

Photo by Layla Farmer

Bolton students read from "Charlotte's Web."

# A 'WEB' OF READERS BREAK RECORD

Local students help make history

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

It isn't every day that an elementary school student gets the chance to break a world record, but for students at Bolton Elementary that opportunity was realized last week.

Bolton, along with Piney Grove Elementary, Union Cross Elementary and Walkertown Middle School, took part in an effort to break the world record for the most people reading aloud simultaneously in multiple locations. At noon, more than 600 Bolton students, along with Bolton teachers and staff members, joined more than 500,000 others around the world in the reading of an excerpt from "Charlotte's Web," a classic children's story written by E.B. White.

The world record-breaking attempt was the result of a coordinated effort by Walden Media, HarperCollins, Nickelodeon Movies, Kerner Entertainment and Paramount Pictures - which just released the film version of the book. All 50 American states participated, as well as nearly 30 countries worldwide, according to a Web site that detailed the record-breaking event.

The previous record was set in Great Britain on March 19, 2004, when 155,528 people read William Wordsworth's poem, entitled "Daffodils." Bolton was happy to be a part of history.

"We saw it as a good way to promote reading and an interest in reading and make it fun as well," said Greg Gilliam, curriculum coordinator for grades 3-5 at Bolton. "They've really enjoyed it."

Even the school system's central office got involved in the fun, Gilliam said.

"In fact, (Superintendent) Dr. (Don) Martin was participating this morning and central office was participating," he remarked.

The passages were copied in both Spanish and English, and students were encouraged to read in either language.

In addition to an increased interest in literacy, Gilliam said that the children learned other valuable lessons by helping to break the record.

"They learn cooperation, working together, being part of a team, following rules - because there were specific rules that the Guinness Book of World Records had," he commented.

The school was required to fill out extensive paperwork in order to participate, and one witness from the community was required to stand in each room during the reading.

Travis Williams, a first-grade teacher at Bolton, led his class in the reading of the excerpt. He said that his students gained a greater self-awareness through being a part of the event.

"I think they got a sense that they were a part of something bigger than just what happens in the classroom," he said. "We talked a lot about how people all over the world were going to be reading at the same time. I think they see that the work they do in here relates to the work that other people are doing in other places."

The children also gained confidence in their own ability as readers, Williams said.

"They got a chance to interact - since these are first-graders - with a text that's kind of far above where we're able to read," he remarked. "By going through and underlining the words that they did know, they got to see that even though they don't know every word that's in there, they are able to read part of this really famous book that's being turned into a movie."

Each child who took part in the "Break a World Reading Record with Charlotte's Web" event received a certificate for his or her contribution.

## Holman announces music, literacy research project

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

For more than 10 years, Faustina Holman, Winston-Salem State University professor emerita, has been researching music and culture among African-Americans in church and community. Holman believes that research such as hers has additional value when shared with others.



Holman

The 88 Keys Plus Invitational is open to nonprofit church and community groups involved in matching people with music and culture. She hopes to address some of the findings of her research through this effort.

The success of this initiative will depend upon the willingness of interested church and community groups to focus more on literacy and diverse programming. According to Holman's research, these two areas are "paths less traveled" among African-Americans who routinely involve the masses in music and culture, particularly school age youngsters.

Throughout her research, Holman has focused on ways that music and culture as serious disciplines of study have been used actively in African-American church and community programming to help narrow the "achievement gap" so much in the local and national news.


Invitational includes a provision for incentives to be awarded to nonprofit church and community groups who, during the period from January 2000-December 2006, included at least one activity or event with strong emphasis on music literacy (beyond singing). The activity or event must have been related somewhat to the piano, organ, orchestral instruments, or other instruments as outlined in the 88 Keys Plus Invitational Grant requirements. School age youngsters must have been included as participants in the activity or event.

Holman's research report includes an index of more than 200 ways that African-American churches and communities have focused on music and culture for greater gain over the past years. The research also pays tribute to

music and culture advocates and specialists whose work has been especially important in the lives of citizens from early childhood through senior years.

