

Where La Raza meets La 'Hood

from A1
already strained social services and tense race relations in the Piedmont — indeed in the South — where such relations have always been black and white? This overview begins a series about that relationship. Our community news staff contributed to this report, under the overall supervision of our columnist, sociologist Dr. William H. Turner, who filed this feature.

By WILLIAM H. TURNER PH.D.
 Special to the Chronicle

David Harold holds a master's of divinity degree and is the very sensitive and progressive administrator of Catholic Social Service, the umbrella organization of Casa Guadalupe. Casa, Spanish for "House of ...," points believers to Latin America's premier patron saint, Guadalupe. In Winston-Salem, Casa is the "go to" agency for the thousands of Hispanics who have made the Winston area their home over the past decade. Over the past two years alone, Casa has served nearly 2,000 Hispanic clients.

However, the "influx" of Hispanics to the area has been so great that Harold and his Casa staff really don't know how many Hispanics are in the area, but they do know that many are poor and have limited English skills. Catholic Social Services, along with the county health department and St. Anne's Church's Neighbors in Ministry are conducting a comprehensive census of the local Hispanic population.

Hispanics constituted somewhere between 6 and 9 percent of the county's population of 217,000 people in 1995. That amounts to somewhere between 15,000 and 19,500 Hispanics in Forsyth County.

They have come to Forsyth (and other northwest Piedmont counties), and they go to Catholic Social Services and Casa looking for citizenship education and translation assistance.

Harold interprets the coming of Hispanics to the area as not only natural and expected, but also as a "golden opportunity for our area to become truly multicultural, because our Asian population is growing too." His staffers, Nilda Cardenas and Veronica Zambrano, full of the universal zest of youth, agree with Harold and also think that much needs to happen in the area in terms of "reducing the divisions in this 'divided area,' to get what they all call "beyond black and white."

The Urban League of Forsyth County, according to Cleo Solomon, an employment specialist, undertook last year a "Hispanic Community Needs Assessment," since "so many Hispanics were coming through the doors of the Urban League," League Director Delores Smith

supervised a sample survey by local consultant Vircher Floyd. Solomon takes notice of her other traditional clients — African Americans — some of whom express "feelings of threat and competition" with Hispanics. The League also



Cleo Solomon, Director of Employment Services headed up a team of the WS Urban League that conducted a "Needs Assessment" of the area Hispanic community in 1995

takes the Hispanic presence as further justification for "Bridging the Gaps," a cultural awareness and valuing-diversity program targeted for human service professionals.

Catholic Social Services' Casa Guadalupe and the Urban League's approaches do not exactly fit the more austere and basic reaction to the area's Hispanic community. Like that of Sylvester Garner of East Winston's Lakeside community, "Syl," who refused to be photographed, lives off Harrington Circle, in a subsidized apartment. The street, in Lakeside, is



Francisco Prudente Arellanes, left and Gabriel Medina, arriving for assistance at Casa Guadalupe, Winston's premier Hispanic Assistance Center.

strewn with trash and broken beer bottles. He says "the man (management) caters to them Mexicans, gives them apartments when black folk be on the waiting list." According to Syl, they "hang tight, like in a gang thing." He said he expects that "something big's going to go down between them and the bloods one of these days."

Syl was sharing a bottle of beer with two friends under a tree while offering a barrage of opinions on the full range of negative stereotypes about "Mexicans," while about half-a-

dozen Hispanic young men could be seen talking about 50 yards away. Syl is convinced, for example, that "downtown, the Mexicans get more play than the black man ... they get the day jobs, the loans to start business, and it's like they done replaced us, you know what I mean!" Angry and enraged with his temporary-worker and parolee status at 38, Syl sees Hispanics (whom he calls "them Mexicans") as another barrier between his "rock and hard place" — Lakeside.

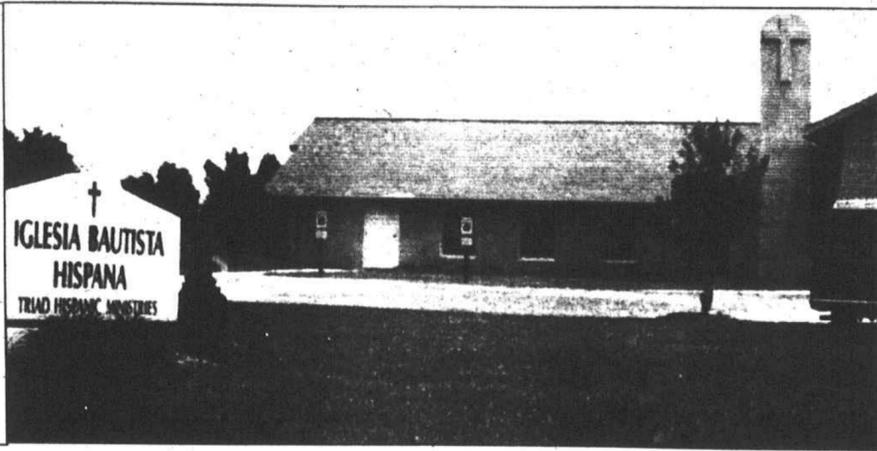
Casa officials note that the area's social service system is "unprepared for the Hispanic

Zambrano said that law breaking is double-layered around citizenship status, because laws are broken on the first order: fake documents like driver's licenses and green cards. As in California and Texas, many Hispanic men came to work in agriculture, and farmers look past workers' legal status when crops like tobacco and vegetables are ripe in the fields.

Back to Black and Brown, the barrio and the "hood. What we have is a clash, a competition for low status, low paying jobs. But, it is apparent to many blacks that, in their view, there is a "takeover," in southeast

Where (many) area Hispanics worship...

