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1982

Beginning

#1

community development

Willie Houseal
Newspaper Clipping 1982.-

**Gets Bored,
Then Involved**
... See Page 8-B



Letters To The Editor

29 Feb 82

Change At Large System

Sir: I am a Valdosta native presently relocating here from the Miami area. I'm writing in reference to the efforts to change voting methods in Lowndes County and Valdosta.

It's obvious to many that a serious problem exists here, concerning equal representation for blacks within our political system. It would be logical to consider blacks with the population as it is.

It has been noted that city election officials such as Harrison Tillman have viewed this lack of representation as apathy toward voting and people not caring about blacks not voting.

It's been said in recent articles that Lowndes county commissioners are at the very least skeptical about the benefits of a ward system in the county.

Commission Chairman Fred Deloach has said he does not feel the ward system was in the best interest of Lowndes County.

One article gave an example of an experience that Jacksonville, Fla., encountered with its ward system, but failed to mention the fact that the city had incorporated its boundaries.

I feel using that example was in poor taste. It only offered support toward the negative attitude held by the commission.

I can further acknowledge that most blacks here support the change and have stated in a recent article that change is the only way to gain equal representation within our political system.

Perhaps when our elected officials realize that the problem of apathy will persist and that voting power will become further diluted, then and only then can we begin to see greater black

voter participation in the county.

More citizens are beginning to realize that there is a great need in Valdosta and Lowndes County for blacks to become more involved in the social and political developments of our community.

I am not suggesting that

discrimination largely exists within our government. I am merely saying that unless the at large system is changed, there can hardly be contributions made by blacks.

Non-participation will surely lead to self-destruction.

Willie Houseal
Valdosta

Letters To The Editor

27 APR 82

Give Educators A Hand

Sir: This letter is written as an effort to commend the Valdosta public schools, their educators, and administrative and supportive services for excellent performance of their jobs.

As a former student of Valdosta's public school system, I would like to address the issue of public education.

I graduated from Pinevale High School in 1969. During that time I could not fully appreciate the value of a good education.

However, since that time I am now able to reap the benefits in a number of areas by recognizing its rewards.

I am currently substituting in a number of schools here in the city. Therefore, I am able to witness the hard work and dedication of our public school employees.

Furthermore, I am able to identify with the improvements made in the system's books, facilities, learning techniques and overall administrative process.

However, we as parents should not be found guilty of blaming the teacher for the disappointments of our children's learning or behavior disorders.

For example, when the statement such as

"needs more supervision at home" appears on our children's report cards, this statement consists of more than just instructing the child to do homework.

(It should tell the parent) to assist the child in every way possible.

Too often we make the mistake of accusing a teacher of picking on a child.

Parents, perhaps if we become more familiar with the academic activities received by our children, then we as parents can make the teacher's work a little easier.

When a child fails to complete their home assignments, the teacher has to work both with the behavior problem as well as with their learning disorder. (This) places the teacher as well as the student further behind.

So let's give our teachers and public teachers and public school employees a hand in educating our children by doing our part at home.

Again, I would like to personally commend our public school system on a fine job of educating our children.

Willie
Houseal
811 Bunche St.
Valdosta

Willie Houseal Fights Boredom

By TONI McPHAIL
Times Staff Writer

Willie Houseal took to flying planes when he became bored with driving.

The 31-year-old outspoken Houseal seems to have his thumb in virtually every plum pie he can possibly get hold of.

He enjoys being involved in community affairs, and believes his involvement can be a great contribution to society.

He admits he's active in community affairs partly because he has to stay busy to keep from being bored but mainly, he says, because he wants to "make Valdosta a better place to live."

His involvement in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People here as vice president is one of many ways Houseal hopes to better the community.

The Valdosta native said he thrives on competition and survives on change and "maybe a little nervous energy."

"Change has always been a motivating factor in my life."

"I also learned a lot about competition in high school. Do you know what it's like being 4-foot-9 and trying out for the basketball team in an all black school? We did end up going to state and I made the team."

"Yeah, I know a lot about competition," Houseal said.

Houseal's life has been full of changes. He's dabbled in various career fields but insists all that "dabbling" has been designed to better prepare him one day for government work.

Following his graduation from Pinevale High School here in 1968, Houseal joined the United States Air Force.

"It was basically a small world for me back then. I joined the military because I thought it would be my outlet to the world. I was narrow minded about a lot of things. I got into the Air Force largely because of economics and my great desire to be independent," he said.

Houseal was an aircraft mechanic 13 months in Viet Nam during his military career but said "that was definitely not my field. That was the longest 13



Times Staff Photo

Willie Houseal Wants To Contribute

months of my life."

So he cross-trained and became a dental assistant. For nearly 10 years he cleaned, brushed and inspected teeth. But boredom struck again.

"I can certainly see why the suicide rate among dentists is so high. It's the most monotonous work. Dentistry never changes...It's like math...an absolute," Houseal said.

"But I stuck with it simply because I knew I had to. I needed to get an education and staying with the Air Force was the best way for me at that time to do that."

During his last years in the military Houseal received his master's degree in human resource management from Pepperdine University in California.

He then made the decision to get out of the military and into the "real world."

He worked for a while at a school for the mentally retarded in Florida before

deciding to move back to Valdosta to live with his sister.

Houseal said he's always wanted to "clean up his little corner of the world" and Valdosta seemed like a

Newsmakers

... A Special Insight

good place to begin.

Keeping the Ulmer Avenue fire station on the south side of town operating became his first major project.

"Many people didn't even seem to know about the city's plan to close the station."

"People are threatened all the time by govern-

ments but they just don't know what to do about it. Some things we can change for the betterment of society if we just know what to do," Houseal said.

Houseal eagerly began researching the needs of the south side residents and the possible fire hazards that would be created if the station were closed.

He presented Mayor-Council with a petition of more than 500 names asking the station to be kept open. Unofficially, the council has agreed at least for another year.

He's also organizing a community Reading Is Fundamental program at Camp Relitso. Houseal said he'd like to see the program expand and serve the entire community, but funds are not available at this time.

The program is scheduled to end at the close of the summer although Houseal plans to look into the possibility of a year-round program.

"Reading is where you learn about goals. Children need to be aware that they should incorporate reading into their lives."

"Maybe with reading a seed can be planted that will nurture and grow into a mature being, useful to society. That's what goals are really all about," Houseal said.

Houseal is working on his doctorate in public administration at Nova University in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., and has organized his life so well that it is "mapped out for

Enterprise, a freely distributed newspaper that caters to residents on the lower economic rung.

In his spare time Houseal substitute teaches at Southeast Elementary School and Lomax-Pinevale Elementary School.

"My time cycle always seems to me to be running out. You know you can't afford to lose a day," Houseal said.

Houseal's primary goal is to make a lasting contribution to society. He would like to work in the foreign service, negotiating between countries and helping everyone live together peacefully.

"My contribution may be in solving a social problem or changing a law or straightening out a situation between two people... who knows."

His main source of inspiration, he said, are his two children, Willie Jr., 10, and Yorshia, 9, who live in Miami, Fla.

"They are a prime motivator for me. I want to set the best example possible for them to follow," Houseal said.

Houseal is an active member of Southside Church of Christ. Religion and his trust in God have always been a stabilizing factor in his rather frenzied, out-of-the-ordinary lifestyle, he said.

He plans to write a book someday about attaining success through a belief in God.

"I believe in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and I believe that no day really belongs to me. I believe this is the key to becoming successful. It should be important to everyone to be the best person they can be."

"Some people will always resent you for what you're doing, even if you're doing it in a positive respect. I tell them, 'Hey it's out there for everybody.'"

"I just try to accomplish everything I think I can accomplish... not to use your talents is a grav sin," Houseal said.

Houseal believes he may only make a small dent in society... but then again he might just make a big splash, provided he can keep from getting bored.

Letters To The Editor

16 July 82
Remember Voting Rights



Sir: Many Americans have taken the right to vote for granted, and many of these same Americans have fought and died for this right.

It should be our responsibility to see to it that the threat to jeopardize this jewel of American liberty does not re-surface.

As many of us know, the 1965 Voting Rights Act has been extended for another 20 years. We should be reminded of the importance of this unique bill. It is obvious that equal opportunity in voting still does not exist in many places.

More people should realize that this important effort proved successful in returning the right to vote to minorities. The bill prohibited new discriminatory laws from being implemented, and even further outlawed discriminatory test devices such as literacy tests, which have prevented the registration of large numbers of eligible black citizens.

Unless we begin to understand the meaning of this important bill, our basic rights as citizens will continue being jeopardized by the stroke of a pen.

When we become more positive in attitude, we can put away the old saying, "My

one vote doesn't matter." Then perhaps we will be able to establish a political power base which will allow all citizens to offer their opinions and gain the respect deserved.

The Georgia Women's Political Caucus needs to be

commended for their efforts to obtain more temporary sites for registering to vote. It is hoped that in the future more organizations will join in the fight against voter apathy.

Willie Houseal
Valdosta

Get Out And Register

Sir: As a concerned citizen I find I relate to findings that voter registration in Valdosta is in need of purging.

But with the primary election growing near there couldn't be a more convenient time to concentrate our efforts toward increased voter registration.

It appears obvious to many that a number of changes have taken place relating to the status of residents living in the Lowndes County area.

During a recent visit to the office of the Board of Registrars, it was revealed there are about 68,000 people residing in Lowndes County.

However, the number of voters shown registered is only 19,385. That doesn't count the change of status for some of those now registered.

One can clearly vision the need for purging now instead of later.

I feel there are a number of interest groups in the city that are highly concerned about this matter.

Therefore, it is requested that the Board of Elections become more considerate of those who present ideas to them.

So far, attempts made to offer alternatives for increased voter registration have gained little support.

One alternative offered was the setting up of temporary

voter registration sites.

However, according to a recent Times article, apathy toward registration would not be curbed.

This may be true. However, the Board of Registrars offers no alternatives for the condition other than that which we already have.

I feel if residents and interest groups are interested enough to volunteer their

time and efforts toward combating this condition it should seem reasonable that the Board of Registrars seriously consider the ideas proposed by such concerned citizens.

In turn, we can begin focusing our attention on other related matters.

Willie Houseal
811 Bunche Drive
Valdosta

Letters To The Editor

2 May 82
**Valdosta Blacks
Should Register**

Sir: Please be informed of the seriousness of the condition concerning voters registration. A recent poll shows 21,000 registered voters in Lowndes County and of that number we have only 4,000 blacks registered.

This letter is not written to cause any confusion or polarization among the races, but only to create an awareness of the apathetic attitudes among the black citizens.

Once a political base has been established, then our city can begin utilizing the talent and expertise of many black citizens in this community and perhaps tap an unexplored resource that has

been at the city's disposal for years.

It is suggested when concerned groups arise to combat this situation, such as the NAACP's massive voter registration drive, blacks will turn out in record-breaking numbers to participate in such an important matter.

It is also hoped that our white brothers and sisters will support our effort in the struggle to gain the recognition and positions blacks here in Valdosta are entitled to.

Willie Houseal
811 Bunche
Drive

Voter Drive 'Success'

The voter registration which was held Saturday at the Pinevale Elementary School gym was called a success by Willie Houseal, director of the Winnersville Coalition Consultants.

