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Minorities not shut out in Atlanta

So the mayor of Atlanta compares the Southeastern Legal Foundation to the Ku Klux Klan.

So the Southeastern Legal Foundation asserts Mayor Bill Campbell's administration is corrupt.

So Mayor Campbell invokes the name of Malcolm X and vows to "fight to the death" to save the city's affirmative-action program.

So the SLF says it is going to court to force the city to scuttle racial set-asides in hiring and awarding contracts. So what?

Unless you have a direct interest in Five Points, this hot war of words over Atlanta's affirmative-action program may seem irrelevant. That battle was settled long ago.

Atlanta is a model affirmative-action town. Set-asides are as much a part of the city's commercial culture as airplanes and MARTA. Legal action is not going to change that.

There is not a major project in Atlanta that doesn't include at least 20, 30, 40, 50 or 60 percent minority participation.

A lawsuit against the city's affirmative-action program is akin to those moot legal assaults on busing to force school integration in areas where the school population is already 90 percent black. It is all but meaningless.

Instead of berating the president of the Southeastern Legal Foundation as a racist, Mayor Campbell should present Matthew Glavin with a heroic rescue award.

Until Glavin came along with his would-be lawsuit, Mayor Campbell was on his way to being remembered in many circles, black and white, as a fellow who did the city considerable harm. (Atlanta's less-than-sterling performance as an Olympics host can be laid directly on the steps of Campbell's City Hall.)

Now Glavin has allowed Campbell to change the subject.

He has inspired calls for boycotts of white industries. He has use the harshest language possible in promising to battle forever against what he describes as the racist barbarians at the city gates.

Frightened by the wild boycott talk and Campbell's fierce rhetoric, some SLF board members have jumped ship on Glavin and his cause. Yet,



Bill Shipp
Columnist

Glavin insists he will carry on. After all, the courts have struck down affirmative-action programs in dozens of other jurisdictions, including Fulton County. "Why," Glavin wants to know, "would one believe the courts will not do likewise in Atlanta?"

Perhaps they will, Matt. But it doesn't matter. Minorities have no reason to fear being shut out in Atlanta.

● Almost a third of the Atlanta Olympics construction was awarded to companies owned by minority and female businesses.

● Minority businesses controlled 52 percent of the concessions at Hartsfield Airport in 1998.

● Through 1997, over \$109 million dollars was spent by the city with certified minority/female business enterprises.

These minority gains were achieved because of the growing political influence of blacks and women, not because of constitutionally dubious legalisms.

Bill Shipp is editor of Bill Shipp's Georgia, a weekly newsletter on government and business. He can be reached at P. O. Box 440755, Kennesaw, GA 30144 or by calling (770) 422-2543, e-mail bshipp@bellsouth.net, Web address: <http://www.billshipp.com>.

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Sunday, Aug. 8, 1999

Valdosta, Ga.

Sunday, Aug. 8, 1999 — 9A

One Dollar

Conservative legal group fights affirmative action

Critics say foundation wants to reverse gains made by blacks

ATLANTA (AP) — For nearly a quarter century, the Southeastern Legal Foundation fought little-noticed legal battles against property restrictions, taxes and census sampling.

But recently, the Atlanta-based public interest law organization has grabbed headlines by pouring much of its money and energy into one high-profile war: annihilating affirmative action.

With court rulings and ballot initiatives chipping away at race-based preference programs in the last few years, the group has had a good deal of success. Some cities and counties have even raised the white flag rather than



Matt Glavine, head of the Southeastern Legal Foundation, poses Wednesday at his Atlanta office. Recently, the Atlanta-based public interest law organization has grabbed headlines by pouring much of its money and energy into one high-profile war: annihilating affirmative action.

risk a long, expensive legal skirmish with the foundation.

"Our goal should be a racial

neutral society," said Matt Glavin, the foundation's president since 1994. "There's no way

we'll achieve that dream if we have affirmative action programs in place because affirmative action programs inherently judge people based on the color of their skin."

Critics, however, say the foundation — whose 110,000 contributors donated \$1.75 million last year — is simply an attack dog doing the bidding of conservative politicians trying to dismantle all the gains by blacks since the civil rights movement.

"They're just a front for the Republican Party," said Lou Walker, president of the Georgia Black Chamber of Commerce. "Growing up in the South I went to the colored schools, I drank from the colored water fountain. It's very emotional for me to even think of going back to that. To think that my grandkids or kids

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Continued from Page 1A

Foundation

will have to go through that."

Now the foundation has turned its efforts toward Atlanta, threatening to file a lawsuit this month against the city unless the mayor voluntarily dismantles a program requiring a third of city contracts to be awarded to minority and women-owned businesses.

But here in the cradle of the civil rights movement, birthplace of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the foundation's efforts have erupted into a fierce battle against black political and civic leaders who have promised marches, rallies and boycotts.

Mayor Bill Campbell, himself the first black child in a North Carolina school system, vowed to "fight to the death" to keep the affirmative action program intact.

"There will be no compromise, no mediation, no capitulation. We will never stop. We will use all means necessary," he told a cheering audience at a City Hall rally.

"Thirty-one plus years ago we fought the dogs of poverty, racism, violence, police brutality

Some of the Foundation's cases

● 1999: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Clinton administration statistical sampling plan for Census 2000 illegal for purposes of determining congressional apportionment.

● 1999: Lobbied for unemployment tax cut bill in Georgia, which Gov. Roy Barnes signed into law.

● 1997: Loses in its fight to strike down Atlanta's ordinance granting benefits to unmarried domestic partners of city employees. The Georgia Supreme Court upheld the ordinance.

● 1996: A judge rejects

foundation's attempts to join legal battle over redistricting in order to have parts of the Voting Rights Act declared unconstitutional.

