

# Editorials & Comments

## Mayor's Veto Lacks Vision

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
Post Executive Editor

By a four to three vote, the Charlotte City Council endorsed district representation last Monday. However, in a surprise move Mayor John Belk used a little-known veto power to defeat the measure.

Council member Betty Chafin, author of the district representation proposal, and Neil Williams, who added a provision for a public vote on the plan next May 17, were both shocked by Mayor Belk's veto action.

Ms. Chafin said after the council meeting, "I was shocked at the mayor's action. I maintain that a majority of our citizens are in favor of this. We'd like to develop a plan to present to the people."

Council members Pat Locke and Harvey Gantt joined Ms. Chafin and Williams in voting to pass the measure. The general consensus of these supporters of the district plan proposal was that the plan would not hurt the relatively long way off consolidation effort and they would be maintaining their campaign pledges to support district representation.

The opponents of the plan, council members Jim Whittington, Joe Whithrow and Lou Davis took the view that the action was too hasty for a major change in government, it would set consolidation back five years and it might, in the words of

## Long Denied Justice

Last week we said in this column that Ronnie Long, the 20-year-old black youth convicted by an all white jury of first-degree rape and first-degree burglary of the widow of a prominent Concord textile executive, had little or no chance of getting a fair trial. Our conclusion was based on the fact that the all-white jury simply found it impossible to accept the testimony of Long's mother and girlfriend over that of the alleged rape victim, 54-year-old Sarah Judson McKinley Bost who has been described as one with "distinguished gray hair...refined mannerism (and) an upper class tinge."

The apparent denial of even the

## Alonzo Mackins Sets Example

The recent death of Alonzo Mackins Sr., was a great loss to the supporters of small business as well as to his family.

Beginning as a small loan merchant for neighbors and friends, and ending as a prominent County Bail Bondsman, Mackins overcame a limited formal education, the barriers of racial discrimination and the absence of capital for minority

Whittington, "be eroding the good local government we have." Mayor Belk's veto action was in support of these views expressed by the minority.

The POST believes that Mayor Belk was wrong in vetoing the will of the majority on this issue. Charlotte needs district representation to allow those sectors of the city that never has any voice in government to finally gain some political influence. For far too long seats on the City Council, the Mecklenburg County Commission and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board have been filled almost exclusively by the residents of southeast Charlotte. This has occurred because such people have the financial means to support a city-wide campaign. District representation would give people in other parts of the city a better chance to seek an office in local government. Furthermore, district representation would (1) give blacks and poor whites a greater chance for representation (2) make local government more responsive to community needs, and (3) set the stage for a smoother transition to consolidated government.

We hope that those council members expressing the minority views on this issue will see the wisdom in this suggestion and support Ms. Chafin's proposal because it shows vision and a commitment to practicing democracy in good government.

most elementary appearance of justice in this case is abundantly clear: the four prospective black jurors were dismissed, the assistant District Attorney's objectivity was limited because the victim had been his baby sitter as a child, over half of the jurors and two alternates or their spouses are employed by Cannon Mills, the jurors admitted having read about the trial at the time of their selection, and the victim's conflicting statements in identifying the accused. Is there any wonder that Long's mother asked upon hearing the guilty verdict, "Do you call this democracy?"

Let us hope that delayed justice will at least prevail in the granting of a new trial for Ronnie Long.

business ventures - as is now available - to achieve a position of eminence among small business men in the Charlotte area.

The POST salutes Mr. Mackins for his commitment and dedication to helping make Charlotte a better place for all to live and work.

Charlotte and the nation needs more "Alonzo Mackins."

## BLACK COMMUNITY SELF HELP - MUTUAL AID - SELF IMPROVEMENT - COOPERATION



Let's Put It Together

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### How To Make A Child A Criminal

RALEIGH-Want to make a criminal out of a child? Here's how.

While there may be other ways to do it, this formula is fail-safe, according to psychologists who work with children in North Carolina state training schools.

To make a criminal out of a child, they say, have him grow up in a poverty area - preferably a city - because this is where an estimated 75 percent of them come from.

Next, give him a fractured family, especially a father who split before or soon after the child was born. Then give him a mother who is pre-occupied with survival, and unoccupied or trained in mothering. Add a brother or sister or two who have already had trouble with the law.

