

At a Glance

News briefs compiled from the Associated Press



(AP PHOTO/Rick Bowmer)

Farrakhan concerned for safety

Surrounded by bodyguards, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan talks to the press Monday December 15, 1997 shortly before boarding a bus from Ramallah, West Bank, to take him to the Allenby bridge crossing into Jordan. Farrakhan, who arrived unexpectedly in the West Bank on Sunday, left for Jordan saying he did not feel welcome in Israel and was concerned for his safety.

NAACP upholds election

GREENSBORO (AP) — The NAACP has upheld the election of Melvin "Skip" Alston as president of the North Carolina chapter, dismissing a complaint filed by three challengers.

Terry Belk, Jesse Smith and Curtis Gatewood contested the results of the Nov. 1 election, saying it violated the state organization's constitution.

In a letter released Tuesday, a week after it was dated, the NAACP dismissed the complaints.

In a statement, Alston called the complaint a waste of time and urged the three to direct their energy toward fighting racism and discrimination.

Alston received 63 percent of the votes. Smith won 22 percent, while Gatewood and Belk had 13 percent and 2 percent respectively. Belk withdrew from the race during the convention to support Smith.



(AP PHOTO/Rick Bowmer)

Leaders make way for future

South African deputy president Thabo Mbeki is shown at a news conference in Johannesburg Dec. 11. While South African President Nelson Mandela (in background poster portrait) will remain president of South Africa until the next national election in 1999, he and other longtime Africa National Congress leaders will start making way for the next generation, led by president in waiting Mbeki, at a five day national conference in Mafikeng.

Duke increases minority scholarships

DURHAM (AP) — Duke University plans to nearly triple the annual amount of its main minority scholarship program in 1998 despite recent legal and federal challenges to race-based scholarships.

"We think this is the right thing to do," said Judith Ruderman, vice provost for academic services. "The chips will fall where they may. We're committed to doing this at Duke."

However, the number of the four-year Reginaldo Howard Scholars awards will drop to five from seven. The award, named for the first black person elected student body president at Duke, has offered \$6,000 annual scholarships to about seven incoming black freshmen each year.

Beginning next fall, the annual award will jump to 75 percent of tuition for both freshmen and upperclassmen who receive Howard scholarships. With tuition now topping \$21,000, the scholarship's value would be almost \$16,000 a year.



(AP Photo/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Matt Freed)

Mistrial called in Gammage case

Walter Moorefield, of the Hill District section of Pittsburgh, Pa., talks Dec. 14, of his role on the jury of the trial of retired Brentwood Lt. Milton E. Mulholland and Baldwin officer Michael Albert in Pittsburgh. The officers were on trial in connection with the death of Jonny E. Gammage. The trial ended in a mistrial after the jury deadlocked. On Moorefield's shirt is a quote from Martin Luther King Jr., with "Violence is Immoral" across the top.

DORSETT

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to Dorsett, she told him that she wasn't sure what the state's need was in that area. Of course, his response was that it is her job to know such information.

"So I said to him, 'We are going to be having some seminars,'" said Dorsett, explaining that her department had scheduled meetings in four different locations to give potential contractors the opportunity to come and meet face to face with the agencies that would be using their services.

"I told him there would be meetings, and lunch, for \$10, would be served. And he said 'I'm not paying any \$10 to come down there.' Of course I let him know that he didn't have to buy the lunch."

The caller, said Dorsett, concluded, "I don't know why we sent you down there — you ain't doing nothing."

This encounter exemplifies the type of expectations people have, Dorsett said.

"I can go back to my experience on the city council and county board of commissioners, and I think that we in our community felt that when we put one person or two people down there, that's all we had to look to and we were going to make things right."

That is not the way things work in state and local government, Dorsett said.

"But I will tell you, it's all about votes. If you don't have the votes on these boards and bodies to do things differently, then your vote won't go very far. I know," she said. "When I served on the City Council, there

were two of us; there were nine members of the city council. And it didn't matter what we thought, unless we got five votes, we could not make a difference. So my experience is that there has got to be coalition building. You've got to have people who want something of you and they need your support. And then when you want something of them, you join. That is the only way that I think you can truly make a difference."

Dorsett was at the center of controversy a year ago because of those expectations.

Shaw Food Service, one of the few black-owned firms to garner a state contract, was replaced as the long-standing provider of meals to predominantly black students, faculty and staff at A&T and North Carolina Central University, which are two of the state's largest historically black institutions. Shaw lost its contract to Marriott and Marcorp, both of which are white-owned businesses. Marriott had offered NCCU \$25,000 to the chancellor's discretionary fund, \$25,000 to student government and another \$100,000 to the School of Hospitality and Management.

Although some believe Dorsett's presence in Raleigh was supposed to make things better for blacks, that's not necessarily the way it has turned out. According to reports at the time, the lost contract resulted in a trimming of the Shaw Food staff as well. Some 375 black people lost their jobs

because of the incident.

Now, a year later, blacks are complaining about the sparse number of state highway contracts they are awarded through the Department of Transportation. State lawmakers called for a study into the matter, but that was before an investigation into misdealing by Transportation Board members was launched. Dorsett has not been vocal about pressing the state to link the improper actions by white board members with the seemingly coincidental exclusion of black companies from highway construction problems.