● 1996: Defended former FBI agent Gary Aldrich, who faced prosecution for his book depicting a Clinton White House of lax security and sexual escapades involving the president. The Justice Department decided not to file charges against him.

● 1995: Sued on behalf of DeKalb County investment company over the state's intangibles tax on stocks, bonds, cash and collateralized loans. In 1996, the Gener-

ty and no affirmative action," Martin Luther King III, son of the slain civil rights leader, told the crowd. "Thirty-one years later, we are still fighting the same old dogs. The dogs may appear kinder and gentler, but it's the same old dogs."

The foundation claims Atlanta's set-aside program — started in 1975 by Maynard Jackson, the city's first black mayor — is illegal and perpetuates discrimination by giving preferential treatment to minorities.

Police end attempt to block rally

CLEVELAND (AP) — The city police union on Tuesday gave up its attempt to block a Ku Klux Klan rally scheduled for the same day as a downtown convention for black families and the Cleveland Browns first home game.

The Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association reached a settlement in federal court with Mayor Michael R. White, who had refused to mount his own legal challenge to the rally, scheduled for Aug. 21.

White has said he's obligated under the Constitution to allow the rally to go forward and a legal fight against the KKK would have been a losing battle.

But the CPPA said the rally would put officers at risk of violence.

Court allows minority groups to join affirmative action case

DETROIT (AP)— Supporters of affirmative action won a court ruling Tuesday allowing them to argue in possibly precedent-setting lawsuits why the University of Michigan should consider race when picking its students.

The 2-1 ruling from a federal appeals court came in class-action lawsuits filed by three white applicants turned down by Michigan.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati said lower federal courts erred when they barred 58 individuals — most of whom are minority students at Michigan — and four groups from joining the school in defending the lawsuits.

Lawyers for the minorities say they want to raise questions

that Michigan won't. The lawyers say they would argue that the university discriminated against minorities in the past, and that the administration relies on racially biased standardized tests.

Michigan had welcomed the minority students' entrance into the lawsuits, but lawyers for the white students had fought against it, saying the groups would raise too many outside issues and delay trials scheduled for the fall.

The appeals court's opinion said the groups met the legal burden for joining the case as defendants, and could be harmed if Michigan loses.

Retired educator elected to national post

Staff Reports

VALDOSTA — A local retired educator was elected as South Atlantic regional director for the American Association of University Women (AAUW) at its biennial convention last month in Washington, D.C.

LaRonnia “Ronnie” Williams will serve as a member of the AAUW national board of directors and as regional director for Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Puerto Rico.

A pioneer trailblazer in advancing AAUW mission, Williams’ service includes: Valdosta Branch president; Georgia State president; National Diversity Awareness Trainer; seminar presenter on leadership styles and communication skills; People to People Citizen Ambassador to the Soviet Union for the Study of Women in the Workplace; senior facilitator in 1995 and 1999 Association National Conventions; article con-



LaRonnia Williams

tributor for “Leader in Action” and “Women of Color” magazines; and positions on other various branch, state, regional and national levels.

Civic involvement is a way of life for Mrs. Williams. She serves as area director for 10

counties of the Georgia Retired Educators Association.

As a leader in AAUW, Williams has proven to be outstandingly effective in forging alliances with those who are different while valuing her own identity.

“Lifelong learning and positive societal change are ‘passions’ which I vigorously champion,” said Williams, “as I focus my energies to embrace the challenge of changing phases and exploring new directions as we capably lead our Association into the new millennium ... and beyond.”

In 1999, AAUS Educational Foundation, one of the largest sources of funding for graduate women, awarded more than \$3 million to 271 scholars.

The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for discrimination in higher education.

AAUW consists of a diverse membership of more than over 150,000

Defining racism

DEAR ABBY: I am a teacher. One of the first things I tell students when we discuss examinations is, "Answer the question!" Your reply to the question, "Why is it OK to be a racist if you're black?" had nothing to do with the question. Want to try again? — **CINCINNATI EDUCATOR**

DEAR CINCINNATI: Racism is never "OK," regardless of the skin color of the bigot. Not all people are alike, and it is ignorant to assume that you can prejudge a person be-

Dear Abby



Abigail Van Buren
Columnist

cause of skin color. You can't. There are no short-cuts. You have to get to know people before you can make intelligent judgments about them. To do otherwise is narrow-minded and shortsighted. The letter from "My Kid's Mom" generated some thought-provoking responses. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I am now retired, but during my 33 years of teaching American history at four universities, my primary research field was the history of race relations in the United States. One of my books, "The Arrogance of Faith: Christianity and Race in America From the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century" was selected for the Anisfield-Wolf Award.

Racism is a complex idea and can mean different things to different people. The definition that has worked best for me is: "A belief in an innate inequality among races, and conduct in accordance with that belief." Civil rights laws can control conduct but they cannot legislate belief.

"My Kid's Mom" said her daughter wondered why it "... is OK to be racist if you're black." Well, it's NOT OK. Discrimination by blacks toward whites is no more acceptable than the reverse, but it might be helpful if more people understood why it exists. For five centuries, Europeans (and later Americans), driven by religious beliefs and supported by economic and military superiority, systematically oppressed — including enslavement and extermination — the aboriginal populations of undeveloped cultures. Today, dark-skinned people have the power to retaliate. As long as white racism exists, they will exercise that power. — **FORREST G. WOOD**

DEAR FORREST: The subject of bigotry is an emotional one for me, and I thank you for putting it into a scholarly perspective. I agree with your conclusion. Viewed from a historical perspective, reverse racism is understandable. But that doesn't make it any the less unfortunate.

For "What Every Teen Should Know," send \$3.95 to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447.

Parks files suit over use of race

SAVANNAH (AP) — Atlanta attorney Lee Parks has filed a third suit over the use of race in the University of Georgia's admission policy, this time on behalf of a Jonesboro student who says she was rejected because she is white and female.