The organization had members present at the registration site ready to bring people to the site or take them back home in a gesture to improve upon the number of registered voters in Lowndes County.

Houseal said more than 120 people registered Saturday and his organization hopes even more will register the next time the gym is used for Saturday registration, which is scheduled for the first Saturday in November.

"We were all surprised," at the number of people who showed up to register, he said, "but we will be looking for a larger number the next time because we will have more organization."

Voter Education Rally Held

By Times Staff Writer

Representatives of the Valdosta chapter, of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute and the Winnersville Coalition Consultants held a voter's education rally in Scott Park Sunday.

The purpose of the rally was to explain to the voters what was on the ballot, said Amos Bostic of the winnersville Coalition Consultants.

The groups were distributing leaflets from the A. Phillip Randolph Institute and the Georgia Women's Political Caucus, and displaying maps of the proposed ward system for Lowndes County.

Crime Rise Disturbing

Sir: There seems to be an existing condition with crime which parallels the rise in unemployment.

The rise in crimes ranging from our public officials to street crimes is disturbing.

It would be pointless to single out any one situation. However, this new wave of crime has many law-abiding citizens wondering if they will be the next victim.

When I read the local newspaper, I'm reminded of the headlines of the Miami Herald, with its reports on rape, drug involvement and white collar crime.

We can see that Valdosta is changing in more ways than

one. And we have the opportunity to support the Southwest Enterprise Black Truth Association.

This organization has implemented a war on crime and urges all residents of Valdosta to do their part in curtailing this cancerous disease which is eating away at our community.

Therefore it is up to each individual to take advantage of this well-planned endeavor toward overcoming the perpetrators who insist on preying on respected citizens and businesses throughout our city.

Willie Houseal
Valdosta

9 Jun 82

Choosing Black Politicians

27 May 82

Sir: Throughout the years, we as blacks have developed a pattern of thinking that has led us to believe our politicians must come from the pulpit. The point is, spiritual leaders do not always made good politicians. Many times, these clergymen know very little about the political affairs to be dealt with. Furthermore the extra activity can separate the minister from his primary responsibilities, which are to administer the spiritual guidance needed.

I'm suggesting we should

begin looking to the communities for our politicians, those that are willing to involve themselves with the growing complexity of planning, coordinating and making decisions without conflict of interest. Let me be among the first to admit that we most definitely need God in the plan.

However, even the recording of Biblical times revealed a distinction between church and state. We as blacks have been plagued with old sayings relating to the reverends and politics.

One example states blacks

can only come together under religious pretenses. I personally disagree with this mode of thinking and feel that NOW is the time to disprove this type of remark.

The need for political and social leaders is quite relevant at this time, therefore the time is now for our black community to begin looking to places other than the pulpit for the guidance needed in today's complex society.

Willie Houseal
General Manager
Southwest Georgia
Enterprise

Letters To Editor

Look Again At Proposal

13 Jun 82

Sir: This letter is written in reference to Chief Ogburn's proposal.

It seems obvious to many concerned citizens that consideration for the safety of many residents living on the South side of Valdosta has been placed on a scale with "economics" as the counterweight.

Concern is given to those residents living near the station No. 2. However, the fact remains that the closing of Station No. 3 should not be overlooked.

Station No. 3 located on Ulmer Avenue is vital to the safety of many residents living on the South side of Valdosta.

After speaking with reliable sources from our city government, there seems to be a concern for the budget rather than for the safety of those living on the South side, without failing to mention that the cost of fire insurance is fluctuating.

The number of reasons opposing Chief Ogburn's proposal includes; the amount of

response time from either the airport or the downtown station the composition of many sections of the South side rather than just one large section; consideration should also be given to the closeness of the single family dwelling as well as a number of apartment complexes, and further consider the construction of houses (wooden frames).

It would be considered pure logic to reconsider any plans to discontinue this important service to the residents of the South side of Valdosta.

It is suggested that mayor-council take a serious look at this proposal before deciding to do any relocating of No. 3 fire station because results will point to lack of security for all residents living on the South side.

It is hoped that the strategy of least resistance not be applied toward approving such an undesired proposal.

Willie Houseal
General Manager
Southwest Enterprise

21 May 83

To Editor

Vote Apathy Still Exists

ing upon us, we are for a change in lothing and even the will eat. There's a he air that touches s during the spring r months.

oping that as we r changes, less we that apathy toward ntinues to exist. e Coalition Consul- : made plans to :oters Education, ng the spring and

summer months throughout Valdoesta and Lowndes County. I am certain that many apathetic attitudes will continue to exist, even after all efforts are exhausted.

The amount of critical issues confronting our city and county administrations continue to mount. Therefore, educating the public on various issues concerning voting should be a task for all community projects and organizations to challenge. With Feb. 1984, local election

approaching, now is the time to begin questioning elected officials on how they stand on the various issues affecting us. Let's avoid the election rush with these issues bombarding us all at once, complicating matters worse. It is hoped that many others will join Winnersville Coalition Consultants in their effort to combat the inherited apathy toward voting.

Willie Houseal
Winnersville Coalition
Consultant

More Of Facts About Voter Registration ^{2, 9 Sept 83}

In response to the article written September 22, "Registration Site Added," more of the facts should have been brought out concerning registration in Valdosta/Lowndes County.

For more than a year, inquiries were made concerning voter registration sites and additional deputy registrars. The local chapter of NAACP and Winnersville Coalition Consultants are two organizations who have questioned this issue.

Members of these organizations and others have requested sites and registrars. Ironically, we were led to believe that additions were not necessary primarily due to the apathetic attitudes in Valdosta/Lowndes County.

However, we now have access to a permanent site on the south side; although the site, Pinevale-Lomax Elementary

School, is scheduled for only one Saturday of each month starting October 1, we should begin constructing our activities around these dates, thus allowing greater turnouts.

We hope that the Board of Registrars consider the names submitted for additional deputy registrars to man this new site.

We are approaching an election year. Many issues are facing us that need our attention, from a new president to new faces at City Hall. Without the vote we have no input, without registration we have no vote. Let's flood this new site when it opens October 1.

Realizing that apathetic attitudes exist, there are only a few legitimate reasons for not registering to vote.

As the seasons change, so will local government.

Willie Houseal
Winnersville
Coalition Consultants



Reading Material

Residents of the Georgia Sheriffs' Boys' Ranch near Hahira look over material donated by the Levi Strauss Community Involvement team and the Lowndes County Public Schools' Chapter 1 tutorial program. Standing with the boys is Willie

Houseal, area coordinator for Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), through which the grant was made. — Times Staff Photo by Joey Ivansco.

Letter To Editor

27 Mar 83

Vote Apathy Still Exists

With spring upon us, we are preparing for a change in weather, clothing and even the foods we will eat. There's a sense in the air that touches many of us during the spring and summer months.

I am hoping that as we prepare for changes, less we not forget that apathy toward voting continues to exist. Winnersville Coalition Consultants have made plans to conduct Voters Education Rallies during the spring and

summer months throughout Valdosta and Lowndes County. I am certain that many apathetic attitudes will continue to exist, even after all efforts are exhausted.

The amount of critical issues confronting our city and county administrations continue to mount. Therefore, educating the public on various issues concerning voting should be a task for all community projects and organizations to challenge.

With Feb. 1984, local election

approaching, now is the time to begin questioning elected officials on how they stand on the various issues affecting us. Let's avoid the election rush with these issues bombarding us all at once, complicating matters worse. It is hoped that many others will join Winnersville Coalition Consultants in their effort to combat the inherited apathy toward voting.

Willie Houseal
Winnersville Coalition
Consultant

Valdosta NAACP

To Meet Today

6 July 82 Time

By Times Staff Writer

The Valdosta chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will hold a membership drive today at 3 p.m. in Scott Park.

Ed Brown of Camilla, 7th District Coordinator, and Sandra Robinson of the Chapter Coalition of Hunter in Atlanta, are to speak.

"The Wizz," is to provide disco music, according to Willie Houseal, chapter vice president.

Black Leaders Oppose Ulmer Avenue

Fire Station

Closing

HOUSEAL'S APPEAL SPARKS MEETING



WILLIE HOUSEAL

A contingent of Valdosta's leading Black citizens converged on the City Council Chambers to protest the proposed closing of the Ulmer Avenue Fire Station which is the only source of guaranteed fire protection for residents of the Southside of Valdosta.

Willie Houseal, General Manager of the SOUTHWEST GEORGIA ENTERPRISE, led the contingent of prominent Blacks by delivering an impassioned talk laden with facts about the necessity of retaining the Ulmer Avenue station as a life and death protective measure for Southside area residents.

After delivering his four page presentation of facts supported by leading fire protection authorities of Valdosta, Mr. Houseal presented a petition signed by more than 500 Black Southside residents imploring the City Council not to close the Ulmer Avenue Station.

Houseal promoted

HOMESTEAD, Fla.—Willie H. Houseal, brother of Ms. Mamie Houseal of 811 Bunche Drive, Valdosta, Ga., has been promoted to staff sergeant in the U.S. Air Force.

The sergeant, a preventive dentistry technician at Homestead AFB, Fla., serves with a unit of the Tactical Air Command.

Sergeant Houseal, a 1969 graduate of Pinevale High School, received a B.A. degree in 1977 from St. Leo College, Tampa, Fla. He received an M.A. degree in 1978 from Pepperdine University, Los Angeles.



Reading Is Fundamental

8/4/84

RIF's New Beginning 2 Years Old

By CASSHEARIN
Times Staff Writer

The local Reading Is Fundamental program just celebrated its second anniversary in this area.

The RIF program now in existence here is not the only RIF program which has ever been in Lowndes County. There was a different type of RIF program here until 1980, when federal funds for the program dried up when President Ronald Reagan took office.

With the drying up of the federal funds, the RIF program dried up locally.

But at least one Lowndes County resident began efforts to start a new program — this time one which didn't have to depend upon federal funding.

Willie Houseal, area coordinator of the local RIF program, said the

program here is 100 percent community-funded now.

Houseal, who takes interest in politics and the ways in which governments are operated, said he became concerned for the future of the area youth when he was confronted with some startling statistics.

"Over 23 million Americans can't even read. They can't even function in today's society," Houseal said.

"Those 23 million didn't read as children. To change the statistics, we must inspire our children to want to read — first by exposing them to reading and then by putting books into their hands," he said.

"We want to try to cope with the situation and focus our efforts on the younger generation, and hopefully when they



WILLIE HOUSEAL
RIF Coordinator

in society," Houseal said, reach the age of accountability, they can function

For the past two years, the RIF program has had at least two book distributions a year, in addition to special programs. In one such program, books were given to handicapped children.

Now Houseal is ready to try a different type of program, but he said the program needs more money, he said. "We're looking for grants from local businesses. We're trying to solicit the notable businesses in the area," he said.

Up to now, groups such as college fraternities and work force groups have contributed to RIF.

The program would take a select group of approximately 50 pre-school-age children, preferably from a low-income housing area, and teach them reading skills before they enter grade school.

Houseal said he still plans to continue with the book distributions, but the program targeted at the 50 children will be different. "It is not going to be like in the past — reaching out to all the kids in Lowndes County, because it is hard to spread yourself real thin. We want to prove a point."

