



Rep. J.C. Watts

GOP attempts to convert black Democrats

by Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Karen Woods is the kind of Democrat Republicans covet.

Woods, pastor of New Creation Christian Church and owner of a Charlotte insurance agency, is a lifelong Democrat. But she's considering a switch to the GOP, which articulates self-sufficiency.

"I will be changing my party," Woods, 47, said. "The time is out where the Democratic Party can just count on our vote. I have not seen one way or the other for them to have my vote."

A letter from Oklahoma Rep. J.C.

Watts was mailed to African-American voters last week seeking their contributions and support for Black America's Political Action Committee, a GOP-backed group. The organization's goal is simple: turn African Americans to the Republican side. At stake is the balance of power in national and local politics in the 21st century.

"I feel this black-led organization has the potential to help make the GOP the dominant political force in America for decades to come," Watt wrote.

The GOP's strategy makes sense, says Ted Arrington, chairman of UNC Charlotte's political science department. The difficulty is in convincing blacks,

who typically back Democratic presidential nominees with 90 percent of their votes, that switching parties is in their best interest.

"There has been an increase, but it's not a lot of people," he said. "But certainly, the Republicans know if they can make a dent in the solid Democratic base, they can seal the Democrats up" and become America's dominant party.

Local returns on the GOP's efforts aren't encouraging. As of Oct. 10, 3,723 Mecklenburg County blacks are registered Republicans compared to 79,119 Democrats. In fact, unaffiliated African-

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Equal Funding for black schools

By DENNIS PATTERSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

RALEIGH (AP) — The Legislature's budget-writers will consider whether historically black universities were unfairly denied extra money given to other campuses that an outside study indicated were underfunded.

"Some expressed surprise that the historically black colleges appeared to be above-average (in operating funds)," Kent Caruthers, the consultant who did the 1995 study for the UNC system, told lawmakers Tuesday.

Based on the study, legislators this year gave \$21 million in extra funding to UNC-Greensboro, Appalachian State, East Carolina, UNC-Charlotte and UNC-Wilmington.

The spending was challenged by black legislators who said the grants ignored long-term underfunding and needs of historically black campuses.

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Johnson opposes naming garage a landmark

By SHARON BROOKS HODGE
THE CHRONICLE editor

The Historic Properties Commission will recommend that Winston-Salem's aldermen grant landmark status to Davis Garage over objections from Constance Johnson, one of the three black members of the appointed board.

Officially, the structure is Union Station. It opened to the public in 1926. For decades it was Winston-Salem's transportation hub. By the mid 1970s, however, the facility closed. In the years that followed, the site attracted vagrants as well as rock-throwing youngsters.

Despite its deteriorated condition, city employees reviewing the application for landmark status said that "the building and site retain a high degree of historical and architectural integrity."

Johnson is not disputing that the former train station holds historical significance. Instead, she questions the timing of the application.

"Is there any particular reason that you are applying for the landmark designation at this particular time?" Johnson asked Harvey Davis at a public hearing on the application.

Davis replied that he had

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Racial Tension



About Race

Klan shouts as others remain silent

BY SHARON BROOKS HODGE
THE CHRONICLE Editor

There was no violence at the Ku Klux Klan rally in downtown Winston-Salem last Saturday, but that doesn't necessarily mean no one was injured.

As hooded white supremacists belated racial epithets from the steps of the Hall of Justice, a little boy sat on the curb and listened. The forlorn expression on his face left little doubt regarding the impact of the words that assaulted his young ears. He was hurt.

"Stop the madness," read the sign he held. The madness, however, continued around him.

On one side of the street, members of the Klan filled the air with the sound of hatred, calling for blacks — and others — to be put to death. Black and white anti-

Klan demonstrators, who assembled on the other side of the street, tried to sing loud enough to drown out the cries of "white power!"

Since President Bill Clinton appointed a commission on race relations, the country has participated in an ongoing discussion on the subject. But that conversation was reduced to a shouting match on Saturday. In the tense days that both preceded and followed the rally, elected officials have been quiet on the matter of race relations in this city. At least one elected official now looks back and wonders why no one stepped forward to ease the tension.

State Rep. Michael Decker, who represents Forsyth County in the North Carolina General Assembly, says he didn't know about the rally in advance.

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Photos by
Aurelia Hill

Conference trains white churches to deal with racism

by Felicia P. McMillan
Special to THE CHRONICLE

The burning of dozens of Southern black churches over the past four years illustrates the destructive force of racism in American society. A program designed to help white churches respond to racism was held in Kansas City Oct. 30 through Nov. 2 at St. Paul of the Theology in Kansas City, Mo.

Called "Reframing the Dialogue on Racism," the program trained white clergy serving white congregations so that their congregations might more effectively address the pattern of racism. An

undertaking of the Burned Churches Project of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, the conference was not a typical "racial sensitivity" or "diversity" training session, according to the Revs. John Mendez and Lynn Rhodes, two local pastors who participated.

Mendez, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, was one of the organizers and presenters for the conference.

Rhodes said the conference was a transforming experience for her and many other white clergy who attended. "Reframing the dialogue is like building the structure anew, uncovering the untold stories and naming the pain, injustice,

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Bluesman claims cigarette maker stole his image

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Bo knows Diddley.

And Bo Diddley, the legendary bluesman, says R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. used his likeness in an advertising campaign to promote Winston cigarettes without his permission.

The tobacco company denies it but quit running the ad anyway after Diddley's lawyer threatened to sue.

The ad, which ran from July through September in magazines such as People, said in part: "My blues are real, just like my smokes" and featured a photograph of a guitarist who Diddley and his attorneys say resembles Bo.

Diddley, who lives in Florida, has not sued Reynolds but has threatened to do so in several letters to the company.

"The ad features a photograph of a Bo Diddley 'look-alike' together with a selection of props, poses and expressions intentionally designed to evoke our client's image and persona," attorneys for Diddley wrote in a letter to Reynolds. "Our client considers any association of his celebrity with cigarette smoking — an activity that he does not condone — to be particularly distasteful and patently misleading."

Reynolds says it hasn't misappropriated Diddley's likeness. But it pulled the ads after Diddley's lawyer faxed a letter Aug. 29 threatening litigation.

The company filed suit last week in federal court asking for a declaration that Diddley — whose real name is Ellas McDaniel — cannot collect any damages or further complain

about the ads.

In its complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Greensboro, Reynolds and its ad agency Long Haymes Carr Inc. of Winston-Salem said the blues ad was part of a larger campaign to introduce the newly formulated, additive-free Winston cigarettes.

The ads used "ordinary people" engaging in "real" activities ranging from fishing to drinking to playing guitar. The ad in dispute used a "generic blues guitarist," lawyers for Reynolds say, who isn't intended to look like Diddley.

Diddley, 68, has recorded more than 40 albums and performed concerts for Queen Elizabeth and President John F. Kennedy. His hits include "Who Do You Love" and "I'm a Man."



Bo Diddley