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## NAACP supports Kennedy-Burke Plan

Local board to seek national support

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Winston-Salem NAACP Executive Board unanimously voted Tuesday to support a county commissioner election bill sponsored by state Reps. Annie Brown Kennedy and Logan Burke, overruling a rival bill supported by President Walter Marshall.

Opting in favor of a legislative remedy over a judicial settlement, the group's endorsement counteracts Marshall's support of a rival bill sponsored by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners. The commissioners' bill was introduced by Rep. Frank Rhodes, a Republican, and represented a compromise reached last June between county commissioners and Marshall. The NAACP had filed suit against the county, charging that its at-large election system based on districts diluted Afro-American voting strength.

Federal Judge Eugene A. Gordon approved the compromise in a consent decree signed in June and directed the commissioners to seek legislative approval. Since then, however, the majority of Afro-Americans in the community have criticized Marshall as selling it short in the deal. The most recent NAACP Executive Board endorsement of the Kennedy-Burke

bill gives Marshall's critics more fuel for the fire. Reacting to similar public protests, Kennedy and Burke introduced their bill March 14.

Three NAACP Executive Board Members, Naomi Jones, Vernon Robinson and Mazie Woodruff, called a special meeting of the committee at 7 p.m. Tuesday. According to a press release, the purpose of the meeting was "to discuss the Forsyth County/NAACP out-of-court settlement as well as the Kennedy-Burke bill for redistricting the Board of County Commissioner elections."

Robinson, the organization's Political Action Chair and former Republican candidate for the state senate, said the meeting was called to state the NAACP's position on the bills in question.

"I was concerned about the misconceptions, which were widespread in the community, of where the NAACP stood," Robinson said. "I received a letter from Ann Duncan (another state representative). I had asked her why she was in support of the commissioners' plan, and she said in the letter that she was supporting the plan because the NAACP and the commissioners supported it."

However, the NAACP Executive Board has never gone on record in

Please see page A10



Photo by Sam Greenwood

**Peter Lightfoot: "There are more Afro-Americans (opera personalities) than most Americans think. Most Americans know the black females, but there are a lot of Afro-American males in the field. But most of us work in Europe."**

## Afro-American baritone stars in Mozart's 'Figaro'

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

It's not often that you find a premiere baritone who hasn't been primed and prepared for that position all his life. But up and coming opera sensation Peter Lightfoot was studying for his MBA degree when he received the calling.

"I always had been interested in classical music because I guess I was sort of raised on it," said Lightfoot. "My grandmother listened to the Metropolitan broadcast every week, and my dad loved symphonic music and church music. So the opera was always something I had a passing interest in."

The Queens, N.Y., native is the only Afro-American to have a leading role in the Piedmont Opera Theatre's upcoming production, "The Marriage of Figaro." Lightfoot will portray Count Almaviva in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's soap-opera-like tale of castle romances. It is Lightfoot's Piedmont Opera Theatre debut.

Lightfoot, 39, has always enjoyed singing but no more than playing football or the other activities he participated in while in high school. After high school Lightfoot attended Tufts University in Boston, Mass., where he majored in economics and history. He continued his studies at Columbia University in New York, N.Y., and received his master's of business administration degree there.

"I was singing for fun then and I liked it a lot," Lightfoot said. "When I was in Boston I worked for extra money with the Boston Opera. When I finished at Columbia I got talked into applying to music school at Juilliard."

So after receiving his MBA from one of the nation's leading business schools, Lightfoot spent three years at the country's most prestigious music conservatory.

In 1979 Lightfoot appeared in his first major opera. He made his European debut in 1983. Since then he has won the coveted National Opera Institute's Bronze Career Medal and Career Awards Grant, and has been deemed "vocally brilliant" by "Opera News," a trade publication.

During the 1986-87 season, Lightfoot's appearances included concert presentations of "Fidelio," "Tosca" and "Rigoletto." The fol-

Please see page A8

## City aldermen agree to table plans for East Winston Parkway

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Plans to build a parkway through East Winston were put on the back burner by the city Board of Aldermen Monday night as board members opted to further study a consultant's recommendation to construct an eastern leg of the Northern Beltway in its stead.

"Our recommendation is that 14th Street be improved . . . and that Northern Beltway construction be accelerated," said J. Steven Mifflin, assistant Regional manager for Kimley-Horn and Associates, a Raleigh-based consulting engineering firm. "Improving 14th Street and extending it improves accessibility and opens a wide area for development. We can make local improvements and build the Northern Beltway to serve through traffic."

In addition, the city should widen 14th Street to three lanes beginning at Northwest Boulevard heading east to open new land for development and smooth traffic between East Winston and downtown, Mifflin said. He recommended that 14th Street be extended one and a half miles from Addison Avenue through undeveloped land to Old Greensboro Road.

