

The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

1531 Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203

Gerald O. Johnson CEO/PUBLISHER

Robert L. Johnson CO-PUBLISHER/GENERAL MANAGER

Herbert L. White EDITOR IN CHIEF

EDITORIALS

For Charlotte City Council

Mayor - This year's mayoral race is a rematch of the 2003 race between Craig Madans and incumbent Patrick McCrory. In that race Madans got a surprising 40 percent of the votes while spending only one tenth of the money. This time around Madans continues to focus on McCrory's perceived missteps while providing little in terms of his own vision for Charlotte. We are strong believers that you should vote your hopes and not your fears. Consequently, McCrory gets our nod.



Foxx



Lassiter



Mumford



Burgess

There are some very good candidates on both sides of the aisle in this year's at large race. The Republicans have John Lassiter and Pat Mumford joined by John Tabor, currently the District 6 representative, and former city council representative Lynn Wheeler. Strategically the strong Republican field has the potential of giving the Republicans a majority council position if McCrory as expected wins the mayor's seat. Andy Dulin will replace John Tabor in District 6. Hence, a Republican sweep in the at large race would mean a Republican 7 - 5 majority council.

The Democrats are countering with a potent field of their own. Joining incumbent Susan Burgess are newcomers Anthony Foxx, Darrell Bonapart and former council member David Erdman. Mr. Erdman was chosen to complete the remaining term of Al Rousso in 1999, but has never won election.

Out of this very strong field of qualified candidates we like the following:

John Lassiter and Pat Mumford have demonstrated the ability to efficiently articulate their positions on issues, but more importantly have shown a sensitivity and openness to hear dissenting opinions.

We also like Anthony Foxx. Mr. Foxx has no experience working as an elected official, but has a wealth of experience serving in political capacities at the federal, state and local levels. We feel his perspective on governing would be a good addition to the board.

We were torn between Burgess and Erdman, both of whom would be good on council from different perspectives. We opted with Burgess because of her heavy involvement with neighborhood issues and concerns.

Without a doubt, Rosa Parks was a courageous lady. But to fully understand why she did what she did, you would have had to walk in her footsteps and sit where she sat - in the back of the bus. I know because I, too, am an Alabama native and of all of my childhood memories of segregation, one of the most painful involved bypassing empty seats up front and either sitting or standing behind a white line in the rear of the bus.

The scars are deep; I couldn't have been more than 4 when I recognized, even at that innocent age, something was amiss. I couldn't articulate exactly what it was, but I knew it wasn't right. African-Americans, no matter how educated or well-dressed had to, by custom and by law, scramble to the back of the bus while the most ignorant and useless White person could sit up front.

I had a part-time job in high school in the early 1960s washing dishes at the University of Alabama. One afternoon en route to work, Clarence "Boot" Hurst, a schoolmate who also worked in the dishroom, said, "Let's sit in the front." I agreed and that's exactly what we did. The driver said, "You boys know you're not supposed to sit up here." We didn't say a word and the driver kept going. When we got ready to get off at our stop, a White man drew a knife and told us we couldn't exit through the front door. We hesitated and then left through the back door, content that we had proven our point. We were scared during the whole ride, but on that particular day, we were going to take our chances. That's why I can relate to Rosa Parks' decision on that cold December day in 1955 not to give up her seat to a White man. I am not suggesting for a moment that our one-day protest was on par with the contributions of Rosa Parks. But I am stating

that, as they like to say in sports, on any given day, African-Americans found ways to challenge the system. That challenge was formalized several years later when Rev. T.Y. Rogers, president of the local Southern Christian Leadership Conference chapter, organized a boycott of the city bus system. SCLC organized car pools that mirrored the city's bus routes and drivers picked up passengers along the way and took them to their destination - for free. By not charging, no one could accuse us of operating a taxis service without a license. My family didn't own a car at the time, but I borrowed my Uncle Percy's car so that I could be part of the action. At the end of the day, Miss Dot and other women had cooked us a pot of food at the First African Baptist Church, our rallying point. We would hold mass meetings there and get reenergized for our boycott campaign.

Unable to withstand the pressure, officials were forced out of business. When service was eventually resumed by another company, seating was on a desegregated basis. Segregated seating on city buses was just one aspect of America's version of apartheid.

Another vivid memory of that era also revolved around transportation. Before, dur-