The program would include pre-testing and evaluation tests to determine the reading ability, or potential reading ability, of each child in the group.

RIF workers will then monitor each child's progress in learning. Houseal said Teaching will be provided by people who are qualified to teach reading.

Houseal has been reading to boys at the Georgia Sheriff's Boys Ranch for the Lowndes County School System, has taken reading classes at Valdosta State College and is a member of the local and national chapters of the International Reading Association.

He said he hopes the program can last at least two years.

Houseal said anyone interested in helping with RIF in any way should contact him at the Boys Ranch in Valdosta.

Houseal Brings Summer Reading Program

Voter Registration Set As Deadline Approaches

By Times Staff Writer
Since Monday is the last day people can register to be eligible to vote in the upcoming city election slated for Feb. 14, special emphasis is being placed on this Saturday's registration.

first Saturday of every month at the gym at Lomax-Pinevale Elementary School on Lake Park Road.

Although Saturday registration will continue, this Saturday is significant, said Willie Houseal, director of Winnersville Coalition Consultants.

one. Everyday is an important one, but Jan. 9 is the last day for registration for this election. We're trying to encourage as many people as possible to come on out and meet this deadline because it's a very important election," Houseal

from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., he said

In addition, Houseal's organization will be offering rides to and from the registration site for those who have no transportation. A telephone number people can call for transportation will be announced on local radio stations.

Ulmer Station Need

South side residents are concerned about the proposed closing of their fire station on Ulmer Avenue.

Fire Chief Charles Ogburn has proposed that the city close the Ulmer Avenue station and consolidate it with the airport fire station located on Madison Highway. At the root of this proposal, of course, is an attempt to save the city money.

A spokesman for the residents presented Mayor Council with a petition several weeks ago asking that the south side station be kept open and operational. They contend the airport station, across the railroad tracks, is not close enough to adequately protect their lives and property.

They say the south side is already a fire hazard and the city doesn't need to add more fuel to the fire by relocating the only south side fire station.

Their point is a valid one.

The south side of town is densely populated with several multi-dwelling units. Most of the houses are wood framed and many are well over 30 years old.

A lot of the residents are elderly and have

lived in that part of town all of their lives.

If the fire department's response time was not quick enough, a small fire could turn into a disaster.

But Ogburn says the airport station could serve the residents on the south side as effectively as the station on Ulmer Avenue now does.

The response time for firefighters would not be any slower, and any one of the other stations in town could pick up the slack wherever it was needed, Ogburn has said.

And to top it all off, the city could save a substantial amount of money.

Of course, we realize human life is worth much more than financial savings. And we believe Mayor-Council agrees.

If the station on Ulmer Avenue can be closed and manpower relocated at the airport station without placing south side residents' lives and property in danger than we believe the city should make the move.

But let's not cut off our nose to spite our face. Let's be sure we can provide residents with quality fire protection before we began tightening the old money belt.

Department's

said.

South side residents plan to turn out "in numbers" at the meeting in August when the council is expected to decide the city's budget, Houseal said.

Houseal also plans to approach the Lowndes County Commission in the

coming year to attempt to gain financial support for the Airport station, which also serves the south side.

"The council is not the only one to blame for this situation. The council seems to like to cut

Mayor

It looks like Mayor-Council is on budget again this year for the fire station on Ulmer Avenue.

Fire Chief Charles Ogburn had proposed the station be closed to help cut expenses, but after hearing all the complaints and criticism from south side residents Ogburn decided the station should be put at least for another year.

Chalk one up for democracy... voices and opinions...and being heard by the Mayor-Council.

The Ulmer Avenue fire station continues to be a case in point of what residents call themselves when they feel they are being abused by government.

South side residents believed the closing of the fire station would create an extreme fire hazard in that area. Houses on that side of town are old, wiring is bad, and most residents are elderly, they complained.

They were concerned about the plight of their community, and told Mayor-Council so.

And to their surprise and almost disbelief, Mayor-Council listened.

Proposed Fire Station Closing Worries Residents

By TONI McPHAIL
Times Staff Writer

The proposed closing of the fire station on Ulmer Avenue has south side residents concerned that their lives and property will not be adequately protected.

Along with a proposal to cut fire department manpower by 20 percent, Fire Chief Charles Ogburn has proposed that the city close fire station number 3 located at Ulmer Avenue and combine it with the airport fire station on

Madison Highway.

The consolidated fire station would cover the south side of town, Ogburn said.

South side residents don't believe the airport station can adequately protect them against fire, and several protested the proposed closing earlier this month at a meeting of Mayor-Council.

Willie Houseal, spokesman for the residents, also presented Mayor-Council with a petition of more than 500 names of residents who

were opposed to the change.

"There are two railroad systems between the main station and us and another railroad system between the airport station and us."

"There's no way we can be assured that we'll be adequately protected if the one station on the south side is combined with the airport station," Houseal said.

The south side of town consists of several multi-dwelling residences and old homes, which are occupied

mostly by the elderly,

Houseal said. "We have an extreme fire hazard in this area. The homes are all at least 30 years old and are wood frames. It's only been by the grace of God that we haven't already had any disasters," said Houseal.

Ogburn believes the airport station could adequately protect south side residents. The fire department's response time would not be any slower if the Ulmer

station were moved, he said.

"I really don't look for them (Mayor-Council) to do this (close the station) because they have gotten so much flack from down there. It's a proposal and that's all it is. Nothing has been decided yet," the fire chief said.

"We just want to let Mayor-Council know that there are a lot of people down here that are concerned with this situation," Houseal said.

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Proposed Fire Station Closing Worries Residents

By TONI McPHAUL
Times Staff Writer

The proposed closing of the fire station on Ulmer Avenue has south side residents concerned that their lives and property will not be adequately protected.

Along with a proposal to cut fire department manpower by 20 percent, Fire Chief Charles Ogburn has proposed that the city close fire station number 3 located at Ulmer Avenue and combine it with the airport fire station on

Madison Highway.

The consolidated fire station would cover the south side of town, Ogburn said.

South side residents don't believe the airport station can adequately protect them against fire, and several protested the proposed closing earlier this month at a meeting of Mayor-Council.

Willie Houseal, spokesman for the residents, also presented Mayor-Council with a petition of more than 500 names of residents who

were opposed to the change.

"There are two railroad systems between the main station and us and another railroad system between the airport station and us.

"There's no way we can be assured that we'll be adequately protected if the one station on the south side is combined with the airport station," Houseal said.

The south side of town consists of several multi-dwelling residences and old homes, which are occupied

mostly by the elderly, Houseal said.

"We have an extreme fire hazard in this area. The homes are all at least 30 years old and are wood frames. It's only been by the grace of God that we haven't already had any disasters," said Houseal.

Ogburn believes the airport station could adequately protect south side residents. The fire department's response time would not be any slower if the Ulmer

Avenue station were moved, he said.

"I really don't look for them (Mayor-Council) to do this (close the station) because they have gotten so much flack from down there.

"It's a proposal and that's all it is. Nothing has been decided yet," the fire chief said.

"We just want to let Mayor-Council know that there are a lot of people down here that are concerned with this situation," Houseal said.

The Valdosta Daily Times, Thurs., Jan. 5, 1984-7-

Voter Registration Set As Deadline Approaches

By Times Staff Writer

Since Monday is the last day people can register to be eligible to vote in the upcoming city election slated for Feb. 14, special emphasis is being placed on this Saturday's registration.

Since October, people have been able to register to vote the

first Saturday of every month at the gym at Lomax-Pinevale Elementary School on Lake Park Road.

Although Saturday registration will continue, this Saturday is significant, said Willie Houseal, director of Winnersville Coalition Consultants.

"This is a very important

one. Everyday is an important one, but Jan. 9 is the last day for registration for this election. We're trying to encourage as many people as possible to come on out and meet this deadline because it's a very important election," Houseal said.

The gym at the school is open

from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., he said.

In addition, Houseal's organization will be offering rides to and from the registration site for those who have no transportation. A telephone number people can call for transportation will be announced on local radio stations.

Ulmer Station Need

South side residents are concerned about the proposed closing of their fire station on Ulmer Avenue.

Fire Chief Charles Ogburn has proposed that the city close the Ulmer Avenue station and consolidate it with the airport fire station located on Madison Highway. At the root of this proposal, of course, is an attempt to save the city money.

A spokesman for the residents presented Mayor Council with a petition several weeks ago asking that the south side station be kept open and operational. They contend the airport station, across the railroad tracks, is not close enough to adequately protect their lives and property.

They say the south side is already a fire hazard and the city doesn't need to add more fuel to the fire by relocating the only south side fire station.

Their point is a valid one.

The south side of town is densely populated with several multi-dwelling units. Most of the houses are wood framed and many are well over 30 years old.

A lot of the residents are elderly and have

lived in that part of town all of their lives.

If the fire department's response time was not quick enough, a small fire could turn into a disaster.

But Ogburn says the airport station could serve the residents on the south side as effectively as the station on Ulmer Avenue now does.

The response time for firefighters would not be any slower, and any one of the other stations in town could pick up the slack wherever it was needed, Ogburn has said.

And to top it all off, the city could save a substantial amount of money.

Of course, we realize human life is worth much more than financial savings. And we believe Mayor-Council agrees.

If the station on Ulmer Avenue can be closed and manpower relocated at the airport station without placing south side residents' lives and property in danger than we believe the city should make the move.

But let's not cut off our nose to spite our face. Let's be sure we can provide residents with quality fire protection before we began tightening the old money belt.

Department's

said.

South side residents plan to turn out "in numbers" at the meeting in August when the council is expected to decide the city's budget, Houseal said.

Houseal also plans to approach the Lowndes County Commission in the

coming year to attempt to gain more financial support for the Airport fire station, which also serves the south side.

"The council is not the only ones to blame for this situation. The county seems to play just as important a part

in our protection as the city does.

"We pay county taxes as well as city taxes, and we plan to launch an investigation into this matter to try to convince the county that they too have a part in this thing and should provide financial support," Houseal said.

Mayor-Council Listens

It looks like Mayor-Council is going to budget again this year for the fire station on Ulmer Avenue.

Fire Chief Charles Ogburn had proposed the station be closed to help cut city expenses, but after hearing all the complaints and criticism from south side residents, Ogburn decided the station should stay put...at least for another year.

Chalk one up for democracy...voicing your opinions...and being heard by the government.

The Ulmer Avenue fire station controversy is a case in point of what residents can do for themselves when they feel they are being abused by government.

South side residents believed the closing of the fire station would create an extreme fire hazard in that area. Houses on that side of town are old, wiring is bad, and most of the residents are elderly, they complained.

They were concerned about the proposed plight of their community, and told Mayor-Council so.

And to their surprise and almost disbelief, Mayor-Council listened.

Naturally the city government can not always say yes to residents with complaints, but south side residents had a valid complaint and Mayor-Council recognized that.

They were fighting for the fire safety of their community. South side residents didn't just attend the council meeting and complain. They came prepared.

They researched the fire situation on their side of town. They brought Mayor-Council the facts.

The south side residents' spokesman was quoted as saying he now believed Mayor-Council was concerned with the entire Valdosta area. He is convinced now that the council will listen when approached with a problem.