The suit, filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Savannah, contends Jennifer L. Johnson would have been admitted to the Athens school if she were male and a member of a minority.

"She was clearly denied admission because of her sex and race," Parks said.

Parks maintains that a set of university-developed criteria called the Total Student Index penalized Ms. Johnson. She scored 4.10 on the index, which looks at grades, test scores, extracurricular activities and a family's educational background. To be accepted at the university, applicants must score at least 4.66 on the index.

Ms. Johnson would have received an extra .5 point if she had been a minority and .25 point if she had been male, Parks said. That would have raised her score to 4.85.

The Jonesboro High School graduate, who applied to the University of Georgia last October, will attend Mercer University instead this fall, Parks said.

VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Friday, Aug. 20, 1999

50 cents

The Valdosta Daily Times

Friday, Aug. 20, 1999 — 3A

Community/Region

“I can’t do anything about history, about what happened 400 years ago, or 200 years ago. But I can do something about what happened yesterday and I can have a whole lot to do with what is written tomorrow.” — Kevin Cronin, participant in Thursday’s race issues forum

Continued from page 1A

Together: Another forum planned for later this year

Coming together

Race forum finds common ground

By Brian Lawson
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

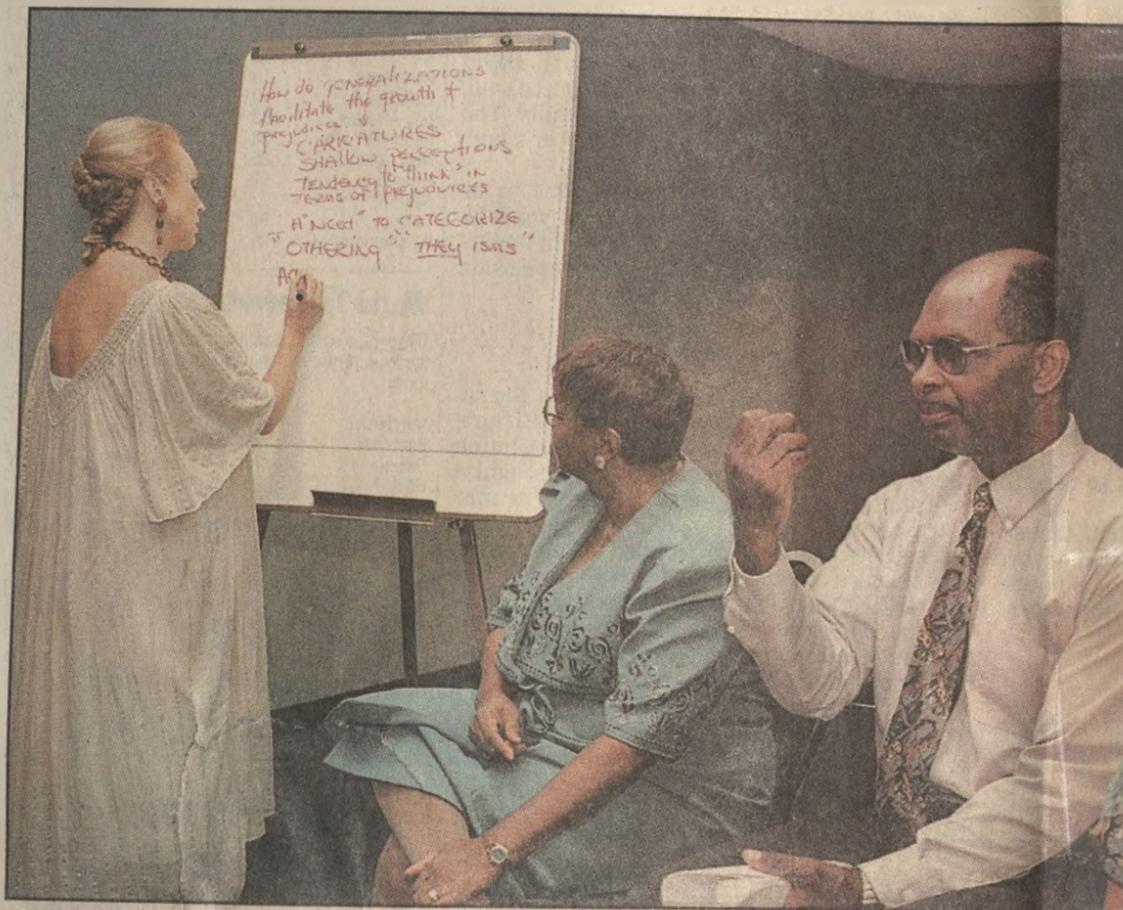
VALDOSTA — Area residents at Thursday’s race issues forum discussed an encyclopedia’s worth of topics — from as many as 75 different perspectives — but shared responsibility proved to be the dominant theme.

The crowd assembled at the University Center on the campus of Valdosta State University, expressed optimism that dialogue could lead to understanding, worried about the instinct to insist on maintaining a permanent underclass and cheered the thought that one mother would fight all by herself, if necessary, to improve the world for her daughters. Jamie Haire, an Abraham Baldwin College student, noted the challenge before the community is to begin to improve things today.

“The world is no longer black and white, but multicultural. My daughter is not black or white, she is a little bit of everything, she is multicultural,” Haire said.

“The way Valdosta is now, I’m going to get my education and take my family and leave,” she said. “But as a group like this, we can change things. I can’t fight everybody, but I’ll try if I have to, if nobody will fight with me.”

There was much common



Dr. Linda Bennett-Elder writes down comments from the Voice of Prejudice discussion group, given by John Ebron, right, as Delores Mitchell-Brown looks on during the race issues forum held at VSU’s University Center Thursday evening.

Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

defined by differences. It was widely agreed the community has a number of responsibilities to face concerning the problem of race relations, including:

● Moving from fixed views about our neighbors, to taking small steps forward, such as to

inviting them to church or home for dinner.

