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# Winston-Salem Chronicle

The Twin City's Award-Winning Weekly

Vol. XIII, No. 20 U.S.P.S. No. 067910 Winston-Salem, N.C. Thursday, January 8, 1987 50 cents 32 Pages This Week

## NAACP plans an active year

By CHERYL WILLIAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The local NAACP had a progressive year in 1986, but the organization's president says there's still much work to be done in 1987.

Reviewing the past year, NAACP President Walter Marshall said the local branch played an active role in education by encouraging black parents to become more involved in their children's learning experiences. The organization, he said, also devoted time to ensuring that black children are able to continue to progress academically.

"What we are trying to do is establish awareness and let the parents know they should be involved in the education of their children," said Marshall, who has just completed his first year as head of the local branch of the NAACP.

"They need also to know that black kids are behind -- they're running a race and they're behind. The first official thing I did when I took over was to communicate with the superintendent to deal with the widening gap between black and white students on the CAT (California Achievement Test)," he said.

Due in part to encouragement from the local NAACP, Zane E. Eargle, city/county school superintendent, last fall appointed a task force to study the problem of underachieving



**Going Strong**

Walter Marshall, president of the local NAACP chapter, plans to make the branch even more progressive as he begins his second year at the organization's helm (photo by James Parker).

students in the school system.

The concern about black students' performance in the system led the NAACP Education Committee to form tutorial learning centers, which began operation in September.

Before the learning centers were started, the committee sponsored an education conference that featured Dr. Beverly Cole, the organization's national education director.

Marshall, a critic of the local school system, said that he is pleased with the work of the learning centers, but he feels they are doing work that

the school system should be doing.

"It shows that the system is not working to our advantage," he said. "We hope in time the school system will take this up."

Concerned by the decreasing number of black educators, Marshall said the local NAACP will continue to monitor the number of black teachers in the school system.

"We're trying to do what we can to get adequate black teachers to serve as role models," he said. "We have a dual problem of them employing blacks and finding educators who are sensitive to

the needs of black students."

Politically, the NAACP hopes to pave the way for more black representation on the board of commissioners. The local branch filed a lawsuit in October in U.S. District Court, claiming that the county's at-large elections discriminate against blacks.

"The at-large system dilutes the black vote and places the black community at the hands of the white community for any political gains," Marshall said. "There's no way anyone can say that a district system is better than an at-large system."

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**"It's humane and it's a quick method to seize the situation and take control of it."**  
-- Sheriff E. Preston Oldham

## City nixes stun gun; others debate merits

By CHERYL WILLIAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Stun guns provide a safe, humane means of subduing rowdy and potentially dangerous people, say law enforcement officials.

But others question whether shooting thousands of volts of electricity into a person's body isn't really high-tech torture.

Stun guns came under attack nationally last year in New York City when five police officers were indicted on charges of torturing black suspects with such a weapon.

In Winston-Salem, the local NAACP has criticized the use of the stun guns by the Forsyth County Sheriff's Department.

On Aug. 30, Thomas Lee Douthit died in the county jail of a cocaine overdose, say local and state medical examiners. But the NAACP questions the circumstances surrounding Douthit's death, which was preceded by a struggle with guards armed with stun guns.

NAACP President Walter Marshall said the case is being investigated and that he prefers not to talk about it. But the NAACP does wonder if the Sheriff's Department may have abused the stun gun in this case, he said.

The NAACP also has taken a stand against the general use of the guns, Marshall said. "My

feelings are very negative about them," he said. "My feelings are that they should be outlawed or used with a lot of care."

Marshall said further use of stun guns should be halted until more tests are conducted to deter-



E. Preston Oldham

mine their safety. Both the local and national levels of the NAACP have always opposed excessive force by law enforcement officers, he said.

But the Sheriff's Department maintains that the guns have not been abused.

Sheriff E. Preston Oldham said that stun guns have been used in his department for the last

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## West parents get PTA

By CHERYL WILLIAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

A Parents/Teachers Association is being formed at West Forsyth High School, three months after several black parents complained about the need for such an organization at the school.

