

Editorials



The Charlotte Post

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Signals From The Primary

In last Tuesday's primary elections, Charlotte's voters began the two-month long process of deciding who will be their guardians of the public purse, policy makers for public services, forecasters of the City's future, and quite possibly trendsetters by being leaders in the Carolinas' largest city for the next two years.

However, even before the first primary ballot was cast, it was known that some change in the make-up of the City Council was evident because two incumbents had announced that they would not seek reelection. Five-term Republican at-large member Minette Troesch and two-term District 1 Democrat Pam Patterson are not seeking reelection.

Vying to win the at-large Council seat being vacated by Ms. Troesch is newcomer Jeff Williams, the fourth highest vote getter in the Democratic Party at-large seat primary. Williams' 2,496 votes left him far behind frontrunner Al Rousseau with 8,654 votes, five-term District 3 Council member Ron Leeper with 8,103 votes in his first at-large bid, and incumbent Cyndee Patterson with 6,118 votes. These Democrats will face a formidable Republican foursome headed by incumbent Richard Vinroot and former County Commissioner Gus Campbell in the November general elections.

The primary will result in some new faces at the district level. Businessman Stan Campbell, a razor thin 36 vote loser to fellow Republican District 5 incumbent Ann Hammond two years ago, turned the tables and won by a 1,137 to 981 voter margin on Tuesday. In the second of two most competitive District races, District 7 incumbent Republican Gloria Fenning's 1,111 votes were enough to stop Vic Bell with 950 votes.

Fenning's victory is tantamount to winning the November 3 election because she has

no Democratic Party opposition. Likewise, in Districts 1 and 2 the Democratic primary winners will have no opposition. The west-side's District 3 will have a new representative for the first time in a ten-year period when Ron Leeper was elected as the district's first Council member in 1977. Ella Scarborough, a former school board candidate, won District 3's democratic primary in a field of three with 931 votes to 423 for City Sanitary worker Samuel L. Carr and 96 votes for Paul Recard, a five-year City resident and owner of a painting company.

Likewise, incumbent District 2 Council member Charles Dannelly's 1,584 vote win over City policeman Steve Barker with 905 votes assures him a November 3 election win because there is no Republican opposition.

In the District 1 Democratic primary, Bob Davis' 1,139 votes and Dan Clodfelter's 1,009 votes led a field of five and puts them in a primary run-off because no one had a clear majority of the votes cast. Davis is a public school principal and a former chairman of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party. Clodfelter is current chairman of the Planning Commission.

In the lackluster Republic mayor primary, former one-term Council member Sue Myrick easily defeated Samuel E. McClure in a lopsided 5,767 to 205 margin.

Now it will be up to the hopefully larger voter turnout on November 3 to vote for the candidates of your choice. In so doing you will also be expressing your concerns about the issues of roads, alleged inefficiency in government and many related issues as we approach the 1990s. Vote on November 3 to show your sense of responsibility, support and interest in your city, your community and your home and family.

Issues And Common Sense

As general election time approaches, some candidates for public office begin to seek straws and propose simplistic solutions to complex problems in the hope of swaying voters. Unfortunately, too, many voters are too often swayed by such emotional appeals that fall far below the level of common sense and or a thoughtful analysis and understanding of the issues.

For example, much of the heated discussion about roads appears to miss the central point of who has the responsibility for providing roads, at what level and what responsibility does the private sector have. The city or state could unrealistically provide numerous six lane roads to get the thousands of cars downtown in the morning and out in the evening in a somewhat more timely manner than at present.

However, as we expand these roads we simply have a supply side economics situation in that motor vehicles will fill these roads to near capacity just as they are now in those rush hours of 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. daily

except on weekends. Economics of scale do in fact make it unrealistic to try and build more and more roads to meet heavy demands for only four hours per day, five days per week. Thus, more roads as such is not the solution unless it is done in concert with some action and sacrifice by those who use such roads.

Reduced to the basic point, if the 60,000 plus people who rush to work in downtown Charlotte were on staggered work schedules with one-third beginning work at 7:45 a.m., one-third at 8:30 and one-third at 9:15 we could, with some fine tuning, reduce the traffic jams at the peak travel hours by two-thirds. This too may sound overly simplistic. However, with a public/private joint commitment, our traffic problems could be eased somewhat without spending one dime. Planned city growth, more efficiency in government and private business and a better disbursement of the public schools could be achieved in a more healthy living environment if we begin to think and then act on these things.

