

Hot Dog!

Physically, mentally-challenged students hold fund-raiser for March of Dimes

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

A well traveled corridor at Forsyth Technical Community College's West Campus was transformed into a makeshift à la carte-style buffet last week. Hot dogs — an American classic — were the main course, with side orders of potato chips, soft drinks and an assortment of desserts also for sale.

The familiar, inviting smell of chili-soaked hot dogs drew a steady stream of students, faculty and staff during the lunchtime fund-raiser. It was organized and administered by a group of mentally-and-physically-challenged students in a compensatory education class offered on the campus.

"It's very exciting because we are doing this for a good cause and that is to help little babies be healthy," said Constance Sims, class president. Proceeds from the hot-dog sale will benefit the March of Dimes.

The process of choosing a charity was a lesson in democracy,

said Virginia Clemmons, who teaches the class. After researching a variety of charities, the dozen or so students in the class took a vote. The March of Dimes won handily after a spokesperson from the agency, which fights birth defects, came to the class to talk about the organization's goals and needs.

"They are looking beyond themselves, and some of them have had handicaps since birth," Clemmons said.

The organization of the hot-dog sale included many other lessons. For instance, Clemmons brought in sales papers from various stores and let her students debate where the best deals could be found for supplies. Harris Tetter helped the effort by extending a credit to the class to buy items for the fund-raiser.

Students also were given the task of organizing themselves in a variety of small groups to handle various tasks associated with the fund-raiser. Some, like Sims, handled the money. Some were in charge of an advertising campaign



FTCC employee Connie Transou serves up a hot dog to a customer during last week's fund-raiser.



Photos by Kevin Walker

Maurice Edmonds, right, who works with the class, and Johnny Levan keep soft drinks cold.

aimed at making the campus community aware of the sale. Others made sure that soft drinks were cold by keeping a steady supply in a well-iced cooler. And still others, like James Branscome, worked the

dessert table, where everything from cupcakes to cookies were baked and then donated by faculty, staff and students.

"A lot of people have come to

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Cavanagh

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porter reading last Thursday's Chronicle while Narvaez sat nearby. The other supporter, a gentleman — a white gentleman, that fact becomes important later in the Q&A — complimented The Chronicle, saying something like, "The Chronicle prints 'what people really say.'" I said thank you or something similar to thank you and waited a bit while the mayor and Narvaez pondered over where the interview should take place.

The other gentleman left the building, and they decided on a destitute back room with a few chairs and a desk, on which sat a Bible.

Narvaez surprised me by taking the seat next to me with a notepad in her hand (I did not realize when the invitation was first extended that the mayor and I would have an audience).

I started the tape recorder and began what turned out to be an interview lasting only about 15 minutes. As you will read, the mayor strongly believes that his words have been spun by this newspaper, so The Chronicle is printing the entire interview as it took place. Only insignificant words — ums and ahs — and opening pleasantries have been taken out. Nothing of substance has been touched. Because nothing has been edited, the conversation may be a little hard to follow at some points.

Thursday, Oct. 18, 4 p.m.

TKW: Just want to ask you, Mr. Mayor — you have a few more weeks to go, how's your confidence level?

JC: Well, as I have shared before, initially my confidence level was low because I felt that six or seven months ago I was the hero of the city by many folks that have now turned toward my opponent. It hurts a little. So I've had to adjust and not look at my opponent as much as I was and all the support I felt he was getting and take a look at what's best for the city, which is what I have tried to do all along. And as I focus on what's best for the city, I can function a lot better.

TKW: When you say six months ago you felt that you were the hero of the city (mayor interjects)...

JC: No, I said they felt (I was the hero of the city).

TKW: They felt? The people you say have now turned and are supporting your opponent?

JC: Correct.

TKW: OK. Did you feel you had any naysayers toward you before the six months?

JC: Not in front of my face.

TKW: Now, I remember when you first appointed Mr. Joines to the HAWS (Housing Authority of Winston-Salem) board, I got the press release and you had a quote in there that was pretty much glowing — that he would be good for the board because — and there were some compliments there.

JC: Absolutely.

TKW: So has anything changed since that point? Do you still respect him as a person, but you do not like his style? What is your issue with your opponent?

