

ARTS & LIFESTYLE

Of Interest ...

Senators introduce resolutions praising N.C. racing company

U.S. Senators Kay R. Hagan (D-NC) and Richard Burr (R-NC) last week introduced a resolution congratulating Jimmie Johnson and Hendrick Motorsports for winning the 2009 NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship. Hendrick Motorsports is based in Concord.

"I am proud to congratulate Jimmie Johnson and Hendrick Motorsports on this historic win," said Hagan. "This was their fourth straight Sprint Cup Championship victory, and they have certainly represented the best of North Carolina's deep NASCAR tradition. I wish them the best of luck for the remaining season and look forward to continuing to watch a North Carolina NASCAR legend."

The resolution also commends the Jimmie Johnson Foundation, which is dedicated to helping children, families, and communities in need in North Carolina and around the country. The Foundation began its work in 2006.

R. Kelly to tell his story in book published by Tavis Smiley

Controversial R&B singer R. Kelly, Robert Sylvester Kelly, has announced that he will publish his memoir with SmileyBooks, a company founded by social commentator and talk show host Tavis Smiley.

According to SmileyBooks, in his memoir, which Kelly will pen with David Ritz, the singer will detail the agony of losing his mother; discuss his creative genius; and talk about the child pornography charges that still haunt him today even though he was found not guilty of the charges in 2008.



Tavis Smiley with R. Kelly.

"I'm writing this book as Robert, not R. Kelly," the singer says. "I'm tired of being misunderstood. I will show you the tears, fears and sweat. I will open my heart and reveal the good in my life as well as all the drama. I want to tell it like it is."

Kelly's book, which is still untitled and slated for release in early 2011, joins a SmileyBooks roster that includes the latest offering from Cornel West, "Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud, A Memoir," as well as Jeff Johnson's "Everything I'm Not Made Me Everything I Am." Other SmileyBooks authors include Henry Louis Gates Jr., Tom Burrell, Sophia Nelson and Iyanla Vanzant.

"We are thrilled to be the conduit through which R. Kelly will tell his own story," said Smiley. "He has earned the right to tell his story his own way."

Buju Banton facing drug charge

MIAMI (AP) - Jamaican reggae star Buju Banton is facing a drug charge in Florida.

Banton, whose real name is Mark Anthony Myrie, has been in U.S. federal custody in Miami since last Thursday.

Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman David Melenkevitz said Sunday that Banton was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine. The charge stems from a DEA case in Tampa.

An e-mail to Banton's independent record label was not immediately returned Sunday.

Banton's ninth album, "Rasta Got Soul," is nominated for a Grammy. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation launched an online petition protesting the nomination, saying some of Banton's earlier lyrics have advocated violence against gay people.

Committee formed to find new Arts Council leader

The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County has appointed a 17-member committee comprised of current and former board members and community leaders to begin the search for a successor to President and CEO Milton Rhodes, who has headed the Council since October 2004.

He told The Arts Council Board earlier this year of his intention to retire in the fall of 2010. The search committee is co-chaired by Peggy Joines and Dara Folan, both former Arts Council Board Chairs. The committee has retained Martin Godwin of The McAulay firm to assist in a national search for Rhodes' successor.



Rhodes

Rhodes said he has made no decision about what comes next, but noted that he and his wife, Mattie, intend to stay in Winston-Salem.

"It has been my special privilege to have two opportunities to live and work in Winston-Salem," said Rhodes. "I met my wife Mattie here, and we started our family in Winston-Salem. After we moved away, we maintained ties with Winston-Salem and kept in touch with friends, friends who continued to enrich our lives and who welcomed us back warmly when I came back to head The Arts Council in 2004. However, when I returned, there was an understanding that my work with The Arts Council would be for a period of years."

School to have birthday party for its namesake

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The local, acclaimed charter school named for the legendary author, historian, journalist and social analyst Dr. Carter G. Woodson will hold a celebration on Saturday, Dec. 19 - the day that Woodson was born 134 years ago.

The public is invited to attend the free celebration, which starts at 3 p.m. in the school's gymnasium, 437 Goldfloss St. Attendees are encouraged to don their Sunday best as students pay homage to the father of Black History Month with a culturally-inspired afternoon of music, dance, art and fellowship.

The Carter G. Woodson

School Male Chorus, Jazz Band, Concert Band, String Orchestra, Dance Team, Cheerleading Squad and Drummers are slated to perform.

The event will culminate with a cake-cutting ceremony and a brief discussion of the life and work of Dr. Woodson, who died in 1950. The son of former slaves, Woodson was already thoroughly self-educated when he enrolled in high school at the age of 20, receiving his diploma in just two years. He went on to earn a B.A. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in history from Harvard, where he was just the second African-American to earn such a degree.

