

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Blacks could cast the deciding vote

Last Saturday, promoters of major league baseball in the Triad kicked off their campaign.

At the same time, opponents also geared up to persuade voters in Forsyth and Guilford counties to reject a bond referendum that would create a prepared food tax for the purpose of building a stadium on the boundary line between the two localities.

Black residents can expect to be pulled in both directions.

"No welfare for Wachovia," insists Winston-Salem Alderman Vernon Robinson.

It is reasonable to be skeptical about any new tax. But this may be a situation where the community participation in ownership of the stadium (a nicer way of saying "tax") is worth the investment.

On Tuesday, J. Walter McDowell, president of North Carolina banking at Wachovia, hosted a luncheon in the bank's private dining room. About two dozen African Americans — presumably community leaders with the ability to influence others — were invited. Integon executive Nigel Alston helped prepare the guest list.

During the meeting it became evident that many black residents of Forsyth County are hesitant to buy into the promises of economic prosperity that will come in exchange for supporting the referendum. Several of those present, including Forsyth County Commissioner Walter Marshall and Delores Smith of the Urban League, cited specific events in the city's past that warrant that uneasy feeling where blacks and economic development are concerned.

At The Chronicle, we see merit in what both proponents and opponents have to say.

Yes, the tax burden is something worth considering. We should guard our wallets.

But those advocating a publicly financed stadium appear to have a convincing argument in that the money generated by the 1-percent tax, could be one of the most critical investments in the region's future.

What's missing, as Ben Ruffin astutely pointed out, is a specific plan addressing how the baseball ownership and authority intend to include minorities in the economic boon. Will black realtors be afforded access to the well-paid baseball players, who likely will be purchasing property in the area? Will the black media ever see advertising dollars, or will the mainstream - white-owned — media be the only vehicles for promoting baseball?

Ruffin is right, promoters will have a tough-sell if they can not offer something concrete when they talk to black voters.

McDowell insists that he does not have the authority to make promises. No one is asking for quotas or guarantees. But before African Americans join the promotional team, they are going to want to hear more than the same vague promises they've heard numerous times before.

It's a little telling that the baseball backers have no information on how professional sports have impacted black communities and black businesses in other cities, including Charlotte. If these folks are sincerely interested in convincing black people that there is a pot of gold at the end of this rainbow, then they need to begin tailoring their presentation to the black audience.

Make no mistake about it, the May 5 vote is an important one. Professional baseball could be the key to growth and opportunity for everyone. The challenge is in coming up with a plan of action for spreading that good fortune, should it land in our laps.

If such a plan emerges, the opponents may have a tougher time defeating this initiative.



The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. To ensure the authenticity of the letter, you must include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to: Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636, Winston-Salem, NC 27102. E-mail address: wschron@netunlimited.net

Rally behind Columbian Heights

To the editor:

The Winston-Salem Coalition for the a Preservation of The Columbian Heights Neighborhood wishes the community would rally behind the preservation of the Columbian Heights Neighborhood. This old neighborhood is one thing both Black and White people wish to save as related to Winston-Salem State University and the community.

Remember the J.S. Hill House, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, demolished in 1981 to make way for a highway and the J.W. Paisley House was moved to 25th and Liberty Street. No one complained because we were not educated to the importance of saving Black History.

Can you also remember the death of 14th Street School in 1977, after being responsible for turning out generations of black leaders? We Black people wanted to see the building preserved but could not get ourselves together as to what to do.

