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THE CHARLOTTE POST

"The Voice Of The Black Community"

Volume 13, Number 28

THE CHARLOTTE POST - Thursday, December 10, 1987

Price: 50 Cents

Black Children Bear Burden Of Busing

By Herb White
Post Staff Writer

Pupil reassignment has been in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools, but something can be done to refine the program to relieve the burden busing puts on black students, a school board member says.

Rev. George Battle said he thinks black children have taken on most of the busing burden since it was ordered in 1970 and the school system and community should look at solutions to ease the problem.

Of the 49,996 students who ride buses to school, about 12,000 are bused for desegregation purposes, the majority of them black, stated Myra Joines, Public Information Director for the school system.

Currently, most busing takes place in Mecklenburg's 71 elementary schools. Students in grades K-3 are sent to schools in predominantly white areas while students in grades 4-6 go to schools in black neighborhoods.

"It takes a lot more numbers to desegregate the elementary schools than 10 high schools," Joines said.

Battle said residents, black and white, who want better education and shorter bus rides are right in challenging the current system to be more equitable. Black parents have a special interest in the matter because their children are bused in

greater numbers.

"To study the pupil reassignment plan is healthy," Battle said. "Blacks have borne a greater share of busing in the community and we're looking at ways that no additional burden will be placed on the black community."

Battle suggested that the current pupil assignment system, which was instituted in the 1970's, may be in for some changes to accommodate the demographic nature of the county.

With newly annexed areas in the southeast and more blacks moving out of the predominantly black westside, the school system has struggled to keep the racial balance intact. Since more people are moving into the white southeast, more schools have been built in that area while inner-city schools have been closed, Battle explained that the situation forces more blacks to take longer bus trips to school.

In the past, the majority of black people lived on 10 percent of the land," he said. "We need to look at the demographics of places like Hampshire Hills, which is majority black, and Hidden Valley. As the economy grows and gets better, blacks will be more spread out."

Black ministers and organizations like the Urban League and NAACP, have voiced concern over the closing of schools in



White children's parents are concerned about having their children bused long distances: like these children who are bused to Barringer Elementary School located off West Blvd. However, officials point out that black children are bused in greater numbers.

Rights Activists: Desegregation May Fail

CHARLOTTE (AP) — Civil rights activists and other prominent blacks say desegregation of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will fall unless officials shorten bus rides for black children, stop closing inner-city schools and stop building new schools in mostly white suburbs.

The black community is becoming increasingly alarmed at what appears to be a retreat from this community's commitment to a

desegregated school system and academic excellence for all of the 73,000 students," said the Rev. Rudolph Seth, head of the local Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

"Whites can be bused just like us," said state NAACP President Kelly Alexander Jr., repeating a phrase used in the 1960s when blacks fought for desegregated schools.

The group of about 10 representatives of some of Charlotte's most influential black organizations called Thursday for more equity in the pupil assignment plan and said the quality of education is declining.

"If we fail to get equity, then we fail to get quality and the community has failed," Alexander said at a news conference.

The activists urge an Superintendent R. Lee Smith to encourage community debate on such issues as pupil assignment, career development and segregated classes within desegregated schools. Recently, parents from southeast Charlotte's Park Crossing neighborhood argued that the school system faces a crisis of

quality that could be improved if busing for desegregation were eliminated.

The focus on the pupil assignment plan comes a year before a 1988 school board election in which five of the nine seats on the board will be up for reelection. It is likely to remain a key issue.

Public Meeting Planned On Beatties Ford Widening Project

A public meeting has been scheduled by the City Engineering Department on Tuesday, December 15, 1987 at 7:30 p.m. in the West Charlotte High School cafeteria, 2219 Senior Drive. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed widening of Beatties Ford Road from Interstate 85 to Capps Hill Mine Road. This road widening project is needed to improve safety and reduce congestion.

The meeting is the first scheduled for the project and will begin the public involvement process used by City Engineering staff in the planning phase of major roadway projects. At the meeting, City staff will present the current status of the project and offer residents an opportunity to identify issues associated with the project.

Citizens interested in obtaining additional information about the Beatties Ford Road widening project should contact Steve Beasley, City of Charlotte Engineering Department, 301 South McDowell Street, Suite 400, Charlotte, N.C.

Burkette Named Barber-Scotia President

By Russell Clark
Post Staff Writer

After searching more than a year for a leader to replace Dr. Mable Parker McLean as president of Barber-Scotia College, the school has found a successor. He is Dr. Tyrone L. Burkette who is currently serving in Raleigh as the Executive Synod with the North Carolina Presbyterian Church.

One of the first things Dr. Burkette projects to do when he takes over on July 1, 1988 is to learn as much as he can about the school's rich heritage.

