



Runners go to the 'Next Level' at competition

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School Board honors Brown

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Howard hosts his famous buddies

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A DRAMATIC RETURN



André De Shields leads other celebrities in the singing of "Lift Every Voice" during a press conference on Monday to kick off the 2011 NBTF.

From Hollywood to N.C.

Famed playwright glad he made transition

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Most of the celebrity guests at this year's National Black Theatre Festival arrived in Winston-Salem via LAX or JFK, but not Samm-Art Williams; he came via his CAR.



Samm-Art Williams

"I drove here," said the iconic playwright. "It took about three hours."

Convenience to Black Theatre Holy Ground is one of the many advantages, according to Williams, of living in Burgaw, the tiny Eastern North Carolina town where he was reared.

Not much has changed in Burgaw, which is a hop, skip and jump from Wilmington, over the decades. The population has nearly doubled to about 3,300 people since Williams was a boy. There have been a few other changes as well.

"We used to have one stoplight, now we have four ... We now have a Food Lion and a Piggly Wiggly," Williams said in

See Williams on A5



Actor Bill Cobbs, whose credits include "Night at the Museum" and "The Bodyguard," is escorted into the Stevens Center on Monday night.



Boy Scout James Flynt Jr. is flanked by his parents, James Sr. and Vonda Flynt.

Scouts kicked to curb in nasty church dispute

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

A Boy Scouts troop has become the unlikely casualty of an ongoing dispute between current and former members of a local church.

The atmosphere has been less than divine at St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church since Pastor James E. Cook was hired in 2007. Many in the congregation have questioned the ethics and money handling tactics of Cook and other church leaders. The animosity became so great that members agreed to mediation in order to avoid hammering out their differences in court.

Among the dissenters, who refer to themselves as the "concerned members," are husband and wife team Emanuel and Anna Mickens, leaders of Boy Scout Troop

and Cub Scout Pack 815, which had been housed at the church and led by the Mickens since its inception in 2003.

But now the Troop is without a home. The couple say that Cook refused to renew the Troop's charter in March. Prior to that, Anna Mickens, a member of the church for 65 years, says the boys had been locked out of the facility where they had held their meetings for nearly a decade, and even barred by guards on at least one occasion from entering the building.

"We don't know what happened," said Mrs. Mickens, who added that the pastor never responded to her husband's inquiries about the charter. "All we know is he didn't sign the charter."

See Troop on A9



Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, the driving force behind the NBTF (which her late husband founded) shares a light-hearted moment with "Soul Food" and "New Jack City" actress Vanessa Williams.

One of Our Own

Winston-Salem's Hauser-Price among NBTF celebs

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

The National Black Theatre Festival is regarded by many as a "family reunion," but for Fay Hauser-Price, the Festival is also a homecoming.

Hauser-Price, whose long list of credits include the film "The Hot Chick" and the soap "The Young and the Restless," is a native of West Virginia, but spent much of her childhood here after she and her family relocated to the Twin City during her first grade year.

"It's great because I remember when the Steven's Center was a movie theater, and I had to walk upstairs and sit in the (segregated) balcony," she related. "It's quite interesting to come back and see the changes that are happening in the



Fay Hauser-Price

See Hauser-Price on A2

Forsyth starts Hispanic American Democrats chapter

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

A Hispanic auxiliary of the Forsyth County Democratic Party was formed last Thursday night, becoming only the second group of Hispanic Democrats in the state.

The Hispanic American Democrats of Forsyth County was formed during a meeting held last week at the Forsyth County Democratic Party headquarters on Burke Street. Through the group is for Hispanics who are registered Democrats, the meeting drew a multiracial group of 29 attendees, which included elected officials like City Council members Dan Besse and Molly Leight and Elisabeth Motsinger, a member of the Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Board of Education.

The North Carolina Democratic Party founded the Hispanic American Democrats last September. State Chair Olma Echeverri is charged with



Hispanic American Democrats N.C. Chair Olma Echeverri speaks.

See Dems on A7

Man on the Move

Success coming quickly for writer/director/actor Gray

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE



Layon Gray

"Knock on wood," as The Black Gents of Hollywood Founder Layon Gray puts it, The Gents are Broadway bound.

A highly-regarded theater group/production company, The Black Gents, whose partners also include actors Lamman Rucker and Thom Scott, have been fixtures at the Theatre Festival in recent years.

"I always set this date aside; I've gotta present

See Gray on A10

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