

OP/ED



ERNEST H. PITT

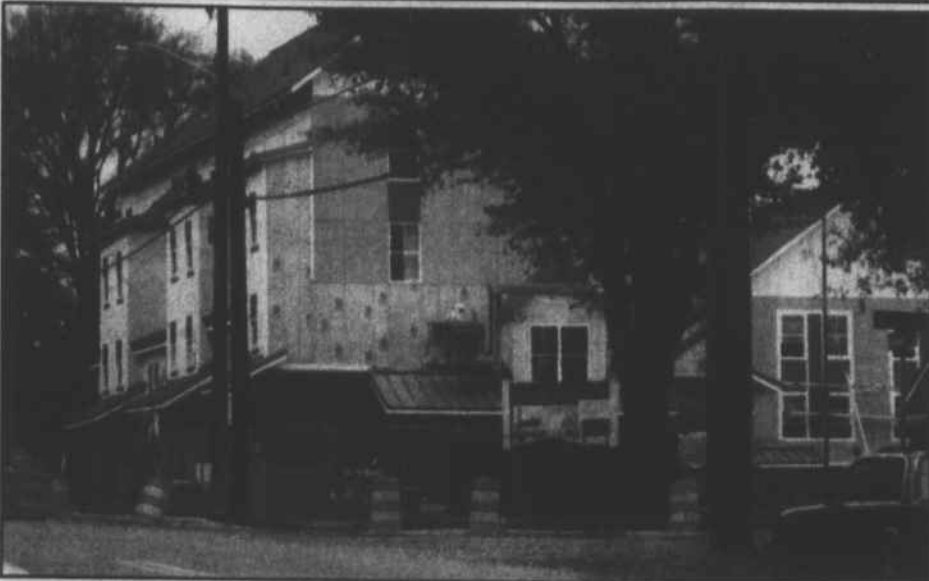
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Public housing residents will only benefit from work requirement

It is surprising that not everyone shares Housing Authority of Winston-Salem CEO Larry Woods' enthusiasm for nudging more public housing residents to stand on their own.

He is unabashed in expressing his desire to implement a work requirement for able-bodied folks living on the public's dime. Woods is not motivated by cruelty or a disdain for the poor — traits far too common in leaders and lawmakers. His concern is for those whose one ambition in life is to make it off the waiting list and into a public housing unit where they may stay and live listlessly for 20, 30 years or more.

It's incredibly sad that there are young people with such limited life ambitions; it's sadder that many of them grew up in public housing and were reared by parents who had limited goals as well. It is a cycle that has made far too many dependent on government services and created financial ruin for the agencies providing these services. HAWS, for example, has a waiting list that is more than 120 percent greater than the units it has.

Public housing was once envisioned as a temporary stopping place — something for those who had hit hard times to use until they got back on their feet. If that intended design had held, waiting lists would be moot, for those who pull themselves up would move into homes and apartments of their own, making room for the folks who currently need help.

The Oaks at Tenth, the soon-to-open Housing Authority property near Cleveland Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, looks nothing like public housing. It's swank, eye-catching and equal to units you'd find in more well-heeled communities in the county. HAWS made the units special for a reason. Those who live there will be required to hold down jobs — a criterion that does not have to be met by those in other public housing units. The Oaks is designed to show the kind of perks that working and self-sufficiency bring. Inquiries about the new units have been overwhelming, and those who do not meet the work requirement aren't automatically dismissed.

HAWS has a long and successful history of helping residents — those who want help, that is — achieve their goals. The agency offers programs to help residents earn degrees and trade certifications and management and save money. There are other offerings as well, all designed to help residents map a way out of public housing.

Woods has spoken passionately before members of Congress about the Housing Authority's self-sufficiency programs, advocating that such programs must be a big part of public housing in the years to come. Even with money for public housing and other programs that help the poor becoming more and more scarce, talk of placing any kind of barrier before those who need help is controversial, and it should be.

Too often, the poor are an afterthought and the first to be affected when budgets have to be trimmed. But what HAWS and other agencies are trying to do is a win-win. Residents are given a lifeline — the programs, classes, etc. It is up to them whether they sink or swim. We wish Woods and HAWS success in creating more units like The Oaks. Giving public housing residents such incentives to work and dream will produce great results and truly change the face of government-subsidized housing in this community.

Kanye and Palin



Bill

Turner

Guest
Columnist

At the Iowa Faith & Freedom Coalition's fall fundraiser in Des Moines last weekend, former Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin compared the federal debt to slavery.

"Our free stuff today is being paid for by taking money from our children and borrowing from China," said Palin; "When that money comes due — and this isn't racist, but it'll be like slavery when that note is due. We are going to beholden to the foreign master."

This comparison of the current times in America with a period in our nation's history that is matchless for its cold-blooded brutality is more than quite a stretch. It is offensive and a vile interpretation of a time, a long time, during which black people were brutalized, kidnapped, raped and murdered. But, such duplicitous rhetoric is not entirely unexpected from a woman who mentioned being able to see Russia from Alaska as the basis of her foreign policy experience while running for Vice President in 2008. Those on America's right wing fringe have loved Sarah Palin despite the fact that

she is not at all intellectually complicated. Her rather depraved homage to the current popular film "12 Years a Slave" got a standing ovation in Iowa. Palin patrons must be consuming some of the same seductive tea that inspired the long and bloody defense of slavery times, up to and including the hangover politics and economics that still staggers through America.