N.C.'s Poor Children Are Worse Off Now

Guest Editorial
By John B. Turner

There are more poor children in North Carolina today than there were 20 years ago, and in many respects they are worse off. That is the discouraging news in a recent report issued by the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute.

A quarter of the children in our state live in poverty. This should concern thoughtful North Carolinians. Studies have shown that children growing up in poverty are more likely to have low self-esteem and excessive rates of high school dropout, school failure, teenage pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency.

While the proportion of children in poverty has been growing, many vital programs designed to help poor children have been cut back. Eighty percent of the funding for poverty-related programs is federal funding. Thus, it is not surprising that some of these programs have suffered drastic cutbacks in recent years, while other have not kept pace with inflation.

The sharp 14 percent drop in funding for child welfare programs overall is ironic, given recent attention to the plight of abused and neglected children. The cuts mean, among other things, that county social services workers in North Carolina have fewer resources even though the

number of abused children has increased 18 percent or more in recent years.

The main program in North Carolina to help poor families with children meet their basic needs is Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). That program provides \$2.24 per child per day, which is one-third of the poverty level. And only one of every three eligible poor children actually receives this help. Fewer families received support from AFDC in 1986 than in 1984.

The school breakfast and lunch program, the main child nutrition program, reaches fewer poor children today. Budget cutbacks and eligibility changes have resulted in 37,000 poor children in North Carolina being cut out of the program.

For poor children, the lack of health care can be devastating in terms of both social and financial costs. Almost half of the teenagers giving birth in North Carolina in 1985 had little or no prenatal care, and 1,485 had low birth-weight babies. Despite increased state funding for child health care, the North Carolina infant mortality rate continues to be one of the highest in the nation.

What can be done about this bleak situation, in which one of every four children in North Carolina is exposed to a grim and harsh subsistence on the fringe of society

and a second-class chance at life in their early years?

The ideal solution, of course, would be for parents to have jobs that allow them to adequately support their children. But many parents are not employed and many others who do work are paid a minimum wage which is so low that they are still in poverty. In fact, 60 percent of the children in poverty in North Carolina are in families where at least one parent is working. We need minimum wages to be established above the poverty level.

When jobs are not available to allow parents to support their children, we must ensure that there are programs set up to alleviate the harsh effects of poverty. Then we must be sure that they are actually reaching the children for whom they were intended.

As individuals, we have an obligation to ensure that our communities respond to the needs of our most vulnerable children. We can bring children's needs to the attention of county commissioners, school board members, legislators, and the heads of private and public agencies. We can help as volunteers and contributors to private and public programs. As John Dewey once said, it is the test of a society to have citizens who want for other children what they want for their own child.



Theory On The Existence Of Hate Groups

I have always found the history of slavery to be a very interesting and thought provoking subject.

The one lesson it has taught me is to be leery of the obvious. This lesson has caused me to develop my own theory on hate groups.

The theory finds its roots in the history of slavery and current events surrounding subversive activities of hate groups.

Black people were not the first people in this country to be used as slaves.

The first were probably the Irish. But, white skinned slaves were difficult to track, because they blended in with the rest of the society, if they escaped. Moreover, they were not well adapted to working in the sun.

The Chinese replaced the Irish to make it easy to identify slaves. Their skin color and Asian features made them easily identifiable, if they escaped. Unfortunately, their small body builds caused them to tire easily under the heat of the sun. Thus, the crop production was not what was desired.

Blacks were discovered as the ideal race for slavery. We were easily identifiable from the rest of the population and we were strong. Our skin color made us less vulnerable to the rays of the sun.

Once Blacks were introduced to the Southern cotton farms, the South began to prosper. The increased cotton production caused both cotton and Slave trading to become key ingredients of the countries Gross National Product.



As the cotton and slavery prospered, it attracted unscrupulous individuals into the marketplace. These individuals used whatever means available to find and bring Africans to this country. They began to invade villages, wreck towns, and literally steal strong Black males and females for slave trading. Only the strong could survive the long boat ride from Africa to America and still be fit for trading.

The unscrupulousness and viciousness of obtaining slaves started a human rights movement by some white religious factions.

This resistance was met with violence. People were killed for trying to put an end to slavery.

