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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

ALSO SERVING CABARRUS, CHESTER, ROWAN AND YORK COUNTIES

Group urges welfare extensions

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Poor people shouldn't go hungry for lack of jobs, a Charlotte-based advocacy group plans to tell Mayor Pat McCrory.

ACORN, a grassroots organization, will ask McCrory to urge Gov. Jim Hunt to waive rules that require poor people

find jobs or risk losing welfare benefits. ACORN held a meeting last week at the Greenville Center.

"We are asking the mayor to help send a message to the governor that without a waiver people here who are doing all they can to find a job will lose their benefits," said ACORN leader Mary Ellen Phifer. "The limit in this law

doesn't ask if people are looking for work, it doesn't check if there are enough jobs - and in our neighborhoods right now, the fact is that there aren't enough jobs for everyone who needs one."

McCrory, who is co-chairman of a task force convened by the U.S. Conference of Mayors to review welfare reform's impact on public

housing, said Friday he hasn't heard from ACORN, but would like to.

"I'm not aware of that request as it relates to the governor," he said. "I'm very accessible to hearing their proposal."

Under the welfare reform bill passed this year, up to 15,000 North Carolinians could lose their food stamps,

including 1,000 Mecklenburg residents. The law allows people without children to receive food stamps for no more than three months in a three-year period unless they are working a minimum of 20 hours a week. People who aren't working lose those benefits, even if they have registered for work or job training, but the law allows states to ask for a

waiver in areas where jobs are scarce.

Because federal welfare funds flow to states instead of cities, local government is limited in its ability to affect change. In Charlotte, "the area we might see the greatest benefits would be in the public housing communities,"

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Crime a concern in NW

Hearings planned for Jan. and Feb. in affected areas

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's getting harder for Willie Garner to tell the good guys from the bad in some northwest Charlotte neighborhoods.

Garner, president of the Lincoln Heights Community Organization, said more criminal activity is creeping into the neighborhoods adjacent to interstates 85 and 77 along Beatties Ford Road. The problem, he says, lies in the type of people who move into the area. Most are decent hard-working people. Others, however, are setting up shop for drug dealing and disrupting the peace.

"Some of those same people are being pushed into this area" from other neighborhoods where residents are being displaced, Garner said. "They've got to go somewhere. It seems like they're not screening the people who are renting these apartments like they should."

Because of what northwest residents feel is a rise in criminal activity in their area, a series of community meetings will be held through February. The hearings, sponsored by the Northwest Corridor Community Development Corp., will include Charlotte police and members of Charlotte city council's public safety committee.

"If it feels to be true to the neighbors, then it needs to be addressed," NWCCD executive director Ike Heard said.

The NWCCD, which is leading efforts to restore housing and business interest in the area, has a vested interest in ridding the area of crime. To attract new homeowners, northwest communities need to be made

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Emphasis on Africa



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Africanologist Melodye Micere Stewart leads a discussion of African history at Bruns Avenue School. The pilot program is an attempt to improve academic achievement of black students.

Black history part of curriculum

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Bruns Avenue Elementary is making a unique attempt to deal with low achievement of African American students at the magnet school near uptown Charlotte.

The school has hired an expert on African history to provide a pilot African and

African American history seminar to about 40 students in the minority achievement program.

Bruns Avenue assistant principal Haze Moore said he's not aware of anything similar in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system, though the minority achievement program and many teachers routinely expose African

American students to historical and cultural lessons, using outside speakers sponsored by the Afro-American Cultural Center or community resources like Glenda Manning or Ahmad Daniels, African storytellers and other artists.

Melodye Micere Stewart, a self-described "Africanologist," has provided

similar programs in Philadelphia since 1987. Stewart meets with students in the minority achievement program twice a week, teaching them about their culture and history.

Moore got the idea for the program from Stewart, who is a member of his church.

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Do Black English be right thing to teach?

By Michelle Locke
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND, Calif. - This much is settled - Black English will be recognized as a second language in Oakland schools. Whether it is considered an insult to the students

or a helping hand is the subject of hot debate.

