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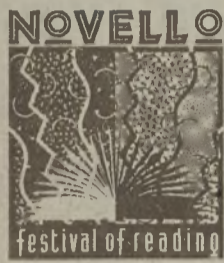
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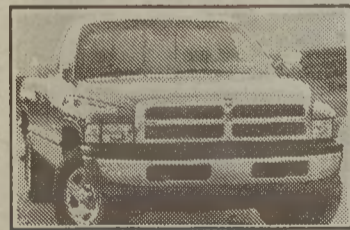
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Ace photographer Paul Williams III brings 'em back live.

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The editors of Car and Driver magazine take a look at the newest wheels in a special section. And The Post's Winfred Cross does the same. Both are inside.

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In some Charlotte neighborhoods, young people are learning hard lessons about life, death and survival.



Antoinette Baker, 12; Carmella Morrison, 2; LaVera Sanders, 7; Tasha Sanders, 8; Nina Sanders, 10 and their mother, Tammy Sanders (left to right) are trying to improve their lives in the Fairview Homes community.

PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Age Of Innocence

By Cassandra Wynn
THE CHARLOTTE POST

NEIGHBORS MURDERED and maimed. Drugs. Alcohol. Sex. Petty arguments that turn into big brawls, even shoot-outs. And images in the media that make the "hood" look like scenes from television's "NYPD Blue."

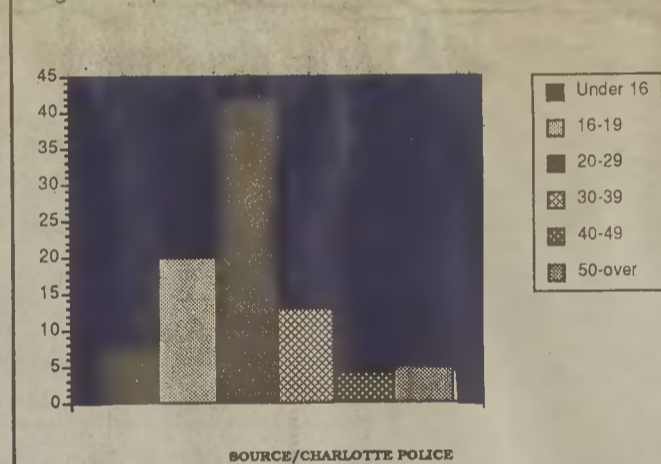
Even the Terminator would have a hard time rising above all that. It's as if there has been a planned assault on the childhood of inner city black kids. Whether or not they are tough, stories in the media persist about how tough they are supposed to be.

How are they really faring? In spite of all the odds, many rise above the negative influences. Others are victims of their environment.

Innocence may be the main casualty of inner city mayhem. The idyllic days of childhood are often fast forwarded. All too often youngsters stumble into life or death situations that most adults wouldn't dream of being in or know how to handle.

Jermond Lowery, 15, knows how to handle himself in the streets. "You can sense trouble," the Fairview Homes resident said. "If somebody's been arguing and you walk into an area

Age of suspects arrested for murder in Charlotte in 1992.



SOURCE/CHARLOTTE POLICE

where somebody might retaliate, you can sense it if somebody's going to come back with a gun. Sometimes I be getting scared. Sometimes I be thinking I'm going to walk into a bullet."

A ninth grade student at Cochrane Middle School, Jermond has learned that survival can be a matter of "watching your back." Whether he goes out at night, for instance, "depends on which night it is and who's out. If you see trouble, you go back in," he said.

Weekends and holidays, when drinking and drug use are heavy, are times to be careful. "On Fridays or Sat-

urdays, Mother's Day (when AFDC and Social Security checks arrive), holidays, the Fourth (of July), when people start drinking, somebody might start arguing when somebody leans on somebody's girlfriend. People may shoot people over clothes. You want certain stuff and you sell drugs to get it fast," Jermond said.