Blacks were classified as sub-human creatures to stem the rising tide of resistance. Hate groups were formed to carry out the will of those who stood to lose the most; the cotton producing farmers.

A calculated movement of brainwashing white America into believing that Black skinned people were dumb, ignorant, and animalistic took root.

Newly formed hate groups used forceful methods to help convince any reluctant believers. The rest is documented history.

The key point in this lesson is hate groups are used and sometimes formed to maintain an economic status quo.

An interesting corollary can be drawn between this theory and the Greensboro shoot out several years ago that resulted in five Communist leaders being killed.

The Communist leaders were very active union organizers. They had been actively seeking to organize unions in several counties in the State. The State of North Carolina does not exactly roll out the red carpet welcoming unions to come on down.

What makes this so interesting is with all the shooting that took place, in what appeared to be a frenzy, the individuals killed were key to the union movement.

The whole incident was built up as a "Klan hates Communists and Black folks" confrontation.

But, I wonder if there couldn't be more to this whole thing. The open public violence is not characteristic of these hate groups. The chosen targets seem not to be coincidental. I wonder if this could be another case of using hate groups to disguise the intended purpose.

This is just a theory and has no factual research to support any of the allegations. But the incidents surrounding the shoot out and the subsequent handling of the case leaves room for doubt.

Need For Jobs Is An Issue Of Fairness

The racist term "underclass" became fashionable in social science circles about 15 years ago and is back in the news again since the release of the New York City-based Committee for Economic Development report last week which sounded an alarm that the deteriorating public education system was creating a "permanent underclass of young people" in the United States.

There is no doubt that this country's educational system is not educating our youth, not preparing them for productive and prosperous futures. But the failure of the school system is premeditated; it's by design. Our society is forced to keep a mass of people unskilled and uneducated because it has no jobs and no opportunities to offer large numbers of our people. The policy is to keep people unemployed and underdeveloped.

What is the implication of this term "underclass"? It suggests that the poorest people in our society, including very large numbers of people of color, are not a part of the working class of America. It sets up a division among working people - it means that the working class is divided into the "stable," "respectable," "working" elements and the "disreputable" poor-the untouchables-typically people of color. It indicates that the poorest members of the working class are not really workers, and are therefore not the problem of "real" working people but parasites on them. Underclass is thus a fundamentally divisive term; intentionally or not, it is used to keep working class people separate from and in fact antagonistic towards each other - in their communities, in the church, even inside the family.

As our economy deteriorates, propaganda about a "recovery" notwithstanding, increasing num-

bers of working class men and women do not work for a wage. That is because our failing education system does not teach the skills that would make them worth hiring, something even the corporate-sponsored Committee for Economic Development acknowledges, though even if the educational system was more productive, there are not enough jobs to go around.

Millions in this country need and want jobs. Millions need and want job training, a decent education, quality support services for working mothers, day care, and on and on. But in spite of the fact that the majority of Americans favor these programs, they are not enacted as public policy. Social policy is increasingly at odds with what the people want because social policy is not defined by the majority of the people, but by a small and immoral minority.

"The Democratic and Republican monopoly...serves very specific interests--those of white corporate America."

The probable confirmation of federal appeals Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court is a case in point. Ronald Reagan's nominee is a dyed in the wool reactionary whose tenure on the Court guarantees decades of anti-people, pro-big business decisions that would savage the already jeopardized rights of poor and working people, Blacks, women and gays in this country. Yet despite the massive grassroots opposition to his nomination, and despite the fact that there is a Democratic Party majority in the Senate where the nomi-



nation will be decided, Bork has an even-money chance of being confirmed later this month.

Why? Because the small and immoral minority--the Democratic and Republican monopoly which controls public policy in this country--serves very specific interests--those of white corporate America. The monopoly of the so-called major parties leaves the majority of the people out of the formulation of public policy just as pro-people candidates are excluded from the electoral process by ballot access requirements for independents and third parties that are virtually impossible to meet and just as it excludes the people themselves from the process. Of the 76 countries in the world which have some form of participatory democracy, the United States ranks 75th in voter participation. Half the country's registered voters did not vote in the last national election. That two-party monopoly is inherently unfair.

I am convinced that a crucial struggle in the 1980s and beyond will be the struggle for fair elections, which will engage the lack of democracy in this country and the failure of the political system to translate our desires and demands for jobs and services into public policy.