

## Conference on racism in S. Carolina

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flies from the state house. Two South Carolina Klan members have been indicted on federal charges for two of the state's church burnings. Civil rights lawyers have sued the local Klan for conspiracy in its link to the church burnings. Local Klan leaders, denying any connection, have ironically made public statements against the burnings.

The NCC, an interdenominational group headquartered in New York City, took the lead on the church burning issue earlier this year. Jones and other NCC officials traveled the South this past summer, meeting with the victimized pastors and hearing their stories. The organization

has raised more than \$7 million to help rebuild the burned churches, and is distributing grants to them. After testifying in Washington last spring about what they had seen, the NCC, the CDR and other groups proposed the idea for a South Carolina march led by local organizers in October. A conference was called instead.

Local organizers told reporters that a march for the spring was still being considered. As a result of its high visibility and leadership on this issue, the NCC and its allies have been attacked by several right-wing organizations, including the Institute on Religion and Democracy, a right-wing Washington, D.C. think tank that has in the past attacked church leaders who came out against the Persian Gulf War and the

## Suspects claim innocence

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claims the charges against him were trumped up by the FBI.

Eugene Smith said Thursday that he was under house arrest for drunken driving at the time of the cross-burning in Waynesville and was wearing an electronic bracelet that would have alerted authorities if he strayed more than 150 feet from his telephone.

"Right after it happened, the FBI came over here and talked to me," Smith said in a telephone interview. "I was a suspect in their eyes right from the very start."

Smith said he was targeted by investigators because of his criminal record, which includes convictions for breaking and entering and larceny, and because he was a friend of white separatist Randy Weaver.

"They found out that I knew Randy Weaver out in Idaho," Smith said. "When they found out, they went wild."

Weaver was involved in a 1992 siege with federal agents at his remote Idaho cabin during which his wife and son were killed. He and his three

daughters received a \$3.1 million to settle their damage claim against the government.

Smith claimed he lived next door to Weaver in 1987 and 1988.

Attempts to reach Weaver, who was staying with a friend in Iowa on Thursday night and preparing to return to his home in Montana, were not successful.

Calls to the FBI's office in Charlotte seeking comment were not immediately returned.

According to the indictment, two crosses covered in rags and soaked in a flammable liquid were burned nearly four years ago in front of the Poison Cove home of Gordon Cullins, a black man, and Hazel Sutton, a white woman.

The couple moved out of their home shortly after the New Year's Eve incident.

Sutton told authorities she had received threatening phone calls for weeks leading up to the incident.

One count charged the suspects with conspiring to violate civil rights laws; another charged that the defendants used the threat of force against individuals exercising their

housing rights; the third charged that the four used fire to commit a felony.

The suspects face maximum prison terms of 21 years and fines of up to \$600,000 if convicted.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Max Cogburn Jr. appointed attorneys for Haynes and Eugene Smith, the Asheville Citizen-Times reported. Smith said he is being represented by Stephen Lindsay, an Asheville attorney. King plans to hire his own attorney.

Since January, the Justice Department has brought more than 20 cross-burning cases against 30 defendants. Two weeks ago, a Maine man pleaded guilty to burning a cross in an Augusta neighborhood where multi-racial families live. The same week, two Ohio men pleaded guilty to felony civil rights violations for burning a cross in front of the home of a black family near Mansfield.

"Hateful acts like cross burnings strike at the heart of the community and must be stopped," said Assistant Attorney General Deval L. Patrick, head of the civil rights division.

## Gallery welcomes Leon Hicks

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ence upon me and my personal development as an artist and as a printmaker," he said. "It was in my drawing and printmaking that I attempted to continue the evolution of the visual language by extending its syntax as it relates to illusionistic and non-illusionistic presentations, and as it relates to its evolution from the past to the present."

From there, Hicks' works evolved during the Black Art movement. A culturally-sensitive agenda drove his works in the '70s, although it was often spurned by mainstream critics. Those rejections didn't stop him, however.

"I am proud of these artworks because they corroborate the practice of my cultural heritage and they express

the collective perceptions that go along with experiencing and being a black American," he said.

"Even more, in the African American community, these artworks also are a direct product of the 'spiritual catharsis' which extended the distance between the life one lives and the art that expresses it."

## Highland gets own market

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Holmes hopes to start off with two to four workers, who will take a four-week course on cash management skills, inventory control and customer services.

"Basically, we are going to emphasize cash management," Holmes said. "They can use those skills anywhere, as bank tellers things like that. They (employers) look for that."

And of course they will leave with groceries—a much needed commodity in Highland where the nearest grocery store is across town or miles down the road in Dallas.

"In two days, they will receive the equivalent of \$60 in groceries," Holmes said.

"We are going to split the days up to make sure (what we teach them) sinks in."

Holmes will work with local business to provide residents who complete the job placement assistance.

The store is not just open to those on the sweat equity plan. Anyone can shop there. The stores will be slightly cheaper than normal market prices.

"I think it has gone across real well," said Gastonia City Council member Walker Reid. "We see it as a stepping stone to the ultimate goal of having a chain grocery store in the area."

