



**West JVs  
trounce  
North  
Forsyth**

- See Page B1



**Journalist  
talks at  
Salem  
about war**

- See Page A4



**Jamaican  
cooking  
comes to  
Winston**

- See Page A9



**Fiesta  
returns  
for its  
12th year**

- See Page C1

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# CHRONICLE

WINSTON-SALEM • GREENSBORO • HIGH POINT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2003

## BLACK LIKE ME

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Vol. XXX No. 2

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### Veteran teachers become leaders

Program designed to  
help equity-plus schools

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

The city-county school system is piloting a program this school year aimed at helping the system's equity-plus schools develop more well-rounded teachers.

Eight veteran teachers make up the first crop of the system's Lead Teacher Program.

The teachers have been placed at schools with high populations of students who

come from low-income families (equity-plus schools) and will serve as mentors and what the system calls "a critical friend" to other teachers at the schools, many of whom have less experience in the classroom.

"We started the program to try to retain and recruit experienced teachers into some of our equity-plus schools," said Toni Bigham, assistant superintendent for elementary administration. Bigham said statistics show that equity-plus schools tend to have a higher percentage of teachers that are relatively new to the profession. Some attribute the smaller numbers of experienced teachers to the state's ABCs accountability system, which gives bonuses to teachers at schools that meet the state's growth standard. But Bigham said teachers leave schools for a variety of reasons. Also, in recent years, many of the system's equity-plus schools have met growth standards and teachers have received bonuses.

Bigham said each equity-plus school was given the opportunity to sign on for the Lead Teacher Program. Three schools - Diggs, Kimberley

See Program on A11



Gorham



Billie Matthews (left), is a retired math teacher who is mistaken for white. Stacie Lawrence, a Glenn High School senior, said people often inquire about her ethnic background.



Photos by Bruce Chapman

### Church helps fill void left by center

Tutoring and other  
programs would be  
offered in North Hills

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

Mercy Seat Holy Church is reaching out to the children of the North Hills community who have been displaced since the closing of the North Hills Recreation Center earlier this year. This Saturday, the church, at 145 Pine Tree Road, will hold Community Day from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for families who are interested in signing up for a number of programs that the church will offer in the coming months.

Students who need extra academic help can sign up for the tutorial program at the church to receive help with school work in such areas as study skills, computer competency, reading and preparation for end-of-grade testing. Teenagers also will have an opportunity to sign up for a Teen Involvement group at the church.

Phyllis Penn, who teaches at Atkins Academic Academy, is one of many teachers who will be volunteering her time as a tutor at the church. She said the program aims to assist students who are unable to attend the tutoring sessions at their schools.

"As teachers we are seeing that the need is growing more and more for kids who need additional help," said Penn. "When we determine their academic needs we will key in on it and help them."

Penn said it is important to reach out to the children in that community and assure them that they have a place to socialize and study after school despite the absence of a rec center in their neighborhood.



Hairston

See Church on A10

## Then and Now

Skin color is an issue that has transcended the decades, women say

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

This is the third article in a series about the experiences of light-skinned African-Americans and the prejudices they face.

Billie Matthews, 70, and Stacie Lawrence, 17, have grown up generations apart. But the two share a trait - their light complexions - that generates the type of questions and curiosity that transcends the decades that separate them.

Matthews, a retired teacher originally from West Virginia, is frequently mistaken for white. Lawrence, a high school senior, born and raised in Winston-Salem, is often asked if she is biracial.

"I'm sure I have taught people who didn't know I was black or

white. They wouldn't know, I'm sure," said Matthews. "Life has been interesting."

Named after her father, who affectionately called her by her

light complexion. The large extended family has been gathering for reunions almost on a yearly basis for decades now.

Although Matthews' appear-

*"I've always felt like I'm me and that is all I can be, and if people don't accept me for my color, that's their problem."*

- Billie Matthews

full name - Billie Marie - Matthews said she received more grief about her name growing up than she did about her complexion. Both of her parents were light-skinned blacks. Flip through any photo album in Matthews' home and you will see that most of her relatives are of a similar

ance gives no indication, as far back as she can remember, her family members have been black.

"My mom and my dad were both considered black. My mom's mom and dad were Negro, as they said it back then. My dad's mom and dad were Negro, and if I go back a little further

their parents were Negro," said Matthews.

For the most part, Matthews said that her experiences in school as a child were "wonderful." The majority of the families in her hometown knew one another. They all lived, went to school and worked together. Any time someone would ridicule her about her complexion, she said, there was always someone who would come to her defense.

Even though Lawrence is a young person in a century and in a generation that are known for their racial tolerance and acceptance, Lawrence said her school years have not been as positive as Matthews'.

The Glenn High School student is all too familiar with being ridiculed about her complexion.

See Black on A11

### Ringer Rumble



Ray Cole and Sheila Campbell were among those who went head to head Saturday at a horseshoe tournament at the Sims Recreation Center. The center hosted several activities on that day, including a car show. To read more about the car show, see page A10.

Photo by Kevin Walker

### Children learn to fight back

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

A small child battling a full-size adult may seem like a lopsided, losing battle, but Barry Partridge said that does not necessarily have to be the case.

Saturday, Partridge demonstrated to dozens of pint-sized youngsters martial arts techniques that could be used to stymie a kidnapping attempt. The little ones punched and kicked padded martial arts instructors who played the roles of kidnappers for the demonstration. The kids accented their blows with screams of "You're not my parent" and "kidnapper."

The self-defense lessons were among many free child safety precautions touted at the Kid Safe 911 Fair held at Partridge's United Tae Kwon Do Academy on Jonestown Road. The academy sponsored the more than four hour event along with the Winston-Salem Police Department.



Partridge



A young girl practices martial arts techniques that could be used to fight off a kidnapper.

Photo by Kevin Walker

See Safety on A4