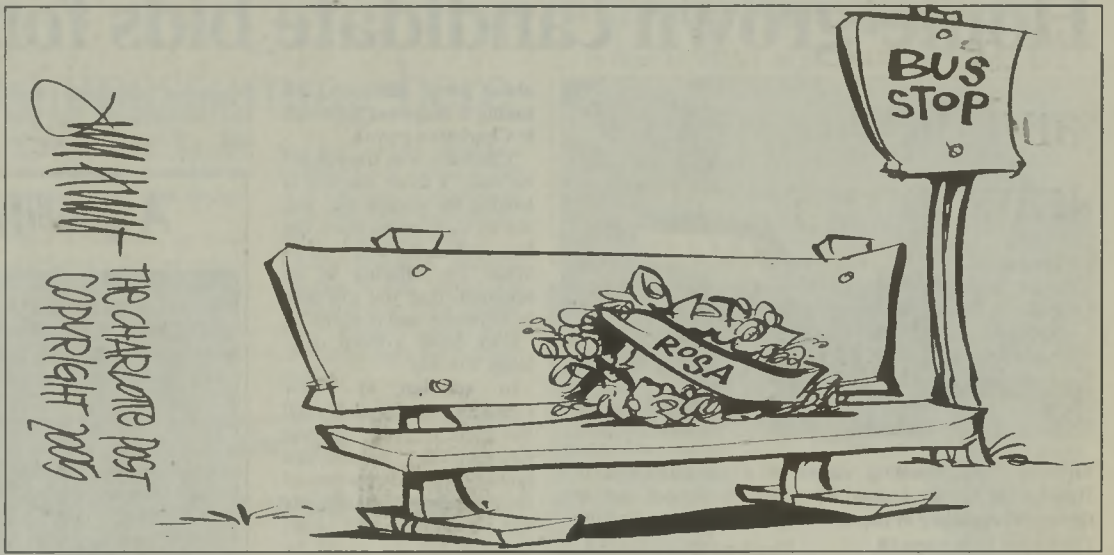
ing and after the bus boycott, my mother did domestic work across town. She was considered good enough to cook for a prominent White family and care for their kids. Yet, when it was time to bring my mother home, she had to ride in the back seat.

The sight of my mother riding in the back seat caused me to vow at a very early age that neither I nor my three younger sisters would be subjected to that kind of humiliation. We were going to go to college - I didn't know how at the time - and education would be our ticket out. We were determined to break the chains - and we did. Now, if you see one of us sitting in the back seat, it's because we're being chauffeured.

Rosa Parks is being described in various news accounts as a seamstress. As Jesse Jackson observed in Montgomery, she didn't get arrested for sewing. Rosa Parks was arrested for taking a stand by sitting down.

And for those who had to sit in the back of those buses, she gave us a better view of the world.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. He appears on National Public Radio as part of "News and Notes with Ed Gordon."



MATTERS OF OPINION

A view from the back of the bus

Lost in all of the cross-country funerals and memorial services for Rosa Parks - in Montgomery, Ala., the site of the famous 1955 bus boycott and launch pad for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s career as a civil rights leader; in Washington, D.C. where Rosa Parks became their first woman to



GEORGE E. CURRY

lie in state beneath the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol and, finally, in Detroit, her adopted hometown - was the depth of indignity caused by being forced to sit in the back of the bus.

Without a doubt, Rosa Parks was a courageous lady. But to fully understand why she did what she did, you would have had to walk in her footsteps and sit where she sat - in the back of the bus. I know because I, too, am an Alabama native and of all of my childhood memories of segregation, one of the most painful involved bypassing empty seats up front and either sitting or standing behind a white line in the rear of the bus.

The scars are deep; I couldn't have been more than 4 when I recognized, even at that innocent age, something

was amiss. I couldn't articulate exactly what it was, but I knew it wasn't right. African-Americans, no matter how educated or well-dressed had to, by custom and by law, scramble to the back of the bus while the most ignorant and useless White person could sit up front.

I had a part-time job in high school in the early 1960s washing dishes at the University of Alabama. One afternoon en route to work, Clarence "Boot" Hurst, a schoolmate who also worked in the dishroom, said, "Let's sit in the front." I agreed and that's exactly what we did. The driver said, "You boys know you're not supposed to sit up here." We didn't say a word and the driver kept going. When we got ready to get off at our stop, a White man drew a knife and told us we couldn't exit through the front door. We hesitated and then left through the back door, content that we had proven our point. We were scared during the whole ride, but on that particular day, we were going to take our chances. That's why I can relate to Rosa Parks' decision on that cold December day in 1955 not to give up her seat to a White man. I am not suggesting for a moment that our one-day protest was on par with the contributions of Rosa Parks. But I am stating

that, as they like to say in sports, on any given day, African-Americans found ways to challenge the system.

That challenge was formalized several years later when Rev. T.Y. Rogers, president of the local Southern Christian Leadership Conference chapter, organized a boycott of the city bus system. SCLC organized car pools that mirrored the city's bus routes and drivers picked up passengers along the way and took them to their destination - for free. By not charging, no one could accuse us of operating a taxis service without a license. My family didn't own a car at the time, but I borrowed my Uncle Percy's car so that I could be part of the action. At the end of the day, Miss Dot and other women had cooked us a pot of food at the First African Baptist Church, our rallying point. We would hold mass meetings there and get reenergized for our boycott campaign.

Unable to withstand the pressure, officials were forced out of business. When service was eventually resumed by another company, seating was on a desegregated basis.

Segregated seating on city buses was just one aspect of America's version of apartheid.

Another vivid memory of that era also revolved around transportation. Before, dur-

ing and after the bus boycott, my mother did domestic work across town. She was considered good enough to cook for a prominent White family and care for their kids. Yet, when it was time to bring my mother home, she had to ride in the back seat.

