

Home Sales Continuing To Increase

The number of Wake County homes placed under contract continues to increase. The news was announced today by Audie Barefoot, president of the Raleigh/Wake Board of Realtors. Since the first of the year 5,461 homes in Wake County that were on the market in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) have been placed under contract. "That represents a 19 percent increase over the same seven month period last year," said Mr. Barefoot. "The majority will result in the transfer of property within six to eight weeks from contract date."

The local real estate market continues to be stronger than in most other parts of the country. "In Wake County, economic conditions are better than in other areas, and people here are clearly more optimistic about the future," stated the Realtor group's president. Mr. Barefoot pointed out that the volume of houses placed on the market in MLS has also increased this year. Currently, the MLS has about 5,000 active listings, compared to about 4,400 last year at this time.

"In the Triangle, when you add low interest rates and good inventory of attractive homes you have the formula for a great market," concluded Audie Barefoot.

Support Offered

Hospice of Wake County is offering several grief support groups beginning in September. These groups are geared towards people who have experienced the death of someone close due to a lengthy illness.

The "Life in Loss" Support Groups provide an opportunity for grieving people to meet and share with other people who have had similar experiences. They also provide education about the normal steps for coping with grief and offer helpful ways to deal with each stage of the process. Two "Life in Loss" Support Groups are available: The evening group will meet each Friday from Sept. 18 to Oct. 23 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



TRULY STUNNING—Sony Music Entertainment Inc./Columbia House sponsored a benefit screening/reception of this summer's smash thriller comedy, "Mo' Money" for the Rheedien Centers for Children & Families. Columbia debut recording artist, Nnenna Freelon, (far right) gave a stylish performance at New York's Bridland. The audience relished in her soulful exhibition of cuts from her self titled album. Freelon is joined by Almayvonne Dixon of "Mo' Money" and Richard C. Wolter, President of Columbia House.

Comic Book Hero Fights To Compete

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Brotherman is slower than a speeding bullet and can't jump but a few feet at a single bound, yet the comic book character of a different color manages to defy odds much like Superman.

Brotherman, decked out in leotards and with a big "B" emblazoned on his chest and skullcap, is an African-American do-gooder who fights for truth, justice and affirmative action on crowded comic book racks.

"Up to now, the few black superheroes have mostly been relegated to roles as sidekicks or as part of 'super' groups," said Guy Sims, 31, of Chula Vista, who penned the story lines for Brotherman's first seven issues.

Brotherman is produced by Big City Comics, a company run by Sims brothers, David and Jason Sims, out of Dallas. David Sims serves as chief illustrator, while Jason Sims manages the production and marketing side.

David Sims read comics for a time while in elementary school, but threw hundreds into the fire-

place one day after realizing that none of them came close to reflecting the black experience.

The differences between Brotherman and Superman are more than skin deep. Like Clark Kent, Antonio Valor down a prestigious position by day, as an assistant district attorney, and is a vigilante in his off-time.

But Brotherman lives in a gritty, surreal urban environment, known as Big City, that would make Kent jump on the next bus for Smallville. It's populated by a rainbow of faces, some of the people talk in hip-hop, and the stories read as if they were taken off a police crime blotter.

"Welcome to the last place on Earth," reads the introduction to a recent issue. "Overrun by the crime and vermin determined to keep it that way...Welcome to Big City... the last place on Earth has a new resident, Brotherman, Dictator of Discipline. He's here and everything's gonna be all right."

Comics observers say the advent of Brotherman marks a first in the industry—a black lead character

who is the product of blacks.

Still, there have been isolated attempts in the last 30 years by the two comics publishing giants, DC and Marvel, to give African-Americans equal opportunities in comic-book pages, as in the Black Panther, Luke Cage and Black Lightning.

"Most of these have been pretty crummy," said Kim Thompson, an editor at The Comics Journal, a Seattle-based traded publication. "They've been written and drawn by white suburban guys who have watched too many Superfly movies. The conception has been so bad that the character comes out either as a black stereotype, or someone whose black side is completely ignored."

Thompson, who is white, considers Brotherman to be an "interesting book." He said he would like to see comics starring Hispanics and Asian Americans as well.

"The comics industry has never been particularly ethnically sensitive, so it's time to come into the modern world," he said.

Brotherman debuted two years

NAACP Denounces Court Ruling Regarding Haiti

The national chairman of the NAACP issued a scathing denunciation of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to block a lower court's ruling that would have reversed the Bush administration's policy regarding the forced repatriation of Haitian refugees.

Dr. William F. Gibson of South Carolina blasted the Supreme Court's decision to grant an emergency stay of a ruling handed down by the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York.

On July 29, that federal appeals panel said that the right to apply for political asylum extends to all refugees, even if they are intercepted in international waters. The administration had argued that this right, which is governed by federal immigration statutes, only applies to refugees who are on U.S. soil or within the 12-mile offshore territorial limit. The Su-

preme Court's action has the effect of validating the administration's position temporarily, until additional written arguments are submitted. Lawyers for the Justice Department and the Haitians are expected to ask for expedited consideration of this issue.

Gibson also announced that the NAACP and TransAfrica are organizing a civil disobedience demonstration, to be held in front of the White House on Wednesday, Sept. 9. Prominent civil rights leaders and concerned African-Americans from across the nation will gather in Washington, D.C. to display their support for legislation that would protect the Haitians and to demonstrate their disgust for what they consider a blatantly racist policy.

The proposed legislation would extend Temporary Protected Status to all Haitians presently in the United States and would end forced repatriation without benefit of interviews and hearings.

Dr. Gibson lashed out at the ruling. He said, "This decision is another example of the Supreme Court's shameful abdication of its responsibility to guarantee equal protection under the law to all people."

"Their action has legitimized President Bush's inhuman, racist policy regarding Haitian refugees. By allowing the president's executive order to remain in effect, the court has condemned thousands of innocent people to persecution, torture and even death. And they have given comfort to the brutal military junta that is terrorizing the Haitian people."

Gibson went on to blast Justice Clarence Thomas, who joined in the 7-2 majority decision. He commented, "By joining the court's majority in this opinion, Justice Thomas has confirmed the worst fears of those of us in the civil rights community who questioned his commitment to individual liberty. His action also makes it clear that he has no real concern for protecting the lives of innocent people of color."

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