During her remarks at A&T Monday evening, Dorsett was also asked about another decision that falls to her department — state recognition of the Occaneechee tribe. Deborah Mebane, a student in the class, said she has several friends who are members of the tribe and she wanted to know why it's been difficult for them to get recognized by the State of North Carolina, even though the tribe receives grants from an agency that deals specifically with native Americans.

Mebane said she believes that the group has been slighted by the state because its members also have African American ancestry. "What happens," explained Dorsett, "is that we have a recogni-

tion committee and a set of criteria that they have to meet. Here again, we're in court at this point trying to mediate this thing.

"I can't tell you what the criteria is, but I do know that there is criteria," Dorsett told Mebane. She added, "I'm now convinced that they have not been able to document responses to those things that they must do."

In addition to dealing with the expectations black people have of her position, Dorsett said she also has to deal with being a woman in a leadership role.

"I can go with one of my division directors, particularly those in property, construction and purchasing, and as we go to talk with people, they invariably look to the man as the head of the agency. And I am his secretary," Dorsett said, drawing chuckles from the audience.

"I remember that I was in the Cardinal Club — county government people had invited us to come and have dinner with them. They introduced all of us. So they introduced the men, secretary of so and so, and then Katie Dorsett, secretary to the governor."

Dorsett is Secretary of Administration. That's hardly the governor's secretary.

"The things I have experienced are nothing out right but kind of subtle. And that's not just typical of government, but I think that's also typical of what women experience in the corporate world.

"I guess we just have not arrived at that point yet. So I suffer the double frustration of being both African-American and female.

WELFARE

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Assistance to Needy Families) benefits of Mecklenburg County, we have 80 percent of the administrative overhead." According to Winfree, reducing what is spent on personnel "would free up a half a million dollars for child care and transportation." Other committee members have said that transportation and child care issues must be addressed if welfare reform is going to have even a chance of working.

"If we have no money to do these things because it's eaten up by administrative costs, then there won't be any big progress. We have to shift the administrative expense and overhead to efforts that reduce welfare, such as transportation," Winfree told the others.

Winfree, who is white, made his comments after committee member Kathy Spicer presented recommendations from a subcommittee assigned

the responsibility of developing the nuts and bolts of the county's plan for reducing the public assistance rolls by putting adults to work.

Spicer and other black members of the group, including fellow commissioner Warren Dorsett, Nettie Coad and Ruth Rideout, argued that there could be a legitimate reason why administrative costs are higher in Guilford County.

"I'd like to know what we're providing with those funds before we start talking about cutting them," Coad said.

The issue of shifting administrative money to programs appeared to divide the group on racial lines.

"I think that this group would be negligent if we did not at least look into the possibility of saving some of that administrative money and helping the recipients we're trying to help," commented Commissioner Mary Rakestraw, who is white.

Spicer, however, was concerned that staff reduction would make it difficult for social workers to do their

job well.

"There's not enough interaction now with social workers. We don't need to decrease the social worker staff," Spicer said.

The group resolved the difference of opinion at last week's meeting by establishing a subcommittee to look specifically at the money now being spent on administration.

The Work First Block Grant Planning Committee has until next month to submit its plan to the state. The recommendation so far is to shrink the welfare caseload by developing an intensive marketing campaign. Under that initiative, recruitment representatives from various companies would participate in regular Work First job fairs.

The idea is to get numerous employers to share in the effort to provide jobs. The county needs to find employment for 1,564 welfare recipients.

Caring for the children of women who go to work is another major con-

sideration. The planning committee intends to recommend that the county "develop a comprehensive package to present to communities, encouraging community-based child care support (in-home and centers)."

As currently written, the draft recommendation contends that this "one-stop effort would cut down on transportation needs to child care facilities; provide employment; and address the need of 24-hour child care availability, sick-child care and quality monitoring."

"I think that this group is not seeing the full picture of welfare reform, and I think that an expert in social issues and welfare is absolutely critical," said Linda Jones. She suggested that either the DSS board or the commissioners hire a professional consultant to review the plan before it is submitted to state officials. That idea did not have widespread support at last week's meeting, but some committee members said they would reconsider at a later time.

WATT

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operations in Bosnia and the Middle East. I voted for nine of the appropriations bills and against four (three because of onerous substantive provisions normally prohibited in appropriations bills and one because it appropriated almost \$4 billion more than the president and the department requested).

Veterans COLAs: Congress approved a bill which authorizes a 2.1 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in veterans benefits, in line with the increase for Social Security recipients. I voted yes.

Immigration: Congress passed several bills to correct some of the unfair provisions in the immigration reform law passed last year. These bills restore welfare benefits to some

immigrants, allow some illegal immigrants to remain in the country while applying for permanent resident visas and avert deportation for some refugees who came to the United States fleeing persecution. I voted yes.

Adoptions: Congress passed a bill designed to speed up adoptions of children in foster care and provide them more health and safety during the process. I voted yes.

