

Big Four graduates hold annual get-together

-See Page A7



Grassroots groups make plans for future

-See Page A3



THE CHRONICLE

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Worth the Wait

First-day early voters endure two hours in line



Photos by Layla Garms
Gail Robinson



Lillie Bacote

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

The early voting season started out with a bang on Oct. 18. Hundreds of voters converged upon the Forsyth County Government Center, braving long lines for the privilege of being among the first in the county to cast their votes in the 2012 General Election. Forsyth County residents could play a more pivotal role than ever in the upcoming election, according to the Associated Press, which reported this week that Forsyth is one of 106 swing-voting communities in battleground states that voted for then-President George W. Bush in 2004 but sided with President Barack Obama in 2008. According to the AP, these counties could play an integral role in whether President Obama is reelected or replaced with Republican challenger, Mitt Romney. Thirteen of North Carolina's 100 counties made the list. In addition to Forsyth, Bladen, Buncombe, Caswell, Cumberland, Granville, Hyde, Jackson, Martin, Pitt, Wake, Watauga

See Voters on A5



Photos by Layla Garms
Isabel Wilkerson (center) poses with fans Robert Smith and Carol Vogler.

Black migration author draws large crowd

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson came to town this week. She addressed audiences at Reynolda House on Sunday and at the Central Library on Monday. Her book, "The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration," was the featured book for Forsyth County Public Library's popular On the Same Page community reading program. Her talk before a packed house of more than 150 in the library auditorium Monday served as the culmination for the program, which began in September.

Wilkerson, a former bureau chief for The New York Times, spent 15 years conducting interviews with more than 1,200 Americans about the 55-year period known as the Great Migration, when millions of African Americans fled abhorrent racial conditions in the South to start new lives in the North and West. A critically acclaimed national bestseller, "The Warmth of Other Suns" is said to be the most comprehensive work on the movement, which extended from 1915-1970.

"This is a story that had not fully been told in part because the people themselves did not feel safe to tell it, because the people themselves had endured such pain that they did not want to burden their children or anyone else with it," she said. "I just view it as a healing experience. This is a way of allowing their voices to be heard."

Wilkerson, a Washington, D.C. native who serves as a journalism professor and director of Narrative Nonfiction at Boston University, said she was inspired to write the book because her own parents were part of the Great Migration, but were closed-lipped about their experiences. "My parents never talked about it," she related. "Wherever it would come up, my mother would just say, 'I left that place a long time ago. I didn't look back.'"

The experience of writing the book and sharing what she learned from others who were a part of the movement with her mother allowed her to establish a closer connection with her family's story, Wilkerson revealed.

"I learned things that I didn't know about my own family through the process," she explained. "It was a way that she (my mother) could begin to process what she had been through ... it made it safe for her to talk about, and it kind of validated it. That's the value of being able to create a safe space for discussion, which is the goal of all of this."

The self-described "southerner once removed" likened



Crystal Holland



Elnora Gore

See Wilkerson on A12



Photo by Layla Garms
Front row (from left): Cancer survivors Sally Rutt, Gina Frank, Patricia Brown Kinnard and Eusebio Velez with Livestrong trainers Rachel Shoffner (far right) and (back row, from left): Robert Edwards, Latisa Tatum and DeShaun Love.

Class helps cancer survivors live stronger

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

Twenty-seven-year-old Eusebio Velez's testicular cancer and the months of treatment that followed it may have robbed him of his physical strength, but it couldn't shake his resolve to live life on his own terms.

"I want to live life. I want to experience the good with the bad," said the Bridgeport, Conn. native, who was diagnosed in June 2011. "I don't know what the future holds, and that's what's exciting about life, and until the end, it's worth fighting for. I would be foolish not to fight."

The Winston-Salem State University alumnus dreams

of completing the master's degree he had started at UNC Greensboro prior to his diagnosis, and becoming a social studies teacher in the future, but for right now, Velez said he is concentrating on restoring his physical strength, as one of four members of Winston Lake Family YMCA's inaugural Livestrong class. The 12-week program is designed to help post-treatment cancer survivors regain some of the physical vigor cancer treatment often depletes.

"We're definitely working on stamina, balance and coordination," said Livestrong Coordinator and Trainer

See Survivors on A10



Diva Breaks a Sweat

Photo by Layla Garms

Singer and reality show star Trina Braxton poses in her workout gear last week. Braxton, who recently released her first solo single, was the featured guest at a Zumbathon breast cancer awareness fundraiser in Clemmons Friday. Read more on page B1.

Homecoming-goers fete trailblazing nursing class

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem State University's very first nursing class was feted during last week's Homecoming.

The nursing program at WSSU, then Winston-Salem Teachers College, was established in 1953 by an act of the General Assembly in response to a state nursing shortage. Thirty-three students enrolled in WSSU's first class. Twelve of them would graduate in 1957 and go on to long careers in



Campbell

See Nurses on A12



Photos by Todd Luck
Class of 1957 Alumna Sadie Webster with her former instructor Gwendolyn Andrews, right.

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