Critics said the decision to interpret Black English in class, rather than just calling it "wrong," underestimates black students' learning abilities and could give them the wrong idea about what it

takes to succeed.

"This hurts the kids, that's the real tragedy of it," said John Fonte, a visiting scholar in education at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. "The way to learn English is to study English."

Proponents say the idea is to help students make the transition to standard English by understanding and translating their mother tongue.

"We're not saying (Black English) is wrong, we're say-

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Gaston County family complains of excessive force

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

A Gastonia couple have filed a complaint against that city's police department over what they say was an excessive use of force.

Gastonia residents Sylvia and Barry Bey have filed a complaint against Gastonia Police Officer Kevin Myer. On Oct. 9, the couple allege that Myer used excessive force to arrest Sylvia Bey and her 15-year-old son, Christopher.

Myer, who is white, used pepper spray to subdue Sylvia and Christopher Bey.

Myer was one of two officers to respond to complaint for trespassing issued by Gastonia

Senior Code Inspector Neil Bell.

Bell's office sent a letter to the Beys, who at the time lived in Florida, to inform them that Christopher had inherited property on Davidson Street, near the new municipal court and jail facility being built in predominantly black Ward 4.

Sylvia Bey said she and her family came to Gastonia to see the house. After arriving, Bey said Bell told them that the house needed almost \$20,000 worth of work.

"He told us the plumbing was shot," she said. "He also said the windows needed repair and that it would take between \$16,000 and \$18,000 to complete the work. He offered to give the us a

loan against the house, but we refused. We didn't want to get involved with that."

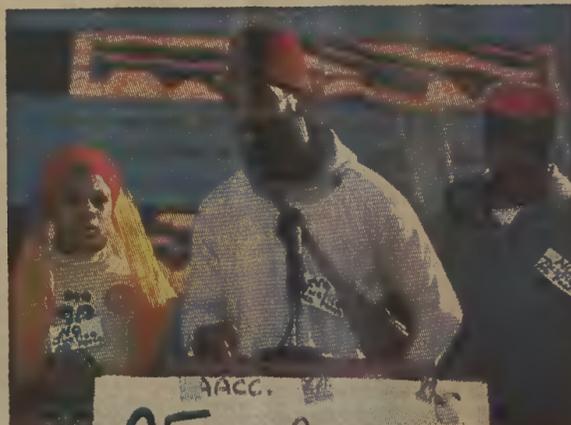
Bell's office then arranged in September for the couple to meet with two investors interested in purchasing the property.

The Beys refused both offers. They asked to see an inspection report to verify the costs of the repairs.

"He refused to show us an inspection report," Sylvia Bey said. "They told us how much it would cost to repair the house, then couldn't show us how they figured that out."

The Beys then decided to fix up the house themselves. They

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PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Barry Bey (center) addresses a rally in Charlotte as wife Sylvia and son Christopher look on

Trouble for the military

Charleston Navy brig site of alleged race, sex harassment

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLESTON, S.C. - The Navy and the Air Force are investigating allegations of racial and sexual harassment at the Navy consolidated brig at the Charleston Naval Weapons Station, a newspaper reported Saturday.

The Post and Courier of Charleston said it received two written reports about the investigation, both of which describe a climate of racial and sexual tension at the brig.

Although operated primarily by the Navy, the Air Force has roughly 30 active-duty members who work at the brig as part of a separate detachment. Air Force and Navy officials are making few comments about the reports.

"It's part of an ongoing investigation," said Navy Cmdr. George Admire, the brig's commanding officer, who refused to reveal further details.

Admire said he had not seen a Nov. 27 Navy report which says "there is an undercurrent of inequitable treatment (at the brig) on both a racial and sexual basis."

The report, signed by Navy Capt. W.F. Eckert Jr., assistant chief of Naval personnel with the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C., was based on an inspection last month by Navy Capt. Linda McBride.

"There is an appearance of, and there may be, a 'good old boy' network (at the brig) that resists change and outside direction," Eckert's report says.

The report, addressed to the deputy chief of Naval Personnel, recommends no definitive punishment against Admire,

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