

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

Get involved in process for new bus routes

The Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA) is holding information sessions for the public through June 8 to explain the changes planned for the bus system starting later this year or early next year. Everyone should be involved in the process of this major overhaul of WSTA bus routes. The major overhaul is the first one since the city of Winston-Salem bought the Safe Bus Co. in 1972.

The Safe Bus Co., owned by African-Americans, had developed an extensive route system based on the east side of Winston-Salem. It served that area during segregation because that's where most of the African-Americans lived. Most African-Americans in Winston-Salem still live on the east side of the city. Safe Bus extended its routes to other parts of the city during its existence when the bus system serving the west side of the city shut down.

WSTA has information about each proposed new routes and a schedule of the information sessions on its website at <http://www.wstransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/proposed-route-changes-booklet.pdf>. Also, see The Chronicle's story at <http://www.wschronicle.com/2015/04/wsta-changing-bus-routes/>.

Everyone should become involved in the process because buses ride through neighborhoods where people live, neighbors use the bus system and taxpayers' money pays for it.

WSTA has said that under its proposal, routes will change, all bus routes will receive new numerical names and the frequency of bus service will increase. That will mean big changes in people's lives.

Riders will have to function with the new route numbers and times.

In a survey of the preliminary bus routes on the website, some bus stops on schedules now have been eliminated. Some riders will have to walk farther to get to bus stops or find alternative means of transportation.

WSTA officials say the goal with the new routes will be to have shorter travel time and better passenger access, too. But there are fewer routes. Now there are 40 routes. Under the proposal, there will be 26 routes. What will this mean for bus riders across the city, especially for those who live east of U.S. Highway 52? These residents largely use the bus system.

Attend the WSTA sessions in your ward to find out what the new bus system will mean to you and your neighbors, or attend a session at the Transportation Center on Fifth Street downtown.

Transportation is very important to people's lives. It could make or break a job offer or even a promotion. It could mean limited groceries if people cannot get to the grocery store. It could mean issues with childcare if people cannot get their children to the people who will take care of them. It could mean not attending college or any other school if students cannot get there.

Without a public bus system that is reliable and convenient, people will have to find more expensive alternatives, such as cabs.

Of course, residents might have friends and neighbors who will give them rides or they can buy cars so they won't have to ride the bus.

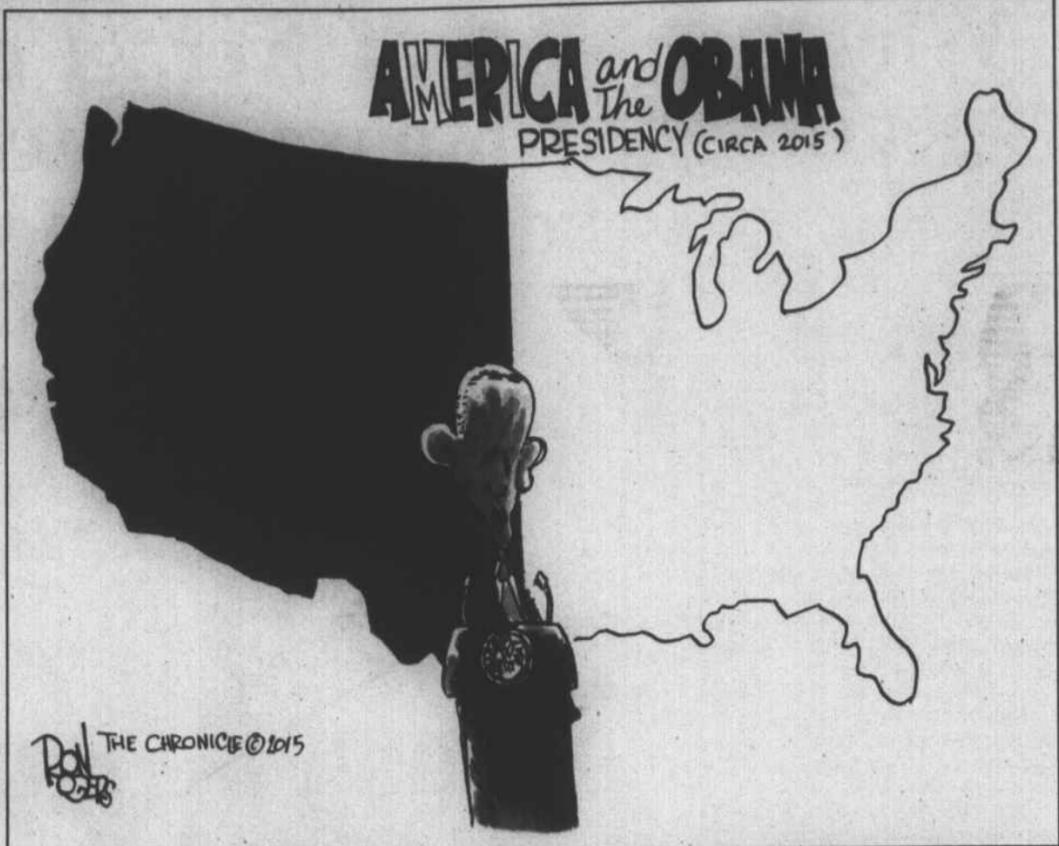
That would ease their transportation burden. However, those alternatives won't be an option for everyone.