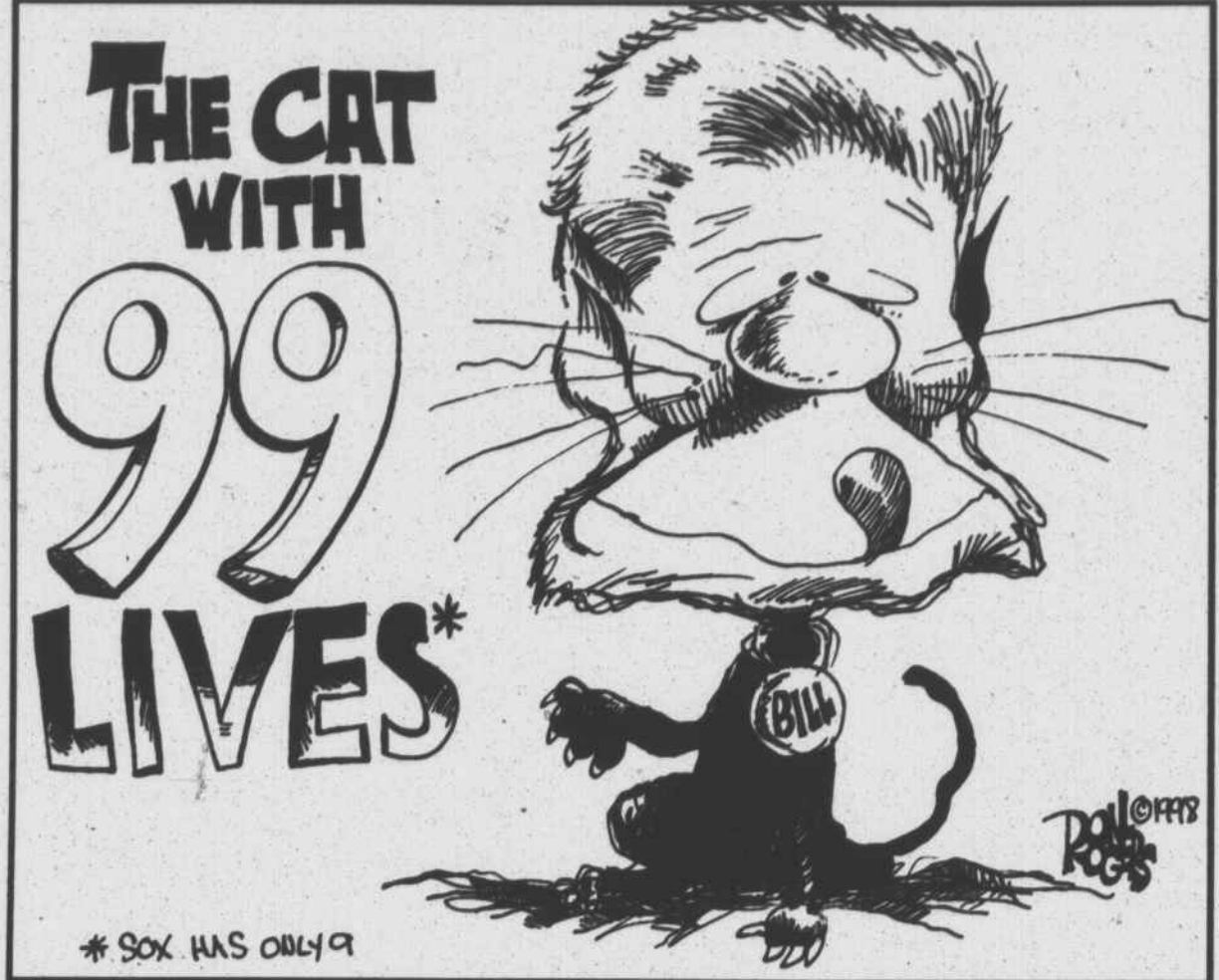
The preservation problems we are having in East Winston is, most of us don't recognize the historic importance of old homes and buildings, many look like just another piece of junk.

Many black landmarks have been destroyed even though their value was known by the community.

The Hill House, one of three Slater Industrial Academy Houses, a group of houses associated with early supporters of Winston-Salem State University were demolished under the name of progress.

The community would love to have saved the Hill House, but were told that we would be standing in the way of progress. The problem with the ideals of preservation and progress is perhaps clearest now at Winston-Salem State University, a Historical Black University that is a proud symbol of achievement in the community, but a university whose progress has come at a high historical price.

The University has swallowed the community that has grown by its presence. The 1989 Master Plan that Winston-Salem State University administrators so proudly speak of is intended to provided additional space for campus expansion. In the process, the old Columbian Heights Neighborhood developed by the founder Dr. Simon Green Atkins before the turn of the century as one of the nation's first residential neighborhoods for blacks, will be



destroyed.