JC: Well, Mr. Joines — you used his name so I am going to just mention it there — is an administrator. He has done it for 30 years. His talent lies there. My talent lies elsewhere; that is more of a visionary, a strategist, someone that has a passion for being for the city. He was an employee of the Board of Aldermen and the city manager, and when we said do something, he did it. He admin-

istered. He processed. He facilitated. And you can find that kind of person anywhere. They are often very available, especially with 30 years (of) experience.

Does this city need an administrator? Well, that's what Bill Stuart (city manager) does. You ask him to do something, he does it. You ask him to go and he goes. If he doesn't do it well or go well, we fire him. There have got to be policy-makers, strategists, people that set goals and objectives, visionaries for the future, and I just don't think my opponent is that kind of person. That doesn't make him bad; it just makes him different.

TKW: You don't think a person like him could, because I am sure when you first started as mayor you weren't the same type of visionary you are now, four years later. So do you think it is necessary to have a person who is a visionary be mayor?

JC: I don't think you are right, Kevin. If you are a visionary and have been given that gift by the Almighty that you are always a visionary. It is a gift that you receive. It is something that you are anointed with, a mantle of whatever placed upon you to be that kind of person. I don't know what your gift is; let's say it's journalism. I can't write. You do. You have been given that gift; you have always had it. It is now coming to the surface. It is manifesting itself. My gift has been manifesting itself for years in many different ways, whether it be for my own personal life, where I want to go, what my vision is for me or my family or my business or whatever. It has always been there.

And I am not new to politics. My vision for Winston-Salem goes back to 1977 (when he served as an alderman) then the North Carolina Senate in 1982 and now 2001. It isn't just coming up; it's been there. And that's my talent and that's my gift. I have been blessed to be able to use it. My opponent has a gift and a talent, God-given. And he is right where he needs to be because people can say go and he'll go, do and he'll do, and those people who tell him to do that are the visionaries, are the planners, are the strategists, are the passion-for-being folks. And you need both.

But what we have gotten is a little fearful, I believe, of the power, in terms of money and influence and the connectivity... What I heard from the backers is their fear of 'Jack, we like you a lot but we don't want to lose the connection; we don't want to lose the network. That network is too important. It affects my business; it affects my personal life; it affects what parties I am invited to; it affects, you know — If I give to this charity, you'll give to that charity. It affects all of that.' And nobody is willing to give that up, or soil themselves by taking the chance of making somebody important mad, and, by the way, I am not just talking about business, I am talking about the church and I am talking about the black church, especially — selling themselves out for fear that...

TKW: And you believe that is happening? For fear that they are going to burn a bridge?

JC: Somewhere, somehow.

TKW: For fear that they are going to burn a bridge, and if Joines is elected...(Cavanagh interjects).

JC: Let me tell you, who else are they going to run against me that would have been a real competitor? It would have been a shoo-in for me. Because Jerry Long (a former RJR executive who has a lot of political influence

locally) wouldn't have changed and those other people who were my supporters in the past wouldn't have changed. It had to be someone in the network that they could control. So, here we are. It's very bad, but that's where it is, in my opinion.

TKW: Let's go back to that issue with the black churches. What do you think they fear? Ruining a connection that could? I am just trying to get to the meat of it?

JC: In my opinion, the black church, the African-American church, has been, not just this

election, but all prior elections to a great extent, influenced by the power base within the community who is primarily the good ol' boy, white group who could care less about the black community, in my opinion. They do things ritualistically to try to prove they really care, but, in fact, when you are behind the closed doors and you really hear their heart, their heart isn't with the black community. Their heart is so far away, but there is money there; there is influence there. Certain black individuals, or African-American individuals, grow their businesses,

and grow their churches.

And then there are also, which I can understand a whole lot more and a whole lot better, that the African-American community is primarily Democrat in terms of political persuasion. I can understand that a lot better than I can selling themselves out, calling themselves Christians and then being bought just like that. That's not unusual within any religion, I guess. I am not just picking necessarily on Christians, but when it affects you personally, it makes you rethink human nature again.

TKW: So in '97, when you

had a great deal of African-American support (mayor interjects)...

JC: I don't recall that.

TKW: You didn't have a lot of support from African-Americans?

JC: Where have you gotten...(TKW interjects).

TKW: I have read past Chronicles and it said that you were surprised by the African-American support you got in '97. Is that not true?

JC: I don't know how to answer that in percentages. I have always had wonderful African-American friends, very close

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