

# Residents hear from prospective police chiefs

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

The four candidates to replace Police Chief Pat Norris were questioned by community members last week at a forum held at City Hall.

The candidates, Cary Police Chief Scott Cunningham, Assistant Atlanta Police Chief Alan Dreher, Assistant Winston-Salem Police Chief Kevin Leonard and Winston-Salem Police Captain Alonzo Thompson, all have extensive backgrounds in law enforcement.

Many questioners asked how the candidates would use their experience to deal with the city's growing Hispanic population.

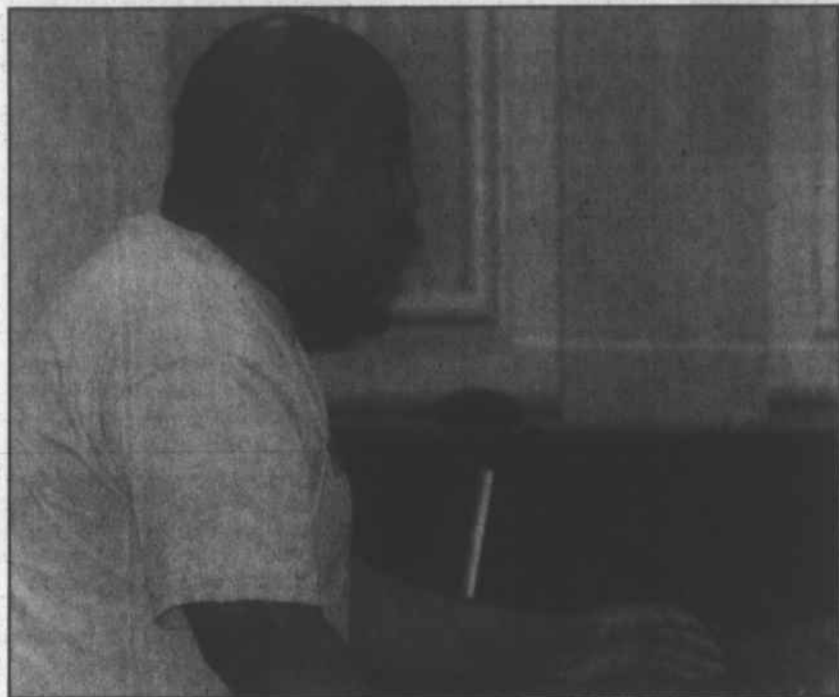
All the candidates committed to meeting with the members of the Hispanic community and trying to increase the department's number of Hispanic and Spanish-speaking officers. Dreher said that Atlanta has a Hispanic Liaison Office with Hispanic officers and that he would do the same in Winston-Salem. Thompson said it will take time to increase the number of Hispanic officers in the department and build a trust with that community.

"I'm going to need your help in breaking down the barriers ... that have existed, not only in the Latino community but in the African-American community as well, this distrust or mistrust of law enforcement," said Thompson, the only minority candidate up for the job.

Local NAACP President Stephen Hairston asked Dreher about a 2006 incident in Atlanta in which Kathryn Johnston, a 92-year old woman, was shot dead by narcotics officers. When the investigation into the shooting began, Dreher said the officers, acting on a no-knock warrant, shot Johnston in self-defense when she fired on them and drugs were found in the apartment. Later it came out that the officers got the warrant with false



Candidates Scott Cunningham, Alan Dreher, Alonzo Thompson and Kevin Leonard.



NAACP President Stephen Hairston asks a question.

Photos by Todd Luck

information and planted the drugs after the raid.

Dreher said the incident was tragic. Currently, two of the former Atlanta officers that were involved are in federal custody and a third was sentenced to four years in prison. Dreher said after the incident, all narcotics officers were reassigned and a whole new team was brought in and re-trained.

Procedures were also tightened and more reviews were added to warrants.

"It caused a great concern in the community and it took a long time to bring that trust back," Dreher said.

Another question was what each candidate would do about crime in public housing projects.

Leonard was one of the first

supervisors of the WSPD's foot patrols in public housing. He said he's seen neighborhoods revitalized because of the department's efforts, but that problems move to other areas and the police have to track them.

Cunningham said enforcement and community education are keys to prevention. He emphasized trying to find a solution to the problems by working with community partners.