The bus system in Winston-Salem is inexpensive, saving people money to spend in other areas of their lives. WSTA officials said the proposed system would operate at the current cost of the transit system, using the same amount of miles driven and worker hours. They say there won't be an increased cost to passengers or the city.

This seems to mean that bus fares will not increase. But many riders now will have to make changes in their lives if the buses don't come near their homes under the new schedules, which could mean they will have to spend extra money.

Council members are discussing the changes in the bus system at their constituent meetings, also. Council Member Derwin Montgomery will hold his East Ward Town Hall Meeting meeting tonight (Thursday, May 14) at New Jerusalem Baptist Church, 1212 North Dunleith Ave.

Attend the WSTA sessions and ask questions and let your voice be heard. The sessions are supposed to be places at which the WSTA wants to hear from you. Let them hear you, loud and clear.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some things to think about after program reflection

To the Editor:

The recognition of the three band directors - Rudolph V. Boone Sr. (Carver High School), Bernard T. Foy Sr. (Deceased - Paisley IB Magnet School) and Harry D. Wheeler (Deceased - Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy) - on Saturday, April 25, 2015 has incomprehensible significance or implications, way beyond human understanding or imagination.

The attendance at the Dedication Program was certainly no indication of its impact, success or significance.

It was noble (liberal) of the Big 4 Alumni Association of Forsyth County Inc. to accept such a proposal to petition the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board to recognize three of its former dedicated and long-serving band directors in one parliamentary action, by naming their respective school band rooms in their honor.



Boone

It was equally noble of the W-S/FCS School Board to vote unanimously to approve the recommendation and follow through on the process in a relatively short period of time.

It was noble of those who signed petitions in favor of this recognition and those who support the idea with financial contributions, program participation, written and spoken words of appreciation, encouragement, gratefulness and satisfaction.

Obviously, there are lessons to be learned from this noble endeavor. The big thing is ... this community will be better off because of this history-making decision and action, as

well as the state and nation.

Thanks to all who helped make this noble thing happen and let the world know about it!!

Rudolph V. Boone Sr. - Honoree

No Summer Camp opportunity for our 1st and 2nd graders attending Title I Schools?

To the Editor:

Opportunity. That is the commodity which every child in Forsyth County should have access. Unfortunately, the state of affairs in the local school system has singled out students at low performing schools and limited access to opportunity. Simply, too many of our schools are failing our children. And unfortunately most of the children in the schools that are failing are brown and black.

Nearly every elementary school that has a majority of black and brown students in Forsyth County received a grade of D or F in the latest assessment. That indeed is a shame. Added to that fact is the limited amount of access to tools that will help these students and ultimately these schools to improve.

I am thoroughly disgusted with the lack of resources being pumped into these failing schools. My daughter spent the first four years of her academic career at Forsyth Country Day, one of the top private schools in the state. Last year, because of our changing economic circumstances, we were forced to take her out of FCDS and enroll her in the local public school system for the first time. The choices were to enroll her at Ashley or Cook Elementary. We enrolled her at Cook. What a shock that was for her.

My daughter has always loved school. She has been one of the class leaders since she enrolled in the Jr. Pre-K program at Forsyth Country Day. As she moved up to Pre-K, Kindergarten and First Grade she continued to excel. However, last

year as a second-grader, she began to dislike school. Too many children off task, too many interruptions of instruction and too many fights.

Fortunately her zest for learning was restored last summer when she attended the Explorers Camp at Petree Elementary. That camp, which was funded by Title I, was refreshing and exciting. She compared her daily activity to that which she had experienced at Forsyth Country Day, where she was very active as the lead in plays both her kindergarten and first grade year. As a member of the Give Me the Beat choir at FCDS; she had performed musically at a number of venues, including a performance at BB&T [Ballpark] where the choir sang the National Anthem before a Winston-Salem Dash game.

Reinvigorated, she eagerly anticipated going to the Explorers Camp each morning. She jumped up every morning excited to have the chance to learn and share experiences with fellow campers. Campers studied the cultures of Mexico and China. They also had an opportunity to display their musical talents for fellow campers. In addition, they received tutoring to improve their English and math skills.

As a result, her experience this year at Cook Elementary has been very rewarding. Despite distractions, she has been a leader throughout the school year. Her grades have been exemplary. She has made A's in all of her academic classes, and I was very excited about her grading out on the 92nd percentile on a recent end-of-quarter test in math.

Yet, I am concerned that she might regress this summer because she won't be able to attend the Explorers Camp. Surely, the powers that be in the local school system realized how much it added to the lives of the children who attended the camp last summer. It is a shame that such a wonderful vehicle for affording black and brown children in our county an opportunity to learn, grow, and, more importantly, to not regress, will not be available for them this summer. After all, shouldn't they want to give every child in the school system an opportunity to broaden their horizons?

Theresa Davis

Rudolph V. Boone, Sr. Band Room

We Welcome Your Feedback

Submit letters and guest columns to letters@wschronicle.com before 5 p.m. Friday for the next week's publication date.

Letters intended for publication should be addressed "Letters to the Editor" and include your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep letters to 350 words or less.

If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our

website, www.wschronicle.com.

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