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Volume 10, Number 15

THE CHARLOTTE POST - Thursday, September 20, 1984

Price: 40 Cents



CONNIE BARRINO
... "Beauty of the Week"

Connie Barrino Wishes All People Could Possess "Same Love" For God!

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

It's been said that the true powers behind major business dealings in the U.S. are the secretaries. These women, and sometimes men, are known for carrying out the most detailed responsibilities that make all transactions run smoother. And a secretary like Connie Barrino, who loves her job, is certainly an asset. Says Barrino, "I enjoy the responsibility of taking the pressure off my boss." Employed with Barclay's American Business Credit, she adds, "I'll take the initiative to do things before I'm asked."

Though she thoroughly enjoys her work, Barrino intimated that for a while she felt there was a missing link in her life. Recently married, she claims that her husband, Dennis, has filled that void. "I'd recommend marriage to anyone," enthused Barrino, adding that her marriage is one of the finest things

in her life. "You must put God first," she advises on what constitutes a good marriage. Shared interest and communication are also extremely important, Barrino emphasizes. "You have to make each other the center of each others life." "To be a wife is not always easy," Barrino admits. But she gladly relates that her mother's help sees her through any rough spots. "She's there for me at all times," she assures.

The daughter of Rev. J. C. Robinson, Barrino relates that her father has also been an inspiration in her life. He is in fact the one person she most admires. "He's a fair-minded, Christian man," she describes, "any hurts or knocks he's experienced in life have not stopped him from preaching and teaching. He often neglects himself for others."

Her father's influence is reflected in Barrino's active involvement in his church, Mt. Moriah Baptist in Matthews. She is the church's part-time secretary, general secretary of the Ushers department, an usher, adult choir member and Sunday School teacher of the primaries. "In order to serve God you must be active in his work," this week's

beauty explains. "I want to stay busy in the church," Barrino confirms. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

She also feels that her presence in the church serves to uplift others. "Sometimes just being there offering a smile and pleasantness is all that is necessary to help someone," she tells.

For hobbies Barrino enjoys bowling, shopping and decorating her apartment and househunting with her husband. She and her husband also enjoy taking vacations together. They've traveled to Gatlinburg, Tenn., Disney World in Florida and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Barrino admits that her dream vacation is to languish on a cruise to the Bahamas.

Her dream for life, she says, is to one day have a nice home, start a family and continue to live as a good Christian. "And finally to reach Heaven and hear God say, 'Well done,'" confessed Barrino.

"I'd hope that all people could possess the same love for God that I have," she concludes concerning the state of the world. "If that was possible then they would realize not to judge others by color, race or background and God's love will abound throughout the world."

A Real Concern City Tends To Have Two Shopping Groups

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

Amidst the upheaval of downtown construction and dislocation, there have arisen charges that minority businesses have been discriminated against and that the city is trying to establish a two-tiered society in the downtown area - the affluent who work in the office buildings and shop in the Overstreet Mall, and those on the street level who rely on public transportation. Is this, in fact, the plan for downtown Charlotte?

"Just the opposite," insists Mike Schneiderman, Director of the Charlotte Uptown Development Corporation. The CUDC, which became operational in 1979, contracts with the city to spur economic growth in the area made up of First, Third and Fourth Wards - "everything within the loop of Independence, Brookshire, and 277," according to Schneiderman, the CUDC's first and only Executive Director.

Although he admits that the city has recently tended to have two different shopping groups - the affluent Overstreet Mall shoppers and the less affluent bus riders on the street, Schneiderman maintains the trend evolved without pre-planning and is now "a real concern" for the city.

In fact, it was this concern that led to the development of the transit mall project in an effort to bring people back into the street, according to the Development Director.

"One of the prime reasons for the present activity," Schneiderman reveals, "is to get it back in focus, to get people on the street so there won't be two societies. We're trying to make downtown more people-oriented, more so than it has been, as well as bringing prosperity to the community."

He blames poor communication for the notion, held by some, that the city wants to "hide the people who ride the buses." "Communication is important," Schneiderman maintains. "If people are thinking the idea was to move people away, that is a misconception."

The move to separate pedestrians from vehicles began in the sixties, according to Schneiderman. The



Mike Schneiderman
... Development Director

prime reason for the thrust, he explains, was to make the street more usable for cars and safer for people. Over time, people moved inside, but this was not a planned occurrence, he insists.

