

# Hey, The Joke Was On Us

In a May 19th article in the Charlotte Observer it was reported that Mecklenburg County Commission Chairman Carla DuPuy said the commissioners have expressed "in a joking manner," that they don't feel obligated to the black community because the black community does not vote for them.

DuPuy said she "couldn't remember" who actually told this joke. She said nonetheless, it was not "an uncommon statement."

With just a little deductive reasoning we can figure out which commissioners probably did share in this joke. Under district representation, this county has one predominantly black district. Accordingly, one of the seven commissioners does get black votes. Therefore, it stands to reason who the jokes are and who the jokes are played on.

Nevertheless, after making that statement, DuPuy tried to clean it up by saying this joke was not particularly funny right now (in the midst of the recycling station battle between the predominantly black westside and the County).

She didn't, however, exactly say when this particular joke was funny.

Perhaps it was funny when the commissioners first decided to stick a waste transfer station in the predominantly black, densely populated LaSalle St. area off Bellhaven Blvd. (The commissioners later decided to make it a recycling station. The black, westside residents still do not want it). Maybe the commissioners were so broken up laugh-



From the Editor's Desk

ing about this joke that the one, black commissioner didn't realize that everyone was cracking up about putting a garbage station in the middle of his district. That's why he went along with it.

Or maybe it was funny, when the commissioners decided the county no longer needed a Minority Affairs office. The joke probably was hilarious when the commissioners began to consider doing away with the county's affirmative action plan.

Wasn't it nice of DuPuy to let us all know that the concerns of the black community in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are a joke. Of course, she admitted sometimes it's a funny joke and sometimes it isn't. But it's common knowledge that with most racial jokes the laughter you receive usually depends upon the color of your audience.

At least we now know why the black community usually gets a raw deal from the County Commission. When blacks go to them with their concerns, they are not listening, they are snickering. "I know it doesn't sound funny

here today," said DuPuy about the commissioner's racial joke, implying that she feels maybe the joke will be funny at some other time. Perhaps it will be amusing to the commissioners after the county dumps more waste on the westside, black community or does away with other services that are important to the black community.

Wonder why not one of the commissioners said this joke is not, never was, and never will be funny?

Apparently, our black commissioner didn't have the nerve to tell his co-commissioners to stop laughing at the expense of his race.

So it is up to us. The black people of Mecklenburg County must become more involved with the County Commission. Attend the meetings. Vote in strong-willed black commissioners. Monitor the commissioners' actions. Be more like the Westside Coalition; take matters to court if need be. Use our political clout by whatever means available to make sure that issues that concern us are not a joke to them.

Only through participation and involvement in, and stringent watching of, the County Commission's activities will black citizens be able to turn the tables and make the commissioners choke on their joke.

To see the County squirm under an empowered black political coalition could elicit a chuckle or two from us.

Remember, he who laughs last, laughs best.

## Letters To The Post

### No Hope For Change On Commission

Dear Editor:

I am sorry that the entire community did not attend the hearings in Federal Court of the Westside Coalition Against the Garbage Plant vs. the Mecklenburg County Commission with Judge McMillan presiding.

As you know, the Westside Coalition sued the commissioners for voting in closed session to place another negative facility on this side of town. Attorneys Yvonne M. Evans and Mel Watt represented the Westside Coalition. Attorney Watt was a prince in every sense of the word. In control the entire week of deliberation, he was a joy to watch!

The most revealing fact that came out of the trial was that the black community has been abused historically by those officials we've elected to represent us. Isn't it still amazing what 30 pieces of silver will do? This community should vote out the entire Board of County Commissioners be-

cause it has not addressed the needs and concerns of the black community.

As one Commissioner said two years ago in a meeting of about 250 concerned westside residents, he doesn't need our vote! And again, at the trial, our attorney pulled out of the Commission Chairman, Carla DuPuy, that commission members had been heard stating that they don't need the black vote. This means the entire Commission is anti-black and there is no hope for a change of heart.

It seems to me that these elected officials talk out of one side of their mouths on one side of town and out of the other side when they are meeting -- all for personal gain and self-service.

So, I submit there are some things the community should be concerned about:

1. What was the relationship between the commissioners and the construction company (black) that attempted to secure the contract for the transfer station? And who esta-

blished a workshop anticipating that company would get the contract?

