

Variance Denied Local Witch

by Theresa Racine

The Manuel Maloof Auditorium was literally bulging at the seams last Wednesday, as over 600 people filled the hall to oppose a variance by the Rev. C. Lehman, or Lady Santana. Members of the Rainbow Forest/ Knollview Civic Organization want Lady Santana to stop practicing witchcraft in their neighborhood.

The meeting, however, did not deal with her religious practices. The DeKalb County Board of Appeals denied Lady Santana a variance to conduct religious services on her property because she failed to meet the proper zoning requirements for a religious facility. The Board made it clear that its decision was based on these facts alone, not her religious practices.

State Senator John Parrish, who orchestrated the masses, was cheered as he spoke before Board members. Senator Parrish spoke solely on Lady Santana's religion, not the zoning requirements. Judging by the amount of "oohs" and "ahs" he received, many who opposed the variance knew little about Lady Santana as did Senator Parrish.

Rev. Harry Smith of Parents Against Crack (PAC) spoke out in favor of Lady Santana's religious rights according the Constitution of the United States. However, he made it clear if she was in violation of zoning laws he was not in favor of her request for a variance. He accused Senator Parrish and other local politicians of misleading the public without the proper facts. The meeting then turned into a shouting match between opponents and supporters. And the media had a

field day.

The bottom line is this: Lady Santana was denied a variance to establish a church at her home due to improper zoning requirements. She, nor her lawyers were present at the meeting. She said she didn't care what the Board decided. She would continue to practice her religion in the privacy of her home like everyone else. She said she does not conduct religious services at her home, but rather counsels members of the Ravenwood Church & Seminary from time to time. She said she was forced to request the variance after the county issued a "warning" pertaining to residential zoning.

At the present time, everything appears to be the same as before. Lady Santana will continue to practice her religion, and the neighborhood doesn't get another church.