

# The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNDISGUISED

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### Words Of Wisdom

Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs.

—Henry Ford

Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but what lies clearly at hand.

—Carlyle

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## Officials, Citizens Clash Over Buses, Utilities Commission Referees

By Donald Alderman  
Durham's boiling controversy over bus service swings between being a hen and egg question, and a hot potato.

On the one hand, people, who told the N.C. Utilities Commission in hearings last week that Duke Power should restore Durham's bus service to 1973 levels, argue that service cuts and poor marketing created the company's escalating losses.

Duke Power on the other hand contends, in justifying its decisions to cut service, that decreased bus use create substantial losses in revenue, making the service reduction unavoidable.

Since both sides use almost the same documents to support their contentions, it's not really clear which came first: decreased ridership or reduced services.

But then the issue is a real hot potato because Duke Power contends that the company can't make a profit with the system, and must content itself with trying to cut losses. Frankly, Duke Power wants the city to take "this albatross from around our necks."

But city officials simply ignore suggestions that mass transit in Durham become a municipal service, because local government appears not to want the headache of rising transit costs and increased demand.

So the matter is now at an impasse, with Duke Power and the city lined up on one side — supporting service cuts — and a coalition of local community organizations lined up on the other — supporting increased bus service.

Now the decision has to be made by the N.C. Utilities Commission that held two days of hearings in Durham on the issue, and wrapped up last Wednesday in Raleigh.

And so, though the current controversy was sparked when Duke Power eliminated night bus service, the issues are much deeper, and the problems more complex. They go back a long way.

Since 1973, when Duke Power Company, which owns the local bus system, renewed its contract with the City of Durham to provide transit service, the service has been cut almost to a bare minimum. Citizens have protested each cut, but to almost no avail.

Those cuts have included schedule changes, route reductions and elimination of holiday, Sunday and temporary night bus service. In fact, a company transit official testified in hearings last Friday before the utilities commission that since 1973, the company has been before the Durham City Council about forty times requesting changes.

Documents, many of them letters from Duke officials, that were introduced as evidence in the hearing, suggest that over the last ten years, ridership has decreased, losses have mounted, service has been significantly reduced and little marketing or promotion efforts were initiated.

The effect of one or the other is hard to pinpoint because each side uses the same evidence to

argue its case. For example, lawyers representing the Durham Citizens Roundtable

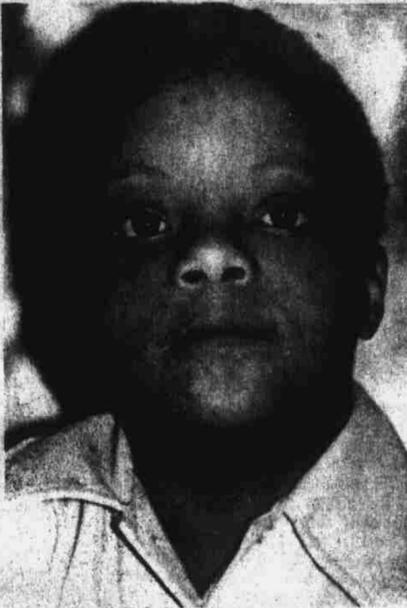
Coalition, one of five plaintiffs in the suit filed against Duke Power Company and the city

after the council honored the company's request to end night bus service February 15, argue that "the company systematically reduced service which caused reduced ridership thereby aiding the company's argument that the service is not being used, and aiding the company in not providing adequate transit service."

On the other hand, Duke attorneys argue that losses caused partly by low ridership prompt service cuts. Irrespective of the different views, the service and ridership have declined.

Between 1968 and 1978, total ridership (including charter service) decreased 42 per cent, from 3,546,538 to 2,067,799; hours of ser-

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BRIAN

## Wanted: Black Parents With Lots of Love To Adopt A Child

By Milton Jordan

Brian (his last name is confidential) is 12-year-old, slightly retarded, and alone. He needs someone to adopt him.