2. Who organized a consulting firm anticipating that the company would get the contract involving approximately six to seven million dollars?

3. Why do some elected officials vigorously support people who have been charged, admitted, convicted, served time, and been classified as ex-convicts? This is public record, and something is wrong!

4. Shouldn't we wonder about the numbers who support and vote for people of this caliber? At least we know how many we have in the community.

And finally, it is unfortunate that ALL the Baptist congregations have been dragged into a situation that all of them had no part in. Maybe those ministers need to be checked out by their memberships.

JAMES FOX

### Walton's Shadow On Charlotte Progress

Dear Editor:

It's a good thing that we don't live in Haiti, where political intimidation and rancid behavior usurp the Democratic process. Evidence suggests that from Bob Walton's view, District 2 is his personal slice of the deep, dark and dumb South: a land where anything goes, from religious bigotry right on through to political chicanery and you just can't forget (although we can forgive) the sacrilegious hypocrisy of "there is nothing wrong with a little fondling."

Approaching the 21st century, Charlotte is only 12 years away from its dawning. Already a preeminent metropolis, it is the most rapidly expanding metro center between Washington, DC and Atlanta, Ga. Outstandingly poised with an overall growth rate of approximately five percent -- compared to Atlanta's four

percent which represents a rate of decline -- Charlotte's prospects are striking. As the regional dominance of Atlanta wanes, it is only rational to assume that this will work in the Queen City's favor. In the city itself, the dynamics of growth have brought a surge of the city's pulse rate. Magnificent plans have been unveiled to add sparkle to the Queen City's skyline profile.

Amidst this swelling ocean of progress, sitting in divine bovine posture is Bob Walton. Indeed, while the tide of a new day sweeps in, the Rock of Phyllis Lynch casts a dubious shadow onto the aspirations of progressive individuals and groups who seek to illuminate rather than obscure. That shadow is Walton, a most bizarre marionette.

Thus, with those very aspirations of hope hanging in the

balance, it is most regrettable that the citizens of District 2 are being held back, like captives, bound hand and foot by the political shackles forged by this devious duo. What could be imagined as more repulsive than these buddy-buddy bulky, bulwarks beating the bushes, thrashing the waters to lay their covetous, avaricious mits on some mud to sling.

Let the unwary take heed and be forewarned about this perfidious pair.

Rarely, even in nature, will one find varmints that are anywhere near as vindictively venomous or as vehemently voracious. I don't believe there are enough lemmings in Charlotte to pave Walton's way back to respectability, responsibility or decency.

M.L. LA NEY

### Walton Has Worked For The People

Dear Editor:

We need to be reminded that we only have had one Democrat on the County Commission during the last four years, and unless Cedric Jones wins in his bid for a seat, that will not change. Additionally, during the past 12 years, we have had only one black elected to the County Commission.

While I am among the many who support Bob Walton who don't condone his misfortune, I would admonish the voters in District 2 to refer to the old saying, "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face."

There is not a person serving on the commission (or running for a seat) with more knowledge or experience than Walton. He understands the complex budgetary issues and process. He has the contacts and the ability to articulate the needs of this county, especially the multi-varied needs of District 2.

Additionally, Walton is not only articulate, but he has a thorough working knowledge of parliamentary procedures, and when to use those procedures to foster continued debate, usually to his advantage and the advantage of the people he represents.

A prime example of this

was when Walton had to vote on the hotly contested Waste Transfer Station proposed for LaSalle St. on the westside. If he had not supported the motion, all debate on this issue would have ended. But Walton's efforts resulted in continued debate and most important, increased the public's input surrounding the matter.

Commissioner Walton, on many occasions, has used his political influence to assist the elderly and poverty stricken in keeping their utility services on during the bleak, cold winter months. He aids many who need food stamps, clothing, shelter, child care and employment. By his service over the years, he has clearly shown that he is not only concerned but also committed to help all people. Additionally, he has demonstrated that he is both sensible and approachable for all, whether they live in District 2 or not. I know this from personal experience, because I have observed and worked with Walton to keep those services for persons who could not afford them otherwise.

Walton is an outspoken and strong advocate for public education and has exemplified true leadership in his support for a continuous pay supple-

ment for Charlotte-Mecklenburg teachers.