The sight of my mother riding in the back seat caused me to vow at a very early age that neither I nor my three younger sisters would be subjected to that kind of humiliation. We were going to go to college - I didn't know how at the time - and education would be our ticket out. We were determined to break the chains - and we did. Now, if you see one of us sitting in the back seat, it's because we're being chauffeured.

Rosa Parks is being described in various news accounts as a seamstress. As Jesse Jackson observed in Montgomery, she didn't get arrested for sewing. Rosa Parks was arrested for taking a stand by sitting down.

And for those who had to sit in the back of those buses, she gave us a better view of the world.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. He appears on National Public Radio as part of "News and Notes with Ed Gordon."

CPCC bonds provide critical upgrades

By Tony Zeiss
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Since our college's birth in 1963, we have been making promises and keeping our promises to this community. From our humble beginning more than 40 years ago, a host of dedicated college and community leaders built Central Piedmont Community College into an institution that is recognized nationally in workforce development.



Zeiss

Today, CPCC serves more than 70,000 people on six campuses. As president of Central Piedmont Community College, I am proud to say that you can look most anywhere in Mecklenburg County and see evidence of our work.

In the past five years, our enrollment has increased 25 percent, while our square footage has only increased 23.7 percent during that same time period. Nearly 1,000 CPCC students were unable to get the classes they needed this fall because of space limitations. By the year 2015, CPCC is expected to serve nearly 100,000 people. That's why the 2005 bond referendum is extremely critical to the college and our community.

On November 8, this community will have an opportunity to approve a \$46.5 million bond referendum for the college. CPCC has not had a local bond referendum on the

ballot since 1999. Our college has been a good steward of the community's money, with all of our local bond dollars either spent or currently under contract. With funds from previous bonds, CPCC added expansions or completed renovations at all six campuses, opened a new conference center and a new Academic and Performing Arts Center.

In addition, the college has also been noted for its efficient and effective operations. CPCC operates on a lower cost per square foot than both the national educational market and the state community college average.

The \$46.5 million bond request in November will address some of the most critical needs including renovations and expansions. The following outlines what the 2005 bonds will mean for CPCC and the community.

- Expansion of the popular construction trades facilities at Harper Campus
- Expansion of the dental assisting facilities at West Campus
- New culinary arts facility on Central Campus
- Rehabilitation to parking decks on Central Campus
- Renovations to the Taylor Building and Pease Auditorium on Central Campus
- Renovation of an existing building on Central Campus for additional visual arts programs
- Rehabilitations to existing CPCC buildings

These bond dollars will finance the next phase of the

college's strategic plan to expand access to CPCC education and training.

Central Piedmont Community College is a driving force in economic development in this area and a tremendous asset to this community. Seventy-five percent of all jobs require training done by community colleges and no college does this better than Central Piedmont. In 2002, the National Alliance of Business named CPCC the "Community College of the Year" for its response to the workforce

and technology needs of local employers and job seekers through innovative educational and training strategies.

I want to thank you for your past support of the college. Your commitment and involvement are invaluable. I also hope you will join us in the effort to educate this community on the value of CPCC, the importance of this bond referendum, and the need to vote on November 8.

TONY ZEISS is president of Central Piedmont Community College.

LETTERS

Wal-Mart more bane than boon for people of color

("Retail lifeline for Wilkinson area," Oct. 27 Post) is a seriously narrow-minded assessment of Wal-Mart and its impact on people of color locally and globally.

We both know Wal-Mart does a lot more harm than good, all in the name of profit. You should be more responsible in your approach to far-reaching issues like this. People need to know that Wal-Mart underpays its workers and that many of them cannot even afford their own benefits program. Even if the local community had not welcomed Wal-Mart, they hardly have the legal resources to fight the corporate giant.

George Thompson
Charlotte

Connect with The Post

Send letters to The Charlotte Post, P.O. Box 30144 Charlotte, NC 28230 or e-mail editorial@thecharlottepost.com.

We edit for grammar, clarity and space. Include your name and daytime phone number. Letters and photos will not be returned by mail unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Clothes make new NBA man

The National Basketball Association hasn't been able to fix the decline in fundamental skills among its players, but at least they're better dressed.

The 2005-06 season marks the start of a league-wide dress code in which players participating in team functions must wear shirts with collars and lose the gaudy pendants and baseball caps in arenas.

The league, concerned about its image as a thugged out gathering of tall brats, can't be blamed for wanting to clean up, although some athletes, like Philadelphia 76ers star Allen Iverson, call it an assault on free speech and the hip hop culture. We don't see it that way. Charles Barkley, who was as much an anti-hero in his day as Mr. Iverson is now, is supporting the new rule, primarily because of the message it conveys to young people. That's a very responsible stance by Mr. Barkley, who once was very adamant about not being a role model, when in reality he was and still is to an extent.

Let's face it. In many families, athletes and entertainers are the role models of not only children, but adults. These heroes set the tone in behavior, thinking and fashion, and many of us follow. If the NBA must act as the adult in enacting a dress code for the fashion-challenged, it's a very good thing.

Correction

An editorial in last week's Post was published with an incorrect photo of Anthony Fox, co-chair of the Vote Yes For Bonds Committee. The correct photo is to the right.



Fox