



Rams to play game at Carver

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Sci-fi writer visits university

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Scouts try to earn Merit Badges

North Carolina Room  
Forsyth County Public Library  
860 West Fifth Street  
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# THE CHRONICLE

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Photo by Layla Farmer

Gang Prevention Specialist Solomon Quick addresses the audience as Patrick Merrill (left) and Rev. Ty Talton look on.

## Official: Gang threat in local schools is real

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

Think Winston-Salem's too small or too nice a town to have a gang problem?

Think again, says Gang Awareness Specialist Patrick Merrill of the Winston-Salem / Forsyth County School system. More than 42 known gangs are in operation in Forsyth County, Merrill said. That number includes both nationally affiliated groups like Bloods or Crips and some local menaces such as the Tyghtwoods, a gang of more than 100 members that is based in the city.

"This type of stuff is going on right here in Winston-Salem on a weekly basis," Merrill told the dozen or so present at his Gangs 101 presentation Monday evening at Ardmore Baptist Church after screening a video clip of gang violence. "We've had about one a year that's that bad or worse. We've lost several students in the last five years to gang violence, and we've actually lost a parent."

The school system hired

Merrill, a former law enforcement officer, three years ago in an unprecedented step against the spread of gangs. The school system is the only one in the state that has a full time gang awareness specialist on staff, Merrill said. He stressed that gang activity is not a school problem, but a community problem that has spilled over into local schools and has affected some children at a very young age. Local youngsters have shown signs of gang influence as early as third grade, Merrill said.

"Unfortunately, it's more and more common to see gang activity at the middle school and elementary school level," Merrill said. "...We have had people who have initiated gangs at the elementary school level."

Merrill's talk was part of a slate of activities held April 4-7 in observance of Gang Awareness Week. The theme of the annual program, now in its second year was prevention, but Merrill's talk centered around recog-