A major portion of Holman's research pays tribute to Dr. James A. Dillard, her college teacher and mentor, as well as "firsts" such as his 1968 Winston-Salem State Choir choir trip to Europe to participate in an invitational choral workshop involving collegians from 14 nations.

Persons interested in receiving information about the 88 Keys Plus Invitational, as well as the research report, are asked to write a brief letter with contact information: Name, Church/Community Organization or Group, Address and/or Phone Number(s) to Faustina Holman, P.O. Box 20454, Winston-Salem, N.C., 27120 by Dec. 31. No fees needed to become a participant in the project.



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## News Clips

Compiled from staff-written and submitted reports

### Carolina receives federal grant to enhance African studies

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's African studies center has received a federal grant designating it as one of 11 National Resource Centers in the specialty.

The Department of Education award - about \$220,000 annually for four years - will allow the UNC center to increase offerings in African studies and provide more outreach activities and educational programs about Africa. The center is part of UNC's College of Arts and Sciences.

Grant activities will focus on the themes "Islamic Africa" and "Health in Africa," said center director Dr. Michael Lambert, associate professor of African and Afro-American studies.

The Education Department administers the National Resource Centers program under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The centers support foreign language instruction and research and instruction in international studies.

The African studies award brings the number of National Resource Centers at Carolina to six, with the centers for European studies and Slavic, Eurasian and East European studies, the Institute for Latin American Studies, the University Center for International Studies and the Carolina Asia Center.

The centers will be among units moving into UNC's new FedEx Global Education Center at Pittsboro and McCauley streets, scheduled to open next year.

### Salem College session for prospective students

The Continuing Studies Program at Salem College will host a free information session

on Thursday, Jan. 9 at 10 a.m. in the Green Room of Main Hall.

The Continuing Studies program provides male and female students ages 23 and older the opportunity to continue their education on a full-time or part-time basis. Salem offers bachelor degrees in a variety of liberal arts majors and two graduate degrees in education.

For more information, contact the Continuing Studies office at 336-721-2669 or at [www.salem.edu](http://www.salem.edu).

### A&T's Ahmad wins residency spot

The Creative Writing Program has announced that Dr. Anjail Rashida Ahmad, poet and director of creative writing at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, is one of two North Carolina artists to win summer residencies in the Headlands Center for the Arts 2007 Headlands Residency Program in Sausalito, Calif.

Headlands is a highly competitive arts program open to artists of various disciplines from around the globe. This two-month, expense paid residency, sponsored by the North Carolina Arts Council, will allow Ahmad to develop new work for later publication and exhibition. Headland's reputation for creative exploration is world renowned, influencing communities from Bangkok to Berlin, Stockholm and New York.



Ahmad

Air Force Airman 1st Class Dustin W. Thompson has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

### Local airman completes basic

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical train-

ing, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is the son of Sherry Thompson of Reynwest Court, Tobaccoville. Thompson is a 2006 graduate of North Forsyth High School.


### Burr announces funds to fight homelessness in N.C.

U.S. Senator Richard Burr has announced \$4,296,152 in federal funds to help prevent homelessness, and feed and shelter North Carolina's homeless. The money was awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency through their Emergency Food and Shelter (EFS) Program.

"Organizations across North Carolina work hard every day to prevent homelessness and feed and shelter the homeless in their communities," Burr said. "I am pleased these FEMA funds will be used to support the social service agencies in our state."

Congress appropriated \$151 million for the EFS Program for FY 2007. This funding will support social service agencies in cities and counties across the country to help feed and shelter the Nation's hungry and homeless.


In June, Burr introduced the Services to Prevent Veterans Homelessness Act. This legislation provides supportive services to keep low-income veterans in permanent housing so they do not become homeless. It increases veterans' access to assistance for housing, physical and mental health services, health insurance, and vocational and financial counseling. Burr is also an original co-sponsor of the Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act, which aims to reduce homelessness by providing supportive housing to chronically homeless individuals and families.




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