"No one should have to live in fear. No one should be fearful of sitting out on their front porch or being unable walk down the street. That should not exist in any part of our community," said Cunningham.

All the candidates pledged to be approachable, responsive and in touch with the community.

"The department's goal is ultimately to serve. I think I have a servant's heart, I think our officers should have a servant's heart," said Leonard.

Chief Norris, the city's first black police chief, retired at the end of last year but has agreed to serve through June. By then, City Manager Lee Garrity will likely hire one of the four candidates.

To watch a recording of the forum online or give feedback to the city, visit the city's Web site, [www.ci.winston-salem.nc.us](http://www.ci.winston-salem.nc.us).

## Local folks named Democratic delegates

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Seven delegates from Forsyth County will represent North Carolina at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colo. in late August. The state's 77 Democratic delegates were selected at district conventions across the state on May 17. Twelve alternate delegates were also elected.

The Forsyth County delegates/alternates are Denise D. Adams, Jimmie Lee Bonham, Susan Campbell, Frank Dickerson, Michael Flatow, Bette James and Albert T. Porter, Jr.

More than 550 people applied to be delegates to the Democratic National Convention, more than three times the number of applications received in 2004. Delegates and alternates are apportioned among the congressional districts according to the district's Democratic performance in the last presidential and gubernatorial elections. The number of delegates and alternates elected from each district ranged from four to 10.

Delegates and alternates are apportioned among presidential candidates according to the primary votes the candidates received. North Carolina's May 6 primary results were reflected across the state's districts with 31 delegates and 5 alternates pledged to Sen. Hillary Clinton and 45 delegates and 7 alternates pledged to Sen. Barack Obama, who won the state's Democratic primary.

North Carolina will send a total of 134 delegates to the Democratic National Convention. In addition to the delegates and alternates elected, 26 delegates and 7 alternates as well as 12 Party-Leader/Elected-Official delegates, or super delegates, and two "add-on" unpledged delegates will be elected at-large during the State Convention in New Bern on June 21.



Bonham



Photos by Bernard J. Carpenter

Franklin Hayes with his daughter, Candace.

### Grads

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lege and making sure I get my good education," said Mahan, who aspires to obtain a degree in computer information technologies from UNC-Chapel Hill.

The Forsyth Tech programs allow adults to complete their high school diploma or GED while still holding down full-time jobs and raising families.

"It didn't take me long, a couple of months and it was a nice journey because I had a lot of nice teachers and nice, respectable counselors that helped push me along through the process, and here I am now to this day," said Mahan. "I'm graduating and (I'm) pretty proud. I see now that I can actually accomplish things that I put my mind to."

Another graduate, Phillip Weaver, was unable to attend the graduation. Weaver was recognized during the ceremony for achieving the highest score statewide on the GED test.

Perhaps one of the most storied graduates was Ola Mae Venable, who completed the GED program in Stokes County earlier this year. At 79, Venable is one of the oldest graduates in the history of the institution.

"I'm happy about it and everybody in my family and all my friends, they are really

happy," she commented. "They thought it was great."

Venable dropped out of school 65 years ago, during her eighth grade year. She took the GED placement test in 2006, at the urging of her husband, Wayne, who was in search of a second career and considering obtaining his own GED.

After taking the test, Venable says she was apprehensive about returning to school. She waited until the last possible day before enrolling. Venable passed all sections of the test on her first attempt, except for math, which took her three tries.

"She was determined to keep on going," Wayne Venable said of his wife. "She wouldn't give up, that's for sure."

Attending the community college was an enriching experience for her, says Venable, a great-grandmother of 10.

"Everybody's treated me just like all of the other students and I didn't feel a bit odd in the classroom," she giggled.

As for the GED certificate, Venable says she plans to hang it on the wall in her kitchen.

"I hope it'll be an inspiration to some future generations or maybe somebody now that has dropped out of school and thinks that they are too old to go back," she said with a smile. "I've done proved that it's never too late to go back."

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- Internal Medicine
- Nephrology
- Neurology
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Standing: Drs. Stephen Tatter, Thomas Ellis, David Kelly Jr., Daniel Couture, Thomas Sweasey.

Sitting: Drs. Charles Branch Jr., John Wilson.

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