Around the same time Ms. Palin was scouring through the bones of slavery to the delight of Tea Party devotees, rapper Kanye West hoisted the Confederate Battle Flag high above his concert tour, emblazoned the Stars and Bars on his clothing line, and went to Twitter, posting in his puffed-up swagger, "The Confederate flag represented slavery in a way. That's my abstract take on what I know about it, right? So I wrote the song, 'New Slaves.' So I took the Confederate flag and made it my flag. It's my flag now. Now what you gonna do?" As if that weren't enough, he added later, "the Confederate flag is colorless also. It's super 'hood and super-white-boy-approved at the same time."

Rev. Al Sharpton of the National Action Network said of West's latest headline-grabbing marketing strategy, "Kanye West selling jack-ets with the Confederate flag on them is a disgrace

and an embarrassment. It's inexcusable for West to be promoting and merchandising this flag. We are determined to boycott and shut down any stores that attempt to sell this merchandise. The Confederate flag symbolizes dehumanization, injustice and pain. It is a stark reminder of an era in our history that was defined by the abhorrent practice of slavery."

In these separate though kindred acts of political and cultural theatre, both Palin and West detached aspects of American history from their original contexts and assigned different meanings and significance to them. Palin perversely diminished the centuries-long cruelty of slavery and West wrapped himself in the Confederate flag, which is inseparably linked to those who defended slavery.

Not to worry though, we should all know by now that the mockery in the messages communicated by Sarah Palin and Kanye West — two peas in the American pod — rests not on some elevated moral scale, but on the freedom of expression and of saying whatever it takes to get elected and to make money. Ask most politicians and rappers.

Dr. Bill Turner is an educator and author. Reach him at bill-turner@comcast.net.

Sunday Cruising



Local residents enjoy Sunday bus service during a preview of the new Winston-Salem Transit Authority offering on Oct. 27. WSTA offers service on seven routes on Sunday from 7 a.m. — 7 p.m.

Women's Fund gives grants

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem awarded \$153,897 in grants to seven local nonprofit organizations to address the economic security of women and girls in Forsyth County. The 2013 grant recipients were announced yesterday at The Fund's Eighth Annual Luncheon at the Benton Convention Center in downtown Winston-Salem, where over 650 members and friends of The Women's Fund gathered to celebrate the power of women's collective giving.



Perry

Authoring Action was awarded \$10,000 for The Artemis Authors program. The goal of Artemis Authors is to work with girls who are at risk of low academic attainment to help them discover their own unique voice, helping them become leaders in the community. The Children's Home Society of NC was awarded \$20,000 to expand its successful Wise Guys program to males in two additional middle schools in Forsyth County. As the other half of the teen pregnancy issue, Wise Guys teaches healthy relationships, proper communication, respect and decision making while stressing that males share the responsibility of preventing unintended pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

The Crosby Scholars was awarded \$28,000 to expand its highly successful ¡Excelencia! program to two additional

middle schools in Forsyth County. Young Latinas from seven area middle schools will participate in academic, college preparation, career exploration and personal development workshops to increase confidence and motivation to graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

The Experiment in Self-Reliance was awarded \$15,000 to recruit and train 90 women to participate in the Individual Development Account Program. ESR's IDA Program

serves working low-income individuals in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County community, helping eligible families become first time homeowners. Since 1999, ESR has helped nearly 500 low-income individuals become new homebuyers in Forsyth County. The Guiding Institute for Developmental Education was awarded \$30,000 to expand The STEM for Girls program that will engage 60 low-income Forsyth county girls in an interactive learning program to increase their knowledge, interest and competency in science, technology, engineering and math fields and offer them a career path to higher paying jobs and significant opportunities for economic security.

The Piedmont Triad Regional Council was awarded \$29,997 to create a curriculum that will address the needs of mothers successfully reuniting with their children after incarceration.

The research and planning of the Successful Transition as Mothers Post-Prison program will model and build on the core structure and design of Project Reentry, the Piedmont Triad Regional Council's nationally recognized best practice program for former offenders.

The YWCA of Winston-Salem was awarded \$20,900 to implement Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy and Sporting Chance, two of the many programs within the nationally recognized Girls, Inc. model. The Girls, Inc. model focuses on equipping girls with the skills necessary to handle tough situations during puberty and developing healthy habits that help them succeed in life.

This year, The Women's Fund once again asked organizations to propose programs that were responsive to the issues and recommendations outlined in their 2010 report Through a Gender Lens: The Economic Security of Women and Girls in Forsyth County. In the last seven years, The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem has awarded a total of 71 grants and more than \$1,000,000 dollars to local organizations working to improve the lives of women and girls in Forsyth County — hence this year's luncheon theme, "One Million In Change."

Yesterday's luncheon also included a keynote speech by Gail Perry, author of "Fired-Up Fundraising: Turning Board Passion into Action" and founder of Gail Perry and Associates.



It's time to see how Business 40 will impact YOU!

The Business 40 Environmental Assessment document is scheduled to be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration in 2014. Several important decisions are scheduled to be made in the next few months. That's why it's critical that you continue to participate in our community outreach program. The meetings are informal and open to the public. You are welcome to stop by at any time during the stated hours. NCDOT Staff and Project Team Members will be available to listen to your input, talk with you, answer your questions, and address any concerns.



CORRIDOR-WIDE PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Interchange Alternatives - Review the proposed on/off ramps
- Traffic Impacts - See where the traffic will be going during the closure of Business 40
- Bridge Design Renderings - See what the new bridges might look like

Milton Rhodes Arts Center
251 N. Spruce Street - FREE PARKING

The Enterprise Center
1922 S. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. - FREE PARKING

Contact Us

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NCDOT will provide complimentary child and senior care services for those who are unable to attend. For more information, please contact the Outreach Project Manager at 336-724-2130. Food and childcare will be provided.