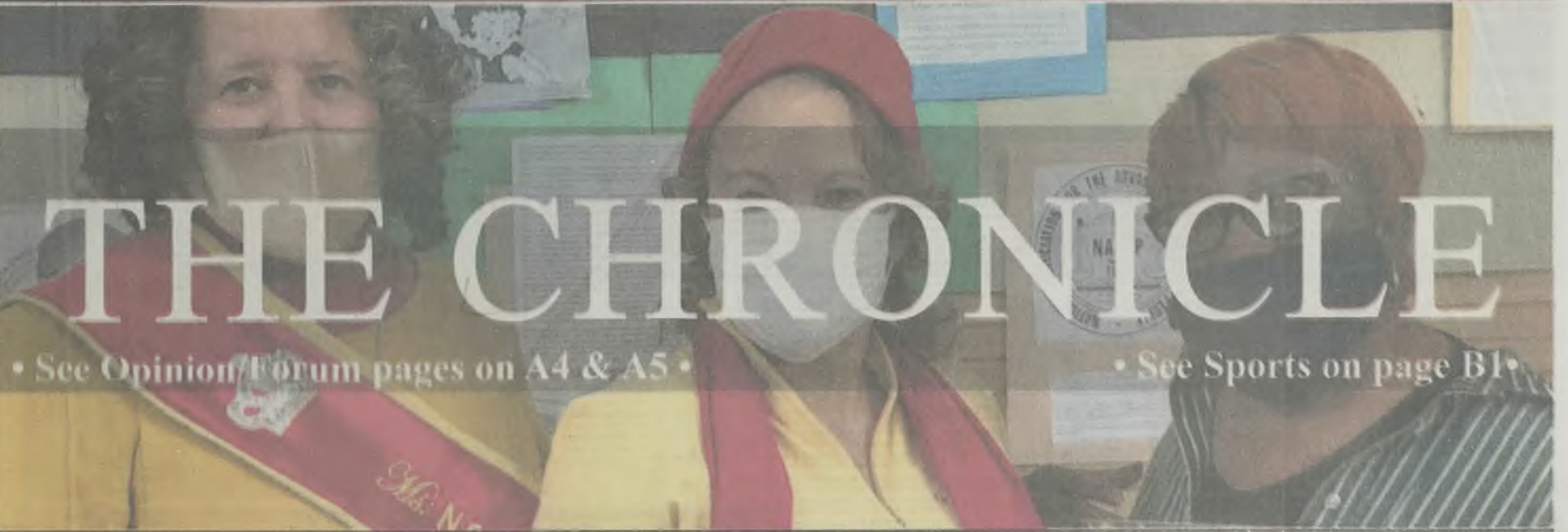


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THURSDAY, December 31, 2020

2020: A year for the record books!

THE CHRONICLE

What can be said about 2020?

It has been a year of firsts. Just imagine the year 1918 riddled with the Spanish Flu, but branded with modern day technology. And there you have it, 2020.

2020 started out as most years, with high hopes of new beginnings and resolutions. The 20th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast brought the charge to "cling to King's dream." We had no idea how much that would be tested during the year. Late in January, it soon took a strange turn with the death of Kobe Bryant. The helicopter crash that killed Bryant, his daughter and eight others shocked the world.

February arrived with rumblings of the novel coronavirus and the celebration of Black History Month. The second month of the year would prove to have the last of in-person events and gatherings.

The 2020 election primaries introduced March of 2020. We saw those who were vying for the community's support to represent its people. There were not many surprises in the local races, but COVID-19 was beginning to make a name for itself. Panic buying left us with empty shelves and scarce provisions. Toilet paper became rare and expensive and masks turned out to be the newest wardrobe additions. On top of that, sports began to disappear from our TV screens and those in their senior year of school began to realize it wasn't going to be a traditional senior year with its usual celebrations and festivities.

In April, words like stay-at-home order and quarantine made their way into everyday conversations and a new normal became inevitable. With many businesses



A Year In Review



closed, people began to feel the economic weight of the virus. The federal government issued stimulus checks to help boost the economy, yet Downtown Winston-Salem began to look like a ghost town and schools moved to online platforms.

Early in May, the city's beloved Mayor Pro Tempe Vivian Burke died, leaving an empty seat on the city council. Only a few weeks later, another Winston-Salem giant, Larry Womble, passed away. We started to see more drive-through and drive-up events, as businesses and organizations pivoted to

adhere to CDC guidelines but remain operational. Before the end of May, America saw the murder of George Floyd and began to hear the horrid details of the deaths of Ahmad Arbery and Breonna Taylor. Despite the pandemic, people went to the streets in protests and launched some of the most aggressive anti-racist movements in modern history.

Because of the racial backdrop, June brought a new resurgence of Juneteenth celebrations, while many Black people questioned their place in a society that considered

their lives expendable. The hashtag #saytheirname permeated social media and news articles around the country.

COVID and racial tensions nearly canceled the July 4th holiday, as "blackout days" surfaced as a way to protest racial injustices by withholding Black dollars. "Buy Black" became a plea when many Black flea markets popped up all over town, highlighting businesses owned and operated by African Americans.

August brought the hard decisions of whether going back to school and

universities would return in-person or virtually. In Forsyth County, Superintendent Hairston and the school board chose Plan C, which was a hybrid of virtual and in-person classes. COVID numbers were steadily rising. We also saw local community leaders form "peace walks" in order to curtail the uptick in gun violence. In addition, Ronnie Long (a story The Chronicle has been reporting for nearly 18 months) was freed after spending 44 years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

In September, President

Donald Trump held a rally at Smith Reynolds Airport, with opposition for his job as commander-in-chief, but mainly for his disdain and disregard of the seriousness of COVID and wearing face coverings. Winston-Salem also mourned the loss of the "community's coach," Coach Art Blevins.

In October, we celebrated the 103rd birthday of Virginia Newell. In her Chronicle interview, she rallied for the "Get Out and Vote" campaign. All things Election 2020 took over our news and political analysis. Residents turned out in record numbers for early voting, amid the confusion of mail-in and absentee ballots. And lo and behold, Trump contracted the coronavirus. He continued to downplay its severity while receiving the best care available (but not so available for others.)

The November 3rd Election Day came and went with no clear winner for days. The winner may not have been clear on the national stage, but Forsyth County sent out a clarion call that Joe Biden was our candidate of choice. The Trump Administration launched a slew of lawsuits claiming the election was rigged and the presidency was stolen from him. Yet, Thanksgiving came with a COVID warning, asking families to have limited celebrations and the number of coronavirus cases and deaths rose to record numbers.

December rolled in with more record-breaking days for COVID, but soon the Pfizer vaccine was approved and was being administered to frontline workers and the elderly. Yet news of a more resistant and contagious strand of the virus had government and health officials cautioning families to have Christmas via virtual avenues in hopes of avoiding even more disturbing numbers going into the 2021.

2020 came with a three-prong pitchfork: COVID, racial injustice, and the general election. To put it mildly, it has been a year for the record books!

Let's remain hopeful that 2021 comes with less drama.

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