

# Hispanics, blacks share concerns about cops, housing

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

Last week's Beyond Soul and Salsa forum was yet another lively discussion addressing issues that affect — and afflict — African-American and Hispanic communities.

It was the seventh such forum held since 2005 by the city's Human Relations Commission, which is actively seeking to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions between the two communities. Although they often share the same neighborhoods and struggles, the relationship between "blacks and browns" has been distant and sometimes hostile.

There have been sparks at past forums as blacks, for example, have accused Hispanics of hoarding services and jobs, and Hispanics have labeled blacks unproductive and disrespectful.

Last week's forum — held Sept. 24 at Sprague Street Recreation Center — was informative and spirited rather than contentious.

One issue cleared up by City Council Member Evelyn Terry, whose Southeast Ward is the city's most racially diverse, is the misconception that Winston-Salem Police officers have the authority to question Hispanics about their U.S. residency status. Terry said Police Chief Scott Cunningham has made it clear that his department is not in the immigration enforcement business.

"Not at all," said Terry, who insisted law abiding Hispanics have nothing to fear from the police.

The Rev. Fermin Bocanegra, pastor of Iglesia



Forum panelists (from left) were Alvin Atkinson, Molly Beacham, Rev. Fermin Bocanegra and Gordon Patterson.

Cristiana Wesleyana in Kernersville, said there are other reasons for Hispanics to be leery of cops. He said he has had several instances where he was pulled over and his vehicle was searched by police for no reason. An African-American woman in the audience stood up and said that wasn't unique to Hispanics. She said her husband had been pulled over and had his vehicle searched several times.

There were other problems shared by both groups that came out during the forum, which focused on gangs, voting, immigration and home foreclosures.

Alvin Atkinson, the interim executive director of Winston-Salem State University's Center for Community Safety, sounded the alarm about the growing

incidents of gang violence. He said the number of gangs and their influence on other young people is expanding

rapidly. "Unless we can really put in the kinds of prevention and intervention program-

ming to go along with the suppression that goes along with what law enforcement does, we're really not going to stem that tide," said Atkinson.

Molly Beacham, of Democracy North Carolina, talked about the importance of voting in upcoming election.

Gordon Patterson of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) talked about housing issues. His department deals with discrimination claims in housing. He said its been hard to prove racial discrimination with predatory lending and sub-prime loans, which have resulted in droves of foreclosures.

"There are no doubts that statistics show that minority neighborhoods are hit hardest by this mortgage crisis and by predatory lending, sub-prime loans in general," said Patterson.

Bocanegra railed against immigration policies, which

he says has many Hispanics living in fear. He said a path to citizenship should be instated by elected officials.

"I want a reform. I pray for a reform. I hope for a reform that will be humane, just, that can look at each one as a human being," said Bocanegra.

Wanda Allen-Abraha, with the head of the Human Relations Department, said that demand to continue the series is strong.

"Every time we think we're finished, we get a request from several people to say 'Please don't stop now, the issues are ongoing,'" she said.

Future forums will likely be done with new moderators. Longtime moderator Stephen Hairston will end his term as president of the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP in December, and co-moderator Juan Suarez's term as chair of the Human Relations Commission will also end.

## News Clips

### Johnson will be A&T's fall graduation speaker

Greensboro Mayor Yvonne J. Johnson will be the keynote speaker for North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University's Fall Convocation at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 9, in Harrison Auditorium on the school's campus.

Johnson, a Greensboro native and Aggie alumnae who began her political career as a city council member in 1993, will also be the grand marshal for the university's homecoming parade on Saturday, Oct. 11, at 8 a.m.

A&T's Fall Convocation is free and open to the public.

### Scouts selling popcorn

Thousands of Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts in the Old Hickory Council, which serves an eight-county area in northwestern North Carolina, will be out knocking on doors through Oct. 26, taking orders for gourmet popcorn products in what has become an annual million dollar sale.

Orders placed for the eleven different popcorn products, including traditional butter microwave, cheese corn, caramel corn and others, will be arriving in early November and should be delivered to customers by Thanksgiving.

More than 70 percent of the purchase price of the popcorn goes to local Scouting activities and helps Scouts do things like attend summer camp, purchase camping equipment, buy merit badges and generally fund their pack and troop programs for the coming year.

Consumers are asked to contact their local Scouting unit to place their order or call the Old Hickory Council at 336-760-2900 to find out where they can purchase popcorn to support Scouting.

For more information about local Scouting you can go to [www.oldschoolcouncil.org](http://www.oldschoolcouncil.org)

### Woods graduates from Air Force training

Air Force Airman Ricarlo D. Woods has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.



Airman Woods

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Woods is the son of Gloria Woods of Winston Salem, and a 2001 graduate of East Forsyth High School.

### Brian Piccolo Golf Tourney

Wake Forest University students, alumni, faculty and staff will compete in a golf tournament Oct. 4 at Tanglewood Park to raise money for the Brian Piccolo Cancer Drive. The tournament is sponsored by the Theta Chi fraternity and the Interfraternity Council.

"Every person in the community has either known someone who had or has cancer, or has had it themselves," says Taylor Donner, a junior at Wake Forest and member of Theta Chi. "The Brian Piccolo events are great for raising money for cancer research because each event really does try to get the entire campus involved."

The 18-hole tournament will begin at 1 p.m. at the Reynolds Course at Tanglewood Park. All proceeds will go to the Wake Forest Cancer Research Center.

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*Sales are also effective at Hanes Mill Outlet at Marketplace Mall; selection is limited.*

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