

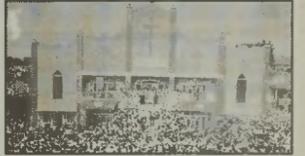


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The Charlotte Post

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THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

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There's no shortage of suggestions for census' ethnic labeling

By Arlene Edmonds
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Filed in an office near the White House, handy for presidential perusal, is one man's solution to the nagging need of the World's Greatest

Democracy to sort people by race. John Beresford, a retiree in Alexandria, Va., proposed a numbered skin-color chart: Forget "black" or "white." You could just pick the number nearest your skin tone.

When the Office of Management and Budget announced a few years ago it was rethinking its race and ethnic labels for Americans under a sweeping rule called Directive No. 15, Beresford's "Skin-Color Gradient Chart" was one of the more dazzling suggestions from hundreds

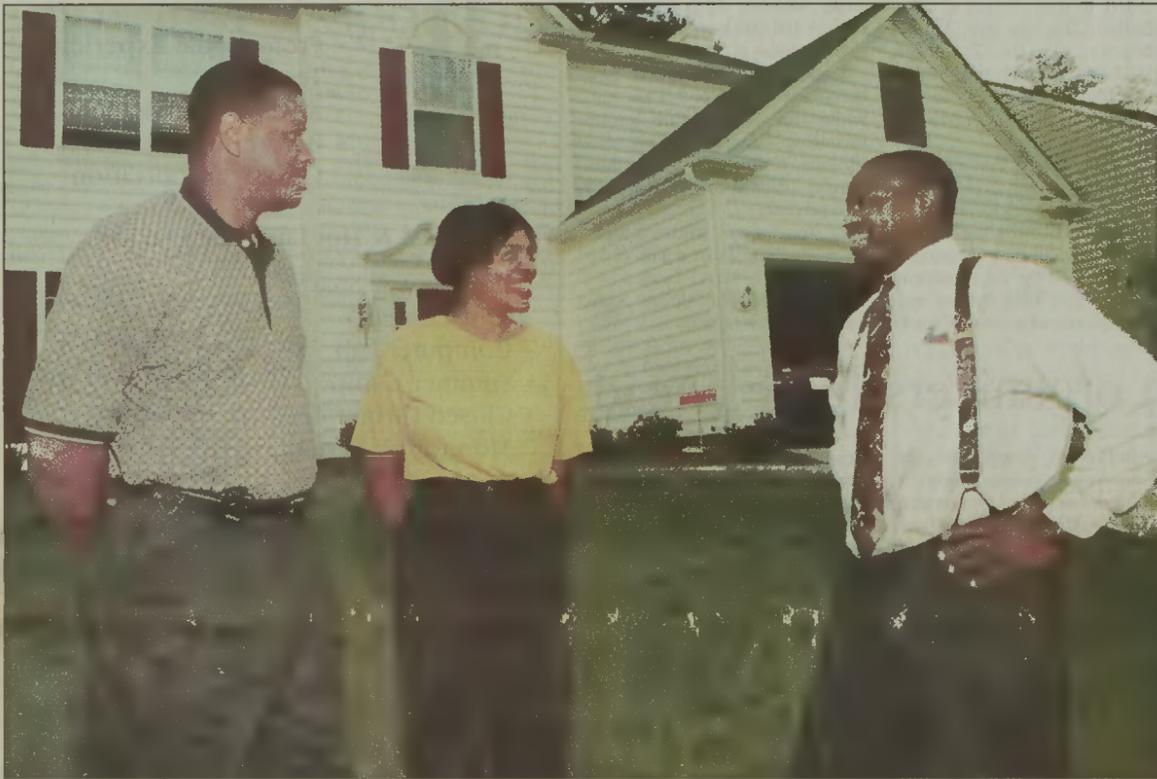
of citizens eager to help. It also was among the easiest ideas to discard, along with "Ameurofian," concocted for people of American Native, European plus West African descent, and "Western European" and "Eastern European" to differenti-

ate the great mass of whites. Meanwhile, at the suburban headquarters of the U.S. Census Bureau in Suitland, Md., social scientists and volunteer advisers helping prepare questions for the next national nose count on April 1, 2000, wrestled with conun-

drums like this one: "American Indian" or "Indian (Amer.)?" Their aim: to deter those with a heritage in the India of curry and Gandhi from checking that box as if they were Sioux or Cherokee. For most of this decade — large-

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Home, sweet home



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Coldwell Banker real estate agent Roland Hawkins (right) helped Robert and Sherry Thomas move into their Charlotte home. According to a Harvard University study, racial minorities account for 30 percent of the country's new homeowners, anchoring the first-time home buyer market in some areas.

More blacks investing in ownership

By John Minter
THE CHARLOTTE POST

When Robert and Sherry Thomas moved to Charlotte from Atlanta 18 months ago, they were already working on buying their first home.

Robert Thomas' promotion at G.E. Capital, which brought him to Charlotte, helped speed along a home-buying process

that included budgeting sacrifices and extra earnings.

Sherry Thomas, 36, worked 17 1/2 hours overtime weekly for BellSouth Mobility DCS. Robert Thomas, 33, worked after hours as a softball and basketball official.

The Thomases' experience is part of a growing trend nationally — blacks and other minorities are becoming a larger

share of the homeowning population.

According to a Harvard University study, minorities account for 30 percent of the country's new homeowners. In many areas, the study found, people of color anchor the first-time home-buyer market.

