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Picketing Church's Fried Chicken at Five-Points are Annie Thompson, Elizabeth Stywalt, Melvin Twyne and Lillie Hill. (Photo by Eileen Hanson)

At Church's Chicken

McPherson Thinks Community

Should Support Strikers

BY EILEEN HANSON
Special To The Post
Fifteen thousand dollars is a lot of chicken dinners.

That's why Ann McPherson thinks the community should support the striking workers at Church's Fried Chicken who have been picketing the fast-food chain at 1734 W. Trade (at Five Points) since Sept. 19.

"Big businesses like Church's come into a totally black community and take out a lot of money, but they don't put anything back in," said McPherson, owner of Sports N' Stuff sportswear store across the street.

According to the strikers, Church's Five-Points shop takes in \$10-\$15,000 a week in sales. They feel they deserve a better shake for their long hours of work. They also want an end to what they call "discrimination against women and arbitrary personnel practices."

The strike started when Five-Points manager Lillie Hill was replaced by a new manager, Al Gentle, recently from Detroit.

"I've worked for Church's for four years and was managing for 6 months," said Hill. "I was responsible for the store from 8:30 a.m. until closing—2 a.m. on weekdays and 4:00 a.m. on weekends. They never gave me an assistant. I hardly had time to go home to eat or sleep."

For her long work week, sometimes 70 to 80 hours, Hill received \$213 a week take home pay. But when the company brought in Gentle, Hill claims she was reduced to assistant manager, cutting her pay by \$40 a week. She was fired when she and several other employees started picketing to protest



Storeowner Ann McPherson says big business should put more back into the black community. (Photo by Eileen Hanson)

what they call "discrimination against black females in management."

"Now Gentle has an assistant manager. Why wouldn't they give me some help?" asked Hill. "Just because he's a man and I'm a woman."

Gentle refused to comment to The Charlotte Post, saying the case was in court. He would only say, "They're out there because I fired them."

Lawyer for the strikers, Michael Sheeley, has filed 7 cases with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for alleged sex and race discrimination, and for retaliation against employees for carrying picket signs. Sheeley said at least 7 of the 15 striking employees were fired.

Spokeswomen for the group, Elizabeth Stywalt who works

at Church's Elizabeth Street store, claims women workers are especially hard hit.

"Mostly they hire women to work here because they don't pay enough to hold a man," said Stywalt. Like most fast-food chains, Church's pays \$2.90 an hour, the Federal minimum wage.

"We're out here so it won't happen to anyone else," Stywalt added. "It doesn't make sense to work 5 years and not have anything. It's just pitiful how they work you to death."

The strikers say 99 percent of the students at Johnson C. Smith University, and about 75 percent of the community is supporting their strike.

"The community should be aware of what's going on and support these young adults," said McPherson. She would like to see businesses contribute to the community by paying decent wages, providing better working conditions and supporting community efforts.

"Church's could contribute to Johnson C. Smith, or support the student newspaper with ads," she said. "Now they just come in, take money and leave."

Church's Fried Chicken, based in San Antonio, Tex., employs 6,000 people and has an annual revenue of \$225.4 million. There are 5 locations in Charlotte, employing a total of about 50 people.

CRC To Find Out

Does Housing Discrimination Exist?

by EILEEN HANSON
Special To The Post
Does housing discrimination exist in Charlotte?

The Community Relations Committee is trying to find out through the City's new Fair Housing Ordinance that went into effect Oct. 1. The new law gives the CRC power to investigate and prosecute cases where buyers or renters think they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion or nationality. Here's how it works.

John and Mary Brown (not their real names), a black couple living on the Westside, needed a larger home for their growing family. They found a "just right" house on the Eastside, closer to John's work.

They made an offer on the house, but the real estate agent told them that "someone else bid higher" when the Browns returned with a second offer, the actual asking price of the house, they were told, "another buyer has made

the same offer and the owner prefers to sell to them."

The next week the "For Sale" sign is still on the house. John and Mary smelled a racial discrimination.