Although the proposal to keep Ulmer Avenue station open has not been officially approved by the council, Ogburn is confident the "proposal will be met with favor."

We realize Mayor-Council is here to guide the city and can not always answer residents' complaints affirmatively, but they will listen.

The budgeting of the Ulmer Avenue fire station has proved that.

Crime Rise Disturbing

Sir: There seems to be an existing condition with crime which parallels the rise in unemployment.

The rise in crimes ranging from our public officials to street crimes is disturbing.

It would be pointless to single out any one situation. However, this new wave of crime has many law-abiding citizens wondering if they will be the next victim.

When I read the local newspaper, I'm reminded of the headlines of the Miami Herald, with its reports on rape, drug involvement and white collar crime.

We can see that Valdosta is changing in more ways than

one. And we have the opportunity to support the Southwest Enterprise Black Truth Association.

This organization has implemented a war on crime and urges all residents of Valdosta to do their part in curtailing this cancerous disease which is eating away at our community.

Therefore it is up to each individual to take advantage of this well-planned endeavor toward overcoming the perpetrators who insist on preying on respected citizens and businesses throughout our city.

Willie Houseal
Valdosta

County Voting Gripes Awaited

By FREDRICK HODGE
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—The Justice Department is awaiting information concerning complaints received about the voting system in Lowndes County.

"We have received some complaints in the voting section of the civil rights division," said John Williams of the department's public relations office.

"We have asked for certain information and are awaiting its arrival," he added.

Refusing to call the proceedings an investigation, Wilson would not disclose the nature or the number of the complaints.

When the information is received it will be reviewed and a determination made as to whether the department has any responsibility or jurisdiction, said Wilson.

"If someone makes an allegation, we have a responsibility to check it out," he added.

Lowndes County Commissioner Fred DeLoach said he had not heard anything from the Justice Department nor from any of the citizens of the county.

"When it (the proposal to change to the ward system) was defeated on the ballot I assumed that was it," he said.

This is a democracy and supposedly the majority rules, and the majority decided they didn't want it, he added.

The proposal was defeated in the Nov. 2 election by a 55 to 45 percent margin. Several complaints were voiced about the wording of the amendment at a rally held by the A. Phillip Randolph Institute and the Winnersville Coalition Consultants on the Sunday before the election.

Speakers at the rally said the amendment was purposely worded to be vague and confusing.

The election system in Lowndes is one of several in the state that have come under attack recently.

The Justice Department has concluded the at-large system unconstitutionally dilutes the voting strength of minorities in the counties that have had their at-large systems overturned.

Georgia State Representative James Beck, author of the amendment to change the voting system, said he has not been approached by anyone concerning the matter since the election.

The citizens indicated by a straw ballot two years ago that they wanted the change, he said. Evidently they did not want to change to the plan that was proposed, he added.

The proposed plan to change the voting system was submitted to the Justice Department for review and it accepted it, said Beck. It, by its record, is not going to approve any type of at-large voting system, he added.

**ATTENTION
ALL REGISTERED
VOTERS**

**Let's Win with the
Ward System**

**VOTE YES
TO A FIVE MAN**

COUNTY COMMISSION

TUESDAY, NOV. 2, 1982

PAID FOR BY WINNEYSVILLE
COALITION CONSULTANTS



Camp Relitso Back in Swing

This summer, Camp Relitso, is back in the swing with its Educational and summer program.

Relitso meaning, Religious, Education, Literacy, Interdenominational, Training Society, is now in its fifth year catering to the needs of hundreds of community children during the summer months.

Irene Miller, the Center Director has worked diligently in making the community center what it is today.

Speaking with Miller, she explains, "the center has provided certain disciplinary activities that are basic extensions of the previous school year." When asked what keeps her going during the hot summer months, after working full time during the year, she says, "Occasionally, I see progress when post-test are compared with pre-test, I've seen students performing below grade level when they come to us and leave improved students. I've witnessed this place develop from a vandalized community eye sore into a community service center.

We believe in our theme, "on target" because students should perform on their level, therefore the center has provided this opportunity.

From the beginning, we have felt that this has been a worthwhile operation, and further hoping that someday we are able to develop fully into a certified education center.

At this time, the center needs community volunteers for improving the plant itself, and volunteers to devote time and materials as they are able too."

To mention a few, Pat Iverson, Bernard Perry, Eloise Bride, Maude Clark, Ella Marshall, Annie Ruth Burns, and Velma Perry have been very generous in helping us this summer, without failure to mention Yvone Bonner who manages the Camp's Day Care Center with help from Cassandra and Janice Miller.

Preparing meals daily are Willa Mae Crawford and Kathy Johnson. In the classroom we have Da Bryant as the center's reading coordinator, Laverne Hargrett as math coordinator, and Willie Houseal, instructor of English.

Students performing were Wanda Williams, Doretha Bridges, Denise Brown, Cher Hanes, Michael Brown, Kevin Williams, Jimmy Holmes, Sandra Kirkland, Darren Jenkins, Kimberly Williams and Lason Kirkland.

As Camp Relitso merges into its Mid-summer program, students from many communities are enjoying the benefits offered by this center, and it is hoped that all the dreams and wishes of these special people come true.

By Willie Houseal

Camp Relitso, inc.

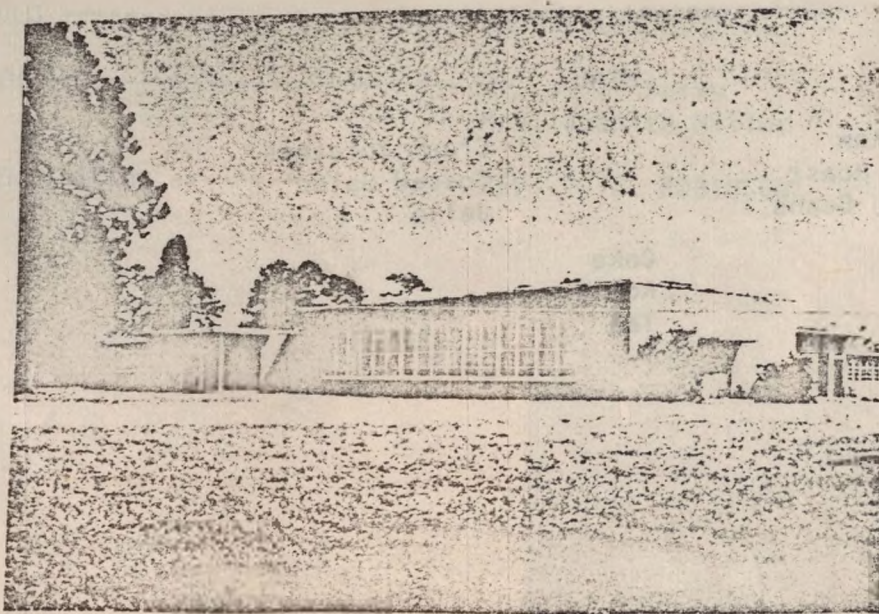
5th ANNIVERSARY

"FOUNDERS' DAY PROGRAM"

THEME: "SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS THROUGH EDUCATION"

SEPTEMBER 25, 1982

7:30 PM





Clarification
 A photograph in Sunday's edition of The Times identified Willie Houseal's Reading Is Fundamental program here as government funded. Houseal said government funds are not yet available for the program

Fundamental Gifts

July 82

Willie Houseal of Valdosta distributes books made available through the government-funded Reading Is Fundamental program to children at Camp Relitso. The

books were distributed Friday during the last day of the summer camp held at the Old P.G. Williams School. — Times Staff Photo By Robert Winter III.



July 13 82

WILLIE HOUSEAL
 Reading Is Fundamental

By Times Staff Writer
 Willie Houseal believes reading is not only fun, but is also the key to understanding and education.

That's why he's decided to initiate a summer "Reading Is Fundamental" program in Valdosta.

Houseal received the go-ahead from the national RIF organization last week. A RIF program is something Houseal has wanted to start in Valdosta for some time, but funds for the program became available just recently.

"When I returned to Valdosta, I became aware that more people needed to realize that reading is the key to understanding. People are

just not reading like they should. One of my many objectives is to try and make Valdosta a better place to live," Houseal said.

The program is only a "pilot program." The community's reaction to the project will determine how long it lasts, Houseal said.

The program will last only through the summer, although Houseal has been authorized to sponsor the program for a year.

"I'd like to see the program run year round," Houseal said, "but we're just going to run out of funds by the end of summer."

About 400 books are to be distributed to children at Camp Relitso the second

week in August.

Houseal said he plans to give two books each to about 100 children, ranging from preschool through the eighth grade.

"The program will center around Camp Relitso because they have been instrumental in letting me obtain funds for the program," he said.

"I'd rather have an organization affiliate itself with RIF allowing the program to grow and allowing more children to benefit from the program in the Valdosta area."

The program can only continue if community and private organizations get involved by donating funds to the cause, Houseal said.

Residents Would End Double Taxation

15. Aug 82

By LEE FREEMAN
Times City Editor

Three southside Valdosta residents armed with a petition and a survey plan to approach the Lowndes County Commission with a request to help end double taxation of city residents.

Willie Houseal, Itas DuBard and Tony Daniels, who call themselves the Winnersville Coalition of Consultants, believe the county should take over the financial responsibility of the Valdosta Municipal Airport and share in the cost of other services such as fire protection.

They are also calling for the disincorporation of Remerton and its merger with the city of Valdosta.

"We're paying dual taxes and we're duplicating services," said Houseal.

"We have a petition with well over 600 names (calling for economic cooperation

between the city and the county) and we plan to go in front of the county commission real soon."

County Commission Chairman Fred DeLoach, meanwhile, said the commission will listen to the group's concerns but that he is still convinced "there's no such thing as double taxation in Lowndes County."

The income collected by the county exclusively outside the city limits exceeded the cost of services to its unincorporated areas by about \$189,000 this year, he said.

Those services include volunteer fire protection, waste disposal, recreation and parks maintenance outside the city.

It does not include the expense of the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department, however, which as a matter

of course doesn't patrol inside the city limits but is still financed in part by city taxpayers.

DeLoach said the sheriff's office is enforcing state laws, not county ordinances, and that the city has said it could handle law enforcement without the help of the sheriff's office.

"That's why they have a police department. That's the reason cities exist. They want more fire and more police protection than we have in the county," DeLoach said.

Despite the county's figures, Houseal, DuBard and Daniels believe the county can do more and they believe city taxpayers agree with them.

DuBard said he conducted a "random survey" in which all questioned agreed an internal reorganization of the

county's budget and finances was in order, to reflect the cost of services provided to the county's unincorporated areas.

"The purpose of all this is to bring about a coalition between the city and the county," DuBard said. "We want economic cooperation so that services necessary can be allowed to continue."

The airport is the major expense the group would like to see the county take over. The city is now footing the entire cost of the airport.

DeLoach said he favored letting sales tax take care of regional services such as the airport, the hospital and the library.

"There's enough sales tax to do it and then some," he said.

The city and county did hold a financial agreement on regional services last year but it was discontinued this year.

