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## Amen Corner



Photo by Kevin Walker

The Rev. John Heath, playing the part of the late Rev. James Cleveland, performs with other members of the cast of the musical "Mahalia." The cast performed selections from the musical Saturday at The Chronicle's Celebration in the Park, which brought hundreds of people to Rupert Bell Park. To read more about the event and to see more pictures, check out pages C1, C2, and C15.

## Critics question cruise taken by director

Event sponsored by the makers of the controversial voting machines

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

Election watchdog groups are scrutinizing a recent dinner cruise held for election officials in Washington, D.C., during the National Election Official Conference last month. Kathie



Sutton

Chastain Cooper, director of the Forsyth County Board of Elections, was among those who attended the conference and dinner cruise, which was sponsored by the Election Center and three voting machine vendors.

The Election Center is a nonprofit professional organization whose members are government and election employees.

A dinner cruise sponsored by companies whom election officials patronize, says Joyce McCloy, is an astonishing conflict of interest. McCloy is the coordinator of the N.C. Coalition for Verifiable Voting, and she urged the Board of Elections not to send Cooper to the event. "It's like an \$85 cruise, but it was partly paid for by voting machine vendors," said McCloy. "Most of us consider it unethical that the voting machine vendors can wine and dine our election officials."

See Election on A9

## Citywide reading project begins at Bookmarks Festival

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN, PH.D.  
THE CHRONICLE

Hundreds gathered around the main stage as Dr. Maya Angelou presented her poem "Still I Rise" as a part of the kickoff address for the Forsyth County Public Library's annual community-read project. On the Same Page. From Sept. 11 through Nov. 7, various book discussion groups will be held around the city centered around Angelou's book "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, director of the Forsyth County Public Library, was proud that the steering committee chose Angelou's book as the focus for the third annual community read celebration.

"We have received a great deal of positive response by selecting this book. We felt that the Bookmarks Festival would be the perfect venue to kick off On the Same Page this year," Sprinkle-Hamlin said.

Angelou praised librarians as valuable resources in the community. Librarians put as much effort into their studies as brain surgeons and computer analysts Angelou explained.

See Festival on A9



Photo by Felecia McMillan

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin is hoping for lots of participation with the citywide read.

## National Urban League head to speak in city

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The president and CEO of the National Urban League will speak in Winston-Salem on Oct. 1 during a luncheon that will be hosted by the Winston-Salem Urban League.

The Urban League's board of trustees unanimously selected Marc Morial in 2003. Morial had served as mayor of New Orleans before taking the post. The people of New Orleans twice elected him. He also is a former president of



Morial

the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

As mayor, Morial made national headlines. Not only was he one of the youngest mayors of a major U.S. city, crime plummeted in New Orleans and the economy surged on his watch. Many North Carolinians know Morial as the man who convinced the Charlotte Hornets to relocate to New Orleans. Getting the team to relocate was one of Morial's last acts as mayor. As head of the nearly 100-

See Morial on A10

## Kushner critical of Bushes during Wake visit

Playwright's latest hit focuses on black maid in the 1960s

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

In the creative mind of Tony Kushner — a mind that has produced a growing list of Broadway classics — not even the first lady of the United States is sacred.

Kushner, a Tony-winning playwright opened his address last Thursday at Wake Forest University with a reading of the first act of his latest work, "Only We Who Guard the Mystery Shall Be Unhappy." Part satire, part political commentary and wholly an indictment of White House policies, the piece is set in a classroom full of dead Iraqi children and features First Lady Laura Bush as the main character. Kushner — adopting a high-pitched, exaggerated Southern accent — took on the part of Mrs. Bush for the reading.

Early readings of the work in New York have created both buzz and controversy. Even Kushner, whose work has always delved into controversial territory, said that in these days of homeland security, it crossed his mind that some government agency might retaliate for his poking fun at Mrs. Bush by storming his apartment and taking possession of his manuscripts and notes. Kushner told the crowd that that fear drove

See Kushner on A10



Photo by Kevin Walker

Playwright Tony Kushner talks with students from N.C. School of the Arts after his talk at Wake Forest University. Kushner has won numerous awards for his work, which includes "Angels in America."



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