



Students play djembe drums in Ashley's gymnasium.

Photos by Todd Luck

The rhythms of Africa come to Ashley Elementary

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

The sounds of Africa were heard loud and clear last week at Ashley Elementary School, as students were introduced to the resonating tune of the djembe drum.

As part of the school's International Education Week, students got of taste of several of the world's cultures.

Last Friday was the day to celebrate The Mother Land. Individual lessons were held for each grade level, K - 5, over the course of the day in the school's gym. Each lesson had 25 kids playing drums at a time as the rest of their class-

school, which means the school focuses on education with a global perspective. Each hallway in the school represents a different continent, and the whole school is decorated like an airport, with the doorways to classrooms acting as the "gates" to students' international destinations.

This global perspective was even more focused during International Education Week, which culminated with Friday's drum lesson. The prior Tuesday was International Reading Day when guests came to the school to read a story in a different language or a story about a different country.

On Wednesday last week,

Ashley Assistant Principal Robert Ash said that, despite its challenges, the school always strives to enrich its students. He said special guests are often brought in to help expose students to new things from around the world. He said the students always appreciate the effort and are fascinated by what they learn.

"Our social-economic level is a little bit lower than certain other areas, so with them not having the opportunity to go places, we try to bring those places into the school as much as we can," said Ash.

News Clips

News PTRP leader picked

Douglas L. Edgeton has been selected as the new president of Piedmont Triad Research Park (PTRP). Edgeton was selected by the PTRP board, with the concurrence of Wake Forest University President Nathan O. Hatch and the board of Wake Forest University Health Sciences. Edgeton also serves as executive vice president and chief operating officer of WFU Health Sciences.

"Following the retirement of Dr. Richard Dean, we are very fortunate to have someone as capable as Doug Edgeton at the helm of this major community initiative," Hatch said. "The research park holds great promise for the future of Winston-Salem and the region, and Doug has the business insight and leadership ability to help move the project forward."

PTRP was established in the early 1990s, but under Dean's leadership, since 2002 the park expanded to a total landmass of about 230 acres in eastern downtown Winston-Salem, from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on the north to Salem Creek on the south.

The park is divided into three districts - northern, central and southern. Most of the development to date has been concentrated in the central district, where there are now six park-related buildings totaling about a half-million square feet

of space.

The park is expected to be fully developed over the next 20 to 30 years.

Davis elected regional VP for honors organization

Dr. Ray J. Davis, associate dean for undergraduate programs in the School of Technology at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, was elected Southeast Region vice president for The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi at the Triennial Conference in Orlando, Fla.

Davis will be responsible for working with regional chapter officers to strengthen

established P K P chapters and with the national organization to install new chapters on distinguished college campuses in the southeast region. There are 62 such chapters in the region.

"It is an honor to serve this learned society which promotes excellence, scholarship and service," Davis said.



Davis

Winston-Salem or knowing more about the downtown market. The Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership is a membership organization dedicated to the economic development and promotion of the center city.

Presenters will include representatives of the Inspections Division and Development Office of the City of Winston-Salem; the Forsyth County Health Department; Fire Marshall's Office; a real estate professional and a general contractor.

There is no charge to attend the seminar which is held bi-monthly. To register or receive more information, call 336-354-1500 or e-mail admin@dwsp.org.

School Board's Parker elected to board

School Board Member Marilyn Parker has been elected to the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) Board of Directors.

She was elected to a two-year term on the board during the association's recent 38th Annual Conference for Board Member Development.

The NCSBA Board of Directors establishes the mission and goals of the association and ensures that NCSBA activities and programs remain focused on those goals.

In addition to Parker, other newly elected board members include Priscilla Owenby of McDowell County and Evelyn Wilson of Edgecombe County.

NCSBA was established in 1937 as an advocate for public-school education. Its mission is to provide leadership and services that enable local boards of education to govern effectively.

Downtown 101 session will be Tuesday

The Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership will hold a seminar called "Downtown 101" on Tuesday, Nov. 27 in its offices at 500 West Fourth Street in the Loewy Building. It will begin at 8 a.m. and end at 11 a.m.

Downtown 101, sponsored by Baldwin Properties, is for anyone interested in opening a business in downtown



Instructor Steve Nalley leads the students.

mates watched from the gym's bleachers, adding their own sounds by clapping their hands. Lessons were led by Steve Nalley, one of the instructors at Living Rhythms, a local group dedicated to preserving the tradition of West African music.

The group's director, Bill Scheidt, earned his certification in teaching the djembe from Mamady Keita, a world-renowned drum master from Guinea who now resides in San Diego, Calif. Keita has visited Winston-Salem several times at Scheidt's invitation.

Although both Nalley and Scheidt are white, Nalley said that the music of West Africa knows no boundaries.

"West African music is rich in history and culture," said Nalley. "(Mamady said) that 'the djembe does not see color, it doesn't see people's age and it doesn't see people's gender; what it sees is people's hearts.'"

A traditional djembe is a hollowed wooden drum shaped like a goblet with goat skin stretched across the top. Most of the drums used by the students were handmade in Africa.

In Africa, the djembe is normally used to play songs for celebratory occasions. Nalley told the students. He led them in one such song, "Moribayassa," which he said often involved a woman dancing around the village to celebrate a problem that she had overcome. He also demonstrated a different type of drum, the sangdan, which is part of the Dunun family of drums.

Ashley is an International Baccalaureate (IB) magnet

the students were treated to a martial arts lesson by Mark Simpson, head instructor at Tae Kwon Do United Academy. Thursday gave the kids a crash course in Spanish, as teachers from the Dual Immersion program, a bilingual Spanish/English curriculum, taught students about different Latin countries. The school was closed on Monday in observance of Veterans Day.

Angela Hunt, the school's IB Coordinator, was in charge of last week's activities. Hunt, who helps Ashley teachers plan lessons consistent with the IB curriculum, said an international perspective helps to broaden students' horizons.

"It's just to give the kids an awareness and helps them see that there's way more out there than what they see every day here in Winston-Salem," said Hunt. "It just helps to give them an understanding of other people, what their lives are like, what their cultures are like."

The student body of Ashley is mostly minority and largely African-American, and many of the students hail from low-income households. As a magnet school, Ashley gets students from all over the county, many come from the surrounding East Winston neighborhood.

"I think it's interesting, Ashley Elementary is the most inner city school in Winston-Salem, but when you come in the doors, it's a totally different perspective. It's like showing them there's more, there's this whole world of opportunity," said Hunt.

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