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THE AWARD-WINNING "VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY"

50 Cents

Black Vendor Ousted From Springfest

By JALYNE STRONG
Post Editor

For the last four years, Carolyn Mason, owner of Balloon-A-Grams, has generated additional revenue for her business through her participation as a vendor at Springfest, Charlotte's annual downtown street festival.

This year, Balloon-A-Grams will miss that income. Due to a policy change and the selection process of Springfest Inc., Mason's company was not invited to participate as a vendor for the upcoming Springfest '89.

Mason says it's not fair, especially in light of her long association with the festival combined with the fact that she is one of very few blacks who've had the opportunity to participate as a vendor at Springfest.

To her knowledge, Mason remembers only one or two other blacks who have been vendors at Springfest since she began participating four years ago. Last year, she believes she was the only one. Without her participation in 1989, Mason believes there may be no black vendors involved.

She has expressed her concerns to the officials of Springfest, Inc. But, to date, Mason says she is not satisfied with their response.

In December 1988, Mason was forwarded a letter from Springfest, Inc. that stated there would be a new policy for balloon vendors. It said that for 1989, only one balloon vendor would be allowed to participate in the festival. This was the same policy Springfest held for its souvenir vendors. It was a change from the previous years when, Mason says, there were at least three to four balloon vendors participating.

Inclosed with the letter was the terms of participation for balloon vendors and a proposal application. Mason agreed to the terms and completed her application. She submitted the information.

Mason's application was followed by a letter, dated January 10, from her attorney, Wayne Alexander, who expressed concern over the new policy of one balloon vendor and also pointed out that Mason was one of "perhaps three (3) minority vendors that has been allowed to participate as Springfest vendors."

"We hope that the net result...is not the elimination of one of the few minority vendors at Springfest," wrote Alexander.

"Springfest is a festival celebrating the vitality and the people of Charlotte. It receives the support of the public and receives public funds. We trust that all segments of the community, including minority vendors, will be allowed to participate in this celebration. We refuse to accept the proposition that all the Afro-American community can and will be allowed to do is to spend its money at Springfest and sing and dance on stage."

On January 18, Patti Tracey, vice president of Springfest, responded to Alexander's letter stating in part that the new policy on balloon vendors came about as a way to facilitate administrative duties involved with vendors and that the selection of vendor participants is a fair policy.

"We can go spend our money, but we cannot make any money."

Carolyn Mason

On January 19, Mason was informed by letter that she was not selected as the balloon vendor for Springfest '89.

In a telephone interview, Tracey stated, "I don't understand what

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Springfest, Inc: No Blacks

By JALYNE STRONG
Post Editor

In their search for information on black involvement in Springfest, Inc., Carolyn Mason, owner of Balloon-A-Grams and former vendor at Springfest, and her lawyer, Wayne Alexander,



Nivens

sought out the blacks participating on Springfest, Inc's various boards.

They came across the name of Vivian Nivens, a black female who is the Public Relations Director for YWCA, listed as a member of Springfest's Advisory Board on the Springfest sta-

tionary.

When they contacted Nivens by letter, Nivens, via letter also, informed Mason and Alexander that she had resigned from the advisory board several years ago.

Nivens wrote in her letter, dated February 6, "My resignation from the Springfest Board was a direct result of my expressed frustration regarding what I perceived as their lack of interest in involving an equitable number of African-American artists, exhibitors, musicians and vendors in this community-wide event."

Nivens expressed concern as to why she was still listed as a member of the Springfest Advisory Board and also interest in whether any other blacks have served on the board of Springfest, Inc.

"We've usually had a promi-

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Mason wants blacks to have the opportunity to benefit from the economic advantages of Springfest.

Will N.C. Black Leadership Stress Bipartisanship With New Pres.?

By HERB WHITE
Post Staff Writer

The N.C. Black Leadership Caucus has not lived up to its pledge of bipartisanship and economic self help, says the organization's former president, who decided not to seek another term.

But the man who replaced him says nothing could be further from the truth.

Peter Grear, a Wilmington lawyer, decided three weeks ago he wouldn't run for reelection because of a busy schedule and opposition to his stance on black self-help and expanding the role of bipartisanship.

"I probably could've gotten elected, but I probably would have had trouble getting the consensus of a lot of folk," he said. "I was not going to get the kind of cooperation I needed."

Elijah "Pete" Peterson of Rockingham, who was elected to head the 1,200-member organization two weeks ago, said the caucus' role is to cultivate political savvy regardless of party affiliation.



Peterson

"Our interest is the development of black leaders. We focus on providing a base or network for developing that leadership," he said.

Charges of partisanship aren't legitimate, Peterson said, adding the group is under no obligation to endorse candidates.

"Many members are active in



Grear

their respective political parties," he said. "The caucus doesn't take a stand. The purpose is not to back candidates."

Charlotte's Bob Davis, the caucus' Western Vice Chairman, backed that claim, adding that Republicans are welcome to participate.

"The organization itself is bi-

partisan, but it's made up of primarily Democrats," he said. "There just aren't that many black Republicans nowhere."

Two of them, former state auditor candidate Edward Garner of Asheville, and Dianna Cotton of Winston-Salem, serve on the eight-member executive board.

A principal at Cordova Elementary School in Rockingham, Peterson admitted having limited knowledge of the caucus' work over the last two years. Yet members sought him to run for the group's top position.

"My election was somewhat the efforts of a lot of people who asked me to run," Peterson said. "I won't be recapturing some of the things that may have happened over the past two years."

Grear, who has served as a delegate for former Democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, also blasted some of the membership for allegedly favoring federal economic assistance over black self-help.

"We think going to the government is the answer, when you would think your basic thrust is

to go with economic self-help and then go to federal programs," he said. "But our leaders still are begging the government for money when they won't even spend their money within the black community. It's not just a North Carolina phenomenon. It's national."

Noting that black Americans as a group have considerable spending power, Grear said spending within the community could eliminate unemployment and increase productivity.

"We can't ignore the money we have," he said. "We have over \$250 billion in spending power, but we don't spend it with each other."

Recent immigrants, such as Cubans, Jamaicans and Vietnamese are doing a better job than blacks in finding economic independence, Grear said. Even in areas with little immigration, blacks fare poorly, often depending of government assistance.

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Noted Author To Speak

Juan Williams, noted journalist and author, will be the keynote speaker for the annual NAACP Legal Defense Fund Dinner on April 1 at McDonald's Cafeteria and Banquet Facility. The reception will be at 5 p.m. and the dinner at 6 p.m.

Williams, an award winning reporter for the Washington Post magazine, wrote "Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-65," a companion to the highly acclaimed PBS television series by the same title. The 33-year-old journalist has served as a White House correspondent, national correspondent covering political and social issues, editorial writer and education reporter.

He has covered presidential campaigns, written numerous television documentaries and magazine articles and served as a news commentator on the Black Entertainment television network.

The North Carolina Fundraising Committee of the LDF is headed by Esther Hargrave, Sarah Stevenson and Franklin McCain.

Former Charlotte lawyer, Julius Chambers, serves as director counsel of the national organization which provides representation for individuals and groups in cases that seek to re-



Williams

move the effects of enforced racial segregation and contemporary forms of racism and injustice.

The annual dinner is the only organized fund raiser or the organization in North Carolina.

Reservations for the dinner are now being taken. Tickets are \$35 each and tables for eight, \$300. There are special donation categories for Benefactors and Sponsors. Persons who wish to make reservations may contact one of the chairpersons or call 399-8897.

Racist Violence Of Skinheads Crosses The Nation

Racial violence rose and the white supremacist movement was revitalized in 1988, largely because of the spread of violent racist Skinhead gangs around the country. In a special report on hate crime in 1988, the February issue of the Klanwatch Intelligence Report notes that Skinheads were linked to four murders and two-thirds of the racial assaults documented by Klanwatch last year. (Since no national data collection system exists, all statistics on hate crimes are incomplete.)

While hate crime by other organized white supremacists and bigoted individuals continues to be a problem, Skinheads "represent a unique and frightening phenomenon in the history of the white supremacism in America," according to Klanwatch report. Begun as spontaneous teen gangs, they re now being organized into a national network by older, white supremacists, such as Tom Metzger of the White Aryan Resistance and Richard Butler of the Aryan Nations.

Skinheads are valued by older, white supremacists because of their tendency toward violence, according to Klanwatch. "Not since the height of Klan activity



Skinheads marched with Klan members in Pulaski, Tenn.

during the civil rights era has there been a white supremacist group so obsessed with violence or so reckless in its disregard for the law."

Noting that victims of Skinhead violence included Asians, Indians, Hispanics and gays as well as blacks and Jews, the report lists a "representative sample" of hate crimes during 1988 which includes 193 incidents in 35 states. For example:

- Black men in Reno, Nevada, and Portland, Oregon, were murdered by Skinheads who apparently picked their victims at random.

- A black church in a white neighborhood in Rock Fork, Illinois, was set on fire in April, rebuilt by the community, and then burned to the ground in October. A Skinhead was arrested.

- Youths in Brooklyn destroyed the inside of a temple and set

fire to the Torahs in September.

- A Hmong refugee and his family were the targets of repeated cross burnings in Eureka, California, in February.

Recognizing the increasing threat of Skinhead crime, legislators and prosecutors are employing special laws directed at hate crime to penalize violent racists:

- In Santa Ana, California, in December, three Skinheads were convicted of state civil rights violations in the brutal beating of a man they believed to be gay.

- In Spokane, a Skinhead was convicted of malicious harassment as well as attempted murder in the knife attack on a black man last July.

- In Dallas, a Skinhead was given the maximum prison term, 10 years, for the October 1988 vandalism of a temple, and pleaded guilty to three other charges of racial and ethnic intimidation.

The lack of complete data has tended to disguise the threat of hate violence in the past, according to Klanwatch Director Pat Clark, "but the tremendous rise in Skinhead crime, as well as the evidence from states who

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