The transit mall, originally not scheduled for completion until 1985, is now expected to be ready by Thanksgiving Day. The mall area, encompassing nine blocks on Tryon from Stonehall to Eighth and two blocks on Trade from Church to College Streets, will feature wider sidewalks for increased pedestrian traffic, attractive bus shelters, information kiosks, and benches. There will be one bus lane and one automobile lane in each direction. This is expected to facilitate the movement of traffic through the downtown area. Bus stops will be dispersed up and down the street rather than congregated at the square to lessen congestion.

The Central Charlotte Association is under contract with the city to promote the new mall. The Association, a division of the Chamber of

Third in series

Commerce has met with area merchants and has attempted to minimize the negative effects of present construction on business.

Dorothy Waterfill, Mall Coordinator for the Central Charlotte Association, admits that some businesses initially experienced construction-related problems, but "that seemed to ease with better weather," she says. "It's been interesting," the Mall Coordinator remarks. "It's been mixed. Some (businesses) are having their best year ever."

The Association has been behind a variety of activities designed to bring people into the construction area. "We want to make it fun to be uptown," Waterfill notes. Among the activities the Association has planned have been the St. Patrick's Day Parade, the SummerStage series, and the "VolleyMall" games on Tryon St. every Wednesday.

In addition, the Association has put up signs reminding people in and around the downtown area that businesses are open. Merchants have been working together to do some extra advertising. Waterfill reveals. She also keeps businesses posted on upcoming activities so that they can coordinate themes in their advertising.

What does the future hold for downtown Charlotte? Will the opening of the transit mall on Thanksgiving Day mark a new beginning in the economic history of the city, or is it already too late to revitalize the area one merchant referred to as "a waste retail-rite"? A year ago a zoning ordinance encouraging storefront retail in new construction was passed. This will eliminate any additional blank walls going up without pedestrian access.

If it's not already too late, the transit mall will increase retail trade on the street. The city's concern about the existence of "two societies" downtown will be eased. And the hopes of planners and developers will be realized. But the creation of a classless downtown society is highly unlikely.

For Al Russo, of Brownline Jewelers, who continues the fight to keep his business, there is still hope. For the many others who have been ill-affected by the odyssey of progress in the downtown area over the past decade, the vision of the mall is not their vision. It can only be hoped that the benefits to be derived from the upheaval of central Charlotte will accrue to the city as a whole, and not to a privileged few.

Ruby Houston Assumes Responsibilities For Controversial Head Start Program

By Teresa Simmons
Post Managing Editor

For the first time September 17 Ruby Houston faced the responsibilities of being Director of the Bethlehem Center Head Start.

With six components: Education-Career, Social Service, Parent Involvement, Transportation and Maintenance, Health-Nutrition and Handicapped; and the responsibility of organizing classes for over 400 children in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area Ms. Houston was faced with a hectic but rewarding task.

Ms. Houston replaced Gerald Horn as director. Horn resigned for personal reasons.

She would like to continue implementing as many improvements in all Head Start components as possible. Previously, Ms. Houston was director of the Education-Career Development department of Head Start. She began working with the program in 1981. In 1982 the program closed and Bethlehem Center became the new sponsor. She assumed her same position in February of 1983.

She has always been interested in the welfare of young children. At Barber-Scott College she received her B.A. Degree in Sociology. From



Ruby Houston
... Head Start Director

there she earned her Master's Degree in Education from the University of N.C. Charlotte. She has worked as director of the Davidson-Cornelius Day Care Center and as instructor in the Central Piedmont Community College Title XX Child Care Training Project.

As a child her play often involved

her being a leader. Today her work involves children and her goal is to assist them in becoming special leaders in their own rights, as well as developing potential talents.

"I've always been interested in young children and helping people help themselves. I feel very strongly about helping to develop young minds."

At various times in the Head Start's history critics have questioned its specific needs and viability. But time has shown that children do benefit from early instruction.

"The most important developmental years for children are between the ages of one and six (Head Start children are ages three to five). It is very important that children are offered various experiences such as Head Start. They can be better prepared academically and for community life," Ms. Houston commented.

The staff of 22 teachers and 22 teachers' assistants focus on meeting the total developmental needs of each child, Ms. Houston emphasized. Teachers have two years of experience and/or a degree in child development. Assistants have one year experience in a



The modern housewife's meals are well THAWED OUT.