

Who Is We Now? Wegroes?!

Would somebody please tell me who we is now, so that I may fill out my driver's license properly? Would somebody please tell me who we is so that I can tell the white folks what they 'sposed to call us?

Really, what is our name? I'll be damned if I can figure it out. Is we African-Americans, Black, or is we something else? My Aunt Elizabeth who lives in New Jersey swears that WE something else!

Well, folks, here we go changing our name again. Hold the presses everyone. Stop before you print anymore T-shirts, bumper stickers, magazines, history books, or encyclopedias. Stop! cause we done found ourselves a new name.

Yes, my fellow Negroes, colored folks, Black Folks, no, African-Americans, well in any case... brothers and sisters, our new name is "People of Color" (POC).

We going back to being colored just like we was. Those of you who kept your "For Colored Only" signs from the days of Jim Crow, dust them off. Looks like we may need them.

Imagine, going back to the same name we used when "we" supposedly didn't know any better — when we were nothing but "miseducated Negroes," when we first believed that "black" and "Africa" were synonymous with things that were weak, evil, and stupid.

All that fuss about not wanting to be called black. The anguish of wondering why white folks always seemed to say "nigra" instead of "knee-grow." All them damned changes for nothing! According to my count, this will make the sixth name change just in my lifetime — 41 years!

The last I heard, we had convinced ourselves that the color black was powerful — the very symbol of strength, virility and courage. It was "white" that was weak, deceitful and cowardly. This was why we marched from being "colored" to sing "I'm Black and I'm proud."

It was our way of announcing to the world that the zebra was black with white stripes and not the other way around! That devils' food cake was not black, and angel food cake was not white. We were no longer going to be duped by the white man's logic. Let us say that our intentions were good.

Which leads me to wonder whether or not the real reason we change our name so often is tied less

to our search for cultural identity and more to our political and economic strategies. I am convinced there is a method to our madness.

Keeping White Folks Off Balance!

Politically, it is very smart. It helps us to keep white folks off balance, which is always a good thing. Never let 'em think they've figured us out. What better way than to keep changing our name? In order for them to keep up with us, they would

brothers and sisters — those who 'sposed to know — they aren't too sure either. For they could just as easily be called Uncle Tom or handkerchief head, too. The only thing saving them is the color of their skin.

Name Changes Creates Jobs
It also makes good economic sense, especially for the would-be T-shirt maker. Throw out everything you have with Black or African-American on it and place your new order for everything featuring our

prayer cloths, or some other kind of foolishness, a kind of voodoo fetish used until all of its magic is gone.

When this happens, you simply go to your local witch doctor and explain the situation. You know, "that the name he gave you the last time, guaranteed to give lasting prosperity, has somehow failed."

The witch doctor of course, undaunted by the last lie he told about the power of the "name," issues yet a newer and improved name — this time guaranteed to defeat the white man, and in addition, provide you and your children with "health, wealth and respectability." Just give him the old name back, and use this new one in the same way you used the last one. (No need to change your behavior.)

Of course, the poor soul, so enamored by his new name (POC) doesn't even realize that this latest sobriquet is but the very same name that the witch doctor gave him when he first started believing in witch doctor's magic.

It almost seems that somebody white is making us change our names so often — that it has to be a conspiracy by rich and powerful white Europeans who live in high places with lots of money and servants — folks like George Bush and the members of the Trilateral Commission. They are the ones who are causing us this confusion. They are the ones behind the bait and switch. It has got to be white folks.

Because it ain't no way in the world that you are going to tell me that we Black folks is this confused about who we is.



ON THE AVANT-GARDE

By TANG NIVRI

just about have to spend all of their waking days and nights trying to figure us out — which is damned near impossible even for the "Wegroes" — whites who would be black.

Thus, white folks are bound to be clumsy in their interactions with blacks. We can always say to them, as white women say to white men, "you just don't get it, do you?" And we all know that the worst nightmare for white folks is standing up before a group of blacks and accidentally calling them by the wrong name! It is a fate worse than death.

The next thing you know, they will call you racist and insensitive. And to make matters worse, even after you seek help from your black

new name — People of Color (POC). This probably creates more jobs for black folks than any of Jack Kemp's enterprise zones or Bush's federal capital gains tax credits.

For us, names are like the clothes we wear and the music we sing; dances we dance, books we read or cars we drive. For us, names are like hairdos: afros today, braids tomorrow. Flat tops today, fades tomorrow. Names are things to be changed once we get tired of them.