See Gangs on A2



Henderson

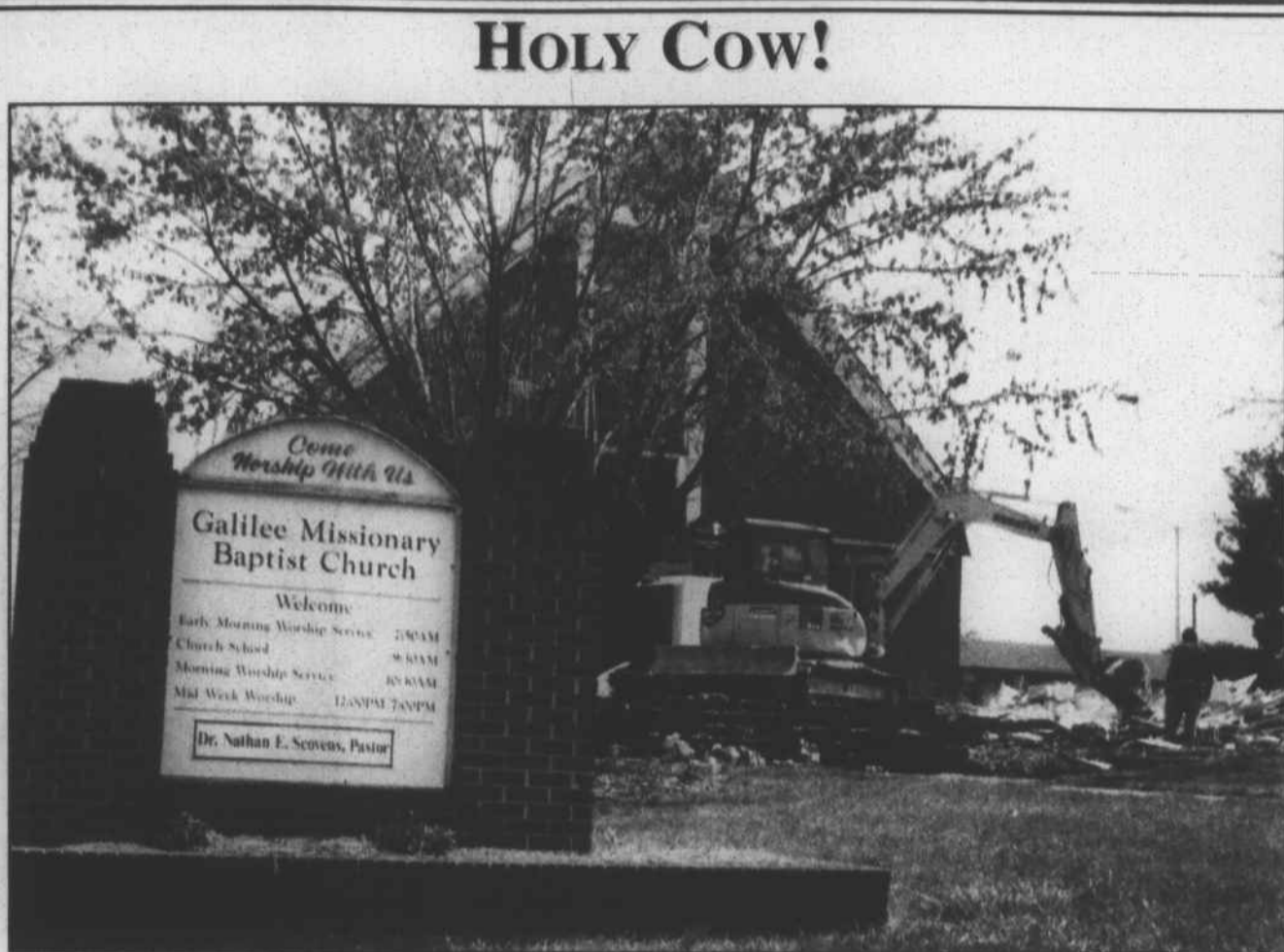


Photo by Kevin Walker

Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, which had been a mainstay on the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and New Walkertown Road for decades, is no more. The building was demolished over the weekend to make way for a new free-standing CVS pharmacy. The congregation of the church had long outgrown the East Winston building. The Galilee flock moved to a swanky, new building at 4129 Northhampton Drive earlier this year.

## HOLY COW!

## Longtime prison super to retire

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

After more than three decades on the job, Wallace Shields Jr. is relinquishing his post as superintendent of the Forsyth Correctional Center, a minimum security prison for adult males that is often known to locals as the Cherry Street Jail.

The city native has served the Department of Corrections for the last 33 years, including two other superintendent posts. Shields, an ordained bishop, says he is retiring on May 1 to devote more time to his duties as pastor of Macedonia Holiness Church in Durham, and to the Church of God in Jesus Christ Apostolic Inc.'s National Board of Bishops, of which he is a member.

"The Lord has told me that it was time to end that chapter with the prisons. He



Photo by Layla Farmer

Wallace Shields Jr. is retiring May 1.

has other things for me to do in the ministry," said the 56 year-old grandfather of seven.

The retirement of the Elizabeth City State alumnus and former football player has been met with mixed emotions.

"I'm sad because he is a

career." Corrections Officer Willie Pledger said Shields, who is affectionately known to prison staff as "Big Papa," will be missed by both staff and inmates at the Cherry Street facility.

"Mr. Shields has made his mark. A lot of us hate to see him go," said Pledger, a DOC employee for the last eight years. "Can't nobody fill them shoes. He's respected in the community, behind or on the other side of this fence."

When he started out as a corrections officer in 1977, Shields said he never planned to build a career with the DOC.

"Back then, it was kind of synonymous with being a prison guard. That's not such a pretty term, but I needed a job," he said of becoming a CO. "It was not

See Shields on A10

## Up-and-comer getting RiverRun buzz

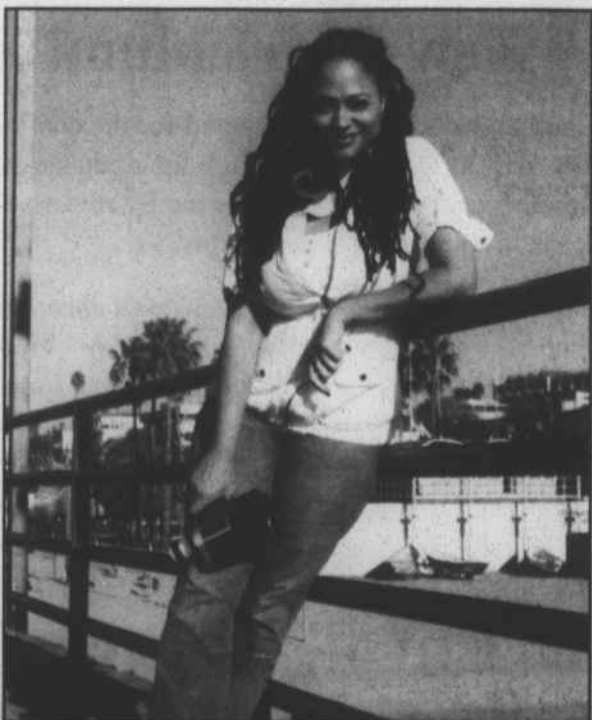


Photo by Darien Davis

Ava DuVernay is bringing her film "I Will Follow" to this year's RiverRun Film Festival, which starts tomorrow.

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

Film marketer-turned-filmmaker Ava DuVernay of Los Angeles is taking the nation by storm with her daring and unprecedented approach to movie promotion.

DuVernay's first feature film, "I Will Follow," has garnered awards and critical acclaim since its March 11 debut, even striking the fancy of Roger Ebert, who wrote, "...this is the kind of film black filmmakers are rarely able to get made these days, offering roles for actors who remind us here of their gifts."

Yet DuVernay hasn't spent a dime on advertising. Buzz about the film, which has been shown on screens in 25 cities, was created entirely through social media and word of mouth, as the pilot project of the African American Film



Rodgers

See DuVernay on A5

## Conference will tackle sports, race and more

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Some of the most well-known names in the world of sports are expected at Wake Forest University next week to discuss timely and relevant topics.

"Losing to Win: Discussions of Race and Intercollegiate Sports" will be the third major interdisciplinary conference held at Wake Forest University since 2009. The conference, which will be held from April 13-14, will bring together prominent academics, athletic administrators, sports journalists, former student athletes, professional athletes and other professionals who have developed an expertise in sports.

The conference is the brainchild of Timothy Davis, the John W. and Ruth H. Turnage Professor of Law at Wake Forest University School of Law. Davis is one of the country's foremost sports law scholars and has



Davis

See Sports on A9

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