● Looking backward and forward to understand the role history plays in developing prejudices and how current views are shaped and distorted by the media

● Avoiding stereotypes and instead seeing people for their individual characters, rather than assuming one experience applies equally to everyone.

● Ensuring talented people

are given an equal chance to work and to advance, regardless of color.

The approximately 75 people in attendance gathered in five smaller groups to discuss topics including affirmative action, background and philosophy which frames a discussion about race, media-generated perceptions of African-Americans, the scrutiny of success, obligations to one’s race, the voice of prejudice and action in the local community.

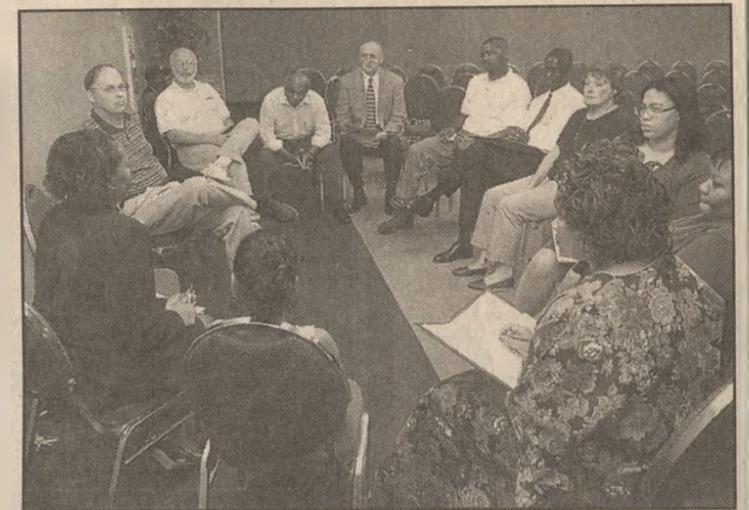
The discussion on local community action included praise for the efforts of the Rev. J.D. Martin in fighting crime and drugs, the need to encourage children to want for others what they want for themselves and their families, and the unifying power of prayer.

Valdostan Ruth Council, who is African-American and Jackie Thomas, a white Valdostan who has lived here since 1931, described how they have joined forces to help bring about a change.

The two women said Thursday it began following the first racial issues forum in April, when they decided “stop talking and do something.” That something has become a weekly prayer meeting at the Southside Library, from 10-11 a.m. The meetings, which feature prayer and singing, began with four people, Council said.

Last Monday’s “non-denominational” meeting was attended by 17 people.

“When we talk about hiring



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

Members of one of the five groups meeting during the affirmative action session discuss issues and experiences during the race issues forum at VSU’s University Center Thursday night.

problems, it’s not necessarily because a person is black, it could be because the person doing the hiring is not honest,” Thomas said. “We need good loving hearts and prayer can make that happen.”

The forum was sponsored Valdosta Project Change, The Valdosta Daily Times and Valdosta State University. The moderator was Dr. Shirley H. Hardin, director of African-American Studies at VSU.

Kevin Cronin, who recalled his family’s Irish immigrant roots, noted that the weighty discussion Thursday showed the uniqueness of America’s shared cultures.

“This is one of the things that makes America great,” he said. “A lot of countries don’t talk about these things, or if they do, it’s done violently. America is great because it has all of these cultures, it enriches us.

“I can’t do anything about history, about what happened 400 years ago, or 200 years ago. But I can do something about what happened yesterday and I can have a whole lot to do with what is written tomorrow.”

Another forum is planned for later this year.

To contact reporter Brian Lawson, please call 244-3400, ext. 239.

THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

www.sgaonline.com

Saturday, Aug. 21, 1999

Cops emphasize contact with citizens in new community policing program

By Jodi Scott
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — Twenty-six years ago, Capt. Donald Cox spent his days walking his beat for the Valdosta Police Department.

"I got to know a lot of people during that time," he said. "I still see people I know."

But as the city grew and the number of calls for service increased, the police department turned to cars for use during patrols. Officers walking the beat became a thing of the past. And contact between officers and residents became limited.

But in three Valdosta neigh-

borhoods, the men and women of the police department are again walking.

"There's been alienation between citizens and police officers," Chief Frank Simons said. "We're attempting to regain trust and communication. We want to be able to know what citizens are looking for, and we hope to provide that to them."

How it works

The community-oriented policing program was formed as part of the federally funded Weed and Seed revitalization effort. The three targeted neighbor-

hoods encompass 2.2 square miles bounded by East Brookwood Drive, Forrest Street, Old Statenville and Hightower Street.

Under the program, two officers patrol the neighborhoods during four-hour shifts. There are two shifts, stretching from late morning to early evening. Due to the recent high temperatures, officers have divided their time between walking and patrolling in the cars, according to Cox.

Federal funding is used to pay the overtime costs, with \$25,000 spent on community policing since the program began five

See POLICING on Page 3A



Mike Tanner/The Valdosta Daily Times
Valdosta Police officer Nelson James visits with South Troup Street resident Jewel Morgan this week. Getting to know the people they serve is a top priority for the officers involved in community policing.

The Valdosta Daily Times Saturday, Aug. 21, 1999 — 3A

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Policing

months ago, according to figures from Simons' office. The officers work the Weed and Seed areas in addition to the regular patrols. While they are in the areas, they are assigned no calls. Instead, they focus on talking to residents or handling incidents that they witness, Cox said. There is no required number of contacts.

Simons plans to soon require officers to use "tip sheets." They will gather information from residents about crime or problems with signs, street lights, etc. The information then will be sent to the proper department or utility company. Officers also would distribute crime tips.

Simons also hopes a newly created bicycle patrol unit will help bring officers and residents together. The program, which will involve four to six officers, should start in about two weeks.

More than 50 officers have taken part in the community policing program since it started, which Cox said did not surprise him. Many have spent their off hours to help with community cookouts and basketball games.