Donna Davis (again fictitious) wanted to get her own apartment now that she has her first job. She called about a listing in the paper and made an appointment to see the apartment.

However, when she arrived the landlord told her, "I just rented it to someone else." Ms. Davis wondered if her skin color had something to do with the rejection. Again, the smell of discrimination.

Now, for the first time, people who suspect they have been victims of discrimination can get help. The first step is to contact the Community Relations Committee, Suite 410 Executive Building, 623 E. Trade Street (374-2424). The

office is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You have 90 days to file the complaint. The incident must have happened after

Evangeline

Redding Will

Speak Here

by EILEEN HANSON
Special To The Post
Evangeline Grant Redding, candidate for governor of North Carolina, will speak in Charlotte Friday, Oct. 22 at the Sheraton Center, 555 S. McDowell at 8 p.m. The program is free and open to the public.

Ms. Redding will be the keynote speaker for Black Awareness Week, sponsored by the Southeast Black Press Institute, an organization of black journalists and authors meeting in Charlotte this week.

The theme of the conference and of Friday evening's program is "Black Studies and Black Media in the 80's: Scholarship, Leadership and Institution Building."

Ms. Redding launched her campaign for the 1980 governor's election last June as a people's candidate. She has been active in civil rights activities for many years, and recently wrote a book about the Wilmington 10 which will be published this month.

She is also author of the book "Nothing: The Mentality of the Black Woman". It will be available at Friday's program, or at Dar es Salaam store at 7th and Tryon.

Ms. Redding's campaign manager in Charlotte, Earline Nelson, said, "Now that the mayoral primaries are over we are beginning to recruit volunteers for Ms. Redding's campaign. Anyone interested in working for her is welcome." Ms. Nelson may be reached at 334-9296.

On October 25 and 26 a "get acquainted program" is planned for Charlotte. Ms. Redding is a native of Tillery, N.C. and now lives in Oxford.



Miss Sonja Lee

...West Charlotte Senior

Lovely Sonja Lee

Is Beauty Of Week

by SHERLEEN MCKOY
Post Staff Writer

Sonja Lee, a senior at West Charlotte High School, is our beauty for this week.

In her spare time, Sonja said that she likes to play ping pong, listen to music and bake all kinds of pies and cakes. She also likes to act in comedy dramas, something she has been doing since the seventh grade.

Athletically-minded, Sonja stated that she loves all kinds of sports, particularly basketball. Last year she played varsity basketball for West Charlotte and anticipates playing again this year.

A forward on the team, she said, "I'm looking forward to basketball season this year. I'm expecting to do a lot bet-

ter." Sonja describes herself as a "real comical" person. "It's a rare time that you will see me really serious or with a frown on my face," she commented. A "fun person," Sonja said that she likes to engage in conversation and finds it "real easy to get along with others."

After graduation from high school, Sonja plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte the following fall to major in Psychology.

"I'm taking it (psychology) in school and it's my favorite subject," she explained. "I like working and dealing with people."

Then, if her good fortune gives her a chance to get her foot through the door, Sonja has other plans for the future. "If I get a chance to make it big, I'd like to have a show like Carol Burnett's," she said. (Sonja related that she inherited her comical nature from her mother).

One of the most exciting times in Sonja's life occurred last Friday when West Charlotte beat East Mecklenburg in football. "It's been a long time since we've won a game," she said happily.

Sonja is competing for the "Miss Carousel," crown this Thursday at the West Charlotte Auditorium. The winner will compete with queens from other high schools. The final winner will reign as queen and the others as princesses during the festive holiday seasons.

Sonja is also a member of the Jan Thompson Agency, a group which secures jobs for people in commercials and as models in catalogs. As a result of her affiliation with this group, Sonja appeared in a commercial last summer for Central Carolina Bank (shown in Raleigh and Durham) and in family portraits (not her own) at Ivey's stores.

Area Residents: Enlarging Streets Is Wrong Move

by VALERIE LYNCH
Post Staff Writer
Will the state rip up LaSalle Street and McArthur Avenue or will the citizens let them?