Home ownership had always been a goal for the couple, who married four years ago after

meeting in Sherry Thomas' hometown of Birmingham, Ala. Robert Thomas is from Chicago. Their parents were home owners, too.

The Thomases moved into their new home in the Highland Creek community near UNC Charlotte in February.

"We had been saving and

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More parents opting out of public

By Rene Sanchez
THE WASHINGTON POST

In a movement flustering public school officials across the nation, more parents than ever are choosing alternatives for their children, so much that what once seemed only a fad to many educators is instead starting to resemble a revolution.

Charter schools are expanding at a breakneck pace. Religious schools are overflowing with new students. Home schooling is attracting unprecedented numbers of parents who only a few years ago would never have dreamed of teaching their own children.

Even African American academies, such as Laurinburg Institute, 90 miles east of Charlotte, have seen an increase in students. More than 400 independent schools have a majority-black enrollment, according to the Washington-based Institute for Independent Studies.

"I think the black private schools are coming back," Laurinburg Institute principal



PHOTO/HERBERT L. WHITE

More black parents are opting to send their children to private schools like Laurinburg Institute (above).

Cynthia McDuffie said in a 1995 Charlotte Post interview. "There's strength in numbers, so those few that are remaining are trying to come together for the benefit of all."

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Juvenile crime's cost hits perpetrators' folks

By Marcus Amick
THE MICHIGAN CHRONICLE

When Maria Fleming agreed her son needed to be detained in a Michigan juvenile facility for stealing a car, she never thought she'd be expected to pick up the tab three years later.

Fleming claims she's being billed more than \$80,000 for the cost of care for the three years her 15-year-old son has been locked up in the juvenile facility.

And though her claim couldn't be validated with a copy of the bill, children caught in the juvenile delinquency system in Michigan are proving to be quite costly for parents.

"I agreed to have my son locked up to teach him a lesson," Fleming said. "And now they're expecting me to pay close to \$87,000 while I'm trying to raise two other children with a total household income of around \$25,000. I just don't have that kind of money," she lamented.

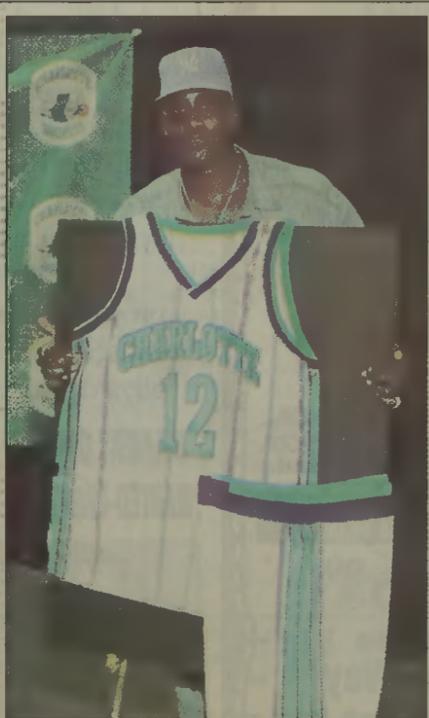
Billing parents for cost of care is part of a 1996 amendment to the Probate Juvenile Code. The act reads in part: "An order of disposition placing juvenile into care outside of the juvenile's own home and under state or court supervision shall contain provision for reimbursement by the juvenile, parent, guardian, or custodian to the court for the cost of care or service."

According to a state official, the state law mandates that each county must seek reimbursement for the cost of care for juveniles

from parents or guardians. Twenty-five percent of the money paid to the county is to cover the cost for administration and the collection of fees. The rest is distributed between the county, state and federal government depending on who covers the cost of care.

"We have to order reimbursement by state law or make some kind of finding that the parents are unable to pay the bill,"

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PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

New look: Charlotte Hornets forward Anthony Mason checks out the National Basketball Association team's new uniforms. The Hornets start preseason practice tomorrow.

Rally leader presses on despite threat

By Latasha J. Bradley
THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

CHICAGO — Despite alleged threats against his life, Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan has outlined the details of the observance of the Holy Day of Atonement/Day of Absences set for Oct. 16.

The day, the second anniversary of the Million Man March, is to be observed with fasting from sunset Oct. 15 to sunset Oct. 16 and pre-dawn family prayer and scriptural readings on Oct. 16.

"America is dying as we speak from an internal rot due to a moral decline into the abyss of decadence," Farrakhan said. "When a nation's evil outweighs its good, God has always sent down a decree of judgment and that judgment meant the termination of that society, that people or that nation. America is now in that unenviable position. But before He (God) brings the full weight of punishment on America, He asks that America be called to repentance, to atone."

Meanwhile, during Farrakhan's current 90-city Million Man March revival



A 37-year-old Indianapolis man, Ronald A. Dearman, was arrested last month in an alleged plot to kill Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

tour, a death threat was made against the minister in Indianapolis by a 37-year-old man. Ronald A. Dearman was arrested and charged with possession of cocaine and police confiscated a cache of weapons, explosives and ammunition.

"I am waiting to see what Indianapolis does," Farrakhan said. "The man is out on \$1,500 bond. I don't understand that, but we'll watch and see. But I would say to America, 'be very careful how you handle me. If I am from God and you plot against my life, that will quicken the destruction of America.'"

Farrakhan said that no money should be spent during the Day of Atonement. No one should work or play and the day should be a time of reconciliation among family members with visitation to churches, mosques, temples or other houses of worship.

Farrakhan also requested that all pastors preach a sermon on atonement, rec-

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