Nelson James Jr. is one of those officers. He spends his time talking to residents, particularly senior citizens and children. He receives tips about crimes that have occurred in the neighborhoods and hears other concerns, such as drivers speeding in school zones.

James said there needs to be more officers on the street and

"I enjoy talking to folks who live down here ... They'll tell you what's going on. We can't do the job without them."

Nelson James Jr.
Valdosta police officer

more contact with citizens.

"I enjoy talking to folks who live down here," James said. "They'll tell you what's going on. We can't do the job without them."

Neighbors react

Rachel Bradley, director of Southside Recreation Center, said community policing program has been well received by the children. The officers often stop by to play basketball or other games.

"At first the children were kind of apprehensive," she said. "The only time they saw a police officer in the community was when something was wrong or somebody had done something wrong and the police arrested them. Community oriented policing has changed their conception of police officers. They know police officers want to be their friends."

While she has not seen officers walking in the area, she thinks foot patrols are a good idea. Many residents in the neighborhoods are leery of police, and the one-on-one contact helps change that, she said.

"Not all of the people in this community are lawbreakers," she said. "We have lots of law

abiding citizens who did not feel as if they had a relationship with the police department."

Jewel Morgan, who lives on South Troup Street, agrees. He has supported Weed and Seed since it started and likes seeing the officers patrolling more frequently in the neighborhoods.

"Once you get to know them, you can tell them about the problems," he said.

Sheriff Ashley Paulk said that while his deputies are unable to walk their large patrol areas, he also encourages contact with residents. Keeping in touch with people can only benefit officers, he said.

"When they reach that comfort level with you, you get a lot more help out of them," he said.

Cox said the only negative comment he has heard about the program is that there are not enough officers to patrol the neighborhoods as frequently as residents would like. Simons said he would like to expand the concept but more money would be needed.

"It takes everyone to make the program excel," James said. "We need all the support we can get."

To contact reporter Jodi Scott, please call 244-3400, ext. 247.

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VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

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Race forum seeks answers

The past 50 years in America has been a turbulent time of men and women of all races seeking answers to problems in our society. Chief among those is the issue of racial harmony and discrimination.

A race forum was held last week as part of a series of meetings to help facilitate a way to answers those questions of race and society and its place in Valdosta.

See page 12



Finding the Means for the End

By Rebecca Yull

Hoping to find solutions to end racism in Lowndes County, a mixed group of concerned citizens came together Thursday at Valdosta State University Center.

Unlike the forum held in April in which a panel and a guest speaker addressed topics and some questions from the audience, this forum allowed attendees to talk about issues and solutions in small groups. The groups discussed affirmative action and hiring practices, the origin and philosophy of race, media generated perceptions of minorities, the difference between racism and prejudice and what action in the community would help discontinue nega-

tive racial issues in the community.

"We need to be here to not just tell it like it is, but move toward making it like it should be," Ruth Counsel, local civic leader, said. Counsel acted as one of the moderators of a group which discussed community action toward changing the racial climate in Valdosta and Lowndes County.

Those in attendance brought to the table many ideas about how to improve the community. A survey could be used to assess people's concerns with race problems in the area and that the local newspaper could be helpful in doing this. "Ask whites are blacks discriminated against and then ask blacks are whites discriminated against," James

Wright, a community activist, said.

Affirmative action could work better if businesses actively sought those who were the minority of their employees, one group's discussion concluded. People should also be hired based on ability, not just because they are a minority, was a general consensus.

Talking about racial problems and dealing with them whenever they happen was also a suggestion. People should also not be afraid to voice their opinion if they think they've been offended or discriminated against. "We can't pretend everything's OK," one man said. "We need to respect each other for who we are," he said.

One woman expressed a concern about keeping issues black and white. "It's not just black and white anymore," Jamie Harie, whose daughter is multicultural, told the audience. "I want things to be better for my daughter and her sister, so she won't have problems with people not liking her because she's beautiful. She is beautiful and this is the best thing I've ever done, she and her sister," she said.

One idea supported by the entire audience was to encourage people to pray together. Invite a person of another race to your church," said one man who had been in prison where the church leaders there decided to have one church for all groups. He said this really unified the Christian prisoners. Checking the racial make-up of area churches would also be a way to gauge how well the community was doing with changing the racial climate. "If you can't come together in the house of the Lord then how can you tell people we are making a change?" he said.

The forum was sponsored by Valdosta Project Change, The Valdosta Daily Times and Valdosta State University.

► YOUR OPINIONS

'Racist' act wasn't racist at all

I recently had an encounter with a black gentleman who felt he and his child had been slighted because of the color of their skin. I suggested to the man that he drop the race issue and figure out what he was really angry about. Though this may have appeared insensitive, even prejudicial to some, allow me to explain.

At a local store, my children were waiting patiently for a sample of some hot food. The crowd pressed in and my 5-year-old son was overlooked in the process and continued to wait patiently until I intervened. The food representative, realizing her oversight, made sure he got the next available sample.

While handing him his food with a direct look and a smile as way of apology, she at the same time handed a small black child who had just arrived a sample without the same attention. The adult father took umbrage to her actions and in no uncertain terms told the food representative how he felt discriminated upon that she "just stuck the food in his child's face," and that she "only did that because he's black."

At this point I tried explaining to the man that my son had been waiting patiently for some time for the sample, and his child really was not being ignored intentionally. The food representative also tried everything to reassure the man that she wasn't being rude to him or his child, but nothing would placate this gentleman's anger. He just wanted to be angry. At anything. At anybody. It wasn't an action or anything associated with the food representative that motivated him.

I resent when individuals resort to the racism issue to account for just any of their angry actions. And we, the majority, are partly at fault for creating an environment in which we fear even being perceived as racist.