Be sure that the family makes barely enough money to make ends meet, or less, so that the child can receive no private psychological help or counseling. Make sure his community has no or few helping resources available without charge.

When he's five or six, put the child in a public school academically designed for children with totally different cultural backgrounds and vocational aspirations than his.

When he begins to experience failure in school, keep promoting him along, so that he can become increasingly aware of how inadequate his school performance is, compared to his classmates.

Allow the child's frustra-

tions to simmer until they turn into hostility, then punish him if he expresses his feelings.

When he is academically two or three years behind his classmates and he increasingly skips school because he can't handle the day-to-day frustration, label him a "bad kid." Have the teachers and principals expect trouble from him. He'll soon sense what they expect and give it to them. By now, causing trouble is the only thing he can do well in school, except maybe sports. But since his grades are low, don't let him participate in sports. This will help tremendously in increasing hostility and its subsequent "bad behavior."

If he should try to meet his own needs, by stealing a baseball in the dime store so he can play ball; or a can of spaghetti from the grocer so he can have something extra to eat; or by breaking into a house with several friends so he can have some status with his friends (because status through anti-social acts is better than no status at all, the psychologists have discovered) or if he

refuses to go to school, because he can't handle the feelings that his failures there produce day after day, be sure that he comes before a judge with very limited choices.

Have the judge say "don't do it again" and send the child back home, or else have the judge send him straight to a state institution - out of sight and out of mind of the folks back home, away from his family and away from his friends.

If the judge's decision is to send the child back home, be sure again, that there are no community resources, such as alternate schools, counseling programs, recreational or social programs for the child to attend. Be certain that mental health resources in the community are not staffed to serve the number of adolescent teenagers who need their help.

If the judge's decision is training school, make sure that the school operates on a budget so tight that it has no or few qualified people able to meet the individual child's special needs. Keep psychological, recreational, education and vocational programs to a bare minimum. Keep staffs underpaid and overworked. Be sure that the kid has no chance at catching up academically, or learning an income-producing skill or getting help with his basic problems.

If the training school has few enough programs, the child will have enough time to learn more about crime from the more hardened offenders, those who have already climbed the ladder to armed robbery, larceny, and even organized crime. Give the child enough time there to succeed at refining his criminal arts.

When the child is released from training school be sure there are no follow-up programs. Send him back to his troubled family life; his troubled school life; and his troubled friends with no better understanding of himself or how to cope with his unchanging problems.

## TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

## Getting Out The Vote

It is very likely that the next President of the United States will get the votes of only about a quarter of the adult population. Nearly a quarter of the electorate will vote for the loser and about half of those eligible to vote won't even cast a ballot.

This is something that should concern every one of us, not just the campaign managers and the politicians. The fate of democracy is dependent upon citizen participation in the electoral process, and everyone loses if a handful of people wind up choosing our leaders.

One big reason for the small turnout is structural - the system is rigged to make it difficult for people to register. Some states have simplified postcard registration, but most throw obstacles in the way of citizens trying to register, making it especially difficult for working people who may have to lose a day's pay to travel to the county courthouse to register.

The case for a simplified national automatic registration system is clear. In some European countries, you're automatically registered and simply drop in to vote at convenient polling places whenever there's an election, without red tape. Last month, for example, over 90 percent of Swedes turned out to vote.

Many people claim that low voter turnouts are attributable to alienation and mistrust of government. If that's true, the parties are at fault. If both parties attempted to open their structures to include all people, if they reached out to the community to involve people in party activities, there would be far less alienation.

And if the candidates dealt with issues that really concerned the people and adequately imparted a vision of the kind of government they wanted, there would be more interest and involvement. So far neither candidate has managed to frame the issues in a believable way that would inspire support and trust among large numbers of the electorate, and the constant harping about how awful "those Washington bureaucrats" are only turns people off. After all, if candidates and officials say government is so terrible, why get involved, even if to vote.

The tragic element in all this is that non-voting is most prevalent among those who are most in need of exercising political muscle. Black gains are being threatened and a really large black voter turnout is needed to protect those gains through a display of political power. Poor people, whose numbers are growing, and young people, for whom few jobs are available, have the power to vote for those who pledge support for the programs needed and to vote against those who stand in the way of change.

