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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

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## Alexander saga drags on for one more month

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Kelly Alexander Jr., suspended president of the N.C. NAACP conference, has less than a month to respond to an audit report made in closed session to the National NAACP board of directors last weekend.

The board delayed a long-awaited decision on whether to reinstate or take further action against Alexander, who was sus-



Alexander

ended in May from the position he'd held since 1989. After his suspension, an audit was ordered, but could not be completed because some records were not available. Auditors had focused on a cash management account at Merrill Lynch into which Alexander said he had deposited about half of

NAACP funds for the past seven years - as much as \$700,000. Neither Alexander or top NAACP officials could be reached for comment this week, though national NAACP CEO/President Kweisi Mfume reportedly said a final decision on Alexander's position could take several

more months. Melvin "Skip" Alston, acting president of the state NAACP chapter, said Tuesday that the national board wanted to give Alexander a chance to respond to the audit before making a final decision. "I totally agree," said Alston, who has sparred verbally with Alexander since taking over

for him. "They voted to give Mr. Alexander 30 days to answer those charges or provide receipts or justify those charges and if he doesn't do that within 30 days he will be suspended permanently." The Executive Board of the National Board of Directors will receive his answer to See ALEXANDER on page 2A

## The bonds that tie

### Voters decide on roads, local infrastructure

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte voters have more to think about than who will fill local, state and national offices this election.

Nearly \$100 million in bonds are also on the Nov. 5 ballot - \$66.3 million in street projects and \$32 million for neighborhood infrastructure improvements. The bond packages are separate items on the ballot, so voters can vote for or against both.

Much of the street bond money will be used in southeast Charlotte for extensions to Colony Road (\$10.9 million); Johnston Road (\$8.5 million); Fairview/Sharon Road (\$3.9 million); Prosperity Church Road (\$4 million). And, \$5.7 million will be used for a railroad bridge at Mt. Holly Road.

In all, \$46,410,000 will be used for roadway and intersection improvements and \$19,965,000 will be used for other transportation projects, such as sidewalks, minor improvements and business corridor upgrades.

Included is funding for Phase I of the planned widening of Beatties Ford Road.

The neighborhood improvement bonds are a first for the city in which specific community-based projects are listed and financed by the city. The bonds, if approved, will pay for infrastructure in 18 "distressed" neighborhoods, some inner city, some suburban. Previous neighborhood improvements had been made in the 73 inner-city neighborhoods - within four miles of uptown - in the City Within A City program.

For example, \$625,000 of the new bond money would be spent to extend Morning Drive and Sudan Street in the Reid Park community. The city utility department will also extend water and sewer lines to allow for new home construction on those streets. New homes are planned as part of the housing authority's reconstruction of the adjacent Dalton Village public housing complex.

Also, \$2.6 million will be spent in the Villa Heights community in north Charlotte to add curbs and gutters and sidewalks along streets.

Charlotte City Council member Pat Cannon said bond monies will address several lingering needs in some low-income

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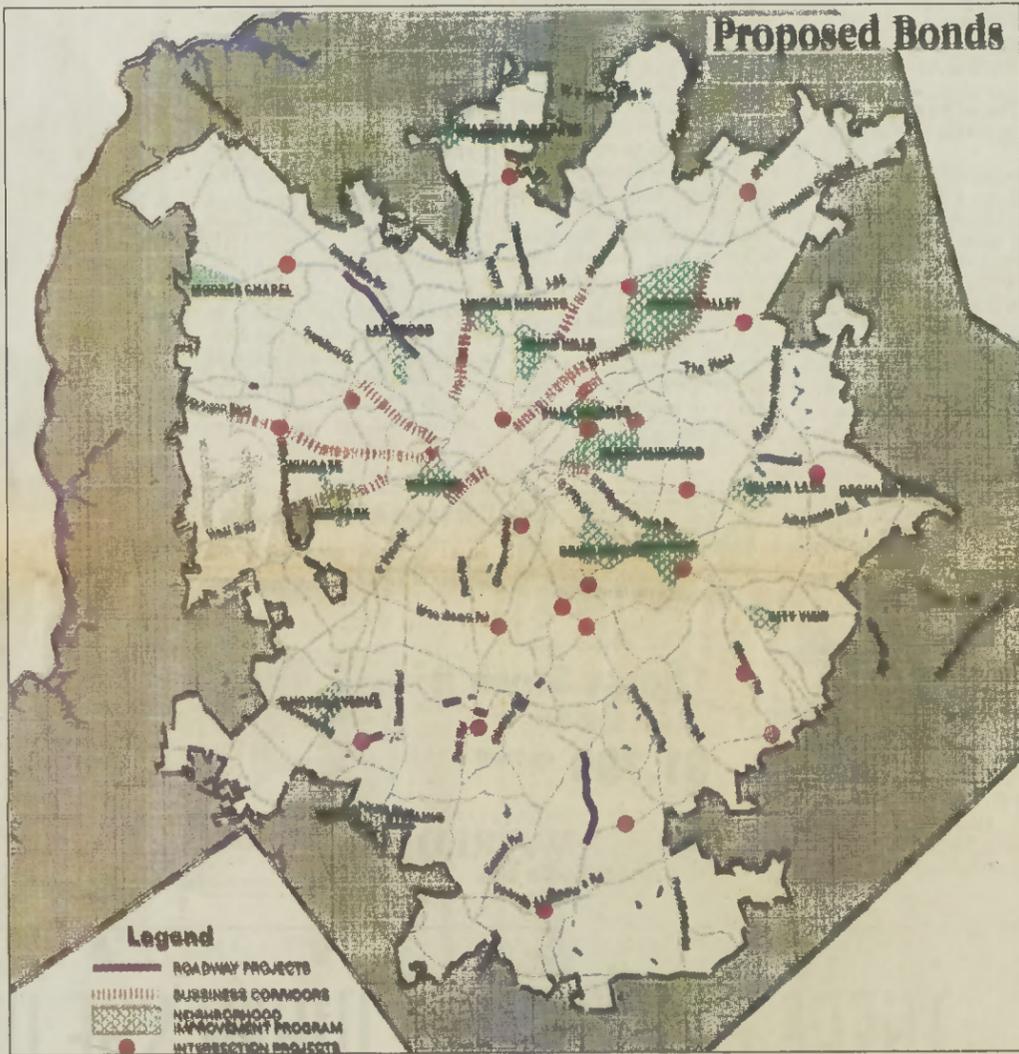


ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM HARRIS

## Helms ads bring on memories of '90

By Emery P. Dalesio  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH - Republican U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms' campaign is raising race as an issue in a new television ad just two weeks before his rematch with Democrat Harvey Gantt, who is black.

The ad began running this week and echoes the last weeks of their first contest in 1990. Helms' ad accuses

Gantt of enjoying preferential treatment because of his minority status to reap millions of dollars.

"We're back to 1990," said David Paletz, a Duke University political scientist who studies politics and the



Gantt



Helms

media. "Race has always been there. Race is now there in black and white."

If Helms repeats his 1990 strategy, voters could see sharper ads on affirmative action before the election on Nov. 5, Paletz said.

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## Henrietta Marie exhibit promises to be the best yet

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte's three-month display of the Henrietta Marie slave ship exhibit and accompanying programs will be the most unique so far on its national tour.

The exhibit, which has been seen in Detroit, Chicago and, most recently, Los Angeles, includes relics from an actual slave ship which sank in the Florida Keys around 1700 after depositing its human cargo in the Caribbean. The ship was discovered in 1972 and is part of the permanent collection of the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum in Key West, Fla. It began a national tour last year.

Charlotte is the fourth stop.

The exhibit "A Slave Ship Speaks: The Wreck of the Henrietta Marie" will be displayed Nov. 8-Jan. 25 in the Knight Gallery at Spirit Square in Charlotte.

Spirit Square vice president Dawn Womack says the schedule of programs and lectures, plus related activities at other local facilities, will be a time of healing and empowerment.

That process has already begun.

Womack said a drive to raise \$50,000, netted \$155,000, over 600 volunteers have signed up and tour groups from as far away as Arkansas have already signed up to visit the exhibit.

"We knew this was going to be



Womack

a challenge," Womack said. "For many people the healing has begun. I know my life will never be the same." All of the donations will be used for the exhibit and related programs, said Womack, who is credited with working to get the Henrietta Marie exhibit for Charlotte, after Discovery Place, a science museum, turned it down.

"More money means more programs," Womack said of a

See SLAVE SHIP on page 7A



## Fighting Back wins \$1 million grant

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Fighting Back won a \$1 million grant to continue its anti-drug efforts in Charlotte's westside communities.

The organization on Tuesday announced the grant - \$1,009,275, for 17 months - and a kickoff celebration in conjunction with National Red Ribbon Week's salute to youth who have pledged to be drug-free.

The new grant is slightly less than the \$3 million, three-year program first won by the organization, which works in Mecklenburg county commissioner District 2 and is administered by the Mecklenburg County mental health department.

Fighting Back projects are community-based coalitions working to reduce substance abuse and related problems by using existing resources.

Charlotte's effort was launched three years ago with a \$3 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Renewal of the grant came into question after infighting and other problems stymied early efforts. A succession of directors led the organization and there was even a dispute over whether the county or neighborhoods would control the program.

Monday's events include a press conference to announce the grant with Dr. Anderson Spickard, national director of the Fighting Back Project.

"Charlotte has overcome some tremendous hurdles to get to a place where they could make a real impact," Spickard said. "Community mobilization is no easy task. It takes perseverance and a real dedication to working on substance abuse issues to get everybody in the community committed to solving these life threatening problems."

"This 17-month Robert Wood See DRUG on page 2A

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