I have been rude on occasion, and have been rightly called to task for it. I have also been wrong and have accepted being corrected as gracefully as possible. However, racism has become the umbrella under which some pretty rude behavior is being sheltered. In this day of political correctness we have become afraid, self-conscious of rebutting any act of rudeness by a minority lest we be labeled "racist." Well, rude behavior is just that. Rude. Regardless of race. And rude behavior should not be excused because we are irrationally afraid of being labeled racist.

And I will now dip my toe into the icy waters of the politically incorrect pool by saying that some minorities are hurting, not helping, their cause by using the general fear of racist labeling to excuse what is normal, unpleasant, but real, human shortcomings.

We all get angry. We're only human. We take it out on our spouse when our boss has taken his frustration out on us. We yell at the cable company when we have a snowy picture when, in fact, we forgot to pay the bill and got our service disconnected. We don't tip the waitress when the cook didn't prepare the food the way we like it. And we yell at food service reps when they serve someone else before us.

This is not racist behavior. This is human behavior. And I strongly believe that to address a problem effectively we must first accurately identify it.

**Kathleen Caldwell
Valdosta**

Foundation sues Atlanta affirmative action program

ATLANTA (AP) — After weeks of tough talk between the Southeastern Legal Foundation and Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, the conservative group filed a federal lawsuit Thursday claiming the city's affirmative action program is unconstitutional.

The program — started in 1975 by Maynard Jackson, the city's first black mayor — sets a goal of awarding one-third of city contracts to businesses owned by minorities or women.

The foundation, which has challenged race-based preference programs around the country, says the true purpose of the law is to "channel public funds to political supporters of Defendant Bill Campbell."

Campbell is one of seven defendants — all current or former city officials — named in the suit, which was filed in the U.S. District Court in Atlanta on behalf of four construction firms.

Campbell said in a written statement Thursday that he believes the set-aside program will withstand judicial scrutiny.

"The program has strengthened our economy and helped remedy past and present discrimination," he said, adding that the city would vigorously defend it.

"Diversity and equal opportunity have made our city appealing and great."

On June 14, Matthew J. Glavin, president of the foundation, sent Campbell a letter demanding that the city abandon the program or face a lawsuit.

Glavin cited a ruling earlier that month by U.S. District Judge Thomas W. Thrash Jr., who declared Fulton County's business enterprise program unconstitutional.

Thrash concluded that economic studies used by the county to justify its program failed to display a clear pattern of discrimination against minority- and female-owned businesses.

In several recent battles, communities have given in to the foundation's demands rather than risk a long, costly court battle.

Glavin said Detroit, Nashville, Tenn., Miami and Jacksonville, Fla., lost fights against similar suits.

But in Atlanta Campbell and community leaders reacted angrily, promising to "fight to the death."

Campbell, himself the first black child to integrate a North Carolina school system, led public rallies and compared the foundation to the Ku Klux Klan.

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The Perils of Crying 'Hate Crime' Surface In Indian Country

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Two Attacks Might Appear Racially Inspired, But Was Booze the Real Trigger?

By CARL QUINTANILLA
And KEVIN HELLIKER

Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MARTIN, S.D. — In early July, when authorities in the South Dakota town of Mobridge charged four white youths in the death of a young Indian named Robert Many Horses, not many people outside the region seemed to notice.

But this week, when police charged three young Indians in the brutal beating of a Martin white man named Brad Young, the story went national. Never mind that beatings — no matter how vicious — rarely get even local news coverage unless they're fatal. The beating of Mr. Young, who remains in critical condition, won space in newspapers from coast to coast. Television programs such as NBC's "Today" also gave coverage to the beating.

To some Native Americans, the difference in news play is clear evidence of racism. "There is just complete shock here over the national coverage of the Brad Young case, compared with Robert Many Horses," says Miles Morrisseau, the Native American editor of Indian Country Today, a national paper based in Rapid City, S.D.

Tensions are rising between whites and Indians these days in Indian Country. Yet in this case, they may be heightened by something other than racism. This week, in announcing the arrest of three Lakota Indians in the beating of Brad Young, Sheriff Russel Waterbury did something he now regrets. He called it a hate crime. What he meant, he says, is that Mr. Young was so viciously beaten — his face unrecognizable, his ears nearly torn from his head — that Sheriff Waterbury could think of no explanation except hate. He meant hate of a generalized kind — not racism. In fact, the evidence doesn't seem to point to racism.

But unintentionally, Sheriff Waterbury incited a media frenzy. Up in Mobridge,



Sheriff Duane Mohr never characterized the assault on Mr. Many Horses as a hate crime. And at least partly as a result, it didn't get as much attention. "If it's a hate crime—if authorities identify it as that—we cover it," says Tom Kent, deputy managing editor of the Associated Press.

Why did South Dakota Gov. William Janklow issue a statement lamenting the fate of Mr. Young but not of Mr. Many Horses? "We didn't get any media calls on the other one," says Bob Mercer, the governor's press secretary. "At Martin, the sheriff used the words 'hate crime' and the media gathered."

News stories about the Brad Young case this week didn't even mention the

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The Perils of Crying 'Hate Crime'

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Robert Many Horses case, despite the obvious parallels: four whites charged in the death of a South Dakota Indian, three Indians charged in the beating of a South Dakota white. Instead, the stories compared Mr. Young's beating to another officially declared hate crime—the Jasper, Texas, killing of a black man by three whites.

As legislators increasingly call for specific laws and penalties against hate crimes, and as journalists spring to action at the mention of those words, the recent cases in South Dakota suggest that hate-crime labeling and prosecuting could backfire, by inviting accusations of racism in almost any case involving multicultural parties.

Certainly, racism exists in South Dakota. Disputes over longstanding governmental treaty violations are so bitter, in fact, that this year Gov. Janklow declared that relations between whites and Indians would get only worse, not better. But do the cases of Robert Many Horses and Brad Young illustrate the evils of racism or something altogether less discriminate—the dangers of drunkenness?

