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Art of crawl

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Volume 88 No. 13

The Charlotte Post

JUL 13 2007 \$1.00

The Voice of the Black Community

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WEEK OF JULY 12-18, 2007



FILE PHOTO

Mecklenburg County commissioners voted Tuesday to support \$516 million in construction bonds for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. CMS now takes on the task of developing a priority list that has divided the school board between inner city and suburban factions.

Building school priorities

\$516 million referendum faces hurdles over construction

By Herbert L. White
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The hard part of deciding on a price tag for Charlotte-Mecklenburg school bonds is over. Next: selling it. County commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to approve a \$516 million referendum on the November ballot. The school board now faces the task of prioritizing projects.
"If we can come together on a consensus, I think we all pretty much agree on our support for the bonds," said

Commissioner Dan Bishop, who represents District 5. "In the grand scheme, I think we've come a long way, commissioners' chair Jennifer Roberts said. "I think we realize this isn't a perfect plan, but it's a good plan."
The sticking point will likely come down to competing interests in the urban core and suburban ring. Rapid enrollment in suburban campuses dictate CMS build new schools. Urban advocates have lobbied for upgrades for older campuses. The commissioners

confirmed its support without holding the board or CMS to a list of exact building priorities. "We believe the school board should be reasonable and we trust them to do just that," Roberts said.
School board member George Dunlap predicts CMS will craft a priority list, but warns it needs balance to win in November.
"If you alienate African Americans, you won't get their support," he said. "If you alienate Myers Park and Olympic See SCHOOL/2A

"I think we realize this isn't a perfect plan, but it's a good plan."



JENNIFER ROBERTS
Mecklenburg County Commissioners chair

Defining gang crimes and time

N.C. bill would punish activities and recruitment; includes education funding

By Herbert L. White
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N.C. lawmakers are considering bills that would define gang activity, penalties and funding for prevention programs. Senate Bill 1358, the Street Gang Prevention Act, is sponsored by Malcolm Graham, a Charlotte Democrat. Co-sponsors include Charlotte Republican Robert Pittenger and Democrats Charlie Dannelly and Dan Clodfelter. The bill was approved last week by the Senate Judiciary Committee and is now before the Finance Committee. The House is considering a similar bill.
"It creates new standards in North Carolina as it relates to street gangs," Graham said. "What we're trying to do is go after kingpins who are recruiting 12- and 13-year-olds."
Whatever form the bill ultimately takes, the legislation will provide law enforcement another tool, said Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Detective Harold Jackson, who is assigned to the Criminal Intelligence Division.
Charlotte has 2,000 police-documented gang members and 150 sets, or individual Please see BILLS/3A



Graham

Men's shelter extends services by two months

By Herbert L. White
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The Emergency Winter Shelter is extending its services.
The shelter for homeless men, housed at the Lucille Giles Center at 3410 Statesville Ave., will be open for seven months, an increase from five, beginning October 1. The facility will close April 30, 2008.
"This is a 40 percent increase in our time of operation," said shelter president Dick Lupo. "The increase in homeless in Charlotte and the cold weather of last April caused us to look at our days of operation."
Shelter officials expect the extended operations will require a 50 percent increase in the budget to pay for services and support staff. That means an increase of \$100,000 to \$300,000 this year - all from charitable giving. The shelter, which opened in 1981, does not receive local or state government funding and relies on individual donors and partnerships with the faith community for services.
On the Net:
Emergency Winter Shelter
www.ewsharlotte.org

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE AWARDS IN CHARLOTTE



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Esther McIlwaine (left) and Anna Hood (right) were named winners of the Mary McLeod Bethune Award by the National Council of Negro Women June 23 in Charlotte. N.C. State Convenor Manderline Scales made the presentation.

NAACP focused on priorities, leader says

By Hazel Trice Edney
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON - NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, while pointing to the ills of America that he says have been exacerbated by the administration of President George Bush, told the NAACP annual convention this week that the organization must now prioritize its own refueling and growth for "grand victories" over injustices.
"There is nothing more important for us to be doing right now than ending felony disenfranchisement elsewhere and registering voters. If you don't believe our vote counts, look at the Supreme Court," Bond told the audience of thousands in prepared remarks at the 98th Annual NAACP Convention, themed "Power Beyond Measure," in Detroit.
"But there are other things we must do too. We must make strengthening our branches and state conferences a first priority, building membership where it is low and insisting on See BOND/2A

No summer break for democracy

By Herbert L. White
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JaMeese Mangum is a democracy advocate - even at Charlotte fast food restaurants.
Mangum is a student organizer in Democracy Summer, an initiative of Democracy North Carolina. Students from N.C. colleges participate in grassroots organizing ranging from voter registration drives to campaign finance reform.
The goal is to involve more peo-

ple in the political process, said Adam Sotak, organizing director at Democracy North Carolina, which sponsors the program.
"They educate the public about important issues facing our democracy," he said. "They urge people to vote and take action for voter rights in North Carolina."
In addition to three organizers in Charlotte, Democracy Summer students are also in Fayetteville and Durham.
Spending the summer advocat-

ing for community-based political empowerment is a lesson in grassroots democracy, said Mangum, a junior at N.C. Central University and Harding University High School graduate.
The organizers' role is to pass the message to people who are often skeptical they can have much impact.
"It's helpful because we're getting into the nitty-gritty of what people can do," she said. "It's good See DEMOCRACY/3A



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Central Piedmont Community College students Courtney Fewell (sitting left) and Sheena Kishah sign campaign finance petitions as Democracy Summer student organizers JaMeese Mangum and Rodney Leak look on.



Property managers breathe new life into troubled community/6C

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