

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

Founded 1974

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## The NAACP and the billboards

WE'RE sure that many of our Afro-American citizens are wondering why the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People would fight to preserve billboards. It is an issue that would seem to most people to have no racial connotations.

Yet, Walter Marshall, president of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County NAACP, and Dennis Schatzman, state executive director of the NAACP, both made statements adamantly opposing a ban on billboards during last week's Board of Aldermen hearing on the proposed view corridor along the new I-40 bypass.

They stated that such a ban would adversely affect the service industries which employ a large number of Afro-Americans, thereby causing Afro-Americans to lose those jobs.

They would have us believe that banning billboards along an 11-mile stretch of highway would cause such severe financial hardship that some companies would be forced to lay off their Afro-American workers. Neither of the men offered any data to support their claims.

Given the weaknesses in their arguments about protecting Afro-American jobs, we wondered what might be the real motivation for Marshall and Schatzman to inject the NAACP into such an obviously non-racial matter. It didn't take long to draw the probable connection.

Rodney Sumler is second vice president of the NAACP and owner of Associated Consultants. The Naegele Outdoor Advertising Company is a client of Associated Consultants, so it seems there is a conflict of interest here.

It seems the NAACP is being used to promote private business interests that have nothing to do with the needs of Afro-Americans. Marshall mentioned in his statement that last summer the NAACP "was able to secure a billboard on Route 52 publicizing our national membership radio fund."

The NAACP may not have had to pay for the billboard, but it's obvious that it now owes *something* to Naegele.

It is disturbing that the business of our local branch of the NAACP seems to have less and less to do with the affairs of Afro-Americans and more and more to do with personal agendas.

Schatzman's reaction to the statements by Alderman Martha Wood concerning the targeting of Afro-American consumers by liquor and tobacco companies was a good indication of the type of "leadership" we have in the local NAACP.

Wood was reiterating what many Afro-American leaders around the nation have been saying for years: The Afro-American consumer is being targeted by tobacco and alcohol companies. That is a fact. Anyone who doubts the veracity of that statement need only to check on some of the "charitable" activities of those industries.

They are sponsoring many worthwhile endeavors within the Afro-American community, such as scholarships, black history programs, and convention activities for major black organizations. But, nonetheless, the objective is to peddle their wares and solidify a consumer base.

It's unfortunate that Schatzman is unable to comprehend this issue. Instead, he would rather rail against Wood and call her a racist. There are many people in this town we would call racist; Martha Wood is not one of them.

What is racist, however, is the joke told by Schatzman himself at the end of his statement. If he would check the origins of his material before he engages in such ridiculous banter, he would find that in circles outside the Afro-American community the "elderly gentleman" is a "nigger".

## CHRONICLE CAMERA

# What was the biggest news event during the year 1988?

1988 was a year chockfull of news and major happenings both in this country and abroad.

Jimmy Swaggert bared his soul on national television and asked his followers to forgive him his indiscretions.

Mike Tyson and his bride,

Robin Givens, waged the biggest bout of all on national television, in the tabloid an through Barbara Walters' 20/20. The nation watched and waited to see what heavy-weight burden Robin would next lay on her clinically "depressed" husband.

Television took us to the Seoul Olympics where Florence "Flo Jo" Griffith-Joyner was the talk of the Games, along with Ben Johnson, who, unfortunately, captured more dubious recognition.

Major disasters were endured

both by the Soviet Union and the United States. Thousands were killed in Armenia when an earthquake struck suddenly and American loved ones at Christmas-time when a terrorist's bomb blew a New York-bound airline from the sky.

But the biggest news of 1988 was the Presidential election campaign.

The election's outcome seemed almost anti-climactic in light of the attention given the perceived slighting of the Rev. Jesse Jackson at the Democratic Con-

vention and all of the mud that was tossed back and forth between candidates Gov. Michael Dukakis and Vice President George Bush.

Chronicle Camera asked residents what they considered the major news event of 1988.



"The way the Democratic Party was going and the way Jesse Jackson tried to run for president."

Tim Abram



"The way the campaign was run. There was a lot of stuff going on with the campaign."

Ethan Sherrod



"Bush winning. The airline accidents. It wasn't a boring year."

Andy Wharton



"The presidential race. There was so much slander on both sides."

Weymouth Jones



"The earthquakes and the melt-down."

Michelle Faulkner

# Thanks to all who made Jan. 16 a great day

To The Editor:

The commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday will always have a very special meaning to me, because of a very unfortunate incident that happened to me. I will always hold true to the ideas for which he lived and died and the changes that he helped to bring about for all minorities. I, not only on Jan. 16, but throughout the year, express to my children the importance of the legacy that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. left for all people -- to have a dream and to fulfill that dream.

Sincere thanks to the committee for planning the activities; the parents for sending their children out; the Winston Lake Family Y for the use of its facilities; the radio stations for airing such a memorable event; the teachers for sharing their knowledge of Dr. King with the students; the students for being receptive to the life that Dr. King led.

Also thanks to all other organizations, companies and individuals for their tireless efforts, patience, time, knowledge and, yes, money that it took to make Monday, Jan. 16, a day to be remembered.

