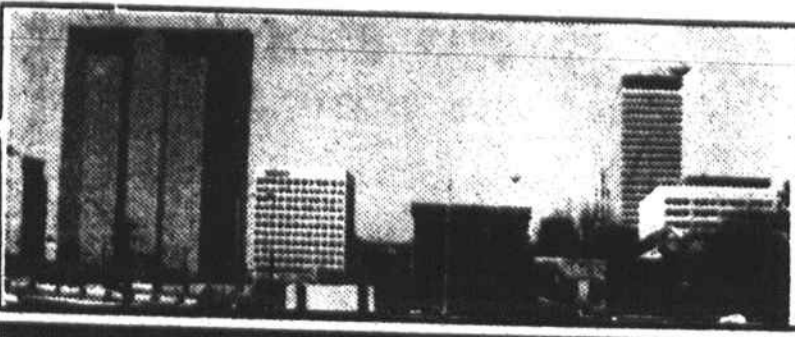


Community News B1



Peace Corps seeks black volunteers

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

Afro-Americans traditionally have made up only a small percentage of the Peace Corps volunteer pool, but recruiters say the benefits of Peace Corps work make it a viable option for the country's minority populations.

Colin Enger, in the Triad area on a recruiting tour, said that Peace Corps volunteers have the opportunity to provide more than lip service to the solution of the world's problems. But he said, too, that for Afro-Americans the rewards can run even deeper.

"The Peace Corps provides an opportunity for Afro-Americans to become leaders and to further develop their leadership skills," said Mr. Enger, who spent two years in a Togo, W. African village as a physics teacher. "It's a great experience in terms of getting more of a perspective on race relations in the United States."

"As a black woman who has been associated with the Peace Corps since 1971, I am concerned that our program does not have more blacks...As an American black, you are part of a proud tradition of people helping people. In the Peace Corps, you have the chance to serve a larger community."

- Vinnette Jones, director of recruitment

And, he said, there are practical benefits. Returning Peace Corps volunteers receive one year of preferential hiring status for government jobs. A portion of National Direct Student Loans are forgiven for volunteers and they are entitled to a deferment of payments on those loans and some other educational loans. Several of the country's colleges and universities offer academic credit for Peace Corps service, and scholarships and assistantships are available to returning volunteers.

More than 5,000 Afro-Americans have served as Peace Corps volunteers since the agency's work began in 1961. In 1978, Dr. Carolyn Payton, an attorney and Howard University faculty member, became the first Afro-American and the first woman appointed as director of the Peace Corps. Afro-Americans currently make up 2.4 percent of the Peace Corps volunteers and trainees, but Mr. Enger said that the agency hopes to increase that number in the near future. Afro-Americans and other minorities, he said, lend a unique perspective to the work of the Corps and often return to

America with a different view of the world as well as their homeland.

"Americans who go over and learn what it's like in another culture and what it's like to organize people can come back and do the same thing here. The Peace Corps is a leadership experience," Mr. Enger said. "It's an extremely good way to get a healthy perspective on the United States. If you spend two years away, you learn that the American way isn't always the best way of doing things. When you come back you have another perspective. I came back with an African perspective. I could see America the way people in Africa see it."

Vinnette Jones, director of recruitment, is concerned by the shortage of Afro-Americans opting for Peace Corps service because she said there are many rewards available to participants.

"As a black woman who has been associated with the Peace Corps since 1971, I am concerned that our program does not have more blacks," said Ms. Jones. "The Peace Corps, after all, is for all Americans, for men and women from 18 to 80. As the Peace Corps expands toward a roster of 10,000 volunteers, it is my hope that more blacks will join and reap the benefits thousands of other volunteers have enjoyed. Peace Corps service offers you a chance to explore a wider world, to polish your leadership abilities, to find great personal satisfaction. As an American black, you are part of a proud tradition of people helping people. In the Peace Corps, you have the chance to serve a larger community."

Mr. Enger said that many individuals forgo Peace Corps service because they have accepted the stereotype that volunteers are all idealists who believe they can save the world. What the Corps actually looks for, he said, are individuals who have found a happy medium between optimism and realism.

"You have to have a desire to help in a pragmatic way instead of sitting around and thinking about the world's problems," said Mr. Enger. "Instead of sending \$5, you're going in helping farm and you can see the benefits of what you're doing. You have to have a blend of pragmatism and idealism now as opposed to the '60s. The Peace Corps is looking for people with some kind of skill to offer to the developing world."

