

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

Founded 1974

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## We should not have to choose

TWO of our most important political entities met Monday night to discuss issues of great significance to the community at-large and Afro-Americans in particular.

At one meeting, the Board of Aldermen, there was a standing-room-only crowd caused by a massive turnout of Afro-American citizens; at the other meeting, the Board of Education, Afro-Americans were scarce.

One could logically argue that more Afro-Americans attended the aldermen's meeting because they had a greater interest in the matters to be discussed by that board.

The issue of the proposed jail site was an emotional issue for many black people; they attended the meeting to express their opposition to the site.

Some Afro-Americans attended the aldermen's meeting because they were concerned about the loitering ordinance.

Meanwhile, the school board is merrily and unanimously endorsing the superintendent's reorganization plan which adds no Afro-American principals to our school system and includes no Afro-Americans in key administrative positions.

Afro-American children in Forsyth County will continue to be taught in a school system that is administered, for the most part, by white males. They will continue to do poorly on achievement tests, and they will continue to be disproportionately disciplined.

We know that many Afro-American citizens are concerned about the plight of black public school children and the decline in black school teachers and administrators.

But that concern was not evident Monday night, possibly because citizens were forced to choose between two important meetings going head to head.

In addition to the conflict with the aldermen's meeting, many of our citizens have given up trying to reach the members of the school board. They have resigned themselves to the fact that the board will continue to be insensitive to the needs of Afro-Americans.

We trust this is a temporary state of mind that will be rectified by a new county election plan. Afro-Americans should have the opportunity to elect school board members who will respond to the concerns of black people.

Ideally, those board members will seek the advice of concerned and knowledgeable Afro-Americans who could contribute to making the schools more responsive to the needs of minority students.

We can not expect our children to progress and excel in our public school system until we have decision-making Afro-American administrators who understand and care about the needs of Afro-American children, particularly the poor and disadvantaged.

It is not reasonable for us to expect a racially insensitive school board to make the appropriate personnel changes without outside pressure, exerted either at the board meetings or at the ballot box.

The crowd attending Monday's meeting of the Board of Aldermen was extraordinarily large, but even when there are no major issues of controversy on that board's agenda, one is likely to find many more citizens attending its meeting because the aldermen are sensitive to the needs of all citizens.

At this point, however, attending the school board meetings is considered by many to be an exercise in futility.

Nonetheless, our voters should not have to choose between attending the aldermen's meeting or the school board meeting. One of the bodies should change its schedule.

## Reader: Give Coble more time before judging him

To The Editor:

Ostensibly people get into the business of editing newspapers to inform and/or entertain the public. In the process, the editor has every right to express his own opinion. But so do those of us who spend money to read your newspaper. What's wrong with you? Your irresponsible indictment of Dr. Larry Coble in your recent editorial speaks, in my opinion, to your absolute lack of sensitivity and your own ego-driven absence of common sense.

Before you throw around such terms as "racist good ol' boy," you should spend a few extra minutes at your typewriter considering the purpose of a public school system. It's about the education of our children, not about serving self-interests -- yours or anyone else's, except those of the people we spend tax dollars to educate.

Dr. Larry Coble has been on the job less than 75 days, and you appear to have made it your business to enter a verdict on his professional ethics, his competence and even his personal standards of racial fairness. I respectfully submit that you have done yourself, your readers and Dr. Coble a distinct disservice by airing your bitterness in your editorial pages.

Fifteen years ago, in the race for the State House, I received more support from the Afro-American citizens of Forsyth County than any white candidate in the race ... because I went to the trouble to listen to people. Two years later, I voluntarily withdrew from a County Commission runoff with Mazie Woodruff, effectively concluding my attempts at elective office, in the interest of a united community. I speak from personal experience when I tell you that you further the cause of no one in this community by working to divide it.

Let's make a deal. I'll agree to keep buying your newspaper, if you'll agree to give the Superintendent of Schools at least 18 months to give us all something upon which we might pass judgment.



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C. Vincent Shortt  
Winston-Salem

*Editor's Note: The Chronicle's editorial positions are not related to newspaper sales.*

### 'Justice With Mercy'

To The Editor:

The *Chronicle* did a sensitive and accurate portrayal of the tragic arrest of Celeste E. Beatty, who has been charged with robbing several Triad area banks in March of this year.

Daughter of Rachel P. Jackson and stepdaughter of Duane P. Jackson, who are highly involved persons in the community, Celeste is an attractive, intelligent and socially conscious young woman in her own right. As her pastor, it has been my privilege to watch her growing spiritual development.

Nothing has shocked and saddened the Dellabrook congregation and myself more in our five years together than this situation. Anyone who knows Celeste and who saw pictures of her at the time of her arrest could clearly see that she was not "herself." Having visited her in the Forsyth and Guilford county jails as well as the Federal Penitentiary in Lexington, Ky., I can attest that she has been a deeply disturbed young woman.

### CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

Many people have asked Rachel or Duane or myself what they can do to help. I've set up an account at Mechanics and Farmers Bank called the "Justice With Mercy Fund." Checks can be written to this account and sent to my church address, 115 Dellabrook Road, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27105. Deacon Sarah J. Boone, our immediate past church treasurer and a highly conscientious woman, has graciously consented to be treasurer of the "Justice With Mercy Fund."

This fund, expedited more privately, has already helped to pay Celeste's initial legal fee of \$3,000. An extensive trial could send the bill much higher. The small but concerned congregation of Dellabrook alone contributed well over \$300 as well as many other friends and family.

This evaluation will also cost \$3,000. It is a high price, but leniency in the case of this promising young woman is a product of "Justice With Mercy."

You may have heard that Celeste, on advice of legal counsel, has entered a guilty plea. The main need for money is to purchase psychiatric evaluation to enable a judge to see the overall picture at the time of sentencing in September.

I know there are a lot of financial causes, but this one has a human and potentially still highly productive face. I hope our community can respond quickly and generously.

The Rev. Carlton A.G. Eversley  
Pastor  
Dellabrook Presbyterian Church

## 'Who are we?' We are African American!

AS I SEE IT  
By LENWOOD G. DAVIS

"African American" is gradually being used by Jesse Jackson, Coretta King, Ben Chavis and others to describe people in the United States of African origin. Over the years, various terminologies were used to describe descendants of Africa.

At one time, we were called African. Next, we were labeled Negro. Later, we were called Colored. We were also called Black and Afro-American. In between African and Afro-American, we were designated Moor, Ethiopian, Blackamoor, African-American and Africo-American.

Writing in 1906, newspaper editor Timothy Thomas Fortune attempted to answer the question, "Who are we?" He argued: "It is of the highest importance that we (people of African descent) get ourselves straightened out on this question of 'Who are we?' ... Until we get this racial designation properly fixed in the language and literature of this country, we shall be kicked and cuffed and sneered at ..."

It appears that in 1989, we still do not know who we are. Some people of African descent want to be called Black Americans. Others want to be designated Afro-Americans. Some also want to be labeled African Americans (without the hyphen between African and American). A good argument can be made for the latter designation.

We should be called African Americans for at least four reasons. First, it is a more accurate term because it denotes a continent, a body of land, something that is tangible, something that one can identify with. In America, there are German-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Italian-Americans, Vietnamese-Americans, etc. Each of these groups are identified with a country and land.

Secondly, we should be called African Americans because Africa not only is a continent, it is the land of our origin; it is our spiritual as well as our cultural home. Ever since African Americans have been in the United States, from our earliest arrival to 1619, we have identified with Africa. It first appeared in the prefix of many of our churches, lodges, schools and social organizations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the African Friendly Society, the African American League, Sons of Africa, the African Academy, African Free School, African Daughters of Ethiopia, African Female Benevolent Society, etc.

Thirdly, we should be called African Americans so that now all of the title, African American, will be capitalized. When Black was

used, it was not always capitalized. Some capitalized it, and some did not. The latter argued that it was an adjective and it is incorrect to capitalize an adjective because it is used to describe something.

Fourthly, African American should be used as a means of developing and sustaining group identity. By using African American, the group would have a higher self-esteem and our identification in American society would be settled once and for all.

We can also answer Timothy Thomas Fortune's question once and for all, "Who are we?" We are African American!

Lenwood G. Davis teaches history at Winston-Salem State University.

The *Chronicle* invites people throughout the community who have an opinion to express to submit columns for consideration for publication in this space.

### CHRONICLE CAMERA

## Do movies like 'Do the Right Thing' promote violence?

Once again, one of Spike Lee's movies has placed him at the center of a national controversy.

This time, Mr. Lee's "Do the Right Thing" is creating a stir over the question of whether his on-screen exploration of racial conflict will promote violence among audi-

ences. Mr. Lee developed the movie, which is set in Brooklyn's Bed Stuy section, after becoming disturbed by the violent incident in New York's Howard Beach.

Lee has said he was angered by the "slap on the wrist" the white

attackers in the incident received and developed his movie as a rejection of such racial violence.

By the end of "Do the Right Thing," the neighborhood is in flames, a long-standing business is destroyed and one of the community residents is dead.

Mr. Lee denies that his movie will provoke any type of violence in the country's inner cities.

"They accuse me of making this film to incite blacks and to make black folks go crazy this summer. I think we're much more intelligent than that as a

people...My hope for this film is that it will provoke open discussion and provoke thought about the madness of racism," Mr. Lee has said in defense of his film.

This week's Chronicle Camera asked residents if movies like "Do the Right Thing" have the potential

to move audiences to violent acts. Responses were varied. Some residents said that most audiences recognize that what they see on the screen is a movie and not an invitation to commit violent acts. Others said movies could have that effect on an audience.



"There's no question. Movies can cause violence."

Timothy Thomas



"Yes. Teenagers especially will be affected."

Tyrone Teal



"No. We see that stuff every day so it's no different at the movies."

Ben Griffin



"Yes. TV and movies make people live in fantasy worlds and they can make people do strange things."

Connie Thomas



"They can but I won't say they always do."

Ronald Leak