- **Winston-Salem**
 - Nuestra Senora de La Merced
 - Iglesia Primera Asamblea
 - Iglesia Alianza Cristiana Misionera
 - Iglesia de Cristo
 - Iglesia Pentecostal Nueva Vida
 - Woodland Baptist
- **Kernersville**
 - Iglesia Bautista Hispana
 - Iglesia Cristiana Wesleyana
 - Iglesia Holy Cross



community." For example, at Reynolds Health Center and Crisis Control, more than half of the clients are Hispanics. There is a need for more bilingual interpreters, like Cardenas and Zambrano, in the courts, social services, and health care. Zambrano, an AmeriCorp



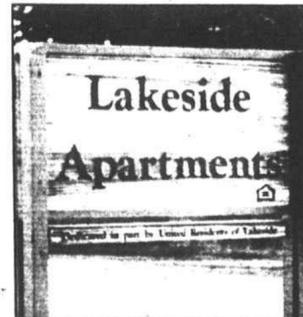
La Fiesta: "The Party Store", Spanish language video. Old Rural Hall Road, North Winston.



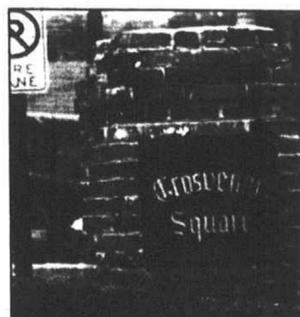
All Photos by William H. Turner
 El Triunfo, "The Triumphant Mexican Store. Main Street, Kernersville.

Winston-Salem, for example. Even though the Hispanic-owned businesses cater primarily to Hispanics, one senses a resentment, rivalry, defensiveness, and a tinge of envy from people like Syl Garner. In words that are not exactly his, there is a "shakeup at the bottom."

The movement of immigrant groups onto and off of the bottom rungs of the economic ladder is a mark of American ethnic history. Lakeside, for example, three decades ago, was starter apartments for many families who have now moved into the middle classes. But many unskilled and uneducated blacks, like Sylvester, can't seem to move out of the bottom. Sylvester's daring and rather mean-spirited attitude toward



Lakeside Apartments off New Walkertown Road site of Hispanic (Mexican) Migration in East Winston.



Grosvenor Square. Off Salisbury Road, site of Hispanic Migration in Kernersville.

"Mexicans" is not all posturing, and David Harold at Casa Guadalupe is right: there is a tremendous challenge to meet

the needs of the Hispanic community. Sylvester just thinks it might be at his expense.

Cynthia Torres Cruz... La Mujer Cosmica

from A1

representation at Hispanic conferences. She handles all RJR publicity for Hispanic programming, including press releases, Spanish translations, news media contacts, and she coordinates special events.

From her window, she can see all the way to Kernersville, to the tobacco and vegetable fields where many Hispanics in the area found the work that brought them to the Triad. There, this first generation college graduate also "sees," through eyes now misty, Gilberto and Amelia, her parents, migrant farm workers, neither with much formal education, who worked the fields of Texas, Colorado, and other parts of the Southwest.

Cruz's responsibilities at RJR are a long way from the struggles

and sacrifices her parents made to raise her and three sisters: an architect, an accountant, and state government official in her native Texas. Cruz holds a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from Texas Woman's University and an MBA from Wake Forest University. Along the path to RJR, she worked as a newspaper reporter, interned on CNN's popular Evans and Novak, and was legislative assistant to Texas Representative Henry Gonzales.

Cruz gets a bit keen-eyed and feisty when she responds to those who heap stereotypes on Hispanics for "invading" communities. She speaks passionately of the strong work ethic of her people and their traditional value systems, which are strongly rooted in family life, group loyalty, patriotism and religious faith.

Cruz is most articulate when



Cynthia Cruz wants to see something concrete come out of the upcoming project being undertaken by the Forsyth County Human Relations Commission.

she explains how Hispanics, for the most part, are no different in

their dreams and aspirations than other struggling minority groups. She laments the handicaps that many Hispanics — especially women — carry in the form of language barriers and a cultural stereotype, machismo, which is overstated in the (white) world. But, even so, machismo, a value covering various qualities of masculinity, must bear on this supremely confident, capable, and independent business woman.

Cruz wants to see something concrete come out of the upcoming project being undertaken by the Forsyth County Human Relations Commission. She will be front-and-center next month when the Commission begins to address the critical issues, problems, contributions and challenges of local Hispanic residents. She sees the project as a "golden opportunity and catalyst for all people, gov-

ernment agencies, religious and educational institutions, businesses, civic and political groups to examine their relationships to Hispanics." She wishes to break down barriers and build bridges.

Cruz has been much influenced by some in the area "in whose footsteps I step," such as Betsy Silva, president of the Hispanic League of the Piedmont Triad, and Julio Barea, also associated with the founding of the League. Mr. Barea is a senior vice president at Sara Lee and member of the Human Relations Commission. She beams when she talks about top local Hispanic businessman Julio Pando, publisher of "Que Pasa!," a newspaper, and Fernin Bocanegra, pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Wesleyana. To Cruz and others in her orbit, Bocanegra's parish is a "Plymouth rock" for Triad-area His-

panics, the grounding place and getting-connected point to the newly-arrived. She is an ardent supporter of Casa Guadalupe, which RJR has funded consistently. David Harold of Catholic Social Services is, to Cruz, "a most faithful and sincere advocate for Hispanics."

La Mujer Cosmica. Cynthia Torres Cruz. If it is true that minority groups need points of light and persons of sterling talent to illuminate the way towards true intercultural understanding and the valuing of diversity, Hispanics could have no better person than Cynthia Cruz. This American enriches the lives of all of us and advances our common humanity. The Triad and RJR should be proud that Cynthia Torres Cruz chose to live here and make a difference, a cosmic difference.