But blacks, the poor, and the young all vote in smaller numbers than do the satisfied and complacent. That should surprise no one, since groups largely excluded from society can't be expected to lead in political participation.

But for black people, voting is of absolutely vital importance. A large black turnout this year will make both parties sit up and take notice of black needs and aspirations. The black vote may provide the margin that elects the next President, a number of senators, over a hundred congressmen, and countless local officials.

## as i see it

### District Election Concept

By Gerald O. Johnson

Possibly you've read or maybe heard some talk about setting up districts for electing council members for this great metropolis, Charlotte. Moreover, it is possible that you did not quite understand what the "district election concept" was all about. Well, I don't either but I am going to tell you about it anyway.

Currently, we elect city council members non-districtly. This simply means that candidates for council seats file with the city to run for the vacant seats. We go to the polls and vote for whom ever we desire to fill those seats.

The "District Election Concept" would divide the city into districts and representatives would be chosen from each district. That is, candidates for council seats would be chosen from districts. Only a person living in your district could be chosen to represent your district. Moreover, you would only be allowed to vote for people in your district.

The idea is much like representation in state and federal legislative bodies. Only people

from North Carolina can vote for whom they want to represent them in the senate. Furthermore, the person elected must be a resident of North Carolina.

So, this is the meaning of District Elections. Now the question becomes is there any merit to subdividing Charlotte into districts and holding district elections. The answer is, No. This No is not a blanket No. There are good points about district elections, but none worth changing our current system.

First, let us examine the purpose of district elections. District elections are used for large areas. Ideologies change somewhat drastically as distance comes between people. The lifestyles of people in Charlotte are quite different from the lifestyles of people in New York City. This is mostly due to the difference in environment and conditions of the two cities. Consequently, a person's thinking in New York would be quite different from the thinking of a person in Charlotte. We can bring this point closer to home and say that the same is true about Charlotte and Boone, North Carolina. Therefore, in a go-



Gerald O. Johnson  
vernmental system district representation affords one in these consequences better representation than open elections.

On the other side of the coin, a town like Huntersville is entirely too small to even consider district elections.

Why? Because the wants, needs, and priorities of the people in Huntersville would not vary enough to make district elections worthwhile.

So then the question becomes where does one draw the line as to what is big

enough to warrant district elections? A very difficult question to answer. But I say whenever there are more political factions than a council can deal with effectively, then it is time to break the city up into districts.

Charlotte is far from being big enough to be broken into districts. My personal opinion is district elections would benefit the candidate and not the voters. A candidate would benefit both financially and politically by district elections. As far as spending

creased. As far as you and I are concerned the district elections would restrict our choices. If we didn't like our district representatives we are stuck. Plus, this method could conceivably leave us without the best council. It is not inconceivable that the best candidates for city council money on his campaign, a candidate need only concentrate on his district, not city-wide. Thus, advertising cost are cut tremendously. Needless to say that since one-sixth of the city population would be voting for a candidate his chances for victory are in-

could come from the same district. Under the district election concept only one of these candidates would end up on the council. Charlotte is not ready to change over to this.

However, I do not agree with Mayor Belk's tactic of vetoing the action to bring to the public the opinions of those council members pushing for district elections. I think a good dog fight over the matter is in order. Both pros and cons should be brought to

the public's attention and then let the public decide.

RESERVED VALUES  
It never ceases to amaze me how we let certain things happen. The Watergate scandal has come and gone and those people convicted of the scandal are becoming rich. John Dean, Spiro Agnew, Richard Nixon, and the group are becoming rich off of a political scandal and we are letting it happen. Where have all our values gone?

## Jimmy Carter Steering

### Committee To Meet

North Carolina Jimmy Carter Steering Committee members State Senator Fred Alexander, Atty. Julius Chambers, and Rowe Motley are expected to attend the annual Democratic "Vance-Aycock" weekend, with guest speaker Democratic gubernatorial nominee Jim Hunt on October 15 and 16 in Asheville.

According to Ms. Betty McCain, chairman of the State Democratic Executive Com-

mittee, Hunt will be the featured speaker at the fund and will give his address at 6 o'clock p.m. on October 16 in the Asheville Civic Center.

The "Vance-Aycock" weekend, which will be held in most part at the Great Smokies Hilton Hotel, is a fund raising affair involving democrats throughout North Carolina and named after two distinguished Democratic Governors.

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