

The Charlotte Post

VOLUME 21 NO. 36

MAY 23, 1996

75 CENTS

NAACP internal woes

Suspension, audit of Alexander causes rift before July national convention here

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The move that led to Kelly Alexander's suspension as head of the N.C. NAACP was filed after he failed to turn over financial books and records to the new treasurer, Z. Ann Hoyle of Hickory.

The NAACP national board on Saturday suspended

Alexander pending an audit of the N.C. chapter's financial records for the last four years. The board didn't reveal why it called for the audit.

It's unclear how the suspension will affect planning and fundraising for the NAACP national convention scheduled this July in Charlotte. Charlotte City Council member Ella Scarborough, head of

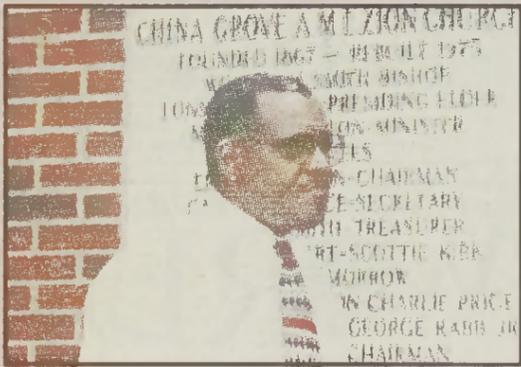
a blue ribbon fundraising committee, could not be contacted this week.

Hoyle, a Hickory city council member, was among a group of new officers opposed to Alexander, who were elected in October. Valerie Woodard of Charlotte, a longtime Alexander opponent, was elected second vice president of the state chapter, ousting Alexander supporter Kermit Waddell.

See NAACP on page 2A



kelly Alexander Jr.



PHOTO/CHARLES CLARKSON

Rev. William Conrad.

Racist message threatens local black church

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The terror of an African American church burning at the hands of white racists has come to Charlotte.

No church has burned here, but a hate-filled message was left on the answering machine of a south Charlotte church Sunday.

Rev. William Conrad, pastor of China Grove AME Zion Church, found the message Sunday afternoon and promptly notified police.

The FBI has also been called in to investigate the phone threat.

Conrad said the call could have been a prank, but a rash of burnings and vandalism across the South has church officials and police taking the threat seriously.

Church burnings have been the subject of congressional debate this week, with federal law enforcement officials telling the House Judiciary Committee they have found no evidence of a widespread conspiracy to link the church arson and vandalism of black churches across the South.

The Justice Department counts 28 arson attacks on African American churches in the past 17 months, but civil rights groups count as many as 45 suspicious fires at black churches since 1990.

Conrad said Sunday's message was very threatening. "All niggers will die in the fires of the Aryan people," Conrad quoted the caller as saying.

"There were a great deal of expletives then 'Die. Die. Die.' That communicated to me that there may be physical

See BURNINGS on page 3A

Olympic Effort



PHOTO/WADE NASH

The eight-time Olympic champion Carl Lewis is still a force to be reckoned with at age 35. Lewis placed second in the Atlanta Grand Prix last week and said he's peaking in time for the Olympics this summer. Story on 8B.

Black Caucus re-elects Bob Davis

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Bob Davis is again chairman of the Black Political Caucus, beating back an effort by Republican Jewett Walker to head the organization.

Davis, a Democrat, won an overwhelming victory in organization elections Sunday at First Baptist Church West, getting 45 votes. Challenger Malcolm Graham, another Democrat, got 21 votes and

Walker, a Republican, got seven.

Davis, who headed the caucus for 12 years, decided to run last week after learning a Republican would be nominated to chair the organization. Davis helped found in the early '70s.

"These are crucial times," Davis said. "Mean-spirited Republicans can no longer occupy the legislature, City Hall or the White House. It is necessary that we get (President) Clinton back,

Harvey (U.S. Senate candidate Harvey Gantt) in and maintain state auditor Ralph Campbell. We don't want to lose anything we have got at the local, state or national level and the Democratic way seems to be the best way at this time."

Davis listed among the crucial issues that must be faced by African Americans the proposed consolidation of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County governments.