Brian can perform many self-help tasks. He can dress, feed and bathe himself. Brian attends special classes in a local school. In addition to class studies, he is being taught basic sign language to aid with communication. He has a speech impediment which sometimes makes it difficult for him to be understood. He enjoys art, music and strenuous outdoor play such as baseball, running and climbing. His latest accomplishments have included writing his name and identifying numbers. His overall independence will depend largely on extended family support and encouragement. He needs a family who will love and understand him and commit themselves to helping him achieve his maximum potential.

Brian is one of three children in Durham County who have been cleared and are waiting now for adoption. Across the state, the figure is 3,420 black youngsters.

Generally speaking, black youngsters are harder to be placed for adoption than white youngsters; harder, both because they are black and because they are older, or for other reasons.

This entire issue of adopting black youngsters will be the subject of a two-day conference session at Russell Memorial CME Church, 703 S. Alston Avenue. The workshop is scheduled to begin Friday, May 14, at 7 p.m., and run through Saturday. The conference, pegged, "One Church-One Child — Black Adoptions; Revising Up-Reaching Out", is sponsored by the Triangle Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers. All sessions are free and open to the public.

Father George Clements, pastor of Chicago's Holy Angels Catholic Church, who became nationally famous when he adopted a 12-year-old son to dramatize the problem of black youngsters who are hard to adopt, will be the principal speaker.

Clements, 49, who also operates the nation's largest black Catholic elementary school at his Southside Chicago church, brings his "one church, one child message to Durham."

Clements, in his national campaign to find families for hard to adopt black youngsters, says that if each black church in the nation will urge at least one family in its congregation to adopt a child, some 100,000 black youngsters would find homes.

Following a 4 p.m. press conference, Clements will speak at a Community Forum at the Russell Memorial Church. His topic will be the "Church and the Family".

On Saturday morning, Clements will keynote the opening session at 9 a.m. and also conduct one of the two concurrent workshops on the program. His workshop will be entitled, "The Church — Resource and Advocate". The second workshop is entitled, "Placement Issues and Concerns". This workshop will cover things to look for when placing a child in an adoptive home, as well as things not to be overly concerned about. Each workshop is also scheduled for afternoon sessions.

Basically, according to Ms. Gloria Hawkins, a member of the sponsoring organization and a Chapel Hill social worker, the program will address the entire issue of adoption. Participants, for example, will learn, not only how serious the problem is concerning the placement of black youngsters, but will also learn how to go about becoming an adoptive family.

The Triangle Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers is a ten-year-old organization, composed mostly of social workers, but open to all human rights professionals and advocates.



Authors Honored

Six area authors were honored last week during a reception given by the Durham County Library Association recently. The reception was scheduled by the library group to give the authors an opportunity to introduce themselves and explain their works.

Pictured here (L-R standing) are: Lee Green, Ms.

Amanda Smith, Mrs. Doris Haynes, authors; and Dr. Benjamin Speller, acting chairman of the DCLA program committee.

Seated (L-R) are: Mrs. Norma Royal, outgoing president of the library association; Mrs. Jane B. Wilson, David Guy and Ms. Linda Chandler, authors.

Photo by William Cavington

## Bass Elected Vice President RJR Industries

WINSTON-SALEM — Marshall B. Bass has been elected vice president of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Industries, Inc.

The announcement was made by R.J. Reynolds Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, J. Paul Sticht, who said, "Bass will continue to have responsibility for corporate personnel development and will continue to serve as secretary of the public policy committee of the company's board of directors."

Bass joined the personnel department of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in 1968 as director of personnel development. With the formation R.J. Reynolds Industries in 1970, he moved to the position of personnel director of personnel development where he has been responsible for federal contract compliance programs, equal employment opportunity and policies pertaining to training, promotion and evaluations of perfor-



BASS

mance.

Bass joined R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company after a 23-year military career during which he rose to the grade of lieutenant colonel.

Bass is a graduate of the University of Maryland and holds several honorary doctorates. In 1977, Bass received a Doctor of Humane Letters degree from King Memorial College, Columbia, S.C. In 1981, he was awarded a Doctor of Humane

Letters from St. Augustine's College, and in 1982, he was awarded a third Doctor of Humane Letters from Livingstone College, Salisbury.

Bass is a member of the board of directors of the North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation and Piedmont Federal Savings and Loan Association, and is a trustee of North Carolina A&T State University.

