

Winston-Salem Chronicle

"Serving the Winston-Salem Community Since 1974"

Vol. VIII No. 11 U.S.P.S. No. 067910 WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. Thursday, November 12, 1981 *25 cents 24 Pages This Week

Brixton Life Goes On Amid Tension

Calvin Lawrence Jr
Special to the Chronicle

LONDON -- At first glance, it's hard to believe Brixton is overrun by rampaging youth earlier in the year. The scene in this southeast London community is now serene although not picturesque. One can accidentally stumble on to the notorious "Front Line," at the heart of the one-mile-long Railton Road, without even realizing

that Railton Road, along with the Brixton Market area, is much more conspicuous during those smoke-filled days in April and again in July. Today's tranquility stands in contrast to bloodied police and smashed storefronts at the gathering-place for many Brixton's West Indian immigrants. The decaying living conditions these black Britons appear to be at the root of anger and frustration that become visible through physical outbursts. And upon closer observation, parts of Brixton particularly the Front Line -- do take on a seedier character. The rise, then, of rebellious youth is not so surprising.

Although Brixton ranks as one of the most run-down communities in this fashionable tourist town, by American standards it is quite fit to live in. Expect for the obvious predominance of blacks gathered at the rock-long Front Line, this economically depressed area cannot be easily equated with a slum in Baltimore, Philadelphia or New York City.

That-sized rats aren't wobbling from one of Brixton's crumbling, abandoned houses to the next. The people here have not resorted to eating Alpo -- yet. Ant there're gun battles behind the eight-foot metal barriers that partially hide garbage-filled land where houses once stood.

However, when compared with other London communities, this racially-mixed district (24 percent West Indian) is in dire need of economic assistance. The only attractive structure on Railton Road is a brightly painted cigarette advertisement. "Stay longer in Marlboro country," the red and white billboard reads. Because many unemployed Brixtonians are too busy struggling to survive, they probably never notice that billboard.

Their struggle sometimes takes unconventional forms. While the government's comprehensive welfare system strictly prevents starvation, many of the community's West Indian immigrant population busily and unscrupulously supplementing that government ration.

In any given day, seven days a week, a casual stroll through the Front Line will bring as many as three selling offers from marijuanapeddlers. They are of various ages, many living in the immediate vicinity, and they calmly pull "ganja" from beneath overcoats or out of pants pockets to allow the potential buyer a peek at the goods for sale. Some choose to be more discreet and deal only a wrinkled lunch bag. The smell of burning marijuana pierces the nostrils. It is the only drug circulating at the Front Line.

At least another three sellers may attempt to usher potential buyers into a nearby house. It is one of the most inviting on the block. Anyone interested, stranger or
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Routine Tension

UPI Photo

Two girls walk calmly past police, standing ready with their protective shields in the Brixton Road district of London, the scene of racial tension violence earlier this year. Writer Calvin Lawrence examines the situation in Brixton today in the story on the left.

By Yvonne Anderson
and
Beverly McCarthy

With the votes counted and the last of the campaign memorabilia laid to

rest, the city has concluded its 1981 elections. Their results could have significant effects on city politics when the new Board of Aldermen comprised of five women, one Republican

and four blacks, takes office on Dec. 7. Many black view the prospect of four black aldermen -- Larry Little; North Ward; Vivian Burke, Northeast Ward; Virginia

Newell, East Ward, and Larry Womble, Southeast Ward -- as a sign of hope for a balance of power that will in some way benefit their communities. "If what they said is true,

then it will make a significant difference in Winston-Salem," said Woodrow Johnson. "I've got confidence in at least one brother down there and that's Larry (Little), but if

they (all) get together and are serious I think that some good will come out of it for black people. But Luqman Abdul-Jami said he has no confidence in
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Four Black Aldermen Ponder Challenges

Cite Media Coverage As Already A Problem

by Yvonne Anderson
Staff Writer

Four black aldermen will be among those sworn in on Dec. 7 to begin charting a course for the city in 1982.

Three of the four are incumbents, with experience in city government. The fourth is newly elected, but not new to the political scene, as this was his second bid for the seat.

Together they form a potentially powerful voting vehicle for the black community and they all say they recognize the responsibilities facing them and expectations of the community.

Virginia K. Newell, alderman of the East Ward for her second term, believes that the year will be a productive one for the entire city, but said that she will work hard to continue the advances made in her ward.

"I live in the poorest ward in Winston-Salem and I need things for my ward," said Newell. "That's what I'm going to concentrate on. I've got to look at home first and then, when I see that I can serve the community as a whole, I will."

Responding to an editorial appearing in the Nov. 4 Winston-Salem Sentinel in which Larry Little and Vivian Burke are described as "disruptive" and "obstreperous", Newell said, "I wouldn't assess that. I don't think anyone down there (Board of Aldermen) is a trouble-maker. Each one of us has a way of going about business. There has been a very negative aspect on the board and that didn't come from the black aldermen alone."

Newell said that her priorities lie with the building of an East Winston Shopping Center and continuing efforts in housing and employment.

"I want to begin a task force of five people to research economic development minority contractors, maintenance and new construction, and crime prevention and cure," said Newell.

Larry Little, representing the North

Ward, is looking forward to the coming year as a chance to demonstrate unity to the youth of the black community.