"With consolidation, blacks

lose representation," he said. "Now we have four city council (persons), three commissioners and three school board members. If the 8-5 plan the Chamber of Commerce is pushing passes, we lose representation in numbers. In the 8-5 system, there would be eight districts and five at large seats. There would be two predominantly black districts."

"We want a decision making body with strong enough numbers to have some impact," See CAUCUS on page 3A

Separate and unequal still

By Roxana Hegeman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW ORLEANS - The same attitude that led to the "separate but equal" U.S. Supreme Court decision 100 years ago is behind the current conservative movement, the dean of the congressional black caucus said Saturday. U.S. Rep. Charles B. Rangel, D-New York, made the com-

ment at the Plessy Conference, which concluded Sunday in New Orleans, on the anniversary of the May 18, 1896 decision that led to Jim Crow segregation.

On June 7, 1892 in New Orleans, Homer Adolphe Plessy, a black man, was arrested after boarding a railroad passenger car reserved for whites. The arrest was carefully orchestrated by

prominent black New Orleanians challenging Louisiana's "separate car act."

The Plessy decision was not overturned until 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision that separate facilities were inherently unequal.

While the United States has come a long way in the civil rights movement since that day, it may not take much to

erase those gains, Rangel said.

"Plessy is over. Where is the equality? The separation is still here," Rangel said.

Rangel said the current Supreme Court may knock three to 10 black congressmen out of office by not allowing district boundaries drawn specifically to enhance the chance of electing a minority.

Today's attacks are coming in the guise of tax cutbacks that will eventually cut welfare, education, health care

and other programs which benefit the poor, Rangel said.

"No matter what civil rights you have, if you don't have a job, what good is it," Rangel said.

Civil rights are back to where they started because in an era of high-tech developments, schools teaching black students are underfunded, Rangel said.

Rangel also said anti-crime measures are being unfairly applied against minorities. Blacks make up a widely disproportionate share of the

inmates in U.S. prisons, he said.

"What is booming today? It is not the military complex. It is the law enforcement complex," Rangel said. "Politicians are no longer looking for military bases ... The enemy is no longer the communists. It is 'get them off the street.'"

Rangel said he is concerned most about public attitudes that put those politicians and judges into office.

"They talk about angry white men. They are insecure white men," Rangel said.

Management of King Center given to park service

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA - The family of Martin Luther King Jr. agreed Monday to turn over management of the slain civil rights leader's tomb to the National Park Service.

The move comes after the park service, which has conducted tours of King property for 12 years, was banished from the King birth home and the King Center last year during a dispute that was later resolved.

The park service will take over tours of King's tomb, located at the King Center, as well as the Freedom Hall exhibit building before the Olympics, when officials expect 100,000 visitors a day.



Coretta Scott King and her children, Martin III., Bernice and Dexter pray with President Clinton.

The King family will maintain ownership of Freedom Hall and the tomb. A date for the new management was not immediately announced.

The King Center, which has been cutting back on staff while coping with financial difficulties, will also turn over control of a \$534,000 federal

grant used to maintain the sites, said Troy Lissimore, park manager for the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.

"It appears they've made a real gut-wrenching assessment to come and determine they were never intended to be in the service business to

begin with," Lissimore said.

The King historic site, located in the Atlanta neighborhood where King grew up, draws 1.5 million visitors a year.

The park service, which is opening an \$11.8 million King-themed visitors center across from the King Center

in mid-June, already conducts tours of King's birthplace and the surrounding historic neighborhood of Sweet Auburn.

And last month, the park service signed a 99-year lease to conduct tours of Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King and his father both preached.

The agreement ends the rift between the park service and the King family, which wanted to build its own \$60 million interactive museum that would have competed with the new visitor's center, Lissimore said.

King's son Dexter Scott King, who heads the King Center, said in a statement the move will free up the center to focus on developing its archives of King's speeches and writings.

Inside

- Editorials 1A-2
- Strictly Business 7A
- Lifestyles 7B
- Religion 11A
- Arts/Entertainment 1B
- What's Up 4B
- Regional News 5B
- Sports 8B
- Classified 13B
- Auto Showcase 11B

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