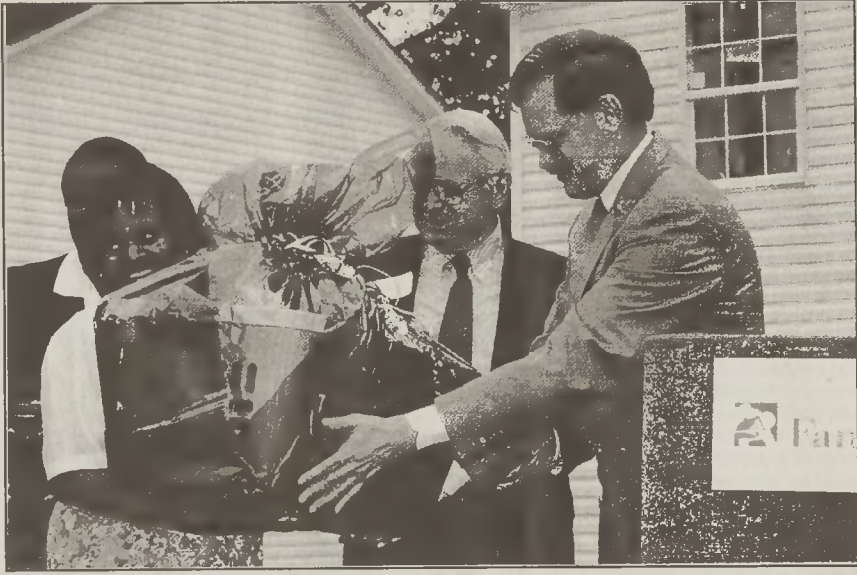


Fannie Mae celebrates success



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Jacqueline Lampkins receives a housewarming gift Saturday during ceremonies sponsored by Fannie Mae and the city of Charlotte.

Continued from page 1A

financing that traditional loan sources are less likely to approve, said Rep. Mel Watt of Charlotte.

"The results of House Charlotte's efforts speak strongly about Fannie Mae's commitment to our

city," he said. "Fannie Mae's investment in minority-owned banks, like Mechanics & Farmers Bank, will help expand local community development efforts."

Although more Charlotte families are moving into homes, the overall percentage

of owners lags behind the national average. Fifty-five percent of Charlotte residents own homes, compared to 66 percent nationally. Among African Americans in the city, 38 percent own homes, compared to the national average of 44 percent.

Redistricting vote delayed again

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte City Council still has not redrawn its election districts and, despite attempts at compromise, neither political party has the votes to pass a new plan.

Monday, it took a vote by Democrat Al Rouso for the five Republicans on the 11-member council to kill a Democratic-backed plan.

All Democratic-supported proposals would add recently-annexed voters to current districts and make little changes to district lines.

Republicans are pushing for a plan which would give Democrats the option of accepting a safe white Democratic seat or a safe black Democratic seat, leaving the two westside majority-black districts untouched.

Time may be running out for a decision.

"The reality is the districts ought to be in place by early May, so maps can be prepared, voters can be assigned to districts and preparation for the election can begin,"

said Mecklenburg Elections Supervisor Bill Culp.

Culp said this is the first difficult city redistricting since district elections begun in 1977.

"We have never had this problem before," Culp said. "Traditionally, redistricting has involved minimum changes to districts. This year, tradition is out of the window. The minimum change map was voted down 6-5 with Al Rouso voting with the Republicans."

The vote symbolizes how difficult it will be to select a plan and how close the city may be to putting district elections in the hands of federal judges. Any plan must have at least seven votes to be veto-proof, assuming the Democrats get a plan passed. Republicans would need at least two Democrats to vote their way.

The two most current compromise plans involve changes to District 1, currently held by Democrat Sara Spencer. Spencer has proposed adding more Republicans to the district, making it more competi-

tive. However, council member Don Reid wants even more Republicans added to that district.

"Until they get somebody to cross party lines and support a map, they are deadlocked," Culp said. "I don't know how it is going to play out, we are in uncharted waters."

Filing for city elections opens July 4. The primary is currently set for Sept. 23 and the general election is Nov. 4.

Culp said it is possible, even if new districts are not approved in time, the mayoral and at-large council elections could be held on schedule.

Since more whites than African American were added in the annexation of several suburban areas, including the University City area, District 4, the northeast district represented by Nasif Majeed, was a prime target to become more white.

Current compromise plans would maintain the likelihood that an African American would be elected in District 4, which includes Hidden Valley and Hampshire Hills.

Ambassador at JCSU graduation

The U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica will be Johnson C. Smith University's commencement speaker May 11.

Gary Cooper, named Ambassador to Jamaica by President Clinton, will address JCSU's Class of '97 at 2 p.m. at Owens Auditorium. A native of Mobile, Ala., Cooper is a founder of the first African American-owned and operated

national bank in that state. In 1973, he was the first African American since reconstruction elected to Alabama's state legislature and in 1978 was appointed to serve as the state's commissioner of human resources.

In 1989, Cooper was appointed by President George Bush as assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower, reserve

affairs, installations and the environment. In that civilian position, Cooper assisted in preparations for Operation Desert Storm. He is senior vice president of David Volkert and Associates, a regional engineering and architectural firm.

Commencement is free and open to the public.

Herbert L. White

Hundreds die in Zairian camp

By Hrvoje Hranjski
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KISANGANI, Zaire - Rwandan Hutus who survived the latest exodus from refugee camps in eastern Zaire said Saturday that Zairian villagers killed hundreds at one camp, where rebel troops also opened fire.

Rebel leader Laurent Desire Kabila, meanwhile, arrived six hours late for a meeting with a European diplomat and aid workers. The officials were demanding that Kabila to tell them the whereabouts of 100,000 missing Rwandan Hutu refugees.

Aid workers have found only a few hundred of the refugees who have vanished since rebel troops sealed off the area south of Kisangani on Monday. They want access to

the camps. Since October, Kabila's forces have seized much of the eastern half of Zaire and have vowed to oust President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mobutu and Kabila are expected to hold peace talks early in the coming week, South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki announced Saturday night.

Mbeki said a problem over the site of the talks had been resolved, but declined to say where they would be held, the South African Press Association said.

In Zaire, aid workers who flew over refugee camps Friday and Saturday, briefly visiting the largest, said they were disturbingly empty - considering they held thousands of refugees who had been too weak to walk and

were dying at a rate of 60 a day.

The refugees are the last of the 1 million Hutus who fled Rwanda in 1994 while ethnic Tutsis were assuming power. They feared retaliation for the Hutu massacre of a half-million people, mostly Tutsis. Most have since returned to Rwanda.

As international pressure mounted on Kabila to explain how Zairian villagers attacked the refugees and why the rebels failed to protect them, more witness accounts emerged from those who survived.

Faustin Nkizinkiko, a 28-year-old Hutu from Gitarama, Rwanda, said Zairian villagers left "hundreds of dead" in the biggest camp at Kasese, 15 miles from this regional capital.

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Save At Least
17¢
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