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# THE CHRONICLE

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## A stamp on history

Act allows state taxpayers to support measure that makes judges more neutral

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Voting Rights Coalition is making a big push to get last-minute tax filers to support sweeping campaign reforms passed by the General Assembly last session.

There is a box on state tax forms this year that asks taxpayers to say yes or no to \$3 going into the fund for the Judicial Campaign Reform Act. For those who say yes, the \$3 will not be deducted from their tax returns. Saying yes, merely indicates to the state's Department of Revenue to send \$3 of taxpayer money to the fund. The Judicial Campaign Reform Act applies to candidates running for the state's two highest courts, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. Candidates who voluntarily sign up agree to greatly reduce their campaign fund-raising. In exchange they will be allotted money from the fund.

The Judicial Campaign Reform Act is the General Assembly's response to people who say that judges making important decisions should not be taking campaign contributions from individuals and organizations who can benefit from judicial decisions.

"Of all elected officials in this country, our judges should be impartial," said Linda Sutton, who is overseeing the Winston-Salem Voting Rights Coalition, which is made up of organizations such as the Forsyth County Democratic African American Caucus, the Black Leadership Roundtable and the NAACP.

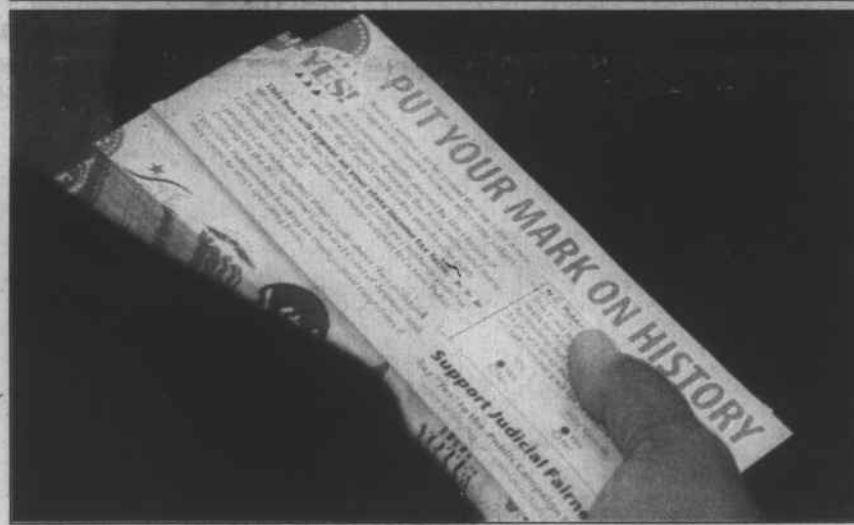
Sutton said volunteers will pass out fliers that advertise the fund and encourage taxpayers to give their support to it.

A million of the fliers have been passed out to taxpayers throughout the state over the last several months, according to Peter Walz of Democracy North Carolina. Walz was on hand last week as members of the Winston-Salem Voting Rights Coalition announced their plans to advocate on behalf of the fund at the city's branch of ComPro Tax in Northside Shopping Center.



Photos by Kevin Walker

Above, Peter Walz (left) of Democracy North Carolina talks with members of the Winston-Salem Voting Rights Coalition about the tax box on the state tax form.



Walz likened the reform act to a new kind of civil rights movement in which money would not be the deciding factor in what makes or breaks a candidate.

"I think this is a revolutionary change in our democracy," he said.

State Rep. Larry Womble said the act will open up the world of politics for more people.

"We are trying to create a level playing field because right now,

See Taxes on A4



Dove

## Rita Dove is coming to Winston

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The nation's youngest-ever poet laureate is expected to read some of her work in Winston-Salem April 22 at the Hanes Auditorium on the campus of Salem College.

Rita Dove was appointed poet laureate in 1993 and served two consecutive terms as laureate and consultant in poetry at the Library of Congress. Dove is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize in poetry for her collection of poems "Thomas and Beulah."

Her other books include "Yellow House on the Corner," "Grace Notes," "Selected Poems" and "On the Bus With Rosa Parks," which in 1999 was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year.

Dove has provided texts for musical works by Bruce Adolfe and Tania Leon, a symphony by Alvin Singleton, and she wrote a critically acclaimed verse drama, "The Darker Face of the Earth," which was performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1996.

She is married to German novelist Fred Viebahn and has one daughter, Aviva.

Dove is commonwealth professor of English at the University of Virginia and lives in Charlottesville.

The event is free and open to the public. The reading, which is cosponsored by Forsyth County Public Library and the Salem College Center for Women Writers, will begin at 7 p.m.

## Deja vu

About 650 people attend Do-Over Prom

BY PAUL COLLINS  
THE CHRONICLE

Some came to relive their high school days or because they like to dance and wanted to have fun. Some came because they missed their first proms or because their first proms were disappointing. And some came because they were curious about what a Do-Over Prom is.

The city's first Do-Over Prom was held Saturday night at the Millennium Center. The Do-Over Prom is a national trend that festival organizers thought would be a great beginning to the event season.

About 650 people, ranging in age from 21 to 65, attended the Do-Over Prom, said Stacie Brenner, one of the organizers of the event.



Photo by Paul Collins

Ray Talent is surrounded by (in no particular order) Barbara Weavil, Susan Ashley, Barbara Taylor, Karen Durrett and Sheila Tucker.

See Prom on A4

## A Gathering of Women celebrates fifth anniversary

COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

There was A Gathering of Women last Saturday as a local book club celebrated its fifth anniversary with a luncheon and book discussion of "Gender Talk: The struggle for Women's Equality in African-American Communities."

A Gathering of Women Book Club, created by Rose Norman, has been meeting once a month for the last five years. She says that she's grateful to have encountered other black women who share her love for reading. Over the years, says Norman, they've spent hours discussing a variety of titles of major and minor issues.

"I enjoy reading and I've

always loved to dialogue with others about what I've read. And it was this love of reading and sharing with others



Norman

that motivated me five years ago to bring together women who shared my passion for literature," said Norman. "The members of A Gathering of Women are both fully committed to reading as well as to one another."

Toy Beatty is one of the 11

See Club on A9



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