I was not able to attend the activities during the day, as I have in the past, but my daughters told me what a wonderful day it was. Again, thanks to all of those who still carry the dream in their hearts and their everyday living.

Vickie H. Hairston  
Winston-Salem



## CHRONICLE MAILBAG

Our Readers Speak Out

### Mental Health

To The Editor:

In response to recent news coverage of the local Mental Health agency: In my long and at times heavy involvement with Mental Health, I have found that virtually all of these people mean well and are quite effective in doing an awful lot of good in assisting indefinite hundreds or thousands of people get over what bothers them, get their heads straight and go on to be more

successful, happier, more productive people. And in some cases Mental Health is saving lives -- and doing no harm that I can see.

Of course, anything may be improved, and that's a good thing to do. But Mental Health comes about as close as humanly possible to being an undiluted good influence in this community. Thank you Mental Health people for all the good you do.

This is a "liberal Democratic" view.

Cody Yasinsac  
Winston-Salem

### On recycling

To The Editor:

The League of Women Voters of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County has endorsed a local group's proposal to start a county-wide system to collect used motor oil for recycling. The League also strongly supports a proposed bill that the General Assembly will consider this year possibly leading to a statewide system by 1990.

It was reported in Frank Tursi's Jan. 6 *Journal* article on oil recycling that Robert Fulp, director of

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# 1988: A year of politics, a year of drift

NEW YORK -- 1988 was a year dominated by politics.

It saw the rise of a serious black presidential candidate, and the election of a new president who appears capable of breaking with at least some of the mistaken directions of the past eight years.

Conventional wisdom says the 1988 election proved the political powerlessness of blacks. But, as is often the case, conventional wisdom is wrong.

The black vote makes its maxi-

### TO BE EQUAL

By JOHN E. JACOB

mum impact in close elections, but the 1988 presidential campaign wasn't close. Blacks gave more than 86 percent of their votes to the loser -- not out of enthusiasm for him, but against a candidate who had served the Reagan administration.

On the state and local level, however, the black vote did have an impact on several important races. Black votes, for example, provided

the margin of victory for Sen. Lautenberg of New Jersey over his popular Republican rival.

And the number of blacks in Congress increased to 23, with the addition of Donald Payne, who carried New Jersey's 10th Congressional District.

The justified pride in his election as the state's first black congressman should, however, be joined by heartfelt gratitude for his retiring predecessor, Peter Rodino, who was a stalwart champion of

civil rights and who did so much to assure passage of key civil rights laws.

Conventional wisdom also says whites won't vote for black candidates, but Jesse Jackson garnered white votes in his primary campaigns, and Mississippi Rep. Mike Espy won re-election with 40 percent of the white vote.

But politics wasn't all there was to 1988. A small step forward was

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# Superintendent selection can heal racial tension

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down minority set-aside programs earlier this week. Many of the millions of Afro-Americans who are not constitutional scholars see this decision as the latest evidence that the end of a second period of reconstruction is drawing near.

As this anxiety level rises, the common ground for biracial cooperation to solve the social problems of our day becomes smaller.

Winston-Salem's majority community is concerned about the perceptions of racial disharmony. These perceptions in the minds of corporate relocators, the people who influence where companies relocate, mean that it will be that much harder to bring the companies to town to jump-start the local economy.

The city fathers and mothers tend to want to treat the symptoms of racial conflict rather than attend to the causes. They talk about the inability of the Board of Aldermen

### VERNON ROBINSON

Chronicle Columnist

to get along. What they mean is that the board is too black, does not share their economic interests and that the four Afro-American aldermen and Martha Wood should be replaced.

I am amazed that these individuals continue to pick unnecessary fights with the Afro-American community. The best example, but certainly not the only one, was the insensitivity toward the naming of the Memorial Coliseum. There were no white economic interests at stake here, only the world view of World War II vintage white supremacists.

Senselessly, efforts were made by prominent members of the community to block naming the coliseum after Lawrence Joel. And the matter became very messy and, yes, the obvious racial tension spilled all over the papers. It is ironic that



Robinson

those who despair over the city's image refuse to compromise on issues that virtually assure racial confrontation.

Many of these people have decided to replace the ward system with one that combines wards and at-large seats to create a "more representative body" (i.e., an unassailable white majority). Evidently, they plan on replacing the pre-clearance provisions of the Voting Rights Acts as well.

Black folk will fight such a plan tooth and nail. Such a plan is not negotiable. The other folk ought to know that they cannot buy enough black folk to effect such a plan.

The image-conscious have another opportunity to moderate

and lessen racial tension in the selection of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school superintendent. In addition to the qualifications one normally considers, such as educational leadership, experience and scholarship, the next school board superintendent must reduce racial tension and ensure equal access to educational opportunity.

Only Dr. Barbara Phillips fits these criteria. Rejection of her bid for the superintendent's job also rejects the aspirations of the Afro-American community and heightens racial tension.

If her style of consensus and conciliation is rejected, confrontation is the only approach other than "yes, massa."

Winston-Salem has an opportunity for healing -- if the blinders are taken off first.

Vernon L. Robinson is a former candidate for the N.C. Senate.



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