

An artful merger

The National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies and the American Council on the Arts have merged to bring U.S. united arts funds under one umbrella.

AUGUST 1996

## Flap over state NAACP remains unresolved

BY BARBARA SOLOW

A decision on who will lead the North Carolina NAACP is not likely before October.

That's when the national NAACP board is scheduled to discuss the suspension of Kelly Alexander Jr., the state conference's longtime president.

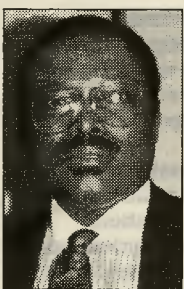
Alexander was suspended in May, based on complaints from members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg branch about his use of invalid checks and other financial issues that have yet to be made fully public by NAACP officials.

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Melvin "Skip" Alston who is serving as acting president of the state NAACP, is one of the complaint signers. He says there are questions about whether Alexander used NAACP funds for personal expenses.

Since Alexander was suspended, "a lot of branches that were not paying their assessments out of protest have now started paying," Alston says. "They feel now that we will be more financially responsible."

Alexander denies any financial wrongdoing and says his suspension was orchestrated by political opponents.



Kelly Alexander

regional headquarters in Atlanta and national headquarters in Baltimore

did not return phone calls from the *Journal*. Carolyn Coleman, a national executive board member who works in the office of Gov. Jim Hunt, also did not return phone calls.

Alexander, who has been concentrating since his suspension on writing and on his family's funeral business, hopes the dispute will be resolved without harming the state NAACP's image.

"When all of this is over and the dust clears, those of us who want to get things done will continue to do so," he says. "I have tried to encourage people to stay in place because if

everybody resigns, the other side will have won by default. And I have asked some of our corporate donors who were skittish to stay the course, as well."

Alexander is still listed as North Carolina Conference president on an electronic posting that is part of the NAACP's new Internet home page on the World Wide Web. To get to the home page, type <http://www.naacp.org>. Then, click on the map of North Carolina for information on the state NAACP Conference.

### Setting benchmarks

## Nonprofit launches statewide salary survey

The North Carolina Center for Nonprofits is surveying 501(c)(3) nonprofits about their salaries and benefits.

BY BARBARA SOLOW

North Carolina has no statewide benchmarks for salaries paid to nonprofit employees. Instead, nonprofit leaders have had to rely on national studies.

Now, the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits has commissioned a survey that aims to provide basic information on salaries, benefits and incentive pay for the state's "independent sector."

The confidential survey - which is being mailed to the center's 1,033 members and other interested nonprofits - also will show how nonprofit salaries in North Carolina compare to salaries paid by businesses and government. The results will be published by the end of the year.

"This is something we've seen a real need for here in North Carolina for so long," says Trish Lester, assistant director of the Raleigh-based center. "Through our board and staff help-line,

### RESEARCH

we've gotten so many calls from nonprofits that are struggling with compensation issues."

Salary information collected by the state Commerce Department, for example, does not indicate whether an employer is a nonprofit or a for-profit organization. And except for a few isolated surveys - such as the *Philanthropy Journal's* look at salaries paid to employees at the state's top foundations - there have been no previous surveys of compensation practices of 501(c)(3) nonprofits in North Carolina.

The N.C. Center's survey will be analyzed by the nonprofit Management Center in San Francisco. That will help ensure confidentiality and scientific accuracy, Lester says.

"What makes this a particularly interesting survey is that we will be looking at job functions," she adds. "We were advised as we checked around with other state [nonprofit] associations that had done surveys, that often-times, you don't get accurate information when

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### Safety first

## Liability concerns nonprofit events planners

In the wake of the Jimmy V Celebrity Golf Classic case, North Carolina nonprofits see how damaging big-money personal injury lawsuits can be.

BY STEPHANIE GREER

Major lawsuits against nonprofits - like the recent case involving the Jimmy V Celebrity Golf Classic - are rare. Still, as that liability suit made clear, nonprofits can lose part of the money raised at special events without sufficient insurance and proper planning.

"The halo that was once around nonprofits is no longer there in quite the same way," says Trisha Lester, assistant director of the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits. "We are seeing, just in terms of liability insurance in general and in the lawsuits, that people are more willing to sue and to bring a nonprofit into a suit, whereas in the past they were less likely to do that."