Firefighter Efforts Supported

Sir: This letter is written in support of the efforts made by our local firefighters. It is to my understanding that, petitions signed by 2,400 more registered voters, will in fact be sufficient for calling for a referendum on issues affecting the concerned citizens.

If this is the case, then I'm sure that the firefighters will have their day when this issue is brought before the public.

Previous experiences have made me aware of the importance of cost efficiency and cost effectiveness. Perhaps there may be logic in contracting private fire protective services in relation to cost efficiency, however serious consideration should be given to the effectiveness of this type of service.

It would be very difficult to rely on research in a matter such as this because there will be cities showing the effectiveness as a positive endeavor while others will express just the opposite.

The City of Valdosta has one of the finest fire protection services in the state of Georgia.

I would be the first to suggest replacing local units if there were obvious reasons, however, at this time the idea just doesn't sound feasible. More firefighters would lose their jobs, outside contractors would take capital out of the community, a period of transaction could cost taxpayers a considerable amount of money, furthermore this period of time could also cost residents their homes and perhaps their lives.

Why open a whole new can of worms, when the one already opened has yet to be used?

Until the city's administration can come up with a more logical explanation as to why we should change, I feel that the firefighters petition should drum up all the support it can get. Until I'm convinced of the total logic of an untimely suggestion, I'm strongly supportive of the fire protection services currently in existence.

Willie Houseal
Winnersville
Coalition
Consultants

Feb 83

adhere more to the needs of the people.

Finally, focusing on poll manning. There are citizens interested, who have placed their names on the registrar's list to work at the polls, only to realize many of the same people are being selected to man the polls.

It is hoped in the future managers selecting persons to work the polls will be more considerate to those who have patiently waited to serve.

Above all, we should remember many single votes add up and voting does change things.

Willie Houseal

It appears to me apathy is being challenged here in south Georgia. We should all be aware of the many political positions appearing on the ballot for the general election.

Among the many positions, the governor's race heads the ballot. However, the issues closer to home, wards and districts for Lowndes County, will also be voted on.

Among the many issues concerning wards and districts, one issue which stands out is the fact that changing the three-man commission to a five-man commission would certainly enhance the election of

CITY COUNCIL POST ONE

Willie Houseal

In the race for City Council, Post One, is Willie Houseal. He and his wife Cleopatra have three children, Willie Jr., Yorshia and Terry. The Houseal family attends River Street Church of Christ.

His educational background includes doctorate work in public administration at Nova University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, BA degree in Sociology at St. Leo College and an MA degree in Human Resource Management at Pepperdine University of California.

Houseal has been employed by the Lowndes County School System as reading and math teacher and by the GA Sheriff's Boy's Ranch under the Chapter 1 Program.

He is a member of Mason Lodge 19, serves on the Board of Directors of the United Minority Effort, Director/Founder of Winnersville Coalition and Lowndes/Valdosta Area RIF Coordinator.

"I will continue efforts to achieve wards in the City of Valdosta, thus allowing fair representation," states Houseal, "maintain fire services as is and efforts toward gaining an equitable return on your tax dollars. I will also maintain an open mind toward industry recruitment as an aid to providing new jobs for our community."

- TO UPGRADE DEMOCRACY IN VALDOSTA
- TO INSURE IMPLIMENTATION OF THE WARD SYSTEM
- TO GUARANTEE A FULLY PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTING SERVICE
- TO GAIN A FAIR SHARE OF ECONOMIC RETURN ON OUR TAX DOLLAR



Letters To The Editor

10 aug 82

Beware Political Games

Sir: This is to remind readers of the political strategies being used by gubernatorial candidate Bo Ginn

In an article printed in Sunday's edition of The Valdosta Daily Times, Bo Ginn and Joe Frank Harris debated Harris' endorsement by the Ku Klux Klan. As concerned citizens we should be aware of the degree

inflict on another. We should remember to stick to our guns when the time comes to make that important decision as to who will be our next governor.

As the ugly head of political evil reveals itself, we who are sincere, both black and white, must be cautious as to what is being said and to whom it is being told.

Surely anyone with common sense can see through

promises that cannot be kept. It is my belief that the KKK will be around for a long time. Further, it will continue to recruit members from the social and political arenas. As time winds down for the political extravaganza it should be remembered that registering and voting is not only an American privilege. It is a duty as well.

Willie Houseal

“ Get to Know Your Candidate ”

Residents Urged To Vote

25/10/51

Sir: Please be informed we are again approaching an election. Observation of the local and primary elections reveals an upward surge of interest related to political and social concerns.

It appears to me apathy is being challenged here in south Georgia. We should all be aware of the many political positions appearing on the ballot for the general election.

Among the many positions, the governor's race heads the ballot. However, the issues closer to home, wards and districts for Lowndes County, will also be voted on.

Among the many issues concerning wards and districts, one issue which stands out is the fact that changing the three-man commission to a five-man commission would certainly enhance the election of

minority members to the commission.

With recent court rulings of at-large voting being declared unconstitutional, we should join the ranks in making our governing body adhere more to the needs of the people.

Finally, focusing on poll manning. There are citizens interested, who have placed their names on the registrar's list to work at the polls, only to realize many of the same people are being selected to man the polls.

It is hoped in the future managers selecting persons to work the polls will be more considerate to those who have patiently waited to serve.

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Willie Houseal

Books Distributed

On Saturday, May 26, nearly 200 books will be distributed to as many children in Scott Park as part of Reading in Fun Week, sponsored by Reading is Fundamental.

The book giveaway will be held just after Valdostan Willie Houseal, area coordinator for RIF, is presented with the Margaret McNamara Certificate of Merit for his role in promoting reading in Valdosta.

Parent-children reading groups will take place that day and refreshments will be served. The ceremonies begin at 11 a.m.

Reading Meet Slated

A technical assistance meeting for representatives of various Georgia Reading is Fun projects will be held Friday at 9:30 a.m. at the Western Steer, 200 N. Valdosta Road.

Ms. Krystal Patrick, program specialist of Washington, D.C., will conduct the meeting, which is expected to last approximately three hours and will include lectures, a movie and discussions of the organization and running of RIF programs.

More information is available by calling Willie Houseal mornings at 244-4606.

Smith Deserved More

This letter is written in reference to the program given in honor of Mr. Herman Smith Sr.'s 40th year in radio broadcasting. I would like to express my view on the response given to the event. It appears to me that more people should have participated in the program than the number that turned out.

I feel that this was a disgrace to see just how many people really meant what they were saying about Mr. Smith. It now seems that people are not in tune to what they are saying.

People should start living what they preach, especially the so-called fans of Mr. Smith.

As a fan of Mr. Smith, I feel that more people should begin showing respect to a man who has delivered gospel programs to Valdosta's listening audiences for almost a half a century.

Robert L. Banks

Books For Youth

RIF Program Gets

By FREDRICK HODGE
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta's Reading Is Fundamental program has been extended for another year.

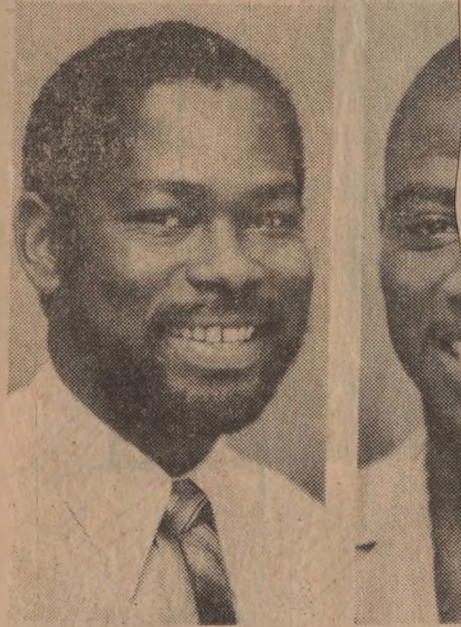
RIF coordinator Willie Houseal said the program was extended until June 9, 1984. The book give-away program donated 500 books to more than 250 youngsters in the Valdosta area last year, he said.

Last year the program was sponsored by Camp Relitso but this year it will be sponsored by Winnersville Coalition Consultants, said Houseal.

Iras DuBard, president of WCC said they decided to sponsor the program to try to "improve the qualifications and skills of future managers of the business community."

Poor and minority kids often lack sufficient reading skills to succeed, he said. "If we can generate interest and have other community organizations match what we're trying to do, we can get more books in the hands of children who need them," DuBard said.

"We (WCC) are the new kids on the block," he said. WCC would like to align itself with various organizations to try and improve the overall quality



WILLIE HOUSEAL
RIF Coordinator

of life in the Valdosta area, he said.

DuBard said the group has aligned itself with the Unity Food Bank to get food for low income citizens. He sees that as

being right objectives

"Reading is fundamental. Society that is in every

Second RIF Book Giveaway Slated

Feb 83

The Valdosta Daily Times, 7

ng upon us, we are for a change in nothing and even the will eat. There's a tie air that touches during the spring months.

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1984, local election . now is the time to ioning elected of-

they stand on the es affecting us. he election rush sues bombarding ce, complicating e. It is hoped that will join Win-

Life Here

learn the language. But we realize that hungry kids aren't interested in reading," he said.

Though the local RIF program is approved at the national level, "it is still community funded," he said.

A lot of people think the government funds the program, but it is the local citizens, he said.

There were two book give-aways last year. Residents of the Georgia Sheriff Boy Ranch received two books each with the help of the Community Involvement Team from Lev Strauss.

Camp Relitso sponsored another give-away and various people involved with that one gave away surplus books to community children who they felt needed help, said DuBard.

DuBard said the group is also working with the NAACP to try and establish a library on the southside of town. He said they were thinking of trying to use the old library building in Hudson Dockett.

Its being used as a storeroom now, he said. The two groups are planning to ask the housing authority if they can use the building once all the mechanisms are in place, he said.

June 24, 1983

RIF Program Gets New Life Here

By FREDRICK HODGE
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta's Reading Is Fundamental program has been extended for another year.

RIF coordinator Willie Houseal said the program was extended until June 9, 1984. The book give-away program donated 500 books to more than 250 youngsters in the Valdosta area last year, he said.

Last year the program was sponsored by Camp Relitso but this year it will be sponsored by Winnersville Coalition Consultants, said Houseal.

Iras DuBard, president of WCC said they decided to sponsor the program to try to "improve the qualifications and skills of future managers of the business community."

Poor and minority kids often lack sufficient reading skills to succeed, he said. "If we can generate interest and have other community organizations match what we're trying to do, we can get more books in the hands of children who need them," DuBard said.

"We (WCC) are the new kids on the block," he said. WCC would like to align itself with various organizations to try and improve the overall quality



WILLIE HOUSEAL
RIF Coordinator



IRAS BUBARD
WCC President

of life in the Valdosta area, he said.

DuBard said the group has aligned itself with the Unity Food Bank to get food for low income citizens. He see that as

being right in line with the objectives of the RIF program.

"Reading is very fundamental. If we live in a society that speaks English, it is in everyone's best interest to

learn the language. But we realize that hungry kids aren't interested in reading," he said.

Though the local RIF program is approved at the national level, "it is still community funded," he said.

A lot of people think the government funds the program, but it is the local citizens, he said.

