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Mawiyah Kambon poses by African garb at Blacknificent Books and More. The store, which also houses the Bennu Cultural Center, opened eight months ago in Raleigh. Kambon and her husband Kamau want the store and center to be a beacon for blocks who want to learn more about their heritage.

STAFF PHOTO BY GARY ALLEN

Black light

A little store and cultural center in Raleigh have a big agenda.

By Deidra Jackson
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH

The lilting sounds of jazz percolating through the speaker of a small clock radio inside a southeast Raleigh bookstore triggered memories of Carmen McRae.

Friday, the day after McRae died at 74, she was the talk inside Blacknificent Books and More, a provocative community gathering place that until recently was an auto supply store.

"I saw her on 86th Street," said Dr. Mawiyah Kambon, a native New Yorker, who owns the store with her husband, Kamau. Charles Riley, a Raleigh resident and longtime friend of the couple, also recalled the Harlem jazz vocalist whose scatting echoed like slow sizzles.

McRae, whose innovative style was adored by both jazz musicians and loyal fans alike, became one of the country's leading singers when she began performing across the country at the end of World War II. McRae, who became canonized with other American jazz legends such as the late Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald, was hailed because she didn't commercialize her talent. She remained true to her art. She didn't sell out.

Faithful patrons have been showing up over the past eight months at 2011 Poole Road for such dialogue. Copies of "African Holistic Health," by Llaila O. Afrika, and Shahrazad Ali's "How Not to Eat Pork (Or life without the Pig)" rest in their cases along with books on health, religion, history, philosophy and literature.

Amid the scented African oils, brightly colored garbs, handcrafted figurines and native instruments, customers often just talk. The Bennu Cultural Center, which shares an entrance with the bookstore, is thriving as the community's other best-kept secret.

"It could be a light to the community," said Riley, who runs freshman orientation programs and midnight basketball leagues at Shaw University when he's not training ACC basketball referees. "The store is good if you desire to learn more."

The free-flowing discussions between the Kambons and their patrons — students, edu-

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The social sector and the mobile village

By Peter F. Drucker
The Atlantic Monthly

The 20th century's most profound legacies are radical transformations of work and society that proceeded with little upheaval and little attention. Now, warns writer, consultant and social scientist Peter F. Drucker, our perceptions and institutions had better catch up. This is the fourth of a five-part series.

By definition, a knowledge society is a society of mobility. And all the social functions of the old communities, whether performed well or poorly (and most were performed very poorly indeed), presupposed that the individual and the family would stay put. But the essence of a knowledge society is mobility in terms of where one lives, mobility in terms of what one does, mobility in terms of one's affiliations. People no longer have roots. People no longer have a neighborhood that controls what their home is like, what they do, and, indeed, what their problems are allowed to be.

The knowledge society is a society in which many more people than ever before can be successful. But it is therefore, by definition, also a society in which many more people than ever before can fail, or at least come in second. And if only because the application of knowledge to work has made developed societies so much richer than any earlier society could even dream of becoming, the failures, whether poor people or alcoholics, battered women or juvenile delinquents, are seen as failures of society.

Who, then, takes care of the social tasks in the knowledge society? We cannot ignore them; but the traditional community is incapable of tackling them.

Two answers have emerged in the past century or so — a majority answer and a dissenting opinion. Both have proved to be wrong.

The majority answer goes back more than a hundred years, to the 1880s, when Bismarck's Germany took the first faltering steps toward the welfare state. The answer: The problems of the social sector can, should and must be solved by government. This is still probably the answer that most people accept, espe-

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March to a different drummer

Richard Armey to lead GOP in House

By Matt Yancey
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON

His acerbic one-liners sometimes grate on friend and foe alike, but the man in line to be the next House majority leader, Rep. Richard Armey, knows how to do a deal, even with avowed liberals.

Speaker-to-be Newt Gingrich's announcement Monday that the Texas conservative will be the GOP floor leader when Republicans take control of the House for the first time in four decades was largely a formality.

The 54-year-old former economics professor became the designated heir two years ago for his party's No. 3 job in the House when he challenged and unseated moderate Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., as chairman of the House Republican Conference.

