

# WAAA to host MLK program

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throughout the years is to try and present him in totality."

Another focus of the program will be to make aware the fact that Dr. King came to Winston-Salem in 1962, and spoke at Goler Metropolitan AME Zion Church. Evans said that the program will help determine the impact of King's visit on the city, and those who were able to hear him speak. She stated that by just coming to Winston-Salem, King made a signifi-

cant contribution to the community since he did not visit every city that would have liked for him to come.

The program will also deal with the issue of voting, since this year is an election year. And Evans said that people will be reminded "of their civic responsibilities as they relate to becoming registered — voting, volunteering in campaigns, working for causes they believe in, and for that matter, running as a candidate."

"So it's both a learning situation, a reminding situation, and it's also about searching one's own conscience and making a commitment to what, individually, you can do to make equality better for all," she added.

At least 1000 people are expected to attend the program, which has always been able to draw a large crowd. And Evans said that the program will appeal to everyone, young and old.

"The program that we do, we really think it has mass appeal. Our approach is that it's not done on a level that's so high that young people can not hear and learn something from the message, instead of share," said Evans. "Nor is it done in such an elementary way that adults cannot appreciate the message too."

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# D. Smith resumes position

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"welcome the staff and assure them that it's a new year, and we will work together to get the job done."

In recent months, the staff suggested that the new CEO meet with each of the personnel one-on-one to explore individual talents and resources. Smith says she will follow through with that idea.

There are those who question the Board's actions, particularly the

national job search which resulted in Smith reclaiming her former title. Smith defends the Board's decisions, explaining that moving cautiously to make the right decision takes time.

"The new Board can honestly say that whatever this process was we went through, they did it completely, and their decision is not to be questioned."

Smith was fired by the former Board after she suggested they adhere to rotation policies outlined by the National Urban League. Subsequently, an all new Board was formed and voted unanimously to reinstate Smith earlier this year. However, the national group required the Winston-Salem Urban League to conduct a job search to fill the posi-

tion of president and chief executive officer.

During the coming months, Smith will lead the organization in developing goals and objectives for 1992 and the next few years. Gregory Bradsher, who has served as acting CEO for the past year, is expected to resume his former title of vice president of finance and operations.

# Ask Us! Residents tell city

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lems.

Taking command of the podium like a true preacher, Rev. Lee Faye Mack drew cheers from the crowd that filled nearly every seat in the alderman chambers.

"We know what it is to hurt, to be out of the necessities of life. Unless you involve us, you won't have a good plan. I'm sorry, but it looks like you're gonna have to tear up that package somewhat."

Rev. Mack mentioned her work at the Back to Life Center on 19th Street, noting that "the alderman for that area is not even here tonight." Vivian Burke represents the north-east ward.

D.D. Adams, who lives in the north ward, was also applauded for her remarks. "You're saying we have a lot of vacant housing in Winston-Salem. But if you travel to East Winston, you'll see all of the vacant housing is boarded up." She also told the panel of officials they should write the housing plan "so the lay people can understand it."

Alderman Nelson Malloy, who represents the north ward, attended the meeting. Other aldermen present were Larry Womble and Virginia Newell, who sat beside Mayor Martha Wood.

Assistant County Manager Kevin FitzGerald spoke briefly about family-based delivery of services and the Opportunities for Families (OFF) project.

Nineteen individuals took the microphone, including representatives from the Experiment in Self-Reliance, Affordable Housing Coalition, Council on Services to

the Homeless, AIDS Care Services, and Kimberly Park Resident's Council. Without exception, they stated a desire to be involved in the planning process, and several stated that they had tried repeatedly to be included.

The plan is called CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy) and is necessary if Winston-Salem is to compete for federal funding from HUD. During the 45-minute formal presentation, city housing officials acknowledged that the parts of the plan were based on sketchy data from the 1990 census, and would be revised as more complete information was available. But a spokesperson for the homeless maintained that much of the information the city needs is already available from grass-roots organizations that serve those with housing problems.

Chuck Snyder, who spoke on behalf of Homeless But Not Helpless, challenged the city to shut down the homeless shelters and put homeless people in the 5,000 units that are currently vacant. Snyder presented the panel with a four-page list of questions, concerns and specific suggestions regarding the CHAS.

Both Snyder and Kay Vives demanded that the CHAS study the need for energy-efficient housing, noting that many low-income residents live in buildings with no insulation, storm windows or other weatherization.

