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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

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Reid's words stir resignation demands

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte City Council member Don Reid says he fears young black teenagers more than whites.

Some African Americans say he should fear fallout from that statement.

Some black leaders are calling

for his resignation and plan to appear at Monday's council meeting to make their point.

Reid, who was endorsed by the Black Political Caucus in the 1995 elections, made the remarks at a Leadership Charlotte seminar two weeks ago. Reid and other public officials at the meeting were asked

about race relations in Charlotte.

Mecklenburg County commissioner Tom Bush opened the discussion by noting that he locked his car doors when young blacks cross the street near him. Bush said it was wrong to do so and cited that as an example of the race problems in Charlotte.

But Reid told Bush he should not feel it's racist to fear young blacks.

"If you are in the streets of Charlotte at night and



Reid

you're approaching two black teenagers and two white teenagers, I'd be more afraid of the black teenagers," Reid said. "Anybody that isn't more afraid of young black men than any other group in the city just does not know the score."

The remark drew angry responses at the Leadership

Charlotte meeting and the community when it was reported last week.

This week, African Americans reacted with the Black Political Caucus deciding Sunday to invite Reid to its next meeting to discuss his remarks.

Caucus chairman Bob Davis,

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Black Monday set to go

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Despite resistance from some members of the African American community, organizers of Black Monday are proceeding with plans, which include a march and rally at The Square.

Seeking to please some early critics and include as many people possible, Black Monday has taken on a new look. Organizers say those who cannot miss work or school to attend the rally can show support by turning on headlights and wearing black arm bands and black-on-white Black Monday buttons.

The Rev. Ben Chavis, who called for Black Monday during a speech sponsored by Citizens for Justice, will appear on the WPEG "Breakfast Brothas" show Friday morning to answer questions about the event.

Chavis, head of the National African American Leadership Summit, was national organizer of the Million Man March.

The demonstration was called in response to the shooting by a Charlotte police officer of an unarmed black motorist - James Willie Cooper - in November, three years after the shooting death of an unarmed black woman - Windy Gail Thompson - by another police officer.

Both officers were cleared by District Attorney Peter Gilchrist and internal police department investigations.

Citizens for Justice, which is spearheading Black Monday, formed after the Thompson shooting.

Both deaths have sparked calls for an independent citi-

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PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Agibike Nrobia shows students from Sedgefield Elementary School a pair of shackles used to keep slaves immobile on the Henrietta Marie. The exhibit is in its final week at Spirit Square in Charlotte before packing up for Florida.

Setting sail

Henrietta Marie exhibit attracts big crowds in final days

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE PRESS

After a two-month visit, Charlotte bids the Henrietta Marie bon voyage this week.

Artifacts from the slave ship have been on display at Spirit Square since Nov. 8. Charlotte

was the fourth stop on the exhibit's national tour.

The accompanying lectures and seminars organized by Spirit Square vice president Dawn Womack helped boost participation and attendance to more than 60,000.

"From what I have heard, we

have not seen as much traffic for any single program or exhibit at Spirit Square," Womack said Tuesday. "This is history for us."

On weekends, patrons have stood in long lines to see the exhibit, which includes a replica of the ship's hold where Africans were kept during the voyage from west Africa to the Americas. Also shown are shackles, some small enough for children.

"The momentum is building," Womack said. "We are seeing more and more coming during the day. We are near the end and spaces are full."

The past three weekends have seen up to 10,000 visitors jam the exhibit. The weekend average attendance has been about 2,000, Womack said.

"We have seen all along the way high attendance in the evening lecture series,"

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Civil rights veterans wonder where and when new leaders will emerge

By Jay Reeves
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - The Rev. Abraham Woods gets a little more worried each time he hears of the death of another civil rights leader who helped pull Alabama through its darkest days of racial conflict.

That's because Woods, 68, sees no one waiting to take the place of those pioneers.

"I'm frightened by this generation coming in behind us," Woods, active in the movement in the 1950s, said. "I don't see the commitment."

Last week, the day after the nation observed what would

have been the 68th birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. if not for an assassin's bullet, voting rights pioneer W.C. Patton died after a long illness. He was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Alabama.

Weeks earlier, civil rights lawyer Arthur Shores died. Before that, moderate white businessman Emil Hess passed away. Last January, black millionaire A.G. Gaston died.

Each man played a vital role in keeping a lid on Birmingham in those violent days of the early 1960s, when black churches were being bombed and Bull Connor was

unleashing police dogs and fire hoses on marchers.

"We are losing a lot of history, a lot of understanding, a lot of even-tempered individuals who would rather sit down at the negotiating table than riot," said Ron Truss, president of the Birmingham-area NAACP.

Shores represented King and other demonstrators in court when no one else would, and Hess quietly supported the movement by hiring blacks to work in his Parisian department store.

Gaston, for years Alabama's pre-eminent black businessman, served as a buffer with

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Parade marshals



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

N.C. Rep. Beverly Earle and Bell South executive Bob Freeman lead Monday's Martin Luther King Day parade. The event was sponsored by the West Charlotte Merchants Association.

County takes a look at cruising

By Herbert L. White
THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's still winter, but Mecklenburg County parks officials are already thinking about spring and one of its controversial activities.

The Parks and Recreation department will hold the first of three workshops Thursday to inform residents living near three west Charlotte parks of what to expect during cruising season.

The first session is Thursday at 7 p.m. at Hornets Nest Elementary School near Hornets Nest Park, the county's busiest cruising site. Others sessions will be held Jan. 30 at Goodwill Industries, 2122 Freedom Drive near Camp Greene Park and Jan. 31 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 917 Clanton Road near Clanton Park.

Cruising has been a thorny issue for the parks department for years. Thousands of young people annually descend on Charlotte parks to participate in the warm-weather ritual, which at times infuriates neighbors. Freedom Park, the cruisers' original locale of choice, became a battleground on the issue, pitting mostly-black cruisers against mostly-white homeowners who complained about noise and unruly behavior. Three years ago, county officials shut off cruisers' access to Freedom, forcing them to scatter to other locations. Hornets Nest Park, located on Beatties Ford Road,

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