## If To Grow or Not To Grow Is the Question, Good Public Transportation Is the Issue

Analysis

By Milton Jordan

Across the nation, urban experts say that effective, efficient mass transit plays a major role in urban revitalization and growth.

Durham's urban experts apparently disagree. This disagreement appears to contradict much of the current discussion among local municipal officials and urban planners about Durham's bright future as a renewed, vibrant urban center.

On the one hand, city officials, especially elected officials, talk glowingly about "moving Durham off dead center", and passionately urge citizens to "invest in the city's future."

On the other hand, these same officials allowed Duke Power Company to eliminate nighttime bus service in Durham, continuing a pattern of service reductions that has plagued Durham since 1973. This pattern features Duke Power complaining that providing good bus service is too costly and improvements are out of the question. But, Duke Power also provides the city's electrical services. That is apparently too lucrative to sacrifice. So the compromise is to cut bus service.

Duke Power, a public utility, owns two municipal bus systems — Durham and Greensboro — giving those cities the only privately owned public transportation systems in the state. All others are municipally owned and operated as a public service. In Durham, bus service is tied to electrical power and contracted to Duke Power under two franchise agreements.

In the past, Duke Power has tried to give the system to the city, but city officials have ignored the offer. Thus Durhamites are caught in a type of urban Catch-22. The city won't provide mass transit, and it won't make Duke Power do a better job.

The contradiction is blatant. For example, to sell the idea that Durham citizens should support a \$10.5 million bond proposal to build a downtown civic center as a magnet to attract more inner city development, city officials point to Charlotte. In the Queen City, officials say their civic center did in fact have a major impact on spurring downtown growth, but they say something else as well.

"This city would definitely be less of what it is today without our transportation system," says Mead Telfair, a transportation marketing specialist with Charlotte's Transit Department, "and an aggressive marketing program is absolutely essential to a viable transportation system."

The contradiction could be costly. "To really analyze the value of a viable transit system, you have to consider what would happen if you didn't have it," explained Doug Sharer, the Urban Program Manager with the N.C. Department of Transportation. "And when you factor in, for example, parking lots that you don't have to build, streets you don't have to widen and people who

would be immobile without the bus system, you begin to see that it is worth more to the city than it costs."

The contradiction could deal a death blow to Durham's proposals for growth and development. Former New York Mayor, John Lindsay, writing in a late 1981 issue of *USA Today*, said simply: "... a decent transit system is basic to urban economic growth and to public safety."

In Detroit, where he has presided over a massive revitalization effort, Mayor Coleman Young echoes a similar sentiment.

"... accessibility to and within this urban area always has been essential, [and now], new transit studies and agreements with suburban governmental units have finally produced a mass transit system plan that will assure convenient, inexpensive and efficient public transportation plus a direct road to our economic revitalization."

And DOT's Sharer says: "When you look at Charlotte, Winston-Salem and Raleigh, other major urban centers, you can easily see that an efficient and effective public transit system is a vital part of the city's growth and development."

But just because the current contradictions could be expensive, and create major headaches for Durham, one should not infer that getting and operating the bus system would be easy or inexpensive.

By 1984, there will be no federal money to subsidize public transit systems. Local transit systems will need increased revenues, either increased fares, or more tax subsidy just to maintain levels of services that determine if a system is viable.

The key words are "effective" and "efficient". According to Sharer, "effective" refers to just how much service a transit system offers per dollar. Efficient refers to how many riders actually get on the bus.

By those standards, Durham falls far short of comparable urban areas in providing bus services. For example, during peak hours, according to data compiled for a twelve month period ending September, 1981, Durham has 22 buses on the streets. Other major urban areas have twice to four times as many. Durham's buses ran about 958,000 route miles, while buses in Charlotte ran about 3.8 million route miles. In Raleigh and Winston-Salem, buses ran 1.5 million and 1.6 million route miles, respectively.

But the fact that Durham has a poor bus system gets almost no argument from anyone. Neither is it seriously argued that Duke Power does not market the local system, does not, in other words, try to get more riders.

No, the real question is can Durham ever become a major urban center without a good transit system?

Across the nation, experts say no. In Durham, city officials, say, in effect, "We hope so."

It seems that only time will tell who is right.