"This is about people who have names, who have needs and desires, people who are living and dying on

the street," said Snyder.

Monica Lett, director of Neighborhood Housing Development, says that during a four-month period last year, many groups were invited to and attended one of a series of housing services delivery meetings, including the Council on Services to the Homeless, Experiment on Self-Reliance, Habitat for Humanity, Housing Authority, East Winston Community Development Corporation, Board of Realtors, Home Builders Association, Urban League, and the Housing Foundation. She said that five weeks ago they sent 150 copies of the CHAS to social services agencies, housing agencies, and neighborhood groups as well as making several attempts to coordinate meetings with them.

Joseph Sausser, city housing planner, said, "It was good, well-stated, well-thought out criticism. This CHAS is an interim plan until more census data is available next year. It is not carved in stone. We will hire a consultant to gather complete data on local housing needs, and they will place strong emphasis on working with the community and advocates for the poor and homeless."

Sausser noted that many of the boarded-up buildings in East Winston have been condemned by the city and are awaiting rehabilitation by the East Winston Community Development Corporation. "The City provides loan financing for rehabilitation and helps steer the CDC through the credit approval process required by the state."

Sausser says this year the city

will be able to generate 36 units of substantially rehabilitated units of affordable housing.

Alderman Larry Womble invited the public to comment on CHAS and housing problems at the alderman's review committee meeting Tuesday at 4:30.

# Solution to ignorance

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Drive Inn.

Rooster Brown is black, 55 years of age, and works for a local manufacturing company. He describes himself as being an arched conservative. Always been that way. He laughs about being farther right than most all black folks and most white folks. He believes that the conservative message is the only sure way that black folks will ever achieve true equality.

But politics aside, here is what makes Rooster Brown and hence, his solution to the problem of American competitiveness unique.

Rooster believes that we as a nation should declare war on cultural and social ignorance.

"It is time that we as an American society declare that every American should be tested on the fundamentals of living in this world society."

Thus, Rooster Brown takes and passes the GED exam once every three years just to make sure that he is still sharp.

Rooster believes that America should devise a Citizens Competency Test, much like the GED exam, which must be taken by all able bodied Americans and passed every three years.

According to Rooster, it would be no different than being tested for a drivers license, or going to have your eyes and ears checked. Except, this test would help each citizen to stay abreast of a minimum amount of mathematics, history, literature, art and music.

Each person would know how

to write and communicate on a minimum competency level. Each person, no matter how old — except after a certain age which he says could be 65 — would be expected to keep a certain edge on the information curve. It would be their contribution toward ridding the United States of so much of its wasted mental ability.

According to Brown, "It would be the least that each of us as citizens could do for this country."

I asked him how would we go about preparing such an exam in view of the massive changes that our society undergoes each year.

He explained that it would be a simple matter for the government to run a state sponsored television channel that would do nothing but teach information that would appear on the next exam. This channel would be available 24 hours a day. Part of the information would, of course, be taught in the public schools as general component of the national educational curriculum. Everyone would have equal access to the basics.

The advantage of this program, as Rooster sees it, is that "older adults would not only have the benefit of having and maintaining the basic skills needed for cultural, civic, and social survival, but would also have the added advantage of being experienced in worldly affairs. Thus, younger people would begin to view older people with a new sense of respect and dignity. "They wouldn't dare to talk back so much because they would know that

older people are in just as good as mental shape as they are."

As to what would happen if you did not pass your competency test, Rooster answers, "The same thing that happens to you when you fail the driving test. You don't get to keep the best jobs in America. No matter how mental. Yes, even the sanitation engineer and domestic engineer would be required to pass the test."

Rooster concedes that provisions could be made where employers could simply give preference to those who have passed the test as opposed to those whose "license" would have expired.

As far as Rooster is concerned, the benefits of this national testing effort would be immense, if for nothing more than a collective and immediate sense by the entire nation, and in fact, the rest of the world that "them" people in the United States are serious about getting rid of ignorance.

"They are so serious that they will make you work on being educated all of your life — not just at the beginning."

After meeting with Rooster, and thinking about his ideas, I just couldn't help but think that maybe Rooster doesn't really trust the young folks in this country.

Maybe he's worried that his social security might not be there because young people in this country are just too darned lazy to even want to work hard. What an interesting man. What an interesting perspective.



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