



Fly hears that as many as half of West Charlotte High School's band members have quit the once highly-touted group, whose swiveling hips wowed football fans across the county and region.

Just another of the problems plaguing the school under Supt. Eric Smith's "reconstitution." Word is there still a shortage of teachers in key positions and several of those hired hurriedly last summer after Ken Simmons was fired, have quit. One poor soul wasn't even certified to teach high school and was reassigned to an elementary school.

Parents are beginning to complain about grades given their children by teachers who have just arrived or who aren't prepared to teach them.

And the school's gospel choir is going on without adult supervision, Fly hears. The group has made several recent appearances without an adult director.

Scuttlebutt has it that Kermit Waddell had a falling out with the NAACP national office over the organization's Community Development Resource Center on Clanton Road. Waddell walked away with most of the staff, Fly hears. He moved down the street and set up a similar operation with the continued support of the local sponsors, NationsBank.

Mary Peeler, former executive director of the state NAACP conference under Kelly Alexander Jr., has reportedly joined Waddell in his new venture.

Some folks are still wondering what the NAACP CDCR does. Must be a lot. The director's starting salary is reportedly in excess of \$40,000. Good work, if you can get it.

A recent Post editorial noting that N.C.'s major cities had elected Republican and conservative mayors was a bit pre-scient. That means it foretold the future. One of those mayors, Winston-Salem's Jack Cavanaugh, celebrated his victory with the Council of Conservative Citizens last weekend. The group's N.C. president, who campaigned for Klansmen David Dukes and Bo Gritz, invited Cavanaugh to come on over.

Cavanaugh apparently felt right at home, even joining in when the group saluted the Confederate flag. Confederacy and KKK paraphernalia was on sale at the meeting, including framed portraits of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a rebel officer and reputedly a founder of the KKK.

Klanwatch describes the Council of Conservative Citizens as a "patriot group," which advocates or adheres to anti-government doctrines, sometimes with "racist ties or leanings."

Mary Clarke is moving to take over the reins at the local NAACP from Rev. Conrad Pridgen, who has been reassigned by the AME Church to Greensboro.

Clarke, acting president until a permanent replacement is selected, is a former branch president who as first vice president under Pridgen is in line to move up to the top job. Clarke's also a Kelly Alexander supporter and considered unlikely to accept the national NAACP office's 10-year suspension of Alexander's membership.

That suspension was imposed for mishandling of funds while Alexander was president of the N.C. NAACP conference.

GOP looks for more black voters

Continued from page 1A

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 American voters - 8,073 - outnumber Republicans. Nationally, Republican presidential candidates fare poorly among black voters, who provided the margin of victory in President Clinton's 1992 win over George Bush.

"Losing 90 percent of the black vote makes it hard for us to recapture the White House," said Watts, who is considered by some political observers to be a possible vice presidential candidate in 2000 or 2004. "It also makes it harder for us to get conservative legislation through Congress without it being branded as 'anti-minority' or 'racist.'"

That's why Republicans struggle to win over racial minorities, Arrington says. Issues ranging from raising the retirement age for Social Security to the debate over a national flat tax has a direct bearing on African Americans. The GOP's national stance of affirmative action and welfare also leaves many people of color cold, he said.

NAACP accepts first of resignations

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE - The NAACP's Executive Committee voted to accept the resignation of a national board member and file a complaint against another, the civil rights organization announced Saturday.

The committee accepted the resignation of the Rev. Henry Lyons and voted Friday to file an administrative complaint against Hazel Dukes. The committee is still reviewing matters involving two other board

"That has to be seen as a direct affront to people who are trying to improve themselves and may need a little boost," Arrington said. "Most polls indicate middle-class blacks have a lot in common with middle-class whites, but college-educated blacks are still more likely to vote Democratic."

Not Woods, who said the Republican position on welfare and affirmative action are more in line with a self-help philosophy. More African Americans, she says, should hold all politicians accountable.

"African Americans have to stand up and say where are you on this issue," she said. "We have perceived that you're against welfare or affirmative action, you're against me. That's not true. We should hear them with an open mind."

Winning black support will likely come slowly, Watts said. While the GOP isn't pushing for a radical reversal of African American votes, initiatives like BAMPAC are expected to stem the tide while building support in local elections.