"I plan to sit down and have an in depth conversation with Dr. McLean to become more acquainted with mission of the college and its history. Beyond that, I want to get acquainted with the preachers, politicians and the entire Concord Community so that we can establish a good rapport with one another," said Burkette in a telephone interview from his Raleigh office.

"I think it's also important to be very accessible to all students, the media and all persons interested in the College. Describing his role as the president at the small predominantly Black college, Burkette says he must take charge to move the school ahead. "As president, I must inspire students to move ahead to be a leader who creates an atmosphere that will motivate people to work well together to get things done."

As a 42-year-old native of De-

troit, Michigan, he is a graduate of Livingstone College in Salisbury where he earned his B.A. in Sociology. His educational background also includes a Masters in Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Ga. He later gained his Ph.D. at the United Theological Seminary in St. Paul's, Minn. He is an ordained minister and the former pastor of the Community Presbyterian Church in Portsmouth, Va. and the Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Like a pilot of a vessel making a flight on the clouds of Higher Education, Dr. Mable Parker McLean has steered the 119-year-old college for the past 12 years. A spokesman for the school reported that she is retiring in July but she could not be reached for comments on her future plans.

The historical Independent College is located between Cabarrus and Corban Avenues in Concord. For over a century, its rolls have been filled with high achievers. The College was founded in 1867 by Rev. Luke Dorland, who had been commissioned by the Presbyterian Church to establish an institution in the South to prepare and train young Negro women as teachers and social workers.

A long way from its humble birth, "Scotia" is an accredited four-year, liberal arts college which admits students without regard to sex, race, creed or na-



Burkette

tional origin. Although the school is predominantly black, Dr. Burkette feels its must represent the entire community.

"We live in a multi-racial and cultural society, so we must reflect and represent the entire community," points out Burkette. "We all learn from each other no matter what race we are. It's important for us to have students and faculty of different races and cultures because we are preparing our young people for a pluralistic society."

Burkette is married to the former Dorothy Chambers and has two children, Gordon 17, and Michelle, 14.



Photo by Charles Ferguson

Blair Underwood, alias Jonathan Rollins of NBC's "L.A. Law," (also known as Bobby Blue of the soap opera "One Life To Live") was in Charlotte last Saturday to help promote the WPCG Christmas Miracle Telethon. If you missed him, see next week's Charlotte Post for the exclusive interview with one of Hollywood's fastest rising, young actors.

Blacks, Women May Not Make Ticket

RALEIGH (AP) — Although women represent a majority of registered Democrats and blacks represent about 25 percent of the Democratic vote, the party might be on the verge of nominating an all-white, all-male state ticket again in 1988.

Officials say that restlessness may be growing in the ranks.

Party leaders such as Lt. Gov. Bob Jordan and state Democratic Chairman Jim Van Hecke have voiced concern about the lack of blacks and women at the top and have said they hoped blacks would be elected to high offices soon.

"I think the Democratic Party would be wise to nominate a black person or a woman on the ticket in November for one of those statewide offices," House Speaker Liston Ramsey, D-Madison, told The News and Observer of Raleigh.

That possibility prompted a group of black party activists from across the state to meet recently at North Carolina Central University in Durham to discuss ways to get a black on the state ticket.

And next week, representatives

of such women's groups as the state chapter of the National Organization for Women and the N.C. Women's Political Caucus plan to meet in Raleigh to discuss ways to get more women on the ballot.

"We are concerned about elective offices and appointive offices," said Robin R. Davis of Raleigh, president of N.C. NOW.

"Women are just underrepresented everywhere," Davis said. "The issues that have the biggest impact on women get ignored or get pushed to the back burner if there are not women there."

"Many black Democrats across the state are very restless," said O.K. Butterfield, a Wilson lawyer and candidate for a Superior Court judgeship. "That is not rhetoric on my part. That is the reality."

Although it is a long-standing question, the issue has surfaced recently because three statewide offices will be vacated in 1988 — lieutenant governor, superintendent of public instruction and secretary of state. The Democratic front-runners for all three positions are white men.

WGIV Food Drive Slated

Gather your good will and bring it along with toys, clothes, canned goods and any non-perishable item to WGIV radio station's annual Mountain Of Food Drive to be held Saturday, December 12 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the corner of Remount Rd. and Toomey Ave.

According to Don Cody, Program Director, all goods donated to the food drive will be turned over to the Charlotte Housing Authority and Crisis Assistance for distribution to deserving families.

He asks for the support of the

Shriners, Eastern Star, all fraternities, sororities, organizations and business persons and citizens of the community in this charitable event.

For more information, call Cody at 570-1600.

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