"The key to this term is for us to work together and unify without letting anything split us up," said Little emphatically. "This is a golden opportunity to demonstrate to the youth who have no interest or faith in politics, the importance of voting and what voting can accomplish. We had the chance before and didn't utilize the opportunity. We can't let that happen again."

To that end, Little said he will work hard despite what he considers as an effort to divide the black aldermen by the Sentinel editorial.

"There is a paranoia setting in and the same old tactics of divide and conquer are being used against black folk," he said. "But I'm not going to let it have an effect on me, I'm a student of politics, so I expect it."

Vivian Burke, alderman of the Northeast Ward, refuses to acknowledge the editorial. "I really don't know who they're talking about because they can't be talking about me," said Burke. "I've always conducted myself in a ladylike and mannerly way."

Burke said that she didn't foresee any problems of cohesiveness among the board members. "I see the media trying to make problems," she said.

Her priorities lie with unemployment, housing, community development and crime, but Burke also said that she will make a strenuous effort to maintain close ties with the "grassroots".

"I basically want to make sure our city moves ahead. I've always worked for peace and harmony," she said.

Larry Womble, the newly elected board member, said he remains un-affected by the editorial and the racial commitments
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Community Optimism On Aldermen Guarded

By Yvonne Anderson
and
Beverly McCarthy

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and four blacks, takes office on Dec. 7. Many black view the prospect of four black aldermen -- Larry Little; North Ward; Vivian Burke, Northeast Ward; Virginia

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Black Firms: Growth, Growing Pains

By Yvonne Anderson
Staff Writer

First in a two-part series

"None of us are really going to get rich out here, but if we can open the doors and keep them open for the generations coming behind us, then we will have done something."

The words of James Carter, owner of Cartwood Connection Co., espouse the ideals of many black entrepreneurs in Winston-Salem. But turning those ideals

into a tangible reality is routinely a long, uphill climb. North Carolina has a history, however small, of pro-

I feel I'm successful because I'm not greedy, I set my prices low and work with the customers.

pagating minority-owned businesses. From the early 1900s, which marked the beginning of two black institutions, Mechanics and Farmers Bank and Winston Mutual Life Insurance Company, to the 1980s, black businesses

have had a steady, if uncertain, struggle for existence. In observance of Minority Business Week, the Chronicle takes a look at the status of black-owned businesses, both large and small. One of the most visible black firms in North Carolina and Winston is Mechanics and Farmers Bank.

Mel White, president of Mechanics and Farmers Bank, which had its grand opening in the city last September, said that the responsibilities of a black-owned bank are twofold.

"The primary role is to help stimulate total economic
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Mel White of Mechanics and Farmers Bank

Bethlehem's Funds Reduced

By Yvonne Anderson
Staff Writer

Administrators at the Bethlehem Community Center, Inc., are scrambling to find alternate funding for its Food Service Program. The agency anticipates a loss of \$22,000 from its 1982 budget because of a reduction in Title XX funds coming from Washington. To complicate matters, the cuts in Title XX will also have far-reaching effects on the other programs run by the agency.

"We just keep thinking of things that are possibly could try," said Administrative Director Brenda Lomax. "We are also reaching out to the community, the churches and civic organizations for assistance." The center also is considering soliciting

aid from the corporate sector, Lomax said. Lomax added that although Bethlehem knows the cuts are coming, it cannot estimate the effect the cuts will have until July of 1982, when the new fiscal year begins for the federal government.

"We know the funds will be cut 20 percent but we don't know how it's going to affect us countwise," said Nancy Wilkes, executive director of the centers.

Bethlehem Community Center, Inc., operates three day care centers in the area: Kimberly Park, Happy Hill and Bethlehem. In addition, the agency provides senior citizen, girl scouting and 4-H programs, as well as adult continuing education, a reading is fundamental (RIF)
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Beginning Nov. 15, 1981, the Chronicle will be delivered to you twice weekly with our regular Thursday and new Sunday editions.

Your current expiration date has been adjusted to reflect 2 issues per week. This way your subscription will expire sooner.

At that time you will receive a renewal notice with our new rate changes. If you have any questions, our Circulation Dept. will be happy to answer them.

Liberty-Patterson

Reynolds Nixes Proposal

By Beverly McCarthy
Staff Writer

R. J. Reynolds Inc. last week declined requests by residents in the Liberty-Patterson neighborhood for priority on new Reynolds' jobs and relocation counseling.

Residents and Alderman Larry Little discussed the situation at a Thursday night meeting of the Liberty-Patterson Neighborhood Association at Lloyd Presbyterian Church.

Earlier last week, the executive board of the group sent a letter to J. Paul Sticht, chief executive officer of Reynolds requesting in-depth counseling services for residents relocated due to the firm's expansion, and top priority on jobs that may become available in the future at Reynolds.

In a written, but anonymous statement of reply delivered by Virgil McBride, public relations officer with Reynolds, residents were

told that Reynolds officials would leave the relocation counseling and negotiations to governmental agencies which have already been set up for such matters.

"We would not object should city officials determine that a certain portion of funds allocated by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company be used for special approaches in counseling for persons in the project area," the letter added. The letter also said that

the employment procedures at the firm would remain as they are and that the residents would receive no special consideration in employment with the company.

"Future employment opportunities will continue to follow the long-standing position of the Company," the letter read, "which is to offer employment opportunities to all applicants on a non-preferential basis."

In addition to discussion of
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