Before he was ever born, alcohol damaged Mr. Many Horses. His family says fetal alcohol syndrome diminished his mental abilities, as well as his height, which never reached five feet. He was a well-known and well-liked character around Mobridge, but at age 22, he had a drinking problem himself, family and friends say. On June 30, he was allegedly beaten and stuffed in a trash bin, and four white youths were charged with crimes ranging from second-degree murder to accessory to not reporting a felony. After a subsequent autopsy deemed the cause of death to be alcohol poisoning, the murder charge was reduced to manslaughter.

The encounter between the youths and Mr. Many Horses never struck authorities as a hate crime. Some Native Americans in town pressed Walworth County Sheriff Duane Mohr to characterize it that way. But he says the evidence didn't point to that. "Kids liked Robert because he would buy them booze," he says. "Knowing the parties involved, I knew this wasn't a hate crime."

Immediately following the death of Mr. Many Horses and charges against his alleged assailants, the Associated Press wrote a brief story reporting the news, and a white waitress in Mobridge named Evie Rice says she called the news service to re-

quest greater coverage of the incident as a race-related event. "They weren't interested," says Ms. Rice.

But AP officials deny that. Three days later, the AP produced a much longer story exploring various aspects of the case, including some accusations of racism. Relatively few newspapers published the story, however. Sheriff Mohr says he "was grateful." If he had used "hate" to describe the murder, he says "we would have been swarmed. The newspapers would have been everywhere."

That's exactly what Sheriff Waterbury discovered this week. The beating of Mr. Young was brutal. Authorities believe his alleged assailants—all Indians under the legal drinking age of 21—may have beseeched Mr. Young to buy booze for them. Authorities say he bought beer at a local service station in Martin on Friday night. The next morning, he was found on the reservation a few miles away, his neck still ringed with a rope that had been used to drag him around a field.

Soon afterward, Lakota tribal officials arrested two 18-year-old Indians, and later Sheriff Waterbury arrested a third suspect, this one a juvenile. Sheriff Waterbury says the juvenile confessed without remorse. "In fact, he smirked," says the sheriff.

After the sheriff called it a hate crime, and the incident spiraled into national view, some friends and relatives of the victim stepped forward to agree that race was the issue. "It's out of hatredness," a cousin, Lila York, told the AP.

But an aunt, Nancy Neuharth, disagreed, telling the news service that her nephew was "well-liked by Indians and whites," and calling it a case of kids "doing things they shouldn't do."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, which investigates felonies on Indian reservations, plays down the theory that this was a racist act.

Whatever the case, the disparate news coverage between the two cases has only deepened tension and suspicion between Indians and whites in South Dakota. Up in Mobridge, a white man named Jay Utter, manager of the Scherr-Howe athletic arena, says he knew Mr. Many Horses for 20 years, and doesn't believe racism played any role in his death.

But if you polled everyone in Mobridge, he says, "most of the whites would say no. A hundred percent of the Indians would say yes."

► OUR OPINION

One area where it takes the village

Getting a diverse group of people to come together and simply talk about a serious subject can be a monumental assignment.

It defies convention to assume that same group would take the time to listen to one another.

But that's exactly what happened when 75 area residents gathered for Valdosta's second race issues forum. Sponsored by Valdosta Project Change, Valdosta State University and this newspaper, the forum was designed to cultivate dialogue among people of all different shades in our community.

Mission accomplished.

Not that anyone attending the assembly walked away thinking all is well racially in Valdosta. Quite the contrary. One African-American man told of being grilled by a clerk when he tried to write a check, all because of his skin color. Some whites acknowledged they didn't know the difference between prejudice and racism. Blacks and whites agreed they often speak from a different lexicon.

Nonetheless, those who joined any of the five breakout sessions discovered an atmosphere where all views were welcomed, and no one was banished because their ideas clashed with another person in attendance. People generously offered attentive ears. Many left confident they had learned from the experience.

Herein may lie the salve able to sooth much that ails our community. Getting to know someone different than oneself helps break down barriers.

The lone negative that emerged from this forum — the second of what organizers hope will be many — is the conspicuous absence of Valdosta and Lowndes County elected officials, namely mayor and council, commission chair and commissioners, and school board chairmen and members. Their voices would have been welcome additions, but their ears were much needed. We can't begin to build a tomorrow where everyone has a seat at the table unless everyone — young, old, black, white, rich, poor, elected — gets involved in the effort.

If that happens, we will truly become a community.

► YOUR OPINIONS

Elected officials must show they care

On Thursday, Aug. 19, an excellent anti-racism forum was held sponsored by The Valdosta Daily Times, Valdosta State University and Project Change. It was extremely informative, and was attended by a number of citizens from this community who are truly interested in improving the quality of life for all people who live in Valdosta and Lowndes County.

Conspicuously absent from both this forum and the one held previously, were our mayor, sheriff, all members of Valdosta City Council and all the members of Lowndes County Commission. This was a great disappointment to me, as well as to other members of the community who attended.

These people were elected with the understanding they were truly concerned about the well-being of our community and capable (and inspired) to provide leadership necessary to promote racial harmony in the community. It would appear, however, that this is not the case.

I realize they are all busy people. I realize they tend the business of the city and county, and regularly debate a number of issues. However, I think it would be appropriate to see them less often at ribbon cuttings and more often at gatherings that have to do with real issues. This would require courage over and above political savvy and economic expertise, and I have yet to see evidence of such courage.

There will be another forum held in about three months. In the meantime, there will be held throughout the community, gatherings of people at community cookouts and community meetings where private citizens will be discussing issues they consider vital to their lives. I would strongly encourage our leaders to take the opportunity to get out among the

crowd and let us know you are really representing us.