Reid, one of the leaders in the fight to bring business to the area, is excited about the cooperative.

"It will give residents the option of going to a community grocery store within walking distance," Reid said.

There is a downside to the opening however. The Highland Family Resource Center is in its last year of funding. Sido is working on grant proposals from both the public and private sector to continue the project which residents feel will give the community a boost. While nothing is solid, she feels the funding will come.

Reid is also concerned. "Hopefully we will work out something to continue funding," he said. "This is too important to lose."

## Spearman ministers at college

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his premises around the idea that it does not take a whole lot of people to make a change.

The Hood Theological Seminary says that the remnant of the eager students who desire to help will be the main instruments in his program.

"Approachability, adaptability and relevance are the main-

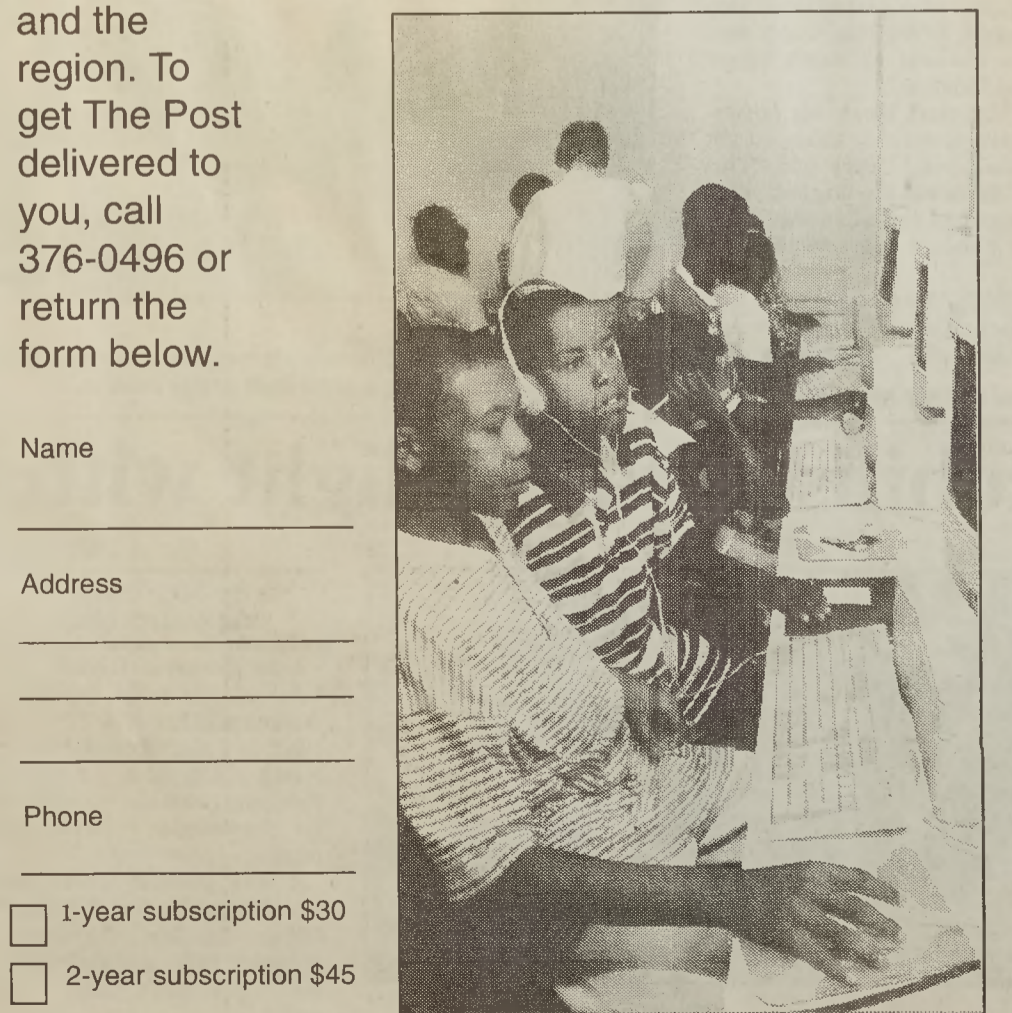
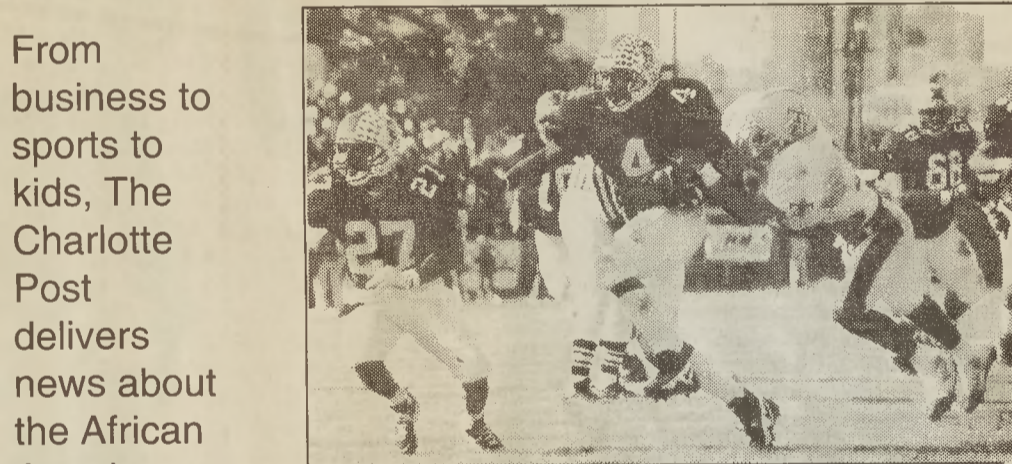
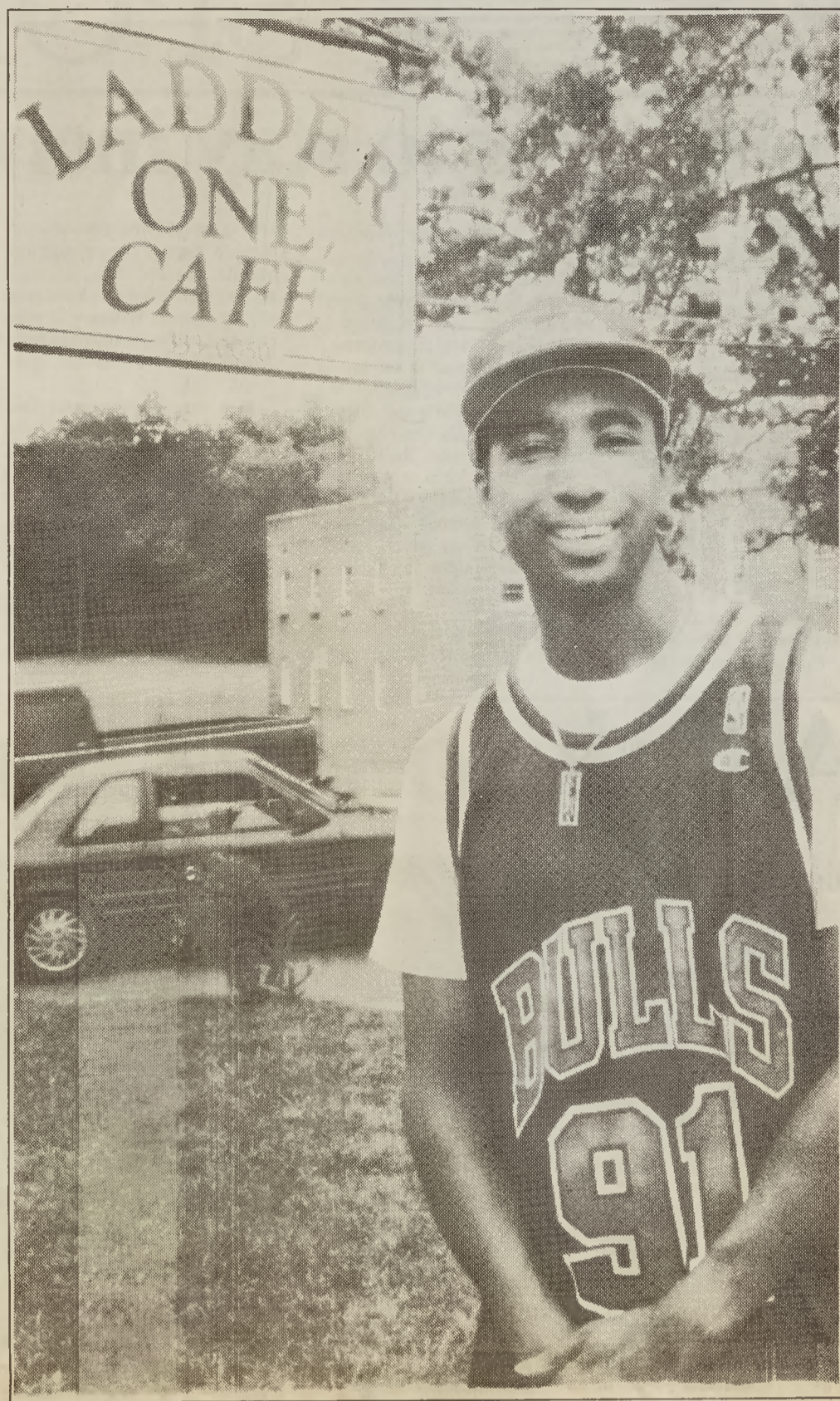
stays of reaching people. We want the campus ministry at Livingstone to be holistic in its views rather than being untimely and irrelevant," he said.

Spearman has put his plans into action. He has gathered a number of devoted students and faculty to be apart of a group called the Real Life Committee. The group's sole

purpose is to conduct workshops that cater to issues pertinent to the plight of the young people on campus.

Spearman claimed that four steps to an effective Livingstone campus ministry are centered around spirituality, morality, practicality, and intellectuality. And, he plans to put all of these suppositions into action.

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