There were two book give-aways last year. Residents of the Georgia Sheriff Boy Ranch received two books each with the help of the Community Involvement Team from Lev Strauss.

Camp Relitso sponsored another give-away and various people involved with that one gave away surplus books to community children who they felt needed help, said DuBard.

DuBard said the group is also working with the NAACP to try and establish a library on the southside of town. He said they were thinking of trying to use the old library building in Hudson Dockett.

Its being used as a storeroom now, he said. The two groups are planning to ask the housing authority if they can use the building once all the mechanisms are in place, he said.

With spring upon us, we are preparing for a change in weather, clothing and even the foods we will eat. There's a sense in the air that touches many of us during the spring and summer months.

I am hoping that as we prepare for changes, less we not forget that apathy toward voting continues to exist. Winnersville Coalition Consultants have made plans to conduct Voters Education Rallies during the spring and summer months throughout Valdosta and Lowndes County. I am certain that many apathetic attitudes will continue to exist, even after all efforts are exhausted.

The amount of critical issues confronting our city and county administrations continue to mount. Therefore, educating the public on various issues concerning voting should be a task for all community projects and organizations to challenge.

With Feb. 1984, local election approaching, now is the time to begin questioning elected of-

ficials on how they stand on the various issues affecting us. Let's avoid the election rush with these issues bombarding us all at once, complicating matters worse. It is hoped that many others will join Win-

nersville Coalition Consultants in their effort to combat the inherited apathy toward voting.

Willie Houseal
Winnersville Coalition
Consultant

Feb 83

Second RIF Book Giveaway Slated

Books Distributed

On Saturday, May 26, nearly 200 books will be distributed to as many children in Scott Park as part of Reading in Fun Week, sponsored by Reading is Fundamental.

The book giveaway will be held just after Valdostan Willie Houseal, area coordinator for RIF, is presented with the Margaret McNamara Certificate of Merit for his role in promoting reading in Valdosta.

Parent-children reading groups will take place that day and refreshments will be served. The ceremonies begin at 11 a. m.

Reading Meet Slated

A technical assistance meeting for representatives of various Georgia Reading is Fun projects will be held Friday at 9:30 a. m. at the Western Steer, 200 N. Valdosta Road.

Ms. Krystal Patrick, program specialist of Washington, D. C., will conduct the meeting, which is expected to last approximately three hours and will include lectures, a movie and discussions of the organization and running of RIF programs.

More information is available by calling Willie Houseal mornings at 244-4608.

Room For 911 Progress

Editorial 15 APR 83

Two Valdosta residents are dead due to a housefire that trapped them in a back bedroom of their residence Saturday.

The tragedy has reignited complaints that the 911 emergency telephone system in Valdosta needs either drastic improvement or to be eliminated.

There was a minor delay in response time due to the 911 system, and that in itself is justification for calling the system into question.

No one has come out and blamed the deaths strictly on the delay, but the feeling rightfully exists that we can't afford to have such delays in situations where lives are at stake. Literally, every second counts.

Yes, the 911 system here could stand improvement. It will never be perfect just as no other system can be, but it can be better.

But no, the system shouldn't be scrapped altogether.

The idea behind it is to centralize emergency communications instead of having them come in at random as it was done before the system was implemented.

The old way of doing things had its share of flaws as well. Practice practice, practice through years of emergencies made the system adequate, though still imperfect.

The 911 system will be even more effective. Yes, there are economics involved, but the idea of centralized emergency communications is still a sound one.

It's obvious there is much work to do before the system is operating at its fullest potential. Emergency agencies and others involved in making the system work will have to put out extra effort and want to make it work. The system will be practically useless if those involved are reluctant to accept it.

The biggest change before us, then will be in our attitude. If we cannot change the negative attitude, then we'll accomplish nothing. We can go back to the old way of doing things and forget about progress.

Unfortunately, nothing stands still. You either progress or you fall behind. Our system can and will progress with cooperation. It will only get worse without it. And going back to the old system leaves no room for progress.

911 System Blamed For Deaths Here

13 April 1983

By TONI McPHAU
Times Staff Writer

The 911 emergency dispatch system here is under fire again, but this time southside residents say it may have contributed to the deaths of two Valdostans.

Bunnie Willis, 60, and his 13-year-old daughter Coretha, of 415 N. Hudson St., died early Saturday morning when fire trapped them inside a back bedroom of their house.

Residents in that area are criticizing the emergency system and contend it delayed the response time of city firefighters—a delay which may have cost the two Valdostans their lives.

Valdosta Police Chief Jack Hughes and Fire Chief Charles Ogburn say there was a breakdown in communication with the system Saturday.

However, both said the breakdown did not cause substantial delay and was in no way responsible for the deaths of the two residents.

When the dispatcher sent out the tone alarm to the fire stations, the address of the fire was never heard by firefighters.

Assistant Chief Gene Crawford had to radio back to the dispatcher to get the address of the fire and to send the appropriate units.

Dispatchers are trained to give the tone alarm, immediately followed by the address and units needing to respond.

In Saturday's incident, almost 60 seconds elapsed before firefighters could respond to the fire call because the address of the fire was not immediately known, according to the log.

Saturday's fire call was received by the 911 dispatcher 35

seconds after 5:32 a.m. Crawford notified the dispatcher that units were on the scene a few seconds before 5:38 a.m.

Hughes said the dispatcher apparently pushed the wrong button on the system, dispatching police officers rather than the fire department.

Firefighters say "every second counts in an emergency situation," and a 30 second delay could be crucial.

However, Fire Chief Ogburn said the delay Saturday was so slight it would have made no difference in the outcome. He said three and a half minutes is a normal response time for the fire department and units from the Ulmer Avenue station were on the scene within three minutes after receiving the address

"A minute seems like an hour" in an emergency situation, Hughes said.

Willie Houseal, a southside resident, said residents are not trying to cast blame on the fire department or dispatcher.

"We don't want to say they could have gotten there in time to save any lives. We're not saying anyone is at fault...we're not even saying the (911) system is ineffective, it's just not as effective as it could be," Houseal said.

Houseal believes the system needs to be improved or perhaps even abolished.

"The old system allowed the firefighters to hear the conversation about the fire when it came in...delays were minimal...but this system was implemented because the administration has economics in mind and not lives.

"They (the city) are the ones that need to be scrutinized the most when these types of plans are laid," he said.

Chief Ogburn agrees the system is not without flaws and is

in need of improvements. He said he was never in favor of implementing the system.

"There's a lot of room for improvement in any system. I was never in favor of this," Ogburn told The Times. "I don't see where it (the emergency system) has helped us at all."

Only six months after its implementation, the 911 system has continually been criticized by residents and city firefighters.

Emergency calls are answered by a trained police dispatcher and firefighters contend the dispatchers are forced to handle too wide a variety of emergency calls.

"The system does not function as it should. Since implementation, the degree of professionalism has decreased greatly. There's a slack attitude toward the potential loss of life and dispatchers don't treat it with nearly the professionalism that they should," said one city employee who asked not to be named.

The dispatcher must control all city and county emergency calls, "but in reality it is run by the police department. It is the police department answering everyone else's calls," said one southside resident.

Firefighters contend Saturday's delay would not have saved the two Valdostans. However, they say such delays don't minimize the loss either.

"This doesn't just hurt the residents on the southside, it hurts everyone," Houseal said. "This same thing could have happened in another area of town. Next time the delay could be longer. I don't know how it could have been any but it probably could have been."

The
39
In
Street

15 May 83 Front Page

To March In Protest

By TONI McPAUL
Times Staff Writer

Residents here plan to take to the streets Saturday to protest an anticipated closing of the city's southside fire station.

The recent deaths of two southside residents in a house fire has brought the seriousness of the situation to light and has prompted southside residents to take a good hard look at the possible closing of the Ulmer Avenue station, according to NAACP public relations director Debra

Morrells.

Protest of the possible closing will be voiced by a march from the southside fire station to City Hall at 11 a. m., she said.

Miss Morrells said NAACP representatives from throughout the state are expected to march along with members of the Valdosta NAACP, Wingersville Coalition, and the Valdosta Ministerial Alliance. Organizers say they expect to draw about 500 marchers.

Mayor-Council agreed last year, amid

controversy over the station's proposed closing, to keep it open on a probationary type basis for another year. The station is included in the city budget now being drawn up for 1983-84.

"Mayor-Council literally thought all this would be forgotten," Miss Morrells said. "We've been working on this project since January. The deaths just stressed the seriousness of what we were facing on the southeast side of town.

"It just let us know that this could

happen again if we don't do something about it now."

The exact route of the march has not been determined yet, she said. NAACP members plan to meet with Mayor Ernest Nijem and Valdosta Police Chief Jack Hughes before making final plans.

"We're hoping we can get the Mayor to meet us at City Hall," Miss Morrell said. "We want to present him with a petition as well."

The petition, which the NAACP began

circulating about three weeks ago, requests that the Ulmer Avenue station be put back into city records permanently and that the council refrain from proposing its closing.

About 300 registered voters had signed the petition as of Friday, she said.

Although union firefighters have not been asked to participate in the march, Union President Leighton Sadler said firefighters would publicly support the venture if asked.

Miss Morrells believes the march will be beneficial whether or not Mayor-Council agrees to maintain the station.

"It will certainly have an effect as far as citizen awareness is concerned," she said. "We need to make this black residents realize that unless they get involved in local politics and things that are going to effect them in the future.

"The majority rules in government and the more blacks we get registered (to vote), the more we're going to get done."

Proposed T. E. C.

Train Could Have Waited

21 MAY 83

By FREDRICK HODGE
Times Staff Writer

An age-old nemesis confronted protest marchers Saturday.

A train approached as marchers crossed railroad tracks at South Lee Street near the South Georgia Pecan Co.

March leaders immediately began to hurry people across the tracks in order to keep the group together.

Sam W. Hunt, a trainmaster for the railroad company, said he could not identify the train, its origin or destination, but accommodations for the marchers could have been made if the railroad had been informed.

"When something like that is coming up, we can sometimes make arrangements to hold the train up if we are notified," he said.

The train didn't disrupt the march, as the marchers scurried across the track along with their automotive convoy. But some had to swerve around the crossing bars to get by.

Leaders of the march did not seem to be rattled by the confrontation with the train and continued on to city hall.

"There's not too much we can do about that, they have a schedule to keep," said Louis Gordon, vice president of the NAACP.

He said the railroad wasn't informed about the march and the NAACP didn't know the railroad could work the train schedule so there would be no conflict.

Willie Houseal, president of the Wingersville Coalition Consultants said, "It (the train crossing) stops progress. If it had blocked us off, people behind may have gone home."

Houseal said the people were so excited about being heard that there wasn't much of a problem.

But Houseal realizes the overall goal of the march is still in the future.

"We have to attend more council meetings, there are still some people who have to be awakened," he said.

He said the march was a beginning and the group needed to keep going.

