

For Second Summer

Buckling Gym Floor Forces Program Move

By GAINES BREWSTER

East DeKalb's seasonal recreational program, including summer day camp activities, is bustling — despite a Lithonia gym floor that's buckling.

Apparently affected by entrapped and retained moisture, the result of two months of frequent rain showers, the gymnasium's wooden floor contains cracks, lumps and ripples. A similar problem — buckling wood panels — also closed the gym last summer.

The Lucious Sanders Recreational Facility, part of Lithonia's Bruce Street Human Resources Center, offers all-day summer programs for underprivileged children.

Commenting on the recurring floor problem, Al Sheppard, center leader and recreational director, said, "Our summer program, involving 150 Lithonia area youths, continues. It has hampered, but not stopped our camp. We're working around the problem; doing more things outside and also going to other places."

While the main floor of the gym is "off-limits," youngsters ages six to 12, use other make-shift facilities to play basketball and handball. Relay races are held outside. The youths also participate in swim meets at the nearby city pool and take field trips to Chattahoochee River Reserve, Stone Mountain State Park, and metro amusement parks.

The present gym floor was installed in April, 1987, as part of a \$1.7 million conversion of the former school building into a community recreational center. The parquet system, considered one of the best methods, was used in constructing the gym floor at a cost of \$51,800. To correct and replace warped and water damaged wood panels, repairs in 1988 cost \$4200.

cause for the floor's condition, a retired Lithonia architect/builder suggested such damage could be a result of excess groundwater, inadequate drainage and lack of sufficient vapor barriers. When correctly prepared and properly applied, he indicated, a parquet system is a good, long-lasting and serviceable floor. Generally, when erecting such a floor, contractors and engineers insist on good drainage, well-packed foundations, at least two vapor barriers consisting of either roofing felt or poly-vinyl, and waterproof adhesive.

Jim Cone, director of the county's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Department, which administers the day camp program, acknowledged, "This floor is something they have had trouble with." DeKalb Commissioner John Fletcher, who represents the Lithonia area, declared, "I would consider the closing of the gymnasium a severe blow to the residents and the kids of that community."

ASKED TO identify a probable

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PARKS, RECREATION

Lucious Sanders Community Ctr.

Fletcher, Maloof Trade Gym Jobs

By STEVE TEASLEY

Manuel Maloof has a mystery on his hands.

What's causing moisture beneath the floor of an old Lithonia gymnasium?

The DeKalb Chief Executive Officer says his building experts are doing all they can to find an answer.

It can't come soon enough for District 5 Commissioner John Fletcher.

He wants the buckled gym floor repaired and the gym reopened as quickly as possible. His southeast DeKalb constituents who use the gym are equally concerned about three weeks of delays, he told the county commission last week.

Mr. Fletcher's insistence on understanding the nature of the problem, who caused it and when it's going to be corrected was about all Mr. Maloof could take in what was the commission's regular work session last week.

At the end of the lengthy discussion of gym floor problems, the CEO lashed out at the district commissioner, accusing him of playing to the news media.

"You can beat something to death and look good in the newspaper," said Mr. Maloof, suggesting that Mr. Fletcher's push for information was so "the media can go bananas."

Mr. Fletcher denied having any such motive. He said he's "only interested in getting the gym opened up" and "making it a safe place for kids."

THE OLD Bruce Street gymnasium was built in 1950 as part of an elementary school that was sold by the school system to the county as surplus property in 1971.

The county converted the Lithonia property to community use with \$1.7 million in federal funds in 1987 and named the facility the Lucious Sanders Community Center. It now houses several human service agencies, and the gym is a favorite play area for youths living in the area.

The original gym floor was removed three years ago as part of the center renovation. The new one buckled last summer and cost the county \$4,200 to repair. A leaky roof was blamed.

Last week, Mr. Fletcher was critical of the county's decision to make the most recent floor a \$50,000 parquet type. It's 25 percent more expensive than standard hardwood floors, he said.

He also attempted to determine who was responsible for the installation specifications, hinting the buckling problem might be related.



Rec Center Queens Crowned

The Lucious Sanders Recreation Center recently held its Fall Talent Pageant and crowned its queens in the "Miss" and "Junior Miss" divisions. In top photograph are Twanda Houston, center, who was crowned the winner in the Miss Lucious Sanders Recreation Center competition, Tamika Zackery, left, first runner up and Tracy Bundage, second runner up; in bottom photo are Tijuanna Manuel, center, Jr. Miss winner, Jennifer Houston, left, second runner up, and Yolanda Sheppard, first runner up. The pageant winners will present their talent in the second annual DeKalb County Talent Showcase, December 1, at 7 p. m., at the Decatur Federal Sky Room, 250 East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Decatur.