



Officer Johnny Blakely holds some of the Vital Paks, which can hold health information.

Police Department giving out life-saving Vital Paks

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Police Department is looking for volunteers with a few good hands to assemble emergency kits for the elderly. The Crime Prevention Unit of the WSPD is hoping to distribute the Vital Paks to the elderly residents of the community in the next couple of months.

A Vital Pak is a magnetized pouch that contains important information about a person's health and next-of-kin contact information. The pouch can be placed on the refrigerator and used by medical or law enforcement personnel during an emergency.

The Vital Pak distribution program began four years ago, and since then almost 4,000 packs have been handed out around the community.

Officer Johnny Blakely with the WSPD explained that the packs must be assembled before distribution. Once that is completed, Blakely expects the packs will go fast.

"In the event that police, EMS or Fire (Department) has to come into the home and this person can't talk to us, then this pack will talk for them," said Blakely, who said that oftentimes important information such as allergies, medications and conditions are not available on emergency calls.

Some residents of the Arbor Acres Retirement Community assembled close to 1,000 packs last Thursday for the Police Department. A blank information form must be inserted into a plastic sleeve, and a magnet must be attached to the back.

The Vital Paks, said Blakely, are especially important in deter-

mining which hospital - Forsyth Medical Center or Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center - a patient may need to be transported to.

"We give them out at programs, and the reason we like to do that is so that we can explain the importance because the packs aren't going to do anybody any good unless they fill it out," Blakely said.

With the older population increasing and more elderly peo-

ple living alone, Blakely said these Vital Paks can save both time and maybe even a life.

The department hopes to deliver 6,000 Vital Paks in the next couple of months to people throughout Forsyth County. Vital Paks can be distributed at community, safety or church programs upon request.

For more information on the Vital Paks, call the WSPD Crime Prevention Unit at 773-7835.

News Clips

Compiled from staff, wire and submitted reports

ArtsIgnite to be broken up

The Arts Council plans to create ArtsIgnite Presents, a series of event presentations throughout the year that will be planned in lieu of last year's 16-day, multi-arts event.

The decision to forgo last year's festival format was made in the interest of "economic and organizational sensitivity," said Arts Council President Robert Chumbley, adding, "The decision to hold single ArtsIgnite presentations throughout the year maintains our commitment to the concept of the festival. We've simply reshaped the festival for an interim period of time while we address our facilities issues."

The council does not intend for ArtsIgnite Presents

to be a permanent format shift and will consider mounting another major ArtsIgnite when appropriate in the context of the economic envi-

ronment and the possible completion of new theatrical facilities downtown.

"We're excited by this decision. It allows us to enjoy the energy and creativity of ArtsIgnite throughout the year," said Marion Pittman-Couch, chair of the Arts Council's board of trustees.

Negotiations are under way to bring the first such ArtsIgnite Presents event to the county.

Author to sign book Saturday

Journalist-turned-author Cheris F. Hodges will sign

copies of her novel "Revelations" Saturday at Styles R Us hair salon on Old Rural Hall Road from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Hodges, a former Chronicle and News and Record reporter, has been receiving rave reviews for the book, published by Genesis Press. "Revelations" tells about the ups and downs of a relationship between a magazine writer, Shari Walker, and a marketing executive, Malik Greene.

The book, which costs \$8.95, can also be ordered at www.genesis-press.com or from retailers such as Barnes & Noble and Borders. Styles R Us is at 4819 Old Rural Hall Road.

Chloe Russell receives Salem's Oesterlein Award

Chloe Russell, daughter of Melissa Taylor of High Point and Cederic Russell of Pfafftown, was awarded the Sister Elisabeth Oesterlein Award at the Founders Day exercises held at Salem Academy on May 25. The award is presented each year to the academy senior who, for four years, has exemplified quality leadership and academic excellence.

Chloe Russell graduated from Salem Academy on May 31. She will attend UNC-Chapel Hill this fall.

Fourth Street Sidewalk Celebration coming

The 11th annual Downtown Sidewalk Celebration will be held on Fourth Street between Spruce and Liberty streets Aug. 8, and will coincide this year with the National Black Theater Festival. The annual event is sponsored by the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership. It will focus on downtown businesses, civic organizations, as well as a host of craftsmen and retailers.

Fourth Street merchants and many other businesses and vendors plan to participate. Included will be art, crafts, fresh produce, music, street entertainment and food.

The celebration will begin at 10 a.m. and last until mid-afternoon. Nonfood vendors may still register by contacting the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership at 354-1500 or maureen@dwsdp.org.



Hodges



Pittman-Couch

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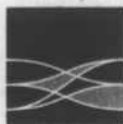
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Uncommon Wisdom

Year-round schools are set to start

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Summer vacation soon will end for about 4,000 young people who attend year-round schools in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County system.

Nine elementary and two middle schools offer a year-round schedule. Open houses for these students will be held July 15-17. Open houses for seventh and eighth grades will be held this evening.

The first day for year-round students will be July 21. Schools on the traditional calendar will begin the 2003-2004 school year Aug. 11.

"The opening of a school year is always an exciting time for staff and students," said Dr. Don Martin, superintendent of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. "I would like to remind our community that school buses will be on the roads beginning July 21, so I urge all motorists to drive with caution."

Elementary schools on the year-round calendar are Bolton, the Children's Center, Easton, Hall-Woodward, Kimberley Park, Konnoak, Mineral Springs, Old Richmond and Petree.

Mineral Springs and Philo middle schools offer both year-round and traditional calendar options.