The Columbian Heights Neighborhood is a very important piece of property.

It is the last vestige associated with local black history.

One would think that the University would want to update its 1989 Master Plan and interact with the community before the demolition of Columbian Heights Neighborhood begins.

The Winston-Salem Coalition for The Preservation of Columbian Heights requests a commitment from the Trustees of Winston-Salem State University, that the University support a Feasibility Study through positive public statements, assistance in access to university information, and refrain from any adverse action towards Columbian Heights Neighborhood until after the Feasibility Study has been presented to the Trustees and the community.

The Coalition: Larry Womble, Beauford Bailey, JaKay Ervin, Dewitt Neely, Henry Jones

It's gone too far

The separation of church and state has gone too far when our

schools are full of demonic activity.

If we have "God we Trust" on our currency, why can't we trust him when it comes to our schools. We found this nation under God's authority. When we put Jesus out of our schools in 1964, the devil came in with a storm.

Voluntary prayer can return to our public schools. For more information please contact the American Center for Law and Justice, P. O. Box 64429, Virginia Beach, Va. 23467-4429, or 804-579-2489 (toll free 1-800-732-0999).

Wanda H. Williams

You can't legislate morality

To the editor:

Election 1998 — the primary season has begun. Before we know it, the whole country will be back into the campaign mode as we head toward the General Election. Once again, the same old sound bites will saturate the airwaves and the news print.

One of those sounds will be an old time favorite — one that goes virtually unchallenged wherever it is tried. We've all heard it said and many of us have even repeated it

ourselves, "You can't legislate morality." Usually, this phrase is directed at people of faith in response to some so-called moral issue. Before accepting this statement at face value, consider the following:

1. All laws legislate somebody's morality. It is impossible to find a law, whether it concerns murder, theft, speeding, or even jay walking, that doesn't prove this statement to be true. Even the absence of laws is a reflection of somebody's morality.

2. All political ideologies demand that some system of laws be enacted to influence people's behavior, thereby allowing one group to impose its morality on another group. All political philosophies in existence, even total anarchy, validate this claim.

Keep this in mind the next time you hear bold assertions against legislating morality, as there are no exceptions to either of these two points. It makes no difference from which side of the political spectrum a law comes. Whether based on religion or not, whether conservative, liberal, or anything in between, as long as there are laws, or even a lack thereof, there will be legislation of morality.

It is impossible to have it any other way.

Jim H. Hill Jr.

Voices from the community...

Since this is black history month, what African-American figure from the past or present has made an impact in your life?



Anadri Chisolm

Although I admire many notable people of African descent, the one person who has had a direct impact on my life and has been a role model throughout my life is my mother, Brenda Joyce Chisolm. My mom is a trailblazer and myth breaker! As a single parent she not only exemplifies strong black womanhood, she modeled the idea of being an independent, competent and financially independent person. She has emphasized the value of education and hard work. Because of her, I strive to be the role model she has been to me in my life.



Deola Johnson

My father is the most influential person in my life because he supports a family of thirteen. My father is a hard working black man, to be admired by all men everywhere. He is the epitome of what a father should be, one who supports his family.



Malaika Edwards

Myrlie Evers-Williams just came and spoke the other week (at UNC-Greensboro). She's just a strong African-American woman...despite all the hardship she's gone through with her husband being murdered, she's still very influential in the community, she hasn't forgotten where she came from, she's making speeches, she's very articulate, she is just everything. I look at her and I say that's how I want to be when I get however old she is because she's got it together.



Monica Quarles

I identify with Rosa Parks because she was a strong independent woman. She didn't like to go with the status quo, she stood up for what she believed in.



Pam Wilson

When we think of people who are influential in our lives, especially historical figures, the person that comes to mind for me is Rosa Parks. I consider her my "shero" because of the way she took a stand and took a risk during the time she refused to give up her seat. From that stand the whole nation changed and I think that power she had that one minute has made the difference for all of us in America today.