"Ed Brown (regional coordinator for the NAACP) hit the nail on the head. He addressed some of the issues about federal money not being dispursed properly," said Houseal.

to my knowledge there has

Registration Response Well-Organized Here

The Secretary of State, Max Glendon, is trying to encourage 1,000 people to register to celebrate our 250th birthday as a state. People who don't register cannot vote. Not everybody is likely to vote in elections, but if registered, person may vote in the election he is most interested

The Board of Registrars has arranged for a registration site at the Pinevale-Lomax Center for the first Saturday of every month. The Wingersville Coalition should be congratulated for doing such an excellent job in organizing the registration response

The number of people registering per year is remarkable, particularly since the people being registered are tradi-

tionally non-participants. The courthouse site rarely draws a crowd, except on the days immediately preceding the deadline for registration.

While it is sad that Lowndes County is lagging behind other counties in the Secretary of State's voter registration drive, it is wonderful to see that some people do care and are willing to make the effort to "go to the people" and involve them in the political process.

Such activity is the essence of democracy. The Wingersville Coalition has reason to be proud of its contribution to the community.

Jane Elza
Assistant Professor
VSC Political
Science

P.O. BOX 1267
VALDOSTA, GA
Fire Deaths Prompt Valdostans

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Valdosta Threatened With Suit



By FREDRICK HODGE
Times Staff Writer

The City of Valdosta may find itself in federal court if Mayor-Council is not willing to discuss changing the city's voting system.

Todd Johnson, attorney at Georgia Legal Services, sent a letter to Mayor-Council asking it to and discuss adopting a ward system for municipal elections.

Johnson, who is representing black residents and a black

Valdosta, June 23rd
community group, said the city
has not responded to his letter, which was dated June 14.

The letter said only a single-member district system, implemented for electing city council members, would be acceptable.

Though the letter is strong in its message to Mayor-Council, Johnson said he would really prefer to sit and discuss changes with them.

Johnson said his clients are prepared to file a civil action if

they have not heard from Mayor-Council before the Aug. 15 deadline in the letter.

Johnson said the system was changed in March 1963 from an at-large residency ward system to a post system. The change, he said, came one month after then-President John Kennedy had introduced the voting rights legislation.

At that time there was a move in the Georgia General Assembly that municipalities should make the change, he

said.

Johnson said the post system was simply "a device to have majority elections." He said there may not have been any discriminatory intent when the system was changed.

Mayor Ernest Nijem said he had not had a chance to talk with the city council about the letter.

"I got mine Monday," he said of his copy of the letter. He said he was waiting until he could meet with the council and

city attorney, George Talley.

"We're in the middle of budget meetings...and the meeting will probably be next week," he said.

Nijem said he remembers the change that occurred in 1963 when Valdosta went to a post system to elect council members. "We didn't have a city manager and mayor distributed (appointed) department heads," he said.

The first six highest vote getters were on the council, he said. Now the winner has to have a majority of the vote to be elected.

Nijem said personally he would like to see a black or two on the council. "Before (William) Pompey died, I spoke with him and asked him to come to my office to talk politics," he said. The mayor hinted that he was going to ask Pompey to run for the council. Pompey ran and lost in 1980.

"I'd be willing to sit down and talk about it (changing the voting system)," he said. "Let's sit down and talk to them."

Nijem, whose term ends in February, said he'd be running for re-election next year and that a ward system wouldn't alter his bid to retain his mayoral seat.

"I'll run at large, a ward system wouldn't affect me," he said.

The only black to serve on the council was Ruth Council. Mrs. Council served from 1974-1980.

Reading Material

Margaret McNamara Certificate of Merit for his role in promoting reading in Valdosta. — Times Staff Photo by Frank Williams.

Willie Houseal and Iras DuBard hand out books at Scott Park Saturday. The books, paid for by the Ulmer Avenue Fire Station, are part of the Reading is Fundamental program. At the park, Houseal was presented with the

Wards Not The Answer *28 June 83*

A challenge is in the works here of how Valdosta elects Mayor-Council by the at-large system instead of by wards or districts. The way it is now, all the voters vote for all council posts and the mayor. Under a ward system, each voter would vote for the mayor and just the councilman from his ward.

It is another case of the end result not justifying the means of getting there.

The protest claims, correctly, that blacks have not been represented on Mayor-Council in anywhere near the numbers of the black population would suggest.

By going to a ward system, Valdosta would have one and probably two seats on Council from predominantly black wards, thus ensuring blacks on Council.

To put it in purely racial terms, that would mean nothing. The vote would still be four-two, if you feel it is going

to be a strictly racial matter.

Yes, there would be blacks on Council with wards. What else would we get? We would get ward politics, the worst of all systems tried in our nation.

Instead of having six councilmen on whom to call, you would have one. How much interest would a councilman have in your problem if you live in another ward and can't vote for him?

In city after city, it has been shown that ward systems are very costly, due to duplication. The old "they got one we want one too..." business of competition between councilmen to see who does the most for "his" ward.

We need more blacks in our political process at all levels of government. We waste a lot of talent, expertise and genius when blacks are not fully in the system. But ward politics isn't the way to solve this problem.

1 April 1983

Re-published

Letters To The Editor

Voter Apathy Continues

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Re-published

Voter Apathy Continues



29 July 83
TONY DANIELS
Donates \$100

RIF Reaps Cash

By Times Staff Writer

The community organization that painted the basketball courts at Scott Park and operate daily concessions there has moved into another area.

United Minority Effort has donated \$100 to the Winnersville Coalition Consultants for their Reading Is Fundamental program.

Tony Daniels, president of UME, said "the money is for whatever purpose WCC sees fit. There are no strings attached."

RIF coordinator Willie Houseal said the money will be used to pay off a small balance from two book give aways that were held last year.

UME, a non-political organization, also supports the Snoopy Club at the Lomax-Pinevale Recreation Center and the summer camp program at Camp Relitso.



Layin' It On Scott Park

Volunteer workers Curtis Thomas, front, and Tony Daniels give basketball courts at Scott Park a paint job. The maintenance of the park is being spearheaded by a group called United

Minority Effort. The Valdosta Parks and Recreation Department provides the materials.—Times Staff Photo by Frank Williams.

were held last year.

UME, a non-political organization, also supports the Snoopy Club at the Lomax-Pinevale Recreation Center and the summer camp program at Camp Relitso.

"I plan to monitor the program this summer to see if we'll be able to conduct a year round program. There will be no house-to-house fund raising campaigns. I'll just make the information about the program available to anyone that might be interested," Houseal said

Only children affiliated with Camp Relitso this summer will be given the free books.

Academic books will be given to preschoolers to better prepare them for the first grade, Houseal said, but "books for enjoyment" will be given to the older children.

"There's a great need for children to be prepared for school. This is just one of the

efforts I plan to initiate to help them in their first year of school," he said.

Houseal is a volunteer instructor at Camp Relitso during the summer. During the rest of the year, Houseal substitute teaches while trying to finish a doctorate degree in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Camp Relitso is a non-profit community organization. Its objectives are to increase academic levels of children working below their capabilities by focusing on math and reading skills throughout the summer. Houseal said

Houseal said he would like to see the entire Valdosta area involved in the RIF program, but admits that won't happen unless the community believes in the need.

"The program right now is totally community funded. State and federal grants are simply not available at this time. I hope to get in line for some aid when the money becomes available, but right now, expansion depends on what help we get financially from the community."

Layin' It On Scott Park

Volunteer workers Curtis Thomas, front, and Tony Daniels give basketball courts at Scott Park a paint job. The maintenance of the park is being spearheaded by a group called United

Minority Effort. The Valdosta Parks and Recreation Department provides the materials.—Times Staff Photo by Frank Williams.

City To Discuss At-large Suit

By CASSHEARIN
Times Staff Writer

The civil suit filed by the U.S. Justice Department against local governing bodies will be discussed at meetings here called by the justice department next Monday.

The U.S. Justice Department filed suit last month against the Valdosta City Council, the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and the Valdosta Board of Education charging the at-large method of voting here is against the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Also named as defendants in the suit are Valdosta Mayor Ernest Nijem and the county board of elections.

Those scheduled to attend the meetings will be lawyers representing the Justice Department, the defendants named in the suit and local black residents, who also recently filed suit against the mayor, city council and county board of elections challenging the at-large method of voting here. Mayor Ernest Nijem said.

Georgia Legal Services and the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the city council and county board of elections soon after the Justice Department suit, charging the at-large voting system here is discriminatory. That suit was filed on behalf of local blacks, the local NAACP chapter and Wintersville Coalition Consultants, a local black political organization.

City Attorney George Talley said the meetings were set "to talk about the case," but would not elaborate as to whether a settlement may be reached at the meetings.

The city council began as long as three months ago seeking ways to replace the at-large voting system here. Nijem said, and indeed came up with a proposal for the Justice Department before the suit was filed against the local governing bodies, he said.

"We were looking at this thing before the suit came. We had agreed to submit the proposal before the suit came out, because, let's face it, it's going to happen just as sure as ducks," Nijem said.

The Valdosta Daily Times, Thurs., Sept. 29, 1983-7-A-

Voter Registration Drive On Saturday

By CASSHEARIN
Times Staff Writer

If you've been using the excuse you can't get off work to go and register to vote, this Saturday is your chance.

The Lomax Community Service Center at 900 S. Troup St. will hold voter registration there from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m., said Willie Houseal, director of the Wintersville Coalition Consultants, which is helping with the drive.

Houseal's organization is doing its best to rid people of another excuse for not registering to vote, which is, "I don't have a way to get there," he said.

All morning long during the

registration, volunteers with the Wintersville Coalition Consultants will be at the center available for anyone who needs a ride to or from the drive.

All anyone has to do to get a

ride to the center is call 244-1524 anytime during registration hours and someone will come and get them, Houseal said.

Houseal said he is excited because this is the first time a

voter registration site has been placed in the south side of Valdosta.

The center will hold one Saturday a month for voter registration, he said, and this Saturday is the first.

Practice Voting Privilege

We'd like to see the day come when voter registration drives in Lowndes County are no longer necessary. However, we're not holding our breath.

Another drive is set for Saturday in Valdosta at the Lomax Community Service Center, and it's something residents of that area should take advantage of. The organizers are even going as far as to provide transportation for those without.

Of course, the community center isn't the only place where one can register to vote. It's as simple as taking five minutes out of your schedule for a quick visit to the courthouse.

It's all so simple, and yet apparently a lot of people believe it's very

difficult. There are hundreds of eligible voters out there who have never found time to register.

There are probably as many excuses for not registering as there are unregistered people, but there aren't any good reasons.

We're rapidly approaching 1984, a year of many elections on the local, state and national level. The time to register is now, if not yesterday.

Voting is a privilege, but just like any other privilege it can be lost if it is not exercised. How low must the voter turnout get before we reach that point?

We'll never know the answer to that one if we'd just get out and register, then get out and vote.

CORRECTION

An article which appeared in *The Times* Thursday incorrectly reported voter registration will be held Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Lomax Community Service Center at 900 S. Troup St.

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30 Sept 83

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City To Discuss At-large Suit

By CASS SHEARIN
Times Staff Writer

The civil suit filed by the U.S. Justice Department against local governing bodies will be discussed at meetings here called by the justice department next Monday.

The U.S. Justice Department filed suit last month against the Valdosta City Council, the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and the Valdosta Board of Education charging the at-large method of voting here is against the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Also named as defendants in the suit are Valdosta Mayor Ernest Nijem and the county board of elections.