Marjorie G. White
Valdosta

Valdosta man reflects on local race relations

A few weeks ago, the citizens of Valdosta had an opportunity to gather together and talk about racism in a forum at VSU with distinguished panelists. That same morning, a 62-year-old black male and a 35-year-old white female, both lifelong Valdosta residents had a discussion of the topic at the Megahee-Speight Co. on Hill Avenue.

James Berrian has been employed there for nearly 44 years.

When he began working at the auto parts store, he used a separate restroom than the white employees. He could not bend over and drink directly from the water fountain, but had to fill a cup and drink from it. James saw it as simply a sign of the times. He has lived in the south all his life and accepted that the culture of the time decreed separate facilities for "white and colored." He says that some folks might call him stupid for looking at that era the way he did, but in listening to James, one realizes he never let any form of discrimination he encountered take away his self respect.

Because of his race, he has had a shotgun aimed at him, he was referred to as a nigger by a man standing next to him, he was harassed by a state patrolman in 1961, and as a young man denied the job of his dreams, working for the railroad.

I thought the most hurtful thing that ever happened to James because of the color of his skin would have been the insults or the shot gun incident. Wrong.

"The most hurtful thing...I always wanted to be a locomotive engineer, and when I came along, that was forbidden in this part of the country to black men, just like the whole country, and when it really got open, I was too old, so I wouldn't even be considered. But that's what I've always wanted to be and you know if things were like they are now, I probably wouldn't be working here; that's what I would be doing. I always wanted to drive a train. When I was coming up as a young man, a black man couldn't have that job."

The saying 'when life hands you lemons, make lemonade' comes to mind. James made some wonderful lemonade because he is a beloved employee by the company which now deals strictly in automobile paint, and it is obvious from

the numerous phone calls from customers his knowledge of automobiles is second to none. I think about my grandfather, who worked for the railroad and realize that during the time of his employment, a little boy was gazing at passing trains, dreaming of driving one, and the society of that era would not let him. Ironically when the shot gun was aimed at him, he was riding his bicycle down the railroad tracks.

James is not an unhappy or downtrodden man. He is one of the most delightful, friendly persons you may find in Valdosta. Concerning hateful things that have happened to him, he says, "I just don't focus on it. I try not to let any root of bitterness spring up in me. You just don't let what other people think about you worry you. As long as you live to please God, it doesn't make a difference what people think of you. I really never encountered any racial problems that I couldn't handle, anything that would turn me against someone. I really try not to let what a person thinks, through his ignorance, move me."

He acknowledges there are still racial problems. Concerning Reverend Rose's attention to alleged police brutality, James says, "There's some things that certain people are anointed to address and that was an issue that the city and county really needed to know how the majority of the people feel...I do know that some law enforcement officers are too aggressive." He also notes that his own treatment by officers on routine traffic stops has improved dramatically when contrasted with the incident in the '60s. James says he now hears polite words such as please, may I, and is addressed as Mr. Berrian.

Another situation that James has seen improve is the availability of better paying jobs to black people. He doesn't feel the market is yet wide open and notes that when he was coming along "none had good paying jobs." Years ago, James and his friend Ed Mitchell scrubbed floors at night for extra income and often subsisted on just a few hours sleep. No ill will or bitterness is reflected about this by James. He laughed heartily sharing that the income was truly extra for Ed, but he used his for groceries. James remarked on the shift in attitude of whites toward black physicians. "I know a lot of young white couples that Dr. Taylor has delivered their children. Man I remember a time when a white man would die and go to hell before he'd let a black man wait on his wife during childbearing."

I recall the day I delivered my first child under the care of Dr. Samuel Taylor. I was calling



Mike Tanner / The Valdosta Daily Times

James Berrian has been employed at the Megahee-Speight Company in Valdosta for nearly 44 years.

people to let them know my son and I were fine, and one person upon hearing the news announced to another in the room not the good news, but that "a black man delivered her baby." I could not believe the insensitivity on one of the happiest days of my life. I had, I suppose, the closest revelation to how a black person must feel when faced with such ignorance.

James feels that much of the racism in younger people is instilled because of the ideas of older prejudiced people. "They only show the negative side of the black race. The majority of black people are achievers. But the ones who don't want to do nothing, that's what they always focus on." He is also concerned about the misuse of modern technology. "To my idea, boy that internet is a dangerous thing. There's a lot of stuff on the internet that really shouldn't be on there for young people's minds. They tell me you can get on there and learn how to make pipe bombs. All kinds of pornography and racial hatred is on the internet."

Despite improvements in people's attitudes, James feels that racism will be a problem as long as people seek answers outside of Jesus Christ. He also believes that passing laws regarding race relations is a futile act and change will only come when people turn their life over to the Lord. How did James get this far in life without the resentment that many whites and blacks feel towards each other? The credit goes to the teachings of his Christian faith.

I wondered what one thing James would like to say to the people of Valdosta given the opportunity. His comments had nothing to do with racial tension...but maybe they had everything to do with it.

"Everyone ought to consider

aged to keep his heart free of prejudice and bitterness comes through. His voice cracked with emotion and his eyes misted over as he told me, "That's one sin my daddy (won't) have to give an account for. He never taught me racial hatred. Never."

I left our discussion feeling that what I had experienced should be a national treasure. James let me record our conversation and I wish I could share it with everyone in Valdosta. We were totally at ease, shared a lot of laughter and a couple of tears. We discussed many controversial subjects with candidness and without arguments or accusations.

Besides his Christian faith and teaching from his father, I feel I found out another secret to James' love toward all mankind. He looks past the unkind actions and speech and into the heart of a person. Concerning the white men who aimed a gun at him and laughed, he said they just thought they were having fun. James discovered a burglar in Megahee's, who promptly hit him across the forehead with a pistol. James said of that particular black man, "he didn't want to hurt me. He just wanted to get away."

We can all learn from this godly man..