We change our name as if it is no more important than the spare tire used when one runs over a nail in the road of life. Even in our religion, some of us believe that all you have to do is "name it and claim it." Thus names are like rabbit's feet,

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EnviroFair Set Oct. 17

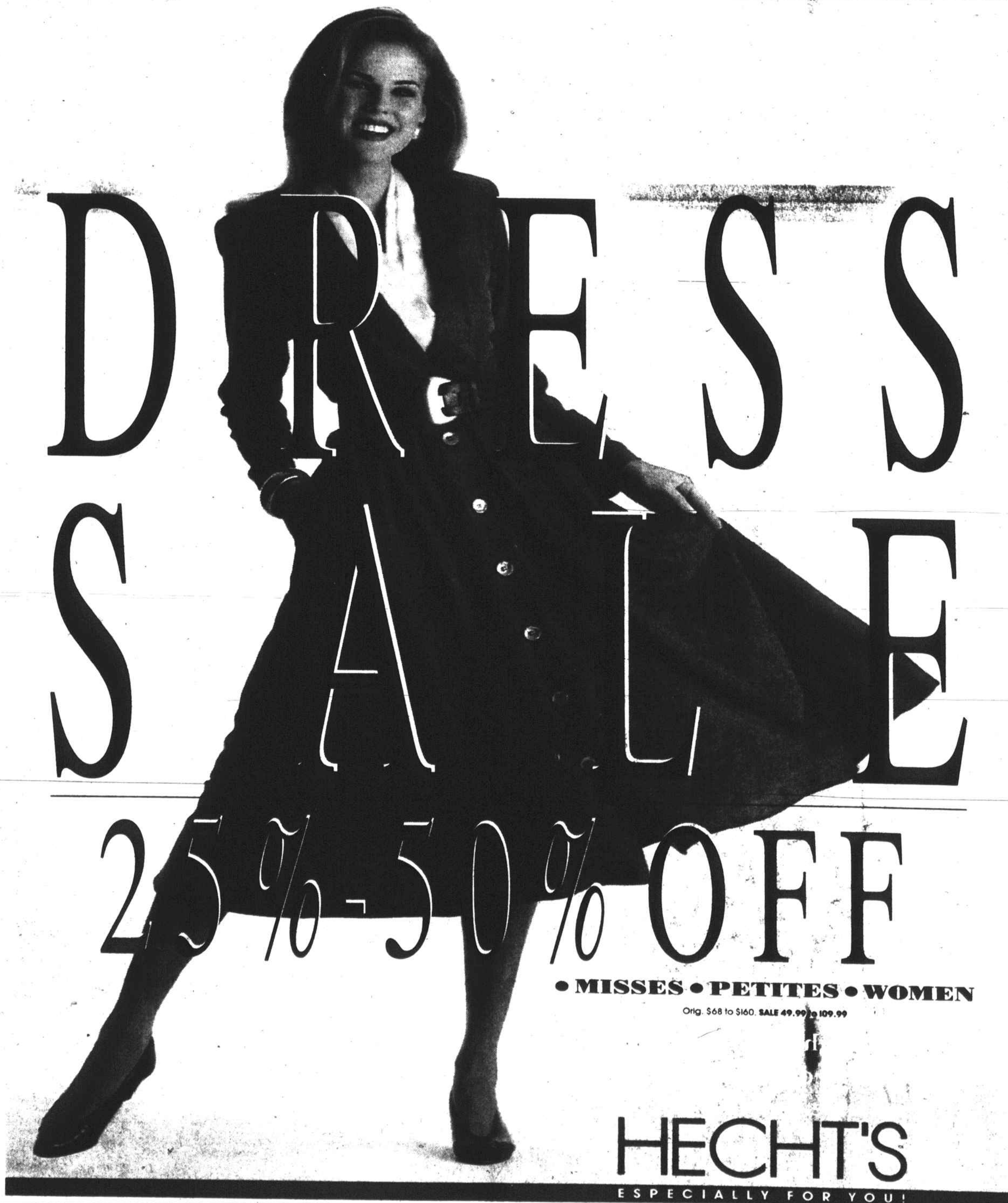
The City/County Utilities Division and Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful are sponsoring EnviroFair 1992. The event will be held Saturday Oct. 17 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Dixie Classic Fairgrounds. All participants should enter off University Parkway onto Deacon Boulevard and enter the midway of the fairgrounds at Gate 5.

All Winston-Salem and Forsyth County residents are encouraged to clean out basements, garages and attics. Citizens should look for any household material that is poisonous, ignitable, explosive or corrosive such as metal polish, oven cleaners, rug shampoos, bug sprays, antifreeze, batteries, and car-care products. Each vehicle will be limited to disposing of five gallons each of paint or motor oil.

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