Peace Corps volunteers are called upon to teach instructors how to teach English, to demonstrate farming techniques and to bring medical technology to villages. The Peace Corps, Mr. Enger said, is not a year vacation, but it is a valuable experience for any individual. Volunteers spend three months learning the

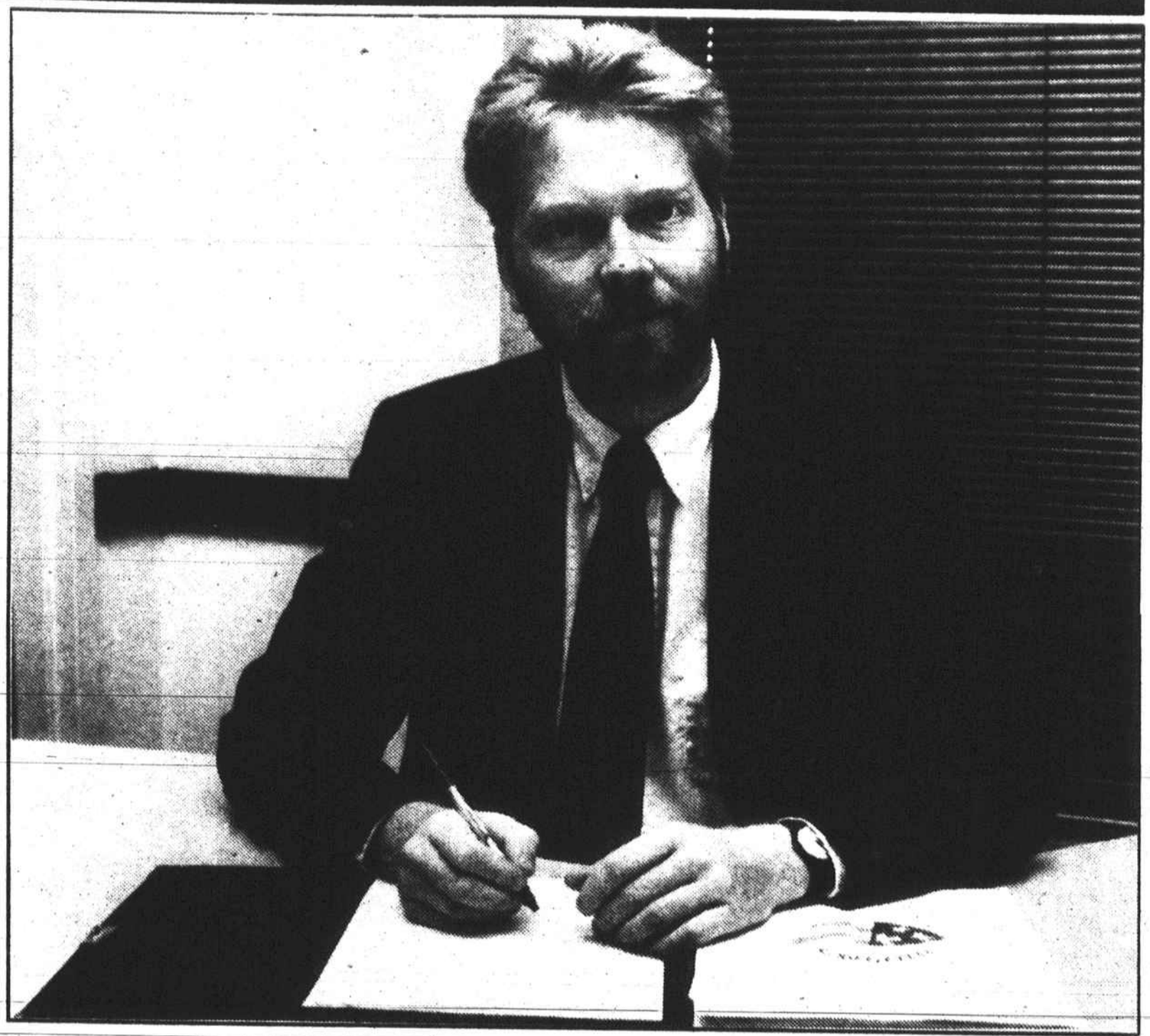


photo by Mike Cunningham

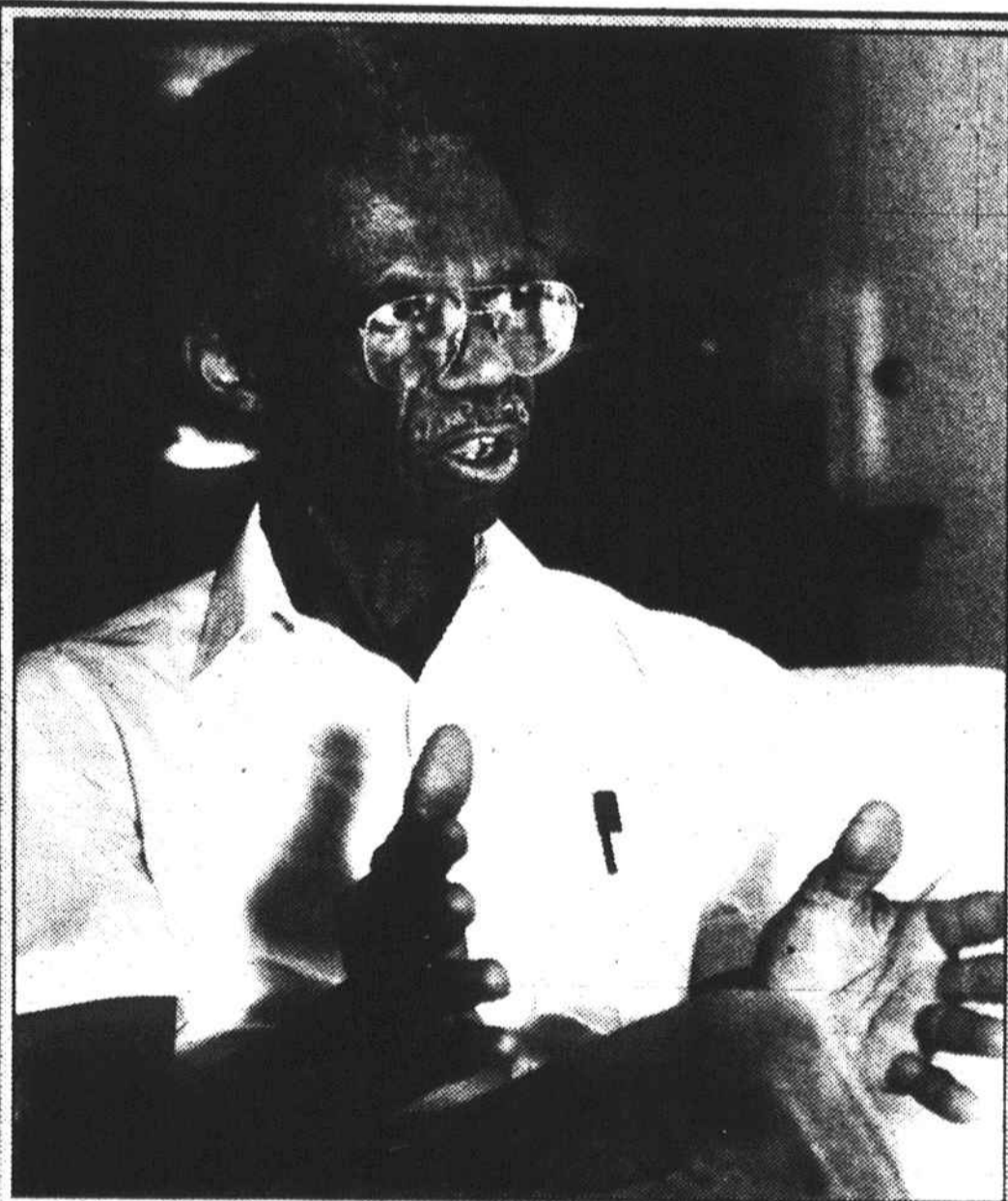
Colin Enger, a regional recruiter with the Peace Corps organization, is visiting North Carolina on a recruitment trip that will include stops in the Triad area.

language of the land that they will call home during their two-year stay abroad. They live in huts and shacks with few if any of the modern conveniences Americans have come to consider necessities. Volunteers adjust to the varied tastes of native foods and they adjust to the customs and tradition of their villages. Mr. Enger said that by working through problems in other areas of the world, Peace Corps volunteers return to the United States with the tools and leadership skills that will enable them to attack some of the problems in their own back yards.

"There is really no price you can put on the joy of

being able to see our work take place. You make a difference in the day-to-day living of the people in the village you live in," he said. "If you were to measure the number of people's lives changed by the Peace Corps, it would be in the millions."

A Peace Corps representative will be at the Greensboro Public Library July 20 and 21 to talk to interested individuals from the Triad area. The Thursday session will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday's session will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



C.C. Ross

photo by Mike Cunningham

Former city alderman disturbed by blacks' apathy

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Former East Ward Alderman C.C. Ross Sr. has seen Afro-American politics come nearly full circle since he first entered local politics, and he is bothered by the apparent lack of interest among today's voters.

Mr. Ross, the East Ward's first alderman, helped to stir local Afro-Americans into political action in the early 1960s. An Army veteran, Mr. Ross said he returned to Winston-Salem armed with leadership experience and an interest in being a part of the action.