Amtrak: Congress passed a bill to restructure Amtrak's management and labor practices and to provide funding for operating subsidies, capital improvements and retirement funds through 2002, the year in which federal support for Amtrak is projected to end. I voted yes.

China MFN: Congress voted to extend most-favored-nation trade status to China for another year. I voted no.

Chemical Weapons: The Senate

approved a chemical weapons that bans development, production, sale and use of chemical weapons. No vote in the House is required on treaties.

Things that failed

School Vouchers: The House defeated a proposal to allow states to use some federal education funds to provide vouchers for children to attend private schools. I voted against the proposal. A provision to allow vouchers was also removed from the District of Columbia appropriations bill under threat of a presidential veto.

Constitutional Amendments: Congress defeated four proposed amendments to the Constitution: to establish term limits for members of Congress, to require a balanced budget, to allow Congress to ban physical

desecration of the flag and to require a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress to pass bills to increase taxes. I voted against all four proposals.

Things that were left undone

For a variety of reasons many bills were not acted on. Among them were bills concerning public housing, IRS reform, job training and literacy, child support enforcement, juvenile crime, affirmative action, campaign finance reform and a tobacco settlement.

My constituents may obtain information about legislation and actions not discussed in this summary, as well as more information about the bills discussed and the reasons for any votes I have cast, by contacting my office. We'll always try to help.

SICKLE CELL

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The grant had paid for a nurse, who cared for roughly 200 patients; a clinic held at the Greensboro office where men, women and children receive exams from specialists from Duke; and transportation for services such as blood transfusions.

The regional Sickle Cell Association created the first satellite community clinic for the disease in 1978. Within a couple of years, according to agency information, the local center became a liaison between area physicians and hematologists at Duke. At the time, there were few blood specialists in the local community who treated people with sickle

cell disease.

North Carolina screens all babies for the disease. Consequently, the number of infants known to have sickle cell or the trait for it is growing, said Robinson. "Therefore, it is important to have funding which provides genetic counseling for parents, as a preventative and education effort."

A study completed in 1988, and paid for with the NIH grant, proved that teaching people with sickle cell preventive maintenance decreased hospital stays, visits to the emergency room and time away from school or work. That study led to the creation of a Home Health Care program. But the Sickle Cell Association lost funding for that program in 1993.

LAKESIDE

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Weatherford stressed the importance of reading to children by urging all parents present to make sure that their children read on a daily basis. "It is very important that parents read to their children because it motivates them to want to learn to read," Weatherford said. Reading, she said, is a way to unlock the secrets to the world for children as well as adults.

In addition, Weatherford demonstrated the rhythm and meter in poetry using band instruments. She also conducted a session on how to write poetry in various ways. Weatherford has traveled across the country conducting workshops and presenting lectures that develop the communication skills of young people in creative ways.

Weatherford holds a master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her most recent books are *Grandpa and Me,*

Mighty Menfolk, My Favorite Toy, and Me and the Family Tree. She also wrote the prize-winning poetry volume *The Tan Chanteus.* She wrote the first children's text on the emancipation holiday, called *Juneteenth Jamboree.* Weatherford displayed her books for children during the session.

"Mrs. Weatherford is an outstanding motivator for children," said Chairperson Louise Smith, a former educator, "and it is very important to encourage our youth to read and write correctly. Music is a great medium to use to get children excited about learning. Technology is fine, but we cannot forget the arts, the basics," she said.

Parents and children alike were enthralled with Weatherford's presentation. "Mrs. Weatherford has the technique, the skills, and the personality to deal with children. I can see why she loves to write children's books," Smith said.

Following the program, the children munched on mini-sub, chips,

Moravian cookies, punch and candy. Each child received a large "goodie bag" filled with books and school supplies that Delta Sigma Theta Sorority donated.

The members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Adopt-a-Community Committee want the children of the Lakeside Community to be exposed to many role models in the community who will motivate youth to achieve. They have also taken the children to see *The Nutcracker Ballet*, the symphony at Wake Forest University, and to the Festival of Lights at Tanglewood. During a two-week seminar on manners and etiquette, the sorors took the children to dine at Cafe Piaf, where they met Chef Don McMillan. Most of the children are African-American; however, many Hispanic children are now participating. A teenager from the community acts as interpreter.

Since the sorority adopted the community as one of its service projects, the parents have organized a

Parent Council to lend support to the project. They are very pleased that this group has shown such genuine interest in their children. Since the parents joined, sorors have held workshops with them to explain how to interpret their children's report cards and standardized test scores. They encourage the parents to check their children's homework each day, to visit the schools and to serve as volunteers at their children's schools. What is more, the sorors conduct an after-school tutorial program at Saint Paul United Methodist Church on New Walkertown Road.

The chairperson of the Adopt-a-Community Committee is Louise Smith. Members of the committee who were present included Simona Allen, Elsie Blackman, Geraldine Davis, Larn Dillard, LaVerne Gaither, LeVerne Hanes, Sherlae Hill, Elva Jones, Robyn Martin-Roseborough, Gwendolyn Rocker, Mary Young Smith and Gwendolyn Wynn.