Lewis, in the view of Armey and most of the 47 freshmen Republicans elected in 1992, just wasn't conservative and confrontational enough. The Californian had supported President Bush's tax increase in 1990 but opposed Bush's plan to give parents government vouchers to send their kids to private schools.

As one of the authors of the so-called school choice measure, Armey is now in a much better position to make it happen.

"In the final analysis," he said Monday, Americans want "a smaller government financed by lower taxes that engages the American people with greater respect and greater freedom to conduct their own affairs."

Along with Gingrich and Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, Armey is among the new breed of conservatives who earned their ideological credentials in academia and then transferred them to politics.

And like Gingrich and Gramm, Armey can occasionally hurt a barb at an opponent, only to see it come back as a boomerang.

Last year he called President Clinton's ill-fated health care plan "the Dr. Kevorkian prescription for the jobs of American working men and women," referring to the controversial Michigan physician who has assisted patients in their suicides.

At a hearing later on the health care plan, Armey promised to make it an exciting event.

"I'm sure you'll do that, Mr. Armey, you and Dr Kevorkian," cracked the hearing's main witness and author of the plan, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Armey's face turned red. "I have been told about your charm and wit," he responded to Mrs. Clinton. "Reports on your charm are overstated. Reports on your wit are understated."

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RICHARD KEITH (DICK) ARMEY
AGE-BIRTH DATE
54; July 7, 1940, Cando, N.D.
EDUCATION
Jamestown College, B.A., 1963; University of North Dakota, M.A., 1964; University of Oklahoma, Ph.D. in economics, 1969.
EXPERIENCE
Economics faculty, University of Montana, 1964-65; assistant professor, West Texas State University, 1967-68; assistant professor, Austin College, 1968-72; associate professor, North Texas State University, 1972-77; chairman of economics department, North Texas State, 1977-83; elected to U.S. House in 1984; elected House Republican Conference chairman, 1992.
FAMILY
Wife, Susan; five children.

FYI

TODAY IS:

■ Homemade Bread Day. Let's make this a civil Homemade Bread Day and avoid that ugly "bread machines don't count" debate.

■ Great American Smokeout.

ON THIS DAY:

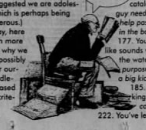
■ In 1800, Congress held its first session in Washington in the partially completed Capitol building.

WHO'S MIDDLE-AGED? I!

We're afraid we may have left some of you with the wrong impression at the end of Wednesday's column. During our attempt to deny being middle-aged by refuting symptoms identified in "You Know You're Middle-Aged When..." we may have suggested sympathy with baseball team owners. Such an allegiance with firm-fisted management would, of course, be a sign of middle age, which we would be if we only planned on living to 76.

But, as we are patiently explaining once again, since we plan on hitting 140, we are a long ways from being middle-aged. We are early-aged, if you must. (Some of you, through anonymous letters and obscene phone calls, have even suggested we are adolescent, which is perhaps being too generous.)

Anyway, here are even more reasons why we cannot possibly consider ourself middle-aged, based on the criteria set forth in "You Know You're Middle-Aged When...":



120. You receive more than a hundred mail-order catalogs a year. A guy needs something to help pass all that time in the bathroom.

177. You make walrus-like sounds when you enter the water. That's on purpose — the kids get a big kick out of it.

185. Corduroy is itching. They make corduroy sweats?

222. You've learned to justify just about anything you do. We're still a little self-conscious about scratching in public — at least some body parts.

276. You make new friends less through shared interests than shared dislikes. We've always admired a critical mind.

283. You stop wearing old school jerseys that display the year you graduated. Geez, those disintegrated into lint years ago.

302. You're always finding forgotten cash, receipts and gum in your coat pockets. Hey, good idea. We're a little short on coffee money this morning.

304. You could care less anymore if people like you. We're just more assured of ourself, thank you.

314. You go to the bathroom again before you leave... just to be sure. We'll never make good time if we hit every rest stop.

347. Your bookshelf contains at least three of the following titles: "What Color Is Your Parachute?" "The Joy of Sex," "Let's Eat Right to Keep Fit," "The Complete Book of Running" and "Love Story." Hold on while we check... Uh oh.

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS.

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