Whereas the proposed East Winston Parkway would carry traffic through East Winston, an eastern leg of the Northern Beltway would carry traffic around the community. City officials have estimated construction of another leg of the Northern Beltway at \$83 million.

Giving a brief history on the proposed parkway, Brent McKinney, the city's traffic engineer, said discussion on the project began more than 20 years ago.

"The objective of this road as presented in 1968 was to provide continued east-west traffic flow in the Northern portion of our city," said McKinney.

Then the parkway was called the Winston Lake Connector, he said. Over the years the planned project took on other objectives including improving traffic flow in East Winston and facilitating economic development in the developmentally barren community, said McKinney. In 1987 the project was added to the city's Highway Needs List. And by that time, "we began to get some very incompatible objectives" for the project, McKinney told board members.

Mifflin has said building a parkway in East Winston is not feasible because those using it would not stop in the community. In contrast,

Please see page A8

## Business Assistance Center opens; Johnson named director

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

New business owners and those wishing to expand their services now have a one-stop assistance center to aid them in their endeavors.

The Business Assistance Center opened Monday, and its director Steven L. Johnson is ready to do business, said Fred W. Nordenholz, president of the Greater Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce.

"This is a community-wide project in which we hope to provide continued services and expert advice,"

Nordenholz told a crowd of about 150 small business owners who attended a reception March 30.

In addition to the center, Sandra K. Mitchell announced the formation of a Small Business Forum.

"We are creating a small business forum to serve as that critical link between chamber members and the chamber structure," said Mitchell, the chamber's vice chair for small businesses. "The success of this forum will depend on your willingness to input into it."

The forum will be an open meeting of small business members who

will meet regularly to share concerns with the chamber and to assist in the development of new programs and services aimed at small businesses, said Nordenholz.

The BAC will be housed in the F. Roger Page Business & Technology Center at 1001 South Marshall St. The center is being funded during its first year with a \$100,000 grant the BTC received from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Chamber of Commerce is expected to provide continued staffing and funding for the BAC in later years, subject to approval of its board of directors,

Nordenholz said.

The chamber is planning to open a BAC satellite office in the East Winston community and to form an area council to aid in that area's economic development. Both recommendations were made in the Battelle Economic Development Study, which the chamber and Winston-Salem Business Inc. commissioned in January.

Johnson, a Clemmons resident with 16 years of marketing, finance and management experience, will be responsible for the coordination and delivery of business, technical, financial, marketing and related advisory

services to new and small business clients in the greater Winston-Salem

"We are creating a small business forum to serve as that critical link between chamber members and the chamber structure. The success of this forum will depend on your willingness to input into it."

-- Sandra K. Mitchell

area, said Nordenholz.

Johnson has spent the last five years with the New York based

Please see page A10



Sandra K. Mitchell

## Black fourth-grader struck, killed by motorist

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

A nine-year-old Afro-American girl was struck and killed Wednesday morning by a motorist who failed to stop for a bus the child was attempting to board. Rochon M. Carney, a fourth-grader at Bolton Elementary School, was crossing South Stratford Road to bus #625 when William Max McLamb, 58, failed to stop for the bus and hit her, said Sgt. J. W. Marble of the Winston-Salem Police Department.

Seventeen children on their way to Bolton saw the fatal accident, said Sue Carson, school-community relations director for the Winston-

Please see page A10

## CLU counselor: Abolish death penalty for mentally ill

By TONYA V. SMITH  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Capital punishment does not deter crime. In fact, some studies have shown that the death penalty tends to stimulate violent crime instead of suppress it, said Norman B. Smith, counselor for the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union, in a lecture to students at Wake Forest University.

"A study of homicides in the state of New York in the months following an execution . . . found on

the average two more homicides take place in the month after an execution," said Smith, who has drafted a bill for the abolishment of capital punishment for the mentally ill and retarded. "It's very interesting that in that study and in all studies there are those who agree that larger conviction rates and longer prison sentences have longer impacts on reducing homicide rates."

"It's my own personal belief that until we have longer prison sentences for the most violent crimes, public opinion will not lean

toward abolition of capital punishment."

While Smith is a supporter of the total abolition of capital punishment, he said he has narrowed his focus to abolishing the death penalty among the mentally ill and retarded.

He cited the history of capital punishment in the world and noted how public executions such as hangings have been abolished in the United States and abroad.

"Over the long view, the history of punishment has been of a

gradual abolishment of the death penalty," said Smith. "On the eve of the American Revolution, 153 crimes were punishable by death."

The number of executions began to decline in the early 1900s. In 1935, 100 people were sentenced to the death penalty and killed in the United States, according to Smith's statistics. In the 1960s there was 29 executions. In 1979 that figure rose to 103 executions. But Smith said the country is executing

Please see page A7