"I won't claim that we conservatives will get a majority of the black vote," he said. "But even if we take 5 percent or 10 percent away from the liberals and add it

to the conservative column, it could tip the balance for us in close races."

"What they're looking for is the black middle class," says Duke University political science professor John Brehm. "They figure the black middle class has some things in common with the white middle class economically, but what it's going to take is a (national) candidate with a different appeal."

Retired Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell could've been a powerful national draw to blacks, but his decision to skip the '96 presidential race hampers

the party's chances. Powell supports affirmative action and abortion rights, something GOP leaders interpret as too liberal.

"Colin Powell would've beaten Bill Clinton," says Arrington. "He would've beaten Clinton and would've driven a wedge between Democrats and blacks. It was an opportunity they missed."

Republicans face a difficult job in convincing blacks to switch



Powell

because of the party's reputation, Brehm says. Dominated by white southern men, the GOP can't be seen as moving too far to the left for fear of chasing off its largest bloc of support.

"Right now, they can't alienate their core," he said. "The trick is to tell a broad message that is not anathema to the core group."

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members, James Ghee and Bobby Bivens, the civil rights group said.

Lyons, president of the National Baptist Convention USA Inc, has been under investigation for allegedly mishandling church funds as well as for alleged marital infidelity. Lyons has denied the allegations.

Last week, NAACP Chairwoman Myrlie Evers-Williams said she was seeking the resignation of the four because of admitted financial

misdealings or allegations of misdealings.

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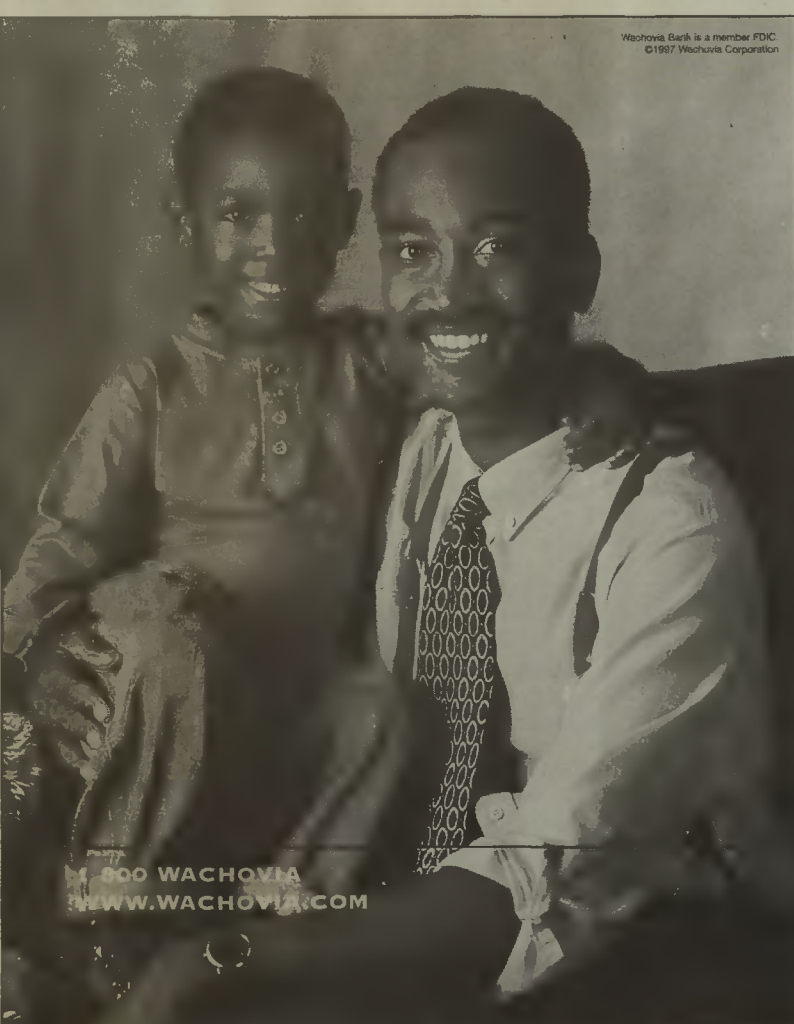
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