Usually 14-year-old Shumira Blount is not frightened by any of the things that go on at Boulevard Homes. However, she was frightened the morning after Charlotte Police Officers John T. Burnette and Andy Nobles were fatally shot in

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• Charlotte Police Officer John Burnette, who was killed last week in Boulevard Homes, said he was troubled by the prospect of using deadly force. See Page 2A.

Black Expo USA Aims To Promote Business Expansion

By Vera Witherspoon
THE CHARLOTTE POST

One of the biggest yearly events in black America is coming to Charlotte.

Black Expo will present business and entrepreneurial exhibits at the Charlotte Convention Center from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday. General admission is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children under 8.

Black Expo USA is a national traveling business and trade show that has been in existence for five years. This year, it will travel to 14 cities.

"The purpose of the Black Expo USA, the concept, is to aid all black businesses to gain exposure and educate the public about

their product or service...and they can also network with other businesses as well as corporate accounts to support our business," said Sylvia Porter, Black Expo's show office manager.

Expo visitors are usually young, fairly affluent, well-educated and more likely to spend their dollars with black-owned companies. According to New York-based NIA Publishing, which surveyed responses from the 1991 expo, 65 percent of the attendees were between the ages of 18-32, 70 percent were single and 75 percent graduated or attended college. Seventy percent of the people attending make over \$25,000 per year. Fifty-five percent of the audience is female.

Black Expo is expecting 20,000 people from the Charlotte area to view exhibits. Over 200 entrepreneurs and businesses are

expected to participate, displaying their products and services.

"There will be a great variety of businesses. Anything you find in the marketplace today will be at the expo, such as insurance plans, health plans, lawyers, doctors, counselors, recruiters, government and city agencies and people who are selling their products," Porter said.

Businesses are displayed in booths. To reserve a booth, an application form along with a certified check or money order must be submitted to Black Expo. Prices for a booth vary according to the size of the booth requested and the type of business.

Porter said, "Other events that will take place at the Black Expo USA are black in-

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Remap Goes To Court

White Voters Sue To Block November 2 District Referendum

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

White Mecklenburg County voters are looking to block a referendum they say give blacks more clout at the ballot box than necessary.

Motions were filed Monday in District Court to stop the Nov. 2 referendum that proposes to shift six districts for the election of county commissioners and school board members. Nate Pendley, a Winston-Salem attorney representing four plaintiffs, said the referendum will dilute the voting strength of whites. By putting more white voters in proposed districts 1, 4, and 5, blacks and Democrats would gain an unfair advantage by stacking the deck in their favor.

The redistricting plan was drawn up by N.C. Sen. Leslie Winner, a Charlotte Democrat. That plan would replace one approved by voters last year but has yet to be implemented.

"The present plan is not perfect, but it comes far closer than (Winner's) plan," Pendley said.

There's a difference of 9,500 voting-age persons in District 4 (with 67,963, the largest area) and District 3 (with the smallest with 58,406). The plaintiffs argue more whites will get less representation.

"I was personally appalled when I saw this pornographic gerrymander by Leslie Winner," said Jack Daly, a plaintiff and former campaign director for Republican Rep. Alex McMillan. "Regardless of where you live, your vote shouldn't count more than mine."

Although Pendley said "It is very tough to get an injunction passed," he sees where the U.S. Supreme Court will ultimately have to decide redistricting guidelines at some point. The court earlier this year ruled in Shaw vs. Reno that N.C.'s two mostly-black congressional districts give an unfair advantage to minorities at the expense of whites.

Pendley said the Winner plan is a partisan effort to protect Democrats on the county commission and gain an advantage on the School Board, which would have the same districts. Especially bothersome is the annexation of Precinct 96, where Democrat Lloyd Scher lives, into the integrated and mostly-Democratic District 4. Under last year's map, Scher would be in District 5, which is predominantly Republican and white.

Under either plan, two districts, 2 and 3 in north and west Charlotte, would be predominantly black.

What: Black Expo USA.

When: Saturday 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sunday 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m.

Where: Charlotte Convention Center.

Cost: \$4 general admission; \$2 for children under 8.