The next two years are very critical to the black community. In addition to the day-to-day business of the commissioners, we need to make sure that we do not lose any of the "few gains" that we have made during the past few decades. In 1990, we will have new census figures which in all probability will change the makeup of the system we presently have of six Republicans and one Democratic commissioner. At that time, we should be able to expect some redistricting which will help minority representation.

For those who feel that Walton needs to be replaced because of his recent misfortune (which was a misdeed), I say to you again, "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face." There are other ways to express your dissatisfaction or to chastise Walton.

Let us all go to the polls to vote with our heads, and not with our emotions. I urge you to vote on Tuesday, May 31, for Bob Walton County Commission District 2, and for the other candidates of your choice.

W. PETE CUNNINGHAM

## Letters To The Post

### Walton Responds To Post Editorials

Dear Editors:

I feel compelled to respond to your recent editorial endorsing my opponent for the Primary Election. In this editorial you made several references as to why you were endorsing my opponent which were incorrect statements and these statements need to be corrected for your own information and to set the record straight for the voting public.

The first incorrect statement was that I had indicated I would run at-large if the structure of the County Commission were changed by the voters. This is absolutely incorrect. I have never made such a commitment.

Secondly, your statement is incorrect that I voted to support a resolution as delegate to the 1986 Annual Conference of the N.C. Association of County Commissioners aimed at prohibiting counties from using local tax revenue for public school salary supplements. The main thrust of the resolution voted upon was to call upon the General Assembly of North Carolina to fund teacher salaries and school employees salaries at adequate levels so as to not burden the counties to have to supplement teacher salaries and salaries of other school employees.

I have always been in the forefront of allocating sufficient dollars to fund education at the highest levels. Education has to be one of our top priorities. Our children our future. Furthermore, it would be ludicrous for me to be sup-

porting a resolution not paying teachers adequately, or to be against teacher supplements -- if this is the only way to pay teachers adequately -- for one only need to be aware that my wife is a teacher and I am fully aware of the need for higher teacher pay.

Thirdly, your editorial goes on to talk about my vote regarding the LaSalle Street site for the then transfer station, now recycling center. Your comments would suggest I was in favor of the site and then changed my vote. Well, let me set the record straight on this matter once and for all (I hope). As I have stated many times before, I was opposed to the LaSalle Street site from the very beginning and so shared this with my colleagues at the meetings we had to discuss this matter. I voted for the site in executive session and at the public meeting following the executive session (commissioners indicate their votes in executive session and have to go out and vote publicly). I did so because I knew the site was supported by a majority of the board and if I had cast my "no" vote at that time, I would not have been in position to bring the matter up again for discussion. This is a parliamentary maneuver used many times by elected officials in order to keep an issue alive. You only know about these maneuvers when you have "experience".

Finally, your April 28, 1988 editorial stated you were endorsing my opponent because

of his own words "I believe in leadership by example. You can't influence people if people don't respect you. I think we have a responsibility to be good role models for our youth." Then you say your paper is endorsing my opponent because he is a man of "integrity". I question anyone's integrity when they promise one thing and then do another. My opponent promise not to talk about my controversy. Well for all practical purpose my opponent has talked about my controversy. If my opponent is making the statements mentioned above, then what is he talking about or what is he referring to? Do you call such, being a person of integrity? Hardly No!!!!

I hope your readers will get the record straight from having read these comments. Having done so, I hope your readers will go to the polls on this coming Tuesday, May 31, 1988 and vote to return Bob Walton to the County Commission.

By the way, let me say to my good friend, Gerald "As I see it" Johnson. If you and your paper are going to pattern after the Charlotte Observer and endorse candidates, please do like the Observer and "interview" candidates before endorsing. Otherwise, please follow the pattern set by your "beloved" father, the late Bill Johnson, and leave endorsing alone and present the news as fairly and as accurately as he did.

REV. BOB WALTON

### Vote Griffin For Equity In Education

Dear Editor:

The education of our youth, tomorrow's leaders, is vital to this community and nation.

Our local schools need a person who has stressed quality

education and equity for all in the educational system.

Arthur Griffin is such a person. Elect him to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School

Board and you will elect a person committed to improving the education of tomorrow's leaders.

WILLA CLINE

## Letters To The Post

### What's On Your Mind?

Let us hear your comments, ideas and opinions. Write to:

Letters To The Post  
P.O. Box 30144  
Charlotte, NC 28230

Please include name, address and phone number. We edit letters for clarity and grammar.

CLEMENTINE REID