

Citizens United for Justice

Education forum gets response

By CAROLE RAGINS
Community News Editor

More than 50 parents and students attended the first of several community forums organized by the Citizens United for Justice, and held last Thursday night in the Ivy Arms on Cleveland Ave.

The group discussed the educational future of black children and how to correct the problems brought on by bureaucratic red tape, including white insensitivity for people of color. Six key issues discussed emphasized the need for equal education to be included for black children in the classroom. The issues were based on a 1990 local NAACP poll in which hundreds of black parents, students, teachers and others expressed what they wanted from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School system.

The forum elaborated on issues such as appropriate expectations of

all students, the need for black educators to be hired at the same racial proportion as the student body, the necessity of a multi-cultural curriculum, the need to find better disciplinary standards, requiring mandatory training in racial and cultural sensitivity for all educators, and establishing a Carver High School district with several feeder racially integrated elementary schools in the black community.

Many participants shared their personal experiences in dealing with racism in the school system.

"I think about the elite track that exists in this local school system versus the poverty track. I think about all the talk we hear about school business partnerships, which isn't worth the paper that it's written on, particularly if you are not in the elite track," said Evelyn Terry. "Our children are going to school with an inferior basic education that will not even prepare them to do anything

but push a broom. This is what I see happening in the public school system."

Alderman Virginia Newell said, "One of the things I have observed in African-American kids in the Forsyth County Schools, 80% of them are enrolled in general mathematics. The problem is many of our kids are not going to be able to go to any one of the 16 constituent universities. You have to have two years of algebra and geometry to get in the door of the constituent institutions."

Newell said the Board of Education needs to "zero in on this massive group of black kids who are being taught by teachers," many of whom are not prepared to teach "the hard stuff that kids need to take into the 21st century."

Strategies for educational reform were also discussed by students who shared their personal experiences at the forum. Warner L.

Heartwell, a rising sophomore student said, "I get frustrated at the fact that when school officials look at me, they see me as a black student — not for my intelligence. I find that you either have to work ten times as hard to make good grades or you let the frustration get to you." Heartwell says he has chosen to continue to work hard in school and to help other classmates.

The Rev. William Fails gave a last piece of advice to parents. "Whatever stories young people bring to you, they are not telling you lies. All children should have the same opportunity to be respected for their hard work in school."

The next forum will be held Thursday, July 30 at Grace Presbyterian Church on Carver Road. The forums are co-sponsored by the East Winston Political Action Committee, NAACP, Citizens United for Justice and the Minister's Conference.

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Brown offers redistricting plan

Continued from page A1

ing, as much as possible, the satellite system now in place. The satellite system dictates what schools children may attend, based on geographical location and maintaining a racial balance.

Brown proposes the school administration investigate building or renovating two schools in the inner city to be used as elementary schools. She suggests that Moore and Kimberley Park be considered for regular districts rather than as

alternative schools — an idea not likely to be welcomed by the predominantly white, middle class parents whose children now fill those schools.

Improve middle school set-up

Brown wants to revisit and reconsider the concept of middle schools. She believes the transition from middle to high school could be more positive and meaningful for students and parents, and wants to

see a review of past and present performances of the program, in order to devise improvement.

Two schools should be converted to serve middle school students from the Kernersville and Clemmons/Lewisville areas, according to Brown's plan. Petree school students could be reassigned to South Park High School.

Create magnet high schools

Brown's fourth goal is to improve the scope of educational opportunities for high school students.

She suggests creating specific magnet schools (such as high tech, technical occupations, or medical/health) in the high schools. Vocational educational programs for the non-college bound student should be revisited, and the possibility of the Career Center becoming a vocational school should be considered.

Brown's proposal begins with the acknowledgement that, "the success of the plan must be based on the principle that it will take two-to-five years to implement, and will insure the opportunity for on-going community input and revision."



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Compromise offered

By SHERIDAN HILL
Chronicle Managing Editor

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School board member Dr. Gerald Hewitt suggested this week that the board create an ad-hoc redistricting committee that would include — as voting members — newly-elected black members Geneva Brown and Walter Marshall. If the idea meets the approval of Brown, Marshall, and the existing nine members, it might soothe some of the feathery that have recently been ruffled over redistricting discussions.

Brown and Marshall have repeatedly denounced the all-white board's decision to discuss

plans for redistricting and bussing before the black members are seated.

Marshall stated he liked the proposal, and Brown said she is "leaning towards it," with some reservations. She questioned the recommendation that the present nine members — at least two of whom are going off the board in November — would remain as committee members.

Gerald Hewitt and Garlene Grogan are going off the board this fall: Jane Goins and Thomas Voss, both Republicans, face Democratic opponents in the upcoming election. Attorney Nancy Wooten is currently campaigning for Forsyth County District Court Judge.

Political flames

Continued from page A1

can no longer sit back and wait for someone else to do it for us. I want to encourage people that their votes count," she said. Parmon and Denise "D.D." Adams are Forsyth County's black Democrats who attended the convention.

"The first night of the convention was overwhelming: just to sit there on the floor, look around at the thousands of different people who all share a common hurt and who are concerned about how to regain the strength the American economy once had. People are hurting under this present administration," said Parmon. "Although the Democratic Party has taken a lot of licks over the last few years, this year, the enthusiasm of the young, old, handicapped, coming together to speak out as one voice will bring about change," she added.

Parmon says she is confident that Gov. Bill Clinton and running mate Al Gore of Tennessee understand that American people have taken a long beating from the Bush administration. "This is why I believe Democrats will win the presidential campaign, because people are ready to get back to work, have health care benefits and get a decent education."

Parmon, who served as one of the deputy whips on the convention floor, says that the North Carolina delegation went to the convention with three uncommitted delegates (not pledged to any particular candidate). "Two chose Clinton, the other chose Brown. That gave us a 99% unified delegation," she said.

The convention's endorsement represented a triumph of strategy and endurance, said Parmon. She

reflected on the unity that was shown among the people who were there. "The young people are really saying, 'we want to be involved, we want to be energized and go back home to help get the votes out.' It made me feel like it was worth all the long years of hard work," she said.

Parmon is concerned about the stigma that has been attached to Democrats. "What has bothered me is being labeled as 'liberals' and it always bothered me because the Democratic umbrella is large enough to be inclusive," she said. "The conservative people in America have taken advantage of that because the Democrats are concerned about the homeless, people with AIDS, and people from all walks of life."

Parmon's dedication to the Democratic Party dates back to 1960. "When I think back on when I first started in the Democratic Party, we did not have the kind of voice in 1960 that we have today in the party," she said. "If a black girl from East 4th Street could rise to the ranks of the Democratic Party to become an elected official, and to deal with political matters on the national level, anyone can. I feel that I could have only done that through the Democratic Party. The Republican Party has not opened up its ranks to everyday people — people who have to work. I am a working person and I have a family and I hurt just like other people."

Parmon says she is very excited about the upcoming election and will soon begin setting up city-wide voter registration drives, especially in the East Winston community.

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