

Opinions On The Street

# Do Area Blacks Support NAACP's Boycott Of Food Lion?

By Audrey C. Lodato  
Post Staff Writer

Just how effective the NAACP's boycott of Food Lion stores will be remains to be seen. According to local NAACP director Kelly Alexander Jr., the branches are just beginning to get information on the boycott. The first step is to create community awareness. So far, over 30,000 flyers have been circulated in Charlotte, and Alexander has addressed various groups concerning the matter. "In general, we've met with a positive response," he reported. "Volunteers have called and joined in the effort."

Pointing to the supermarket chain's recent "I Love Food Town" campaign—as evidence, Alexander believes Food Lion executives are worried about the effects of a boycott. "If they didn't believe it would have an effect, they wouldn't be doing that," he insisted.

Calls to the eight area Food Lion stores elicited little more than "no comment" from most of the chain's managers. The two who did respond to questions about the boycott's effect on their stores' sales saw none.

Bill Nivens, manager of the Delta Road store, reported "no effect whatever. None at all. I wouldn't have known a boycott was going on if I hadn't read it in the newspaper." His store generally does not attract a large percentage of black customers.

Eastway Drive Food Lion manager Donnie Jackson claimed there has been no decrease in black trade at his store. "We haven't seen any effect at all."

In an effort to find out what local blacks think of the boycott, an informal survey was conducted at several shopping centers. No claim is made to the scientific reliability of this survey, and no conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the boycott are drawn from its results.

Several people queried had not heard about it. When informed, they had mixed responses.

Firefighter Daryl Wise, of Roseridge Place, hadn't heard of the boycott. On learning of it from The Post's reporter, he replied, "I agree with it; I think it's fair." Wise does not shop at Food Lion, so any boycott will not affect his shopping habits.

Another respondent, who preferred to remain anonymous because his job brings him into contact with Food Lion managers and because he is employed by a company that is also being boycotted by the NAACP, said, "I'm really in a fix!" He went on, "I've never seen any black Food Lion managers." He thought another food chain "was just as bad 'til recently," when they started hiring some blacks into management positions. This respondent occasionally shops at Food Lion. He was unsure whether he would continue, but added, "If a Food Lion is close, I might not go out of my way to another store."

Miss Gaddy, a housewife from Kentland Lane, had just heard about the boycott on television the day before. Her companion didn't know anything about it, but said, "I would probably agree with it; I know they don't have blacks in management."

A woman in the Food Lion parking lot on South Blvd. didn't know anything about the boycott, adding "I just spent \$99 there."

Brenda Graham, a S. Tryon St. housewife, responded, "I don't know much about it so I'd rather not comment." She does shop at Food Lion and said she will most likely continue.

Danforth Lane secretary Betty Petty didn't know too much about the boycott, either, but thought it was a good idea. "It needs to be done," Ms. Petty commented, "Especially when we're not evenly represented. Minorities need an opportunity." She has shopped at Food Lion in the past but does not plan to continue to do so.

John Boyd, a retired resident of Chester, SC, hadn't thought much about it. "I shop at Food Lion," he responded. "I get better bargains, the store is cleaner, food is fresher." His pickup sports an "I love Food Lion" bumper sticker. Boyd plans to continue shopping the store.



Miss Gaddy



Ralph Steadman



Marie Cherry



Daryl Wise



John Boyd

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Blondine McKinney



Betty Petty

Other respondents were more supportive of the NAACP's campaign. Ralph Steadman, a Carrysbrook Lane retiree, stated, "I think the boycott will alert officials of Food Lion of our community's impact on their stores and the necessity to hire in accordance with that." Steadman has been an occasional Food Lion shopper but will honor the boycott "to see its effect."

Marie Cherry lives on West Park Avenue and works in the shipping department at Lance. "I think Food Lion isn't fair because blacks have to work just like everyone else," she said. "I haven't seen any blacks working there at all." Ms. Cherry is not a regular Food Lion customer. Templeton Avenue housewife Blondine McKinney also brought up the fairness issue. "I think they should be fair to blacks just like they are to whites," she contended. Ms. McKinney does not think the boycott is a good way to make the point, but asked "How else can we get what we want?"

Although there are no black managers in any of the eight local Food Lion stores, there are elsewhere. Some opposition to the boycott was raised by blacks in Winston-Salem because one of the stores in that city has black management and provides employment for the local community.

Winston-Salem was the only city where the NAACP was picketing Food Lion stores. Picketing was called off last week because of a bomb threat. The boycott, however continues - and continues to be debated, both in Winston-Salem and elsewhere.

### Fewer DWI Arrests

RALEIGH -- Highway Patrol Commander Colonel David L. Matthews announced DWI arrests for June were fewer than those made in June last year.

"This was the 17th consecutive month DWI charges were less than those for the same month of the previous year, but the gap is narrowing," Matthews said. "Only 61 fewer DWI arrests were made in June as troopers removed 3,283 impaired drivers from the highways."

Matthews pointed out that the decrease in June was less than in any month since the Safe Roads Act went into effect on October 1, 1983. Figures released by Matthews showed a decrease of 1,045 in October; 1,246 in November; and 1,063 in December. The trend has continued in 1984 as decreases of 1,041; 576; 276; 1,018; and 719 were reported in January through May, respectively.

Matthews had only praise for his troopers. "There are some very dedicated people in the Highway Patrol, and they are doing an outstanding job," he said. "There are just not as many impaired drivers on the highways."

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Elder Michael Graham, above, will be the guest speaker at H. O. Graham Presbyterian Church during the Citywide Praise and Prayer Service Wednesday, August 15, beginning at 7:30 p.m. There will be many local choirs rendering music during the program which is being sponsored by the Gospel Chorus of the church. (Photo By Teresa Simmons)