The North Carolina Department of Transportation representatives and Madison Madison International, a private engineering firm, will host a public hearing at Druids Hills Elementary School, Wednesday October 17, at 7:30 p.m., so that residents of these streets may voice their recommendations and opinions to proposed improvements to their area.

The Board has devised an Improvement Plan to reconstruct westside Charlotte's LaSalle Street and McArthur Avenue as its "1979-85 initial state project." The streets, which begin at Statesville Ave. and extend approximately one mile easterly to Graham Street will affect more than 171 families, in homes and condominiums.

Residents in the area say that if the improvement plan requires enlarging the streets into a four-lane highway then "it's definitely a wrong move."

A representative from the Public Affairs office of the Department of Transportation, Jean Dodd, said that the board is now in the process of updating the project but it could be subject to change. The total cost of the plan is estimated at \$535,000. However, it does not incorporate rise in construction cost. Compensation of the Environmental Impact Statement may calculate to be more by the time work begins.

Home owners and tenants shake their heads in disagreement to the idea of the State's possibility of widening the streets.

"We don't have much yard now," says Mrs. Ida Bell Gary, a resident for over 20 years on LaSalle Street. Presently, Mrs. Gary lives almost two blocks away from West Charlotte High School where constant traffic emerges in the area.

"There's enough traffic already coming through with the high school being here. If that's the plan, then I'm not for it!" Mrs. Gary said that she would rather have sidewalks built on both sides of the street than extra driving space.

The immediate reaction toward the potentials of extra traffic in the neighborhood turns the residents "off."

L.C. Coleman, a community worker, said "all they were trying to do is take the people's land and use it for commercial purposes—a highway."

He continues, "This is no improvement. Since 1974, 15 different people bought land on McArthur Avenue and had no idea that this would happen. This speculation is only for investment." Coleman mentioned the fact that a nursing home on McArthur Avenue would be "cut in half if a four lane highway came through." That business would definitely have to relocate.

He feels that the \$500,000 is too much money to spend on an isolated street. "We've never had that much of so-called improvement on any other street before. The state is just taking the citizens tax money to build a highway on their land. People on these streets do not speak out for themselves to officials. They especially do not speak out when they are not informed. The home owners on these streets didn't know a thing about this," Coleman said.

Many of the residents on LaSalle Street including Mr. & Mrs. George McDonald and James Davis say that there is entirely too much traffic now. Especially when ball games are played at West Charlotte High School. They see no real need to widen the streets. Davis said, "The only street proposition I'd suggest would be sidewalks so that the children can walk on them going to school."

Benjamin Walker, an 18-year resident who lives across Statesville Ave. on McArthur Ave. said, "The only improvements we need is curbs and gutters as well as sidewalks."

According to another McArthur Ave. resident, Lee Patterson, the city had deleted a short cut to Graham Street from McArthur Ave. into a dead end. "It's peaceful now that those big trucks do not come through here. Besides they tear up our streets. And

four lanes would end our peacefulness. Leroy Kelly said that he would like a dead end on both ends of McArthur Ave. "Anyway if they did put a four lane highway here, where will we live?" It's evident that the citizens on LaSalle Street-McArthur Ave. area disagree with the North Carolina Department of Transportation's plan of improvement.

There has been no sign of protest but the citizens agreed to make their grievances known at the October 17 meeting.

NAACP Sets 36th

Annual State

Convention

Kelly Alexander Sr., president of the North Carolina National Association for the Advancement of Colored People announced this week the thirty sixth annual state convention will be held in Greensboro, N.C. Nov. 8-11.

Through workshops, discussions and presentations, state branches will receive information on implementing policies and procedures.

A "vigorous and aggressive" action program for the 1980s will be launched to raise public awareness to problems affecting the black population, disadvantaged and poor according to Alexander.

"NAACP Priorities In A Time of Economic Crisis" is the convention theme.

DIRTY-TALK

The trouble with life, you're halfway through before you realize it's one of those DO IT YOURSELF DEALS.