"I came back from the service and that was when we started a new movement among blacks," said the 75-year-old Mr. Ross. "We wanted to get involved in politics. We got together and went to meetings. Then after we started showing up at all the meetings, they started to change the times and locations at the last minute. We'd have to hurry around and try to find out where the meeting had been changed to. They did things to keep us from coming but that just made me want to get

more involved."

Mr. Ross, along with the late Carl Russell and other leaders, spent time watching local politics in action and faithfully reported back to the Afro-American community. Mr. Ross said that before that time the Afro-American community had not been overly active in politics in terms of getting out and voting, but that the tide began to change once they became more informed.

"People were concerned once they found out what was going on and that they could be a part of it, too," he said. "I think that when they found things out, that's when people became more interested in helping us get involved. By going to the meetings we became educated and that was the beginning of all of it."

For Mr. Ross, those early actions were the start of a political life that would see him serve four terms on the Board of Aldermen and act as mayor pro tem and chair of the board's finance committee, the first Afro-American to hold the position.

But Mr. Ross' activities were

not limited to the confines of issues broached in the aldermen's chambers. He served as a member of the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees for 12 years. He was the board's first Afro-American chair for the academic year 1973-74. Mr. Ross is credited with initiating efforts to allocate funds to relocate Stadium Drive and to construct the Francis Atkins and Hall-Patterson Communications buildings at WSSU.

Mr. Ross, a native of Mississippi, said involvement was something he learned from his parents, who taught in West Virginia and at Hampton Institute. His father, who became impressed with Hampton during a teacher exchange visit, vowed that his children would attend the school. As his father had hoped, Mr. Ross found the Hampton facilities attractive and enrolled in the school. He said that his leadership skills got an opportunity to flourish while he was at Hampton and that he took advantage of every opportunity to be involved in the campus activities.

He received his degree in

painting and decorating and was offered a position at Winston-Salem's Atkins High School. He had not been at Atkins long before receiving an offer to teach at West Virginia State. He packed up his family and headed for West Virginia where he taught for several years before answering the call from Uncle Sam's army.

"I came back to Winston-Salem when I got out of the army because I decided I was going to do what I had always wanted to do and that was run my own painting and decorating business," said Mr. Ross, who opened his business in 1947.

Shortly after opening his business, Mr. Ross said he rediscovered his interest in being involved and entered local politics. But, he said, the original enthusiasm among Afro-Americans has softened over the years and that they have again settled into complacency.

"Blacks feel that they don't need as much as they used to and they think that they have over- come," he said. "We've got to do

Please see page B5

'Education and the Black Student' topic of NAACP forum

By THE REV. CARLTON
A.G. EVERSLEY
Special To The Chronicle

On Wednesday, July 26, at 7 p.m. at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church, 115 Dellabrook Road, the NAACP Education Committee will hold its second community forum on the topic "Education and the Black Student in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County."

This is the second forum in a series of three, one each in June, July and August.

The goal of these forums together is to bring the various viewpoints into focus from the black community in order to prioritize our goals for the new school

superintendent and the school board.

To enable this to happen, a form has been designed to reflect the desires of any person attending the forums.

In the first forum, held on June 28 at Shiloh Baptist Church, Dr. Barbara K. Phillips lifted up the goals of the local school system, and Sam Puryear, principal of Parkland High School, told how he and his staff try to upgrade the performance of underachieving students.

Willa Sumler, a parent, expressed concerns about drug use in the system, and her son, Christopher Henderson, a 1989 graduate of Carver High School, reflected on

the local system from his own experience.

Beyond the panelists, much of the discussion from the audience centered on whether or not the system's goals were realistic and/or whether the needs of black students were being adequately addressed. A frank and lively exchange of opinions ensued on these issues.

All panelists and audience participants agreed that it was time well spent.

Often the Afro-American community finds itself in a reacting position to others in the educational (and other) system(s). These community forums are designed to be

proactive and initiating a black educational agenda for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County.

Moreover, the objectivity of the forms to be filled out lifts us from the realm of personality power plays.

It won't matter as much what the individual opinions of persons in the NAACP or even the NAACP Education Committee are; what will be advocated is the collective plan of the entire black community as gleaned from the priority form.

Wednesday, July 26, at 7 p.m. at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church continues the journey toward unity in pursuit of black educational excellence.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THURSDAY, JULY 20

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County will hold an orientation for incoming Big Sisters for teen-age parents at the office. For more information call Marilyn Odum at 744-1203.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County will hold an orientation for incoming Big Sisters for teen-age parents at the office. For more information call Marilyn Odum at 744-1203.

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