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BULLY BEWARE

White House confronts bullying head on



A CALL TO ACTION — President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama convene White House conference on bullying

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Schumer taps Black woman for federal court judge

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Cuomo bill to cap salaries of school superintendents

By J. Zamgba Browne
Special to NY Beacon

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has introduced legislation that would cap the salaries of school superintendents across the Empire State based on student enrollment. If approved, the bill would cap the salaries of district superintendents once their current contracts are up.

Superintendents of district with the smallest enrollment — up to 250 students — could earn up to \$125,000 a year, while superintendents of districts with more students —

more than 6,500 could earn up to \$175,000 a year. But for many superintendents, that \$175,000 would be a pay cut.

Data released by the New York State Department of Education shows that for the 201—2011 school year, about 30 percent of the more than 700 superintendents in the Empire State are making \$175,000 or above.

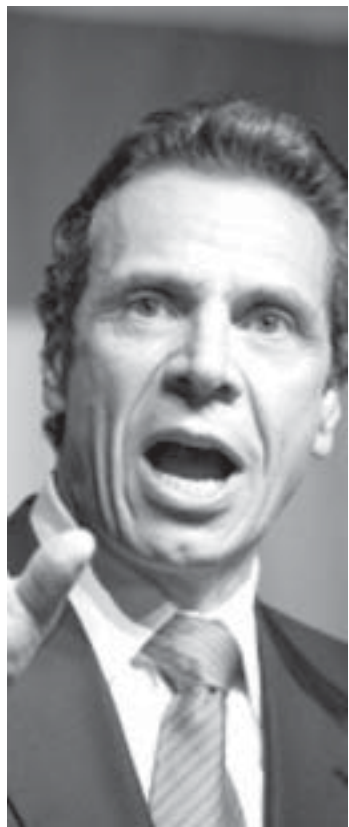
Gov. Cuomo said the bill could save school districts a total of \$15 million. “We must wake up to the new economic reality that government must be more efficient and cut the cost of the bureaucracy,” he added.

Said Gov. Cuomo, “We must streamline government because raising taxes is not an option. Reducing back-office overhead, administration, consultants and encouraging consolidations are the best targets to find savings.”

Carole G. Hankin, superintendent of Long Island’s Syosset School District, is currently the highest paid superintendent in New York State, earning upwards of \$380,000 for the 2010-2011 school year for overseeing a school district that has 6,687 students, according to the State Department of Education.

Robert Reidy, executive director of New York State’s Council of School Superintendents, sharply criticized the impact of Gov. Cuomo’s proposed bill.

“The Governor’s proposal to cap superintendent salaries would undermine the capacity of schools to adjust to the new realities he says they must face,” said Reidy. “As it is now, school districts have found it increasingly difficult to get candidates to take on the job of superintendents. A cap would make it much harder,” he added.



Gov. Andrew Cuomo



Susan Rice speaks to young woman

Ambassador Susan Rice speaks to young women in East Harlem

Ambassador Susan Rice, the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, marked the 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day on March 8 in East Harlem, New York. There she urged tomorrow’s strong woman leaders, the 11th- and 12th-grade classes of The Young Women’s Leadership School (TYWLS) of East Harlem, to continue to win their future through education.

These young women, primarily low-income students of color, have a remarkable legacy to uphold: for ten straight years, every single senior at TYWLS of East

Harlem has been accepted to college with significant financial aid. Ambassador Rice spoke to roughly 120 students and teachers who gathered in the school’s multi-purpose gymnasium on 106th Street. “There is no greater source of empowerment and success,” she said, “than to have, and to insist upon getting the best education.”

After the event, Ambassador Rice met and snapped photographs with Jo’Nella Queen Ellerbe, Marjana Chowdhury, and Tiara Kittrell, seniors who have been accepted to prestigious uni-

versities and who delivered introductory and closing remarks on Tuesday. Together with their classmates, these young women carry on with their “most important asset,” as Ambassador Rice called it: “the education that you are getting, and the education that you will continue to get when you leave this great school.”

For more information on the United States’ work at the United Nations, visit www.usun.state.gov and follow Ambassador Rice on Twitter and Facebook. Click here for Ambassador Rice’s statement commemorating International Women’s Day.

Pain at the gas pump

By Chris Levister
Special to the NNPA from the
Blackvoiceneews.com

Just when Theta Abrihet Taylor put a year of unemployment in her rear view mirror — comes yet another blow to her weekly paycheck — pain at the gas pump. Taylor is already seeing the effects of higher gas prices. She has a new job. But, unlike the eight minute commute to her old one she now drives an average of 21 miles each way. “It’s getting harder and harder living from paycheck to pay check,” said Taylor filling up her small sedan at a busy station in Riverside. “My paycheck used to last four days now it might last half that long.”

Rising gas prices are pushing many paychecks to the breaking point, but surveys show more Americans are better prepared. The price of oil has had an unnerving ability

to stretch paychecks and blow up family budgets. The Middle East has often provided the spark.

Taylor whose parents migrated from Ethiopia in the early 1980s is torn. “On one hand I’m happy to see the people of Egypt and now Libya fighting for their freedoms, on the other I’m not happy to see what it’s doing to our gas prices.” Taylor who works as a billing clerk for a soft drink distributor rattles off a history of Mideast oil shocks: The Arab oil embargo of 1973; the Iranian revolution in 1978-79 and Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 — all reminders of pain at the pump. The increase in energy prices is beginning to resemble the rise that occurred in 2008. But, this time, like many middle and low income Americans, Taylor, a the part-time college student and single parent is better prepared for higher fuel costs. She started driving less

in December, when gas hit \$3 a gallon. “It’s like waiting for the other shoe to drop, seeing just how high those prices will go.

I knew I needed to gain some control over