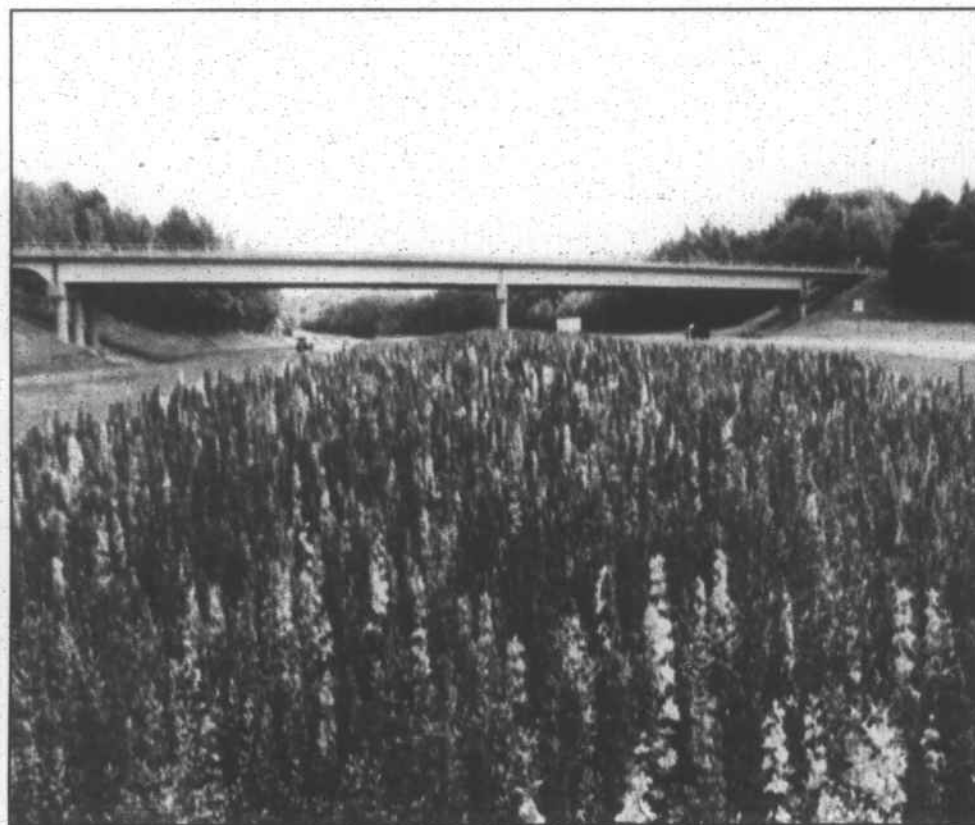


From Brown Collection
Dr. Carter G. Woodson

He taught briefly and held educational administrative posts at several schools, including West Virginia State College, where he founded and became president of Associated Publishers. Woodson established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and its scholarly publication, "The Journal of Negro History," which, under his direction, remained an important historical periodical for more than three decades. The author of more than 30 books, he founded Negro History Week, which later evolved into Black History Month.

For more information about the event, call 336-723-6838.

THE COLOR PURPLE



NCDOT Photo
The eye-catching flowers along this portion of U.S. 220 and Holden Road in Guilford County took home an honor in the N.C. Department of Transportation's 20th annual Wildflower Awards contest. Sponsored by the The Garden Club of North Carolina Inc., the awards recognize NCDOT staffers who plant and care for the wildflowers to enhance the overall appearance and environmental quality of the state's highways. The Guilford County flowers, cared for by NCDOT Division 7, won first-place in the Central Region. A section of I-40 at U.S. 421 in Forsyth County received an honorable mention in the William D. Johnson Daylily category. The flowers are maintained by NCDOT Division 9.

THE NEXT DIDDY?

New A&T course geared for future hip hop music producers

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

North Carolina A&T State University will take students deep into the world of hip hop music production with a new course that will be offered in the 2010 spring semester.

Students will find the elective, "Computational Hip-Hop & Object-Oriented Design" in their course catalog early next year. Taught by Dr. Gerry Dozier, the course will focus on the design principles of the popular music form and the object-oriented software, which are closely related.



Dozier

Students will work in small groups and will be required to engineer the design of the Aggie Hip-Hop Box - a modification of Sun Microsystems' Groove Box; produce at least one student hip hop artist; and use modified versions of the Hip-Hop Box to develop a number of song prototypes for their student-artists to perform.

Student groups that produce the top five songs will be invited to have those songs professionally produced by a local recording studio.



Submitted Photo

The talented Maximus Merrill.

Kid from Lewisville wins guitar competition

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

A young man from Lewisville has won the first-place award for elementary school-aged children in the Music Academy of North Carolina's 5th Annual Guitar Festival. The Academy is based in Greensboro.

Maximus Merrill took home the honor during the three-day competition that began on Nov. 13. He was among more than 40 students representing 25 cities and 12 states that participated in the competition, which also featured masterclasses led by faculty and guest clinicians.

The winners performed at First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro on the last day of the competition, Sunday, Nov. 15.

Austin Delossantos was the only other Forsyth County winner. He placed third in the middle school category. Competitions were also held for high school and college students.



File Photo

A local woman auditions for the tournament last year.

Auditions scheduled for MEAC Tournament talent

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Area residents will again have the chance to shine at the next MEAC Basketball Tournament, slated for March 8 - 13, 2010 at the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

The Conference will come to town early to hold auditions for singers to perform the national anthem before games and to showcase their talents during half-time shows.

Auditions will take place on Saturday, Jan. 23 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hanes Hosiery Community Center, 501 Reynolds Blvd. MEAC at Center Court offers entertainers, including choirs and musicians, of all ages and backgrounds an opportunity to showcase their talents before a crowd of thousands at a major Division I basketball event.

Auditions for national anthem performers will be from 9-11 a.m. National anthem performers will have up to two minutes to perform a cappella version of the song. Half-time performers are scheduled to audition from 1-3 p.m. and will have up to four minutes to present their acts in front of a panel of judges.

Those who audition should possess a positive attitude, creative technique and style and display a high level of showmanship and energy, according to MEAC officials. Although auditions are free and open to the public, space is limited, so applicants are encouraged to be on time and be prepared to perform at the time of arrival.

Participant waiver forms can be found at MEACHoops.com and MEACsports.com.