Velma Hopkins, a spokesman for a group of black parents and students who came before the city-county school board in October, and John E. Moore, a parent, expressed concern then that the school didn't have a PTA. The parents and students also charged that West Forsyth discriminated against its black students.

"There seemed to be a desire to form a PTA, and our whole objective is to have the type of organization that fits the community," said West Forsyth Assistant Principal Norma Harbin.

A steering committee of 20 parents and teachers, eight of them black, is working to form the PTA, said Miss Harbin.

"In getting the steering committee, we tried to have a good representation of males and females, blacks and whites," she said. "The parents have been a great group to work with."

Parents from all four grade levels at the school are

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**QUOTABLE: "... Lynching is not a criminal act against an individual, but a political act against a people. It is the remnant of America's version of the Holocaust."**

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## Koch, black leaders to combat racism

By GARY LANGER  
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK -- Lawyers for two blacks who were attacked by a gang of whites say they won't let their clients testify in the death of a third black man because racism is "official policy" in New York.

"It is very clear now that in racial bias cases no elected official in this city is prepared to do justice," lawyer Alton Maddox said last Wednesday.

Later, a City Hall summit between Mayor Edward I. Koch and 24 black leaders produced a pledge to combat racism, which the participants said is pervasive

in the city. Maddox boycotted the meeting.

The meeting was prompted by racial tension stirred by the Dec. 20 death of Michael Griffith, a 23-year-old black man who had been hounded and beaten in the Queens neighborhood of Howard Beach by whites wielding sticks and baseball bats.

Murder charges against three white youths accused in Griffith's death were dropped last Monday after another victim, Cedric Sandiford, refused to testify.

"No white person can ever be in fear of being convicted of murdering a black person in this city," Maddox, Sandiford's lawyer, said at a news con-

ference. "That is official policy."

Maddox lambasted city officials and prosecutors who have said he has stymied efforts to ensure justice, and he again called on Gov. Mario Cuomo to appoint a special prosecutor.

Queens District Attorney John J. Santucci, meanwhile, is considering turning Griffith's death over to federal authorities for prosecution as a civil rights case, according to a report in the New Year's Day editions of *The New York Times*.

Such a move would make it easier to prosecute the white youths, who face reduced charges

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## Local man claims foul play in recent auto deal

By CHERYL WILLIAMS  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Larry D. Watson of 525-B Claremont Ave. threw away more than \$2,000 in October.

At least that's how he said he feels now, after purchasing a car from a local car salesman, paying cash and never receiving a title to the car.

"My money's gone down the drain," said Watson, a waiter at the Black Velvet Lounge. "I don't have any kind of registration papers. I have it insured. That's it.

"Actually, the only thing I'm doing is driving a car with insurance in my name and tags on it," he said.

In an interview last Friday, Watson said he had bought a 1981 four-door Caprice for \$2,652 from James "Babe" Johnson in October. At the time, Johnson was an employee of Camel City Motors.

"I had seen it several times at the Camel City lot, and I had seen Babe drive it around," he said. "He told me it was for sale and that it's a good-running car. And the

car is in good shape. The thing is, I don't have any legal claims to it.

"I paid Babe cash in full for the car," Watson said. "He gave me a bill of sale and told me that he would give me the other papers later."

But Watson said he has never received the papers and that the only thing he has to show that he bought the car is the sales receipt signed by Watson and Johnson.

The way he insured the car, Watson said, is by switching the insurance from another car he owned.

He said that repeated calls to Johnson have failed to get him the title.

"I've been talking to Babe since October," he said. "He told me he couldn't catch up with the man who has the title. I have been getting one sham story to the next."

The last time he talked to Johnson was about a week before Christmas, Watson said. "He told me he was going to come over to my house and straighten everything out. He told me to give him 'til Tuesday. Tuesday came and

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Larry D. Watson: "It was a raw, dirty deal" (photo by James Parker).