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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

ALSO SERVING CABARRUS, CHESTER, ROWAN AND YORK COUNTIES

Call for Black Monday

By John Minter and
Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

African Americans urged to boycott
schools, businesses as shooting response

The Rev. Ben Chavis has called for a Black Monday on Jan. 27 as a community-wide boycott to protest the deaths of three unarmed African Americans killed by Charlotte police officers.

Chavis was keynote speaker at a vigil sponsored by Citizens for Justice and other grassroots organizations commemorating

the deaths of James Willie Cooper, Windy Gail Thompson and Jake King.

"No school. No work. No play," Chavis said. "No one is going to take us seriously until we take ourselves seriously. We don't want to see a black face in a mall anywhere in Charlotte."

Chavis, national organizer of

the Million Man March, said he will remain in Charlotte to help organize the protest and may seek help from Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader who called for the march as a Day of Atonement.

"I'm coming home," said Chavis, who attended UNC Charlotte and once ran for

Charlotte City Council. "I am going to become a resident of Charlotte again."

In a rousing speech drawing shouts from the crowd packed into Clinton Chapel AME Zion Church, Chavis said "It is time for united action. We are declaring Monday, Jan. 27, 1997 as Black Monday in Charlotte, N.C. It's OK to be black again."

"We demand justice," Chavis shouted. "We cannot let Brother

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PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Marches like this one protesting the fatal shooting of James Willie Cooper could be repeated on Jan. 27, proclaimed Black Monday.

Kwanzaa founder affirms principles

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Maulana Karenga's lecture on the second day of Kwanzaa Friday was a rousing reaffirmation of the the Nguzo Saba from its creator.

Karenga left no sin unpunished in calling on African Americans to "speak truth, do justice, walk in the way of righteousness."

"Don't use the difficulty of the struggle as an excuse not to engage in it," Karenga told the nearly 500 people who turned out at Ovens Auditorium and greeted his lecture with cheers and applause.

Noting the deaths of James Willie Cooper, Windy Gail Thompson and Jake King, all shot by police officers while unarmed, Karenga told the audience, "The only thing that saved you was your absence."

"Whatever happens to one of us will happen to all of us," he said. "Each of us is compelled to enter the field of action."

Asked about Oakland, Calif.'s plans to teach Ebonics or Black English in public schools, Karenga praised the move as a way to relate to African American students and teach them other languages, including proper English.

Karenga's visit, marking the 30th anniversary of Kwanzaa, was organized by the Kwanzaa Task Force, headed by Ahmad Daniels. The evening began with a private reception at the Afro-American Cultural Center.

Karenga is professor and chair of the Department of Black Studies, California State University, Long Beach. He helped write the mission statement for the Million Man March and is founder of the US organization, one of the few remaining groups from the '60s Black Power movement.

He founded Kwanzaa in 1966 as the only non-religious, non-heroic African American holiday. Kwanzaa is celebrated with daily rituals Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, ending with a feast called the Karamu at which gifts are given to chil-

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PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Maulana Karenga, the founder of Kwanzaa, was in Charlotte last week to talk about the holiday, which is celebrated by an estimated 20 million people worldwide.

Kwanzaa's getting too commercial, much to holiday supporters' chagrin

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — As Kwanzaa grows, items used to celebrate the holiday are being offered by mainstream retailers.

The candles, cups and other items have customarily been sold by black-owned businesses.

"It's very disturbing," said Theman Taylor, a history professor at University of Central Arkansas.

"Keep in mind, this is an African American holiday to the core and black people must understand that the meaning of the 'kinara' (can-

dleholder) and the meaning of everything to do with Kwanzaa benefits black people first," Taylor said.

"To go and purchase these things from these large corporations is missing the whole meaning. In fact, you're changing the meaning," he said.

Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits," began Dec. 26 and runs through Jan. 1. An estimated 5 million black families are expected to celebrate this year. The holiday began 30 years ago, created by Maulana Karenga, with whom Taylor is friends.

Building economic indepen-

dence is among the seven principles that Kwanzaa symbolizes. The holiday has grown to the point where Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Avon are selling Kwanzaa materials.

"We're raising the awareness about Kwanzaa, and we're helping people understand the importance of this holiday," said Paulette Brown, Avon spokeswoman in New York.

Patrick Oliver, owner of Kuumba Cafe and Images of Africa gift shop in Little Rock, said the corporate involvement takes away from the holiday.

ever to offend anyone," he said.

Griffin, whose great-great-grandfather fought in the Confederate Army, said the license plates are "a symbol of pride in our heritage."

The plates display a small Confederate battle flag on the left side and "Sons of Confederate Veterans" written under the license numbers. Sons of Confederate Veterans is

Funds raised to put cameras in police vehicles

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

A group of African Americans plan to announce Thursday that they have already raised \$25,000 toward the purchase of video cameras for Charlotte police cars, The Post has learned.

A press conference has been called for 11:30 a.m. Thursday to announce the group's initial efforts to outfit police with cameras. The funds raised would go to the installation of video equipment in 25 cars.

The group includes Charlotte City Council member Ella Scarborough and TransAmerica Peinsurance President Bill Simms, First Union Bank vice president Lenny Springs and Ron Leeper, a former city council member who owns a construction firm.

A call for video cameras in police cars arose in the wake of the killing of an unarmed black motorist by a Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer in November.

James Willie Cooper, 19, was shot in the side after a traffic stop in east Charlotte by officer Michael Marlow.

Community leaders have renewed a call for a citizens review board to investigate such incidents.

The use of video cameras, used by several police agencies, including highway patrol troopers, was proposed as a solution to determining whether deadly force and other police acts are justified.

Police officials and city council members have said mounting cameras in cruisers is a good idea,

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Simms



Scarborough

Task force to study schools

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

A diverse group of local citizens will help plan future school construction needs, focusing on equity in the siting of buildings and in student assignments.

The group, called the Citizens' Task Force for Future School Planning, will report to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Supt. Eric Smith and the school board.

Smith, noting that Charlotte-Mecklenburg is the fourth-fastest growing large system in the nation, said "we will continue to face two major issues related to that growth: providing enough classroom seats for our students and deciding which students will fill those seats."

"The Citizens' Task Force will play a vital role in helping us

meet the challenges of our growing community in a pro-active, forward-thinking way," Smith said.

The appointment of the task force comes as the community ends another fight over pupil assignments, a fight which left bitter feelings on all sides, especially Matthews area parents who want their children to attend the new southeast high

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Rebel flag's appearance on Md. tags stirs controversy

By Tom Stuckey
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The battle over the Confederate flag has moved into Union territory.

Maryland's motor-vehicle department has issued special license plates with the flag to about 70 members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, offending black leaders.

"Maryland doesn't need to go backwards with this Jim Crow mess," said state Sen. Larry Young, a Baltimore Democrat and chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus.

Young and Hanley Norment, president of the state chapter of the NAACP, said they will ask the state Motor Vehicle Administration to stop issuing the special plates.

"We in the NAACP are surprised and disappointed that a state agency would cooperate in perpetuating such symbols as this one," Norment said.

Patrick J. Griffin III, a Maryland member of the Sons of the Confederacy, said his organization is not racist and abhors the activities of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

"There is no intention whatso-

ever to offend anyone," he said.

Griffin, whose great-great-grandfather fought in the Confederate Army, said the license plates are "a symbol of pride in our heritage."

The plates display a small Confederate battle flag on the left side and "Sons of Confederate Veterans" written under the license numbers. Sons of Confederate Veterans is