Those scheduled to attend the meetings will be lawyers representing the Justice Department, the defendants named in the suit and local black residents, who also recently filed suit against the mayor, city council and county board of elections challenging the at-large method of voting here, Mayor Ernest Nijem said.

Georgia Legal Services and the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the city council and county board of elections soon after the Justice Department suit, charging the at-large voting system here is discriminatory. That suit was filed on behalf of local blacks, the local NAACP chapter and Winnersville Coalition Consultants, a local black political organization.

City Attorney George Talley said the meetings were set "to talk about the case," but would not elaborate as to whether a settlement may be reached at the meetings.

The city council began as long as three months ago seeking ways to replace the at-large voting system here, Nijem said, and indeed came up with a proposal for the Justice Department before the suit was filed against the local governing bodies, he said.

"We were looking at this thing before the suit came. We had agreed to submit the proposal before the suit came out, because, let's face it, it's going to happen just as sure as ducks," Nijem said.

The Valdosta Daily Times, Thurs., Sept. 29, 1983-7-A-

Voter Registration Drive On Saturday

Sept 29

voter registration site has been placed in the south side of Valdosta.

The center will hold one Saturday a month for voter registration, he said, and this Saturday is the first.

ride to the center is call 244-1524 anytime during registration hours and someone will come and get them, Houseal said.

Houseal said he is excited because this is the first time a

registration, volunteers with the Winnersville Coalition Consultants will be at the center available for anyone who needs a ride to or from the drive.

All anyone has to do to get a

Houseal's organization is doing its best to rid people of another excuse for not registering to vote, which is, "I don't have a way to get there," he said.

All morning long during the

By CASS SHEARIN
Times Staff Writer
If you've been using the excuse you can't get off work to go and register to vote, this Saturday is your chance.

The Lomax Community Service Center at 900 S. Troup St. will hold voter registration there from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m., said Willie Houseal, director of the Winnersville Coalition Consultants, which is helping with the drive.

Practice Voting Privilege

30 Sept 83

We'd like to see the day come when voter registration drives in Lowndes County are no longer necessary. However, we're not holding our breath.

Another drive is set for Saturday in Valdosta at the Lomax Community Service Center, and it's something residents of that area should take advantage of. The organizers are even going as far as to provide transportation for those without.

Of course, the community center isn't the only place where one can register to vote. It's as simple as taking five minutes out of your schedule for a quick visit to the courthouse.

It's all so simple, and yet apparently a lot of people believe it's very

difficult. There are hundreds of eligible voters out there who have never found time to register.

There are probably as many excuses for not registering as there are unregistered people, but there aren't any good reasons.

We're rapidly approaching 1984, a year of many elections on the local, state and national level. The time to register is now, if not yesterday.

Voting is a privilege, but just like any other privilege it can be lost if it is not exercised. How low must the voter turnout get before we reach that point?

We'll never know the answer to that one if we'd just get out and register, then get out and vote.

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1983 Second Suit Challenges

By LEE FREEMAN
Times City Editor

A second suit challenging the at large electoral system in Valdosta as discriminatory to blacks has been filed against Valdosta City Council.

Georgia Legal Services attorney Todd Johnson filed the suit in federal court here Monday afternoon on behalf of the Lowndes County Chapter of the NAACP, the Winnersville Coalition of Consultants and other members of the black community here.

The suit, threatened since

June, comes on the heels of a federal court suit filed Oct. 27 in Macon by the U.S. Justice Department in Washington. That suit names the Valdosta Board of Education and the Lowndes County Commission in addition to the city council of board of elections here as defendants

Both suits seek to replace the at large method of voting with voting districts, which they contend would give blacks the opportunity to participate in elections and elect candidates

of their choice. In an at large system, every voter can cast a vote for every post up for election of a particular governmental body. A district, or ward, system of voting allows only those voters living within the particular district to vote for their district representative.

If district lines are drawn correctly, the ward system virtually assures the election of minority members.

Johnson said the legal services suit was "a form of

insurance," in case the Justice Department's suit doesn't bring about a voting system suitable to the defendants.

"In past cases, the Justice Department has been overturned" on appeal, Johnson said.

"We're pleased that the Justice Department is involved, though."

The suit contends "there has been a history of official discrimination against blacks in the City of Valdosta...Black people have been unable to

Letters To The Editor

Valdosta Blacks Should Register

Sir: Please be informed of the seriousness of the condition concerning voters registration. A recent poll shows 21,000 registered voters in Lowndes County and of that number we have only 4,000 blacks registered.

This letter is not written to cause any confusion or polarization among the races, but only to create an awareness of the apathetic attitudes among the black citizens.

Once a political base has been established, then our city can begin utilizing the talent and expertise of many black citizens in this community and perhaps tap an unexplored resource that has

been at the city's disposal for years.

It is suggested when concerned groups arise to combat this situation, such as the NAACP's massive voter registration drive, blacks will turn out in record-breaking numbers to participate in such an important matter.

It is also hoped that our white brothers and sisters will support our effort in the struggle to gain the recognition and positions blacks here in Valdosta are entitled to.

Willie Houseal
811 Bunche
Drive

Registration

Voter registration will be held at Pinevale Lomax School Saturday from 9 a.m. till noon.

A spokesman for the NAACP said there would be a field representative from Atlanta present to work with the registration.

There will also be fraternities and sororities from Valdosta State College there to help with registration, said the spokesman.

A campaign will be sponsored on Saturday by the NAACP and Winnersville Coalition to help people from the south and west sides of town get to the registration.

"We want to get as many people registered as possible, not only now but between now and the national election," said the spokesman for the NAACP.

Valdosta, Georgia, Tuesday, November 8, 1983

Valdosta Election System

elect members of their race or persons who support their views and interests to the Valdosta City Council."

The purpose of the at large method now in practice, the suit charges, "is to ensure that areas having high concentrations of black population are thrown together with areas having low concentration of black population. This method of elections dilutes the voting strength of black citizens."

The suit offers as evidence that only one black, Ms. Ruth

Council, has ever been elected to the city council.

It asks the courts to declare the at large system in violation of the 1st, 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Neither this suit nor the Justice Department's suit asks for a ward system outright, but both ask that a voting system be established which, in effect, would guarantee blacks an equal opportunity with whites to participate in the political

process here. Valdosta City Council now has six at large posts. The mayor is also elected at large.

Johnson said a six-ward system has been discussed, but that there are other options such as a mixture of wards and at large posts.

It is possible an agreement can be reached outside of court. The Justice Department has said it is willing to negotiate an out-of-court settlement and Johnson has met with City Attorney George Talley on the

prospects of establishing wards.

However, Johnson said he has received "no official response" from the city council and "there comes a point when you start wondering if you're going to get anything."

The defendants in both suits have 20 days from the dates the suits were filed to file an answer in federal court here, according to Lundie Smith, clerk of the Valdosta Division of the Middle District Court of Georgia.

Swank, Evelyn Coppinge, LaRonnia Williams, Iralene
Dickerson, Juanita Miller, Editha Clinkskales, David Wells,
Otis Lane, Cynthia Lane, Gwendolyn Register, Connie
Montgomery, Aurelia Jones, Bonnie Ward, Olivia Bethea,
Dr. Ken Martin, Patricia Iverson, LaVerne Shiver, Juanita
Parker, Gloria Davis, Johnnie Carter, Hattie Williams,
Kathryn Young and Velma Perry.

The program is open to the public at no charge.

Vote Registration Set

7 Dec 83

Anyone who has not registered to vote or is not able to during the week because of conflicting work schedules, will have the opportunity to register Saturday.

The first Saturday of every month, the Lomax-Pinevale School gym is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for voter registration.

"I know people are tired of hearing about voter registration, but it should be driven home. People should never get tired of registration," said Willie Houseal, director of the Winnersville Coalition here.

Houseal's organization, along with the local NAACP chapter and Kappa Tau Lambda, is offering transportation to and from the registration site, he said.

Telephone numbers for rides to the school will be announced on WGOV, a local radio station, Houseal said.

7 Dec 83

Progress Of Registration

This letter is written to inform the many readers of the progress of the registration drive conducted at Lomax-Pinevale registration site.

In spite of all the controversial publicity related to registration, our recent drives produced an approximate total and the number to rise.

can be interpreted or simply 100

ion would

like to commend the local chapter NAACP, Georgia Womens Political Caucus, Business and Professional Women, the American Association of University Women and the Kappa Tau Lambda organizations for their collective effort.

These organizations realize the importance of voter registration and have joined together to combat the apathetic attitude toward voter registration.

There are those who share their problems with us concerning our community. However these problems continue to exist, because our city government has not responded.

With Valdosta having a radius of 7.5 miles in diameter, we have concluded that there is little sensitivity toward some areas of our city.

I personally find it hard to be convinced that a council member living in an entirely different neighborhood can be honestly concerned as to conditions in the many nooks and crannies of the south and west side of town.

Many people are becoming confused as to why registration is important at this time. We should be aware that implementation of wards and districts has little relevance to increased registration, therefore the focus should be placed on state and national elections, as well as local election.

Democrats and Republicans alike are interested in increased registration. With increased vote, Democrats are striving to gain more House seats, while on the other hand, Republicans are concentrating on maintaining their status.

Recent statistics show that only three states have lower voter turnouts than Georgia.

Winnersville Coalition has vowed to strive to increase voter turnout in south Georgia by 10 percent to equal or surpass the national turnout rate of 48.5 percent.

Registration in the 80's means fair representation for a better community, a protest to despair towards national elected officials and the protection of interest of the state of Georgia.

1984 will be an election year. There will be local, state and national elections. Time is running out for registration. Therefore it would not be advisable to wait until the first Saturday because the registration offices are open daily.

Also, those that are 17 years of age approaching their 18th birthday may consult with their principals.

We hope that more organizations will join our efforts in the drives conducted on the first Saturday of each month. It's a great thing to be involved.

Willie Houseal
Director,
Winnersville Coalition
Consultants

Tues., Nov 22, 1983-6-

This And That

Camp RELITSO Sets Ceremony

By Times Staff Writer

A candlelighting ceremony will be held at Camp RELITSO at 7:30 a.m. Thursday following the camp's annual Thanksgiving breakfast.

The program was arranged and directed by Ruth K. Council, principal of Lomax-Pinevale Elementary School here.

It is designed to spotlight 36 teachers who have "exemplified the thankful spirit" by volunteering to teach at the camp during the summer, a spokesman said.

Doug Stevens, production director of WGAF 91, will be the narrator.

The following persons will be honored: Maude Clark, Irsle Flipper King, Gwen Burgman, Irene Miller, Julia Batchelor, Bernard Perry, Mack Rose, Willie Houseal, Dr. Ann Pierce, Patti Segovis, Josie S. Hunter, Xemenia Holcombe, Dr. Earl Swank, Evelyn Coppage, LaRonnna Williams, Iralene Dickerson, Juanita Miller, Editha Clinkscales, David Wells, Otis Lane, Cynthia Lane, Gwendolyn Register, Connie Montgomery, Aurelia Jones, Bonnie Ward, Olivia Bethea, Dr. Ken Martin, Patricia Iverson, LaVerne Shiver, Juanita Parker, Gloria Davis, Johnnie Carter, Hattie Williams, Kathryn Young and Velma Perry.

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