Americans increasingly are taking one another to court, Lester says, and nonprofits are not immune to that trend. And while the Jimmy V lawsuit was unusually large, smaller

### INSURANCE

claims are being made more often against nonprofits.

At the 1994 Jimmy V Celebrity Golf Classic, spectator Jennifer Wilson fell out of a golf cart driven by David Sharpe, an 18-year-old tournament volunteer. Wilson never regained consciousness and died two months later.

Her husband, Richard Wilson, filed a wrongful death suit against the classic and Sharpe. The event is named for Jim Valvano, the late N.C. State University basketball coach who died of cancer. It raises money for cancer research.

Wilson accepted an out-of-court settlement on June 13. The amount of the settlement was not disclosed, but it will cover all medical and funeral expenses, as well as the cost of education for Wilson's daughter, Sydney. The source of the settlement funds was not disclosed.

Not only do charities lose money on lawsuits, they lose credibility, Lester says.

"What [a nonprofit] organization stands to

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### Changes at the top

## Pack Place arts center eyes streamlining plan

BY STEPHANIE GREER

### Asheville

Pack Place, a center for five of Asheville's top arts, science and education organizations, is undergoing management changes - including the resignation of Cynthia Grant as executive director.

Grant, who could not be reached for comment, left the center as of June 28. She had held the position for three years.

### MANAGING

Norma Price, chairman of the Pack Place board of trustees, says Grant resigned because of changes in the center's administrative structure.

Jim Lesko, a member and former chairman of the organization's board of trustees, will serve as interim executive director.

Pack Place recently marked its four-year anniversary by paying off

the mortgage on its building. In addition to searching for a new director, the board of trustees has appointed a task force to examine strategies for streamlining operations.

The center was conceived as a place to house the Asheville Art Museum, The Health Adventure, YMI Cultural Center, Colburn Gem and Mineral Museum, and the Diana Wortham Theatre. The YMI center is now the only one of those groups not physically located in Pack Place.

All of the organizations except the Wortham Theatre have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. The theater expects to apply for tax-exempt status soon.

Pack Place provides space and public relations and programming services to its partner organizations. It also governs the Wortham Theatre.

But overseeing a 40-member board and various board committees - in addition to separate boards for member organizations - has become too cumbersome, supporters say.

Under a new administrative structure for Pack Place, each individual organization will be responsible for its own programming and marketing.

The job focus for the Pack Place executive director will likewise shift to include more emphasis on administrative issues and less on programming and public relations.

The task force is expected to present a draft of its streamlining strategy to the full Pack Place board in mid-September.

### BRIEFLY

#### Longtime crisis control head resigns

The Rev. Ginny Britt, who directed Crisis Control Ministry in Winston-Salem for 19 years, has resigned, citing changes in the ministry's approach to its mission - such as separating outreach from other activities. Velma Shore, director of operations, has been named executive director.

#### Elderly homeowners to get financial help

A task force appointed by Gov. Jim Hunt has recommended revising state law to help senior citizens use a "reverse mortgage" created by the N.C. Housing Finance Agency. Individuals could borrow against equity in their homes without repayment until the homeowner dies, moves or sells the house.

#### State launches study of Work First

The state Department of Human Resources has launched a five-year study of Work First - Gov. Jim Hunt's welfare reform program. Work First requires welfare recipients to find jobs, and ends benefits after two years. For information on a series of statewide forums on Work First, call (919) 733-9190.

#### Advocacy organizations merge into one

The North Carolina Client and Community Development Center and the North Carolina Legal Services Resource Center have merged to form the North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center. Call Andrew Foster at (919) 856-2178 or Greg Malhoit at (919) 856-2150.

#### Year of the Mountains report is finished

The Year of the Mountains Commission has presented its report on critical issues in western North Carolina to Gov. Jim Hunt. It recommends increased state funding, participation and the creation of new programs to preserve natural and cultural resources.

#### Foundation offers scholarships

A \$5,000 award from the Blumenthal Family Foundation of Charlotte has made scholarships available for people interested in the Nonprofit Leadership Institute sponsored by Duke University. This year's institute is Sept. 24-26. Call Marilyn Hartman, (919) 684-3255.