

From the staff of The Chronicle: Have a merry and safe Christmas.

SPORTSWEEK

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dominate Super 25

.....

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steeped in tradition



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CHRONICLE

The Choice for African-American News

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2001

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Laws used to strip blacks of land

This is the final part of "Torn From the Land," a three-part series documenting how black Americans lost their family land over the last 160 years.

BY TODD LEWAN
AND DOLORES BARCLAY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lawyers and real estate traders are stripping Americans of their ancestral land today, simply by following the law.

It is done through a court procedure that is intended to resolve land disputes but is being used to pry land from people who do not want to sell.

Black families are especially vulnerable to it. The Becketts, for example, lost a 335-acre farm in Jasper County, S.C., that had been in their

family since 1873. And the Sanders clan recently lost 300 acres in Pickens County, Ala., that had been in their family since 1919.

The procedure is called partitioning, and this is how it works:

Whenever a landowner dies without a will, the heirs inherit the estate in common, with no one person owning a specific part of it. If more family members die without wills, things can get messy within a couple of generations, with dozens of relatives owning the land in common.

Anyone can buy an interest in one of these family estates; all it takes is a single heir willing to sell. And anyone who owns a share, no matter how small, can go to a judge and request that the entire property be sold at auc-



Alvie Marsh of Choudrant, La., tours what remains of his family's land in Jackson Parish. His family lost 80 acres in the 1950s when a white oil man acquired the property in a questionable partition sale.

See Land on A4

School tackles digital divide

Five area churches boast computer labs as part of WSSU pilot program

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

In an effort to get minorities up and running on the ever-changing information highway, computer education is making its way to the African-American church.

Winston-Salem State University has collaborated with five African-American churches for a pilot program that will bring computer technology to minority communities. The program is being funded by a \$12,000 grant from the WSSU Foundation and donations of equipment from local businesses.

United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church, St. James AME Church, Goler Memorial AME Zion Church, Union Baptist Church and St. Benedict's Catholic Church are the first churches selected to create "community knowledge centers" at their church facilities.

The church sites access the Internet through a relatively new method of wireless connectivity as opposed to dial-up modems.

Joyce Williams-Green, associate provost for information resources at WSSU, wrote the proposal for the community knowledge center grant, which allows not only church members but the members of the community at large to utilize the church-based labs. Williams-Green recognizes the need for technology to be taken into minority communities. Statistics show that African Americans do not buy as many computers as other



Williams-Green



Cone

racism, which places them on the short end of the digital divide.

"I saw an opportunity for WSSU to take some of our strengths into the community - meaning our faculty, students and the technology we are developing," Williams-Green said.

This pilot program, according to Williams-Green, has allowed WSSU to go into the community to test new technology and provide an avenue for local college students to access the technology as well as train others how to use it.

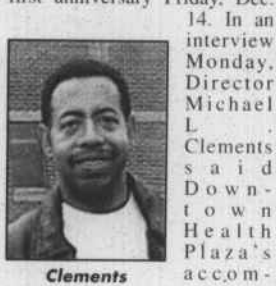
Williams-Green approached her own pastor, Rev. Mary Peterson of St. James AME Church on Patterson Avenue, earlier this year. Peterson opened her lab just one month ago and is very excited and

See Computer labs on A5

Health facility celebrates first year

BY PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

Downtown Health Plaza of Baptist Hospital celebrated its first anniversary Friday, Dec.



Clements

14. In an interview Monday, Director Michael L. Clements said Downtown Health Plaza's accomplishments in the first year include improved efficiency in providing service for patients; creating a "culture" in which patients are treated with dignity and respect; and collaborating with other agencies to improve patients' health or quality of life.

The \$9.8 million, 47,600-square-foot health-care facility opened Dec. 11, 2000, at 1200 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

Clements recalled, "One of the first things we wanted to do was create ... an environment where people were ... proud to be there. So a lot of time went into the aesthetics so that when people walked in the door they did not feel they were going to a place for poor people. Historically, Reynolds Health Center was considered a place for people who had no resources at all, and for years, county government supported it toward that end; people who had no resources, no insurance, no other source of health care, that's where they went. We didn't want to create that kind of environment. So, again, the first thing we did was to try to make a very attractive place where people felt good."

Thirty to 35 percent of Downtown Health Plaza's patients are on Medicaid, 8-11 percent are on Medicare, up to 5 percent or a little more are on commercial insurance and 30 to 40 percent are on personal pay. Personal pay means you don't have insurance because of income, you're self-employed, you choose not to buy insurance or some other reason.

Clements said that Downtown Health Plaza has offered more efficient health care by reducing patient wait times (with the help of a new computerized system) and has taken measures so that more patients make and keep appointments

See Facility on A3



Jeannette Lewis, left, and Brenda Diggs strike a pose in their one-of-a-kind hats.

Photos by Felicia McMillan

Attention-Grabbers

Moles create a Wonderland during Madhatters' Ball

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

"I'm late, I'm late for a very important date!" said the Rabbit as he and so many of the other animals made their way toward the Madhatters' Ball in Lewis Carroll's classic "Alice in Wonderland" (1865). Boy, what a party that was! Having attended Rugby School and lectured at Oxford University (1855-1881), Carroll explores his own imaginative powers as he creates an extraordinary dream world of wit and absurdity for children and adults who work hard but also love having a good time.

Friday night was party time for the Moles and the Mules in

the Wonderland of Winston-Salem. More than 300 Moles, Mules and their guests attended. The 32 members of the Winston-Salem Chapter of the Moles made their grand entrance into the Madhatters' Ball adorned in metallic gold top hats with kelly green, white and gold shingles as bands. All of them had the traditional green mole on the left cheek. Mole Wilma Wheeler, the local chapter president, introduced all of the Moles and their Mules to the audience. The Mules are the husbands and significant others of the Moles.

Dr. Velma Gibson Watts, the national president of the Moles,

See Moles on A10



Louise Smith's hat, "the bird's nest," won a prize for most elaborate.

Home for the Holidays

Habitat, volunteers help single mother's dream come true

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Two events last week left Angela Givens fighting back tears.

First, her two children, both of whom are in academically gifted programs at their schools, told her that they both want to be lawyers when they grow up. A short time later, Givens was handed the keys to her brand-new house - a cozy, bright yellow, green and white place with three bedrooms, two baths and a deck.

Givens said both of the heart-touching occurrences will assure that this Christmas will be merrier than most for her family.

"I have always wanted a house. Living in an apartment is like throwing away your money because it is something that you will never own. This is mine," Givens said, surveying the fresh paint on the walls of her new house.

Givens' new house, located in Neil Place off University Parkway, is the 137th house completed through Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County. More than \$40,000 was raised by the Northwest Chapter of Credit Unions of North Carolina to cover some of the house's costs. Members of the chapter, who work at several area credit unions, also volunteered every weekend for 15 weeks to build Givens' house.



Angela Givens looks on as her son, Allen, accepts the keys to her new house from Sam Whitehurst. Beside Givens is her daughter, Jayla.

Photo by Kevin Walker

See Habitat on A11

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