

# Mason Protests Her Exclusion From Sales

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Mr. Alexander position was. The (new balloon vendor policy) was purely a business decision. There was no negative intent to preclude anyone in particular."

Tracey also said that Springfest receives no public funds. Though she admitted, "We are provided city services and one year we were allowed as a rider on the city's insurance policy."

Tracey said that Springfest, Inc. keeps no record of the number of black vendors allowed to participate in the festival. "It has never been an issue," she pointed out. "We have no policy that addresses minority participation."

That may be an issue that needs to be addressed by the Board of Directors, Tracey concluded.

"I can't give any numbers in respect to black participation in Springfest," says Steve Kaufman, Executive Director of Springfest. "We don't use race as a criteria in the selection process."

The Board of Directors has long ago discussed minority involvement in Springfest, making sure that we indeed put on a festival involving as many people as we could," adds Kaufman, who says he can't believe that Mason was the only black vendor at last year's Springfest, though he knows of no others.

"We do the best we can do. It was never indicated that we ought to develop a quota system or preferential treatment should be given."

"We believe as an organization that the (selection) process is

fair," says Kaufman.

Mason and her lawyer, have doubts about the its fairness.

Mason was informed that The Party Store/Floating Flowers was selected as the sole balloon vendor for Springfest '89. The Party Store/Floating Flowers is in fact two different balloon vendors, operated by whites, that merged and applied as one for the Springfest concession. Mason says although Floating Flowers has participated in Springfest as long as Balloon-A-Grams. The Party Store participated for the first time last year. As a combined entity, The Party Store/Floating Flowers has no experience as a Springfest vendor, points out Mason.

Citing her four years experience, Mason says, "I feel I should be able to participate. Most vendors with Springfest have grown with Springfest over the years. I am one of the vendors who has proven the ability to handle the capacity crowd that attends the festival."

In an effort to assess the fairness of Springfest's vendor selection process, Alexander forwarded a letter to the organization, dated January 31, asking for specifics, such as: "In what particular respects was The Party Store/Floating Flowers proposal better than that submitted by Balloon-A-Grams? Why was the Balloon-A-Grams proposal not selected? How many vendors, with African-Americans owning a majority interest in the firm, ever have participated in Springfest?"

Springfest, Inc. has not directly answered any of Alexander's

inquiries, accept to say in a letter, dated February 14, "It is not our practice to justify those decisions to persons who feel aggrieved by them."

Kaufman says, "In present procedures there's nothing that precludes a black vendor from being at Springfest."

He maintains, "If the question is that we have to insure a certain number (of black vendors) to make Springfest a truly community-wide event, depending upon the input to the Board, maybe something needs to be done. Maybe we indeed have to initiate something that goes beyond a fair and impartial selection procedure."

Mason says the Springfest Board has received her input. She claims that she talked with Kaufman by telephone on one occasion. "I asked for specific deficiencies in my application."

"He said the choosing of the balloon vendor was a 'subjective, judgement call' --- in exactly those words. He did not invite me to come to talk to him any further on the matter," says Mason. Hence began the correspondence between Mason's attorney and Springfest, Inc.

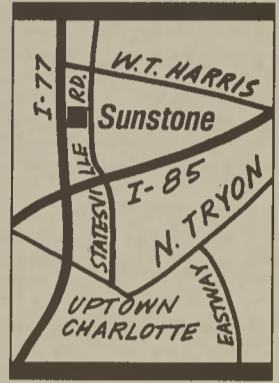
At this point, all Mason can say is that she still wants to participate as a black vendor at Springfest. "Springfest is supposed to be an event for the entire community, held in the heart of Charlotte. But one entire segment of the people of Charlotte is absent from the economic aspect of it."

conomic aspect of it.

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

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## Springfest Seeks Black To Replace Black

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Black citizen on the Springfest advisory board or board of directors," says Pattie Tracey, vice president of Springfest, who was able to name one, Gloria Duval, vice president of Johnson C. Smith University, who recently resigned from the Springfest Board of Directors.

Tracey explained that Nivens' name still appears as an advisory

board member because Springfest, Inc. has not changed its stationary.

"No, we have not had much involvement of blacks on Springfest's boards," admits Executive Director Steve Kaufman. With Duval's resignation, Kaufman, says there are currently no black members on any Springfest boards.

"That position (Duval's) is now

open. It is the board's desire to find another black member for the board," says Kaufman.

"In all likelihood it will be a black person who'll get that position."

### Skinhead Violence

Continued From Page 1A. do have data collection laws, clearly shows hate crime is a bigger problem than we ever suspected."

Clark urged passage of a national bill to require reporting on hate crimes, and said continued vigilance on the part of law enforcement will be key to curbing the rise in Skinhead crime.

## Black Leadership Plans

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In communities where we don't have these (other) nationalities, black people are still poor," he said.

Peterson maintained the caucus can best serve the black community by addressing the needs specified by its steering committee, made up of representatives of each of the state's 11 congressional districts.

"There will be a sharing of knowledge," he said, in order to achieve "a fair share in government."

"Economic development is

part of our ongoing agenda. We have people from all the districts who have needs. We will serve the districts. The districts will tell us where to go."

Greer said the organization will have to drop party preferences and work for its constituency to be effective in the future.

"All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win...is for enough good men and women to do nothing. We in the caucus have a Democratic wing and a Republican wing, but it takes two wings to fly," he said.

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