

Derwin Montgomery stretches before the race.

Race

from page A1

Winning has been the trend for Montgomery of late. He cinched the nomination for the East Ward seat, which is currently occupied by Democrat Joycelyn Johnson, in the primaries, and faces no competition in the General Election. The Winston-Salem State senior will become the youngest City Council member in Winston-Salem history when he officially assumes the position in December.

"I thought it was a good idea," Montgomery said of the foot race, which occurred on the eve of the runoff election for the Democratic primary in the Southeast Ward, where incumbent Evelyn Terry also faced a much younger competitor in fellow Democrat James Taylor, who ended up winning the runoff.

"We're putting that attention again back to the elections," Montgomery said. "Everybody's running, so we've got to get everybody out (to the polls)."

Besse has a battle on his hands as well. The incumbent will face off against Republican Ted Shipley in his quest to retain the Southwest Ward seat.

Claudia Shivers, the Republican candidate for the

city's Northeast Ward, came out to support the event.

"I think it's refreshing for people to have a new way of doing something political," said Shivers, who will square off against the city's longest sitting Council member, Vivian Burke, in the November 3 General Election. "It gives you just a small look at what the possibilities are with fresh, new leadership."

Montgomery's election is proof positive that the winds of change are blowing in the city, Shivers said.

"I think Derwin's win, on the tails of Obama's win, are indicative of the whole country's desire for change," she declared.

Besse says Montgomery's youthful presence will change the dynamic of the Council.

"The Council has been a good group, but we haven't had any young folks on it," he commented. "It's going to be such an interesting change to have a genuine young man."

As the winner of the race, Montgomery was allowed to select the charitable organization where both he and Besse will spend a day volunteering in November. Montgomery chose Samaritan Ministries homeless shelter.

Talk

from page A1

ease the discomfort some parents may feel about broaching the subject with their teens or preteens, through education and awareness. Events centered around fostering healthy dialogue will continue throughout the month.

"Let's Talk Month recognizes the importance of a strong partnership between parents and the community," said Mayor Allen Joiner in a proclamation declaring October Let's Talk Month in Winston-Salem. "...Honest and accurate education about sex will promote healthy sex attitudes and behaviors that will endure for generations."

Seven panelists, including three teens from area schools, weighed in on the discussion.

Arwilda Cannady, a sophomore at West Forsyth and member of Teen Talk – an initiative of the Forsyth County Department of Public Health to educate and prepare teens to make sound life decisions – believes abstinence is the best policy.

"I can't stress enough how important it is to wait to have sex, and to ask questions if you need help," Cannady said. "Most uninformed decisions only end in failure."

Marissa Gordon, a junior at Atkins Academic and Technology High School, offered a different perspective.

"I think you should prevent (teen pregnancy) as much as possible, but it depends



Photo by Layla Farmer

Addie Hymes speaks.

on the mentality of the person," Gordon said. "Age doesn't determine how good of a mother you're going to be. I think teens are capable of taking care of a baby without messing up their own lives or their child's."

Other issues raised during the forum ranged from concerns about parental involvement in their children's education; to the influences of music, media and the teens' own peer groups; and the role of the church in addressing sexuality.

"It is highly unlikely that you will hear preachers preach about these things," commented Rev. Rodney Coleman, pastor

of Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Mocksville. "... These are issues that need to be discussed, not only in the African American churches, but in all churches. There has to be more dialogue about these topics."

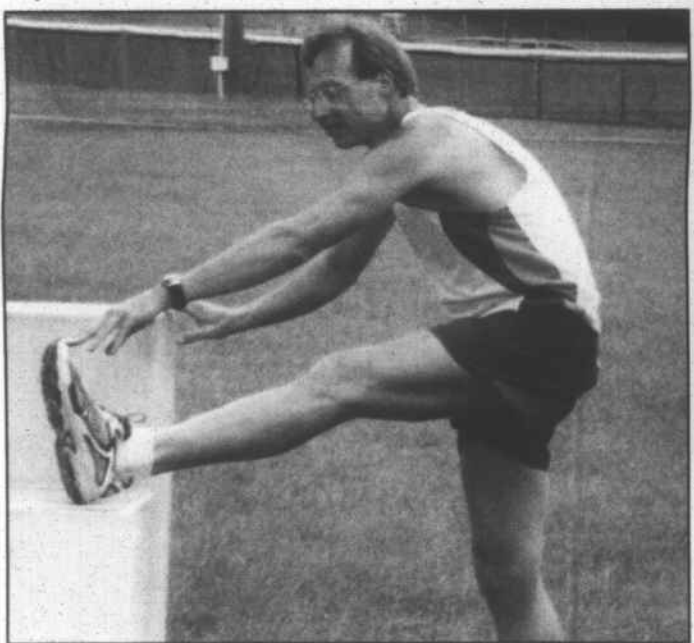
Parents play a vital role in all aspects of their children's education – sexual or otherwise, said Addie Hymes, Parent Involvement coordinator for the Winston-Salem / Forsyth County School system.

"I don't think parents really realize how much power you really have," she commented. "...In a number of households, the kids are in charge. The parents are trying to do what the kids want because they want the kids to like them."

Cleo Solomon, director of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church daycare center, says she has witnessed the hardships an unwanted pregnancy can give rise to.

"From my current standpoint ... I have seen the effects that unplanned pregnancies can have on a family," said Solomon, who spent three decades working with youth at the Urban League of Winston-Salem. "Educating teens about sex is an important part of preventing teenage pregnancy."

Health educators are available to lead classes to help facilitate discussions at agencies or organizations across the city. For more information, or for a listing of Let's Talk Month events, contact Coleman at (336) 703-3269 or visit www.co.forsyth.nc.us.



Photos by Layla Farmer

Dan Besse, a longtime long distance runner, gets prepared.

Big Read

from page A1

black township. It was in this small rural community that she developed her fascination for folklore, hearing old tales told on the porch of the village store. As an adult, she traveled extensively, learning about folklore, which she collected into two books. She also wrote four novels, an autobiography and numerous short stories, plays, essays and articles. Hurston's forceful personality, style and intelligence made her an iconic figure among the writers, artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance.

Despite all that, she was poor when she died in 1960. Her neighbors took up a collection to pay for her funeral, and her grave remained unmarked until 1973.

Hemenway, who recently retired as chancellor of the University of Kansas, discovered Hurston's work in graduate school and was shocked he hadn't been taught about her before. This led to some extensive reading and research on her, which he used for his biography.

"She wasn't some regional writer that maybe was good or maybe wasn't good," said Hemenway. "She was a major American writer."

Hemenway told a story about Hurston visiting a small backwoods town in segregated South Carolina in the 1930s

while collecting folklore. The town had only one stoplight, and she walked through it even though it was red. A white police officer came up to her and asked her, "Girl, what are you doing crossing against the light?" Boldly, she responded, "Why officer, I saw the white folks go on green and I figured the red was for us."

Hemenway wasn't sure if the story was literally true or had been embellished a little, but said the meaning was clear.

"It seems to me that she was communicating to that white police officer. I know your story, I know what you're trying to do, I know you're trying to just lean over and make my life a Jim Crow life, but I'm not going to let you do that," said Hemenway.

He asked the audience what they felt was most important about Hurston. Many appreciated that she was a strong, liberated, "sassy" woman. Others appreciated her incorporating the language and experiences of African Americans into her work.

"She was not afraid to...celebrate and appreciate the common, everyday life of African-Americans and the richness of our culture," said Elwanda Ingram, a WSSU English professor.

For more information on Big Read events go to www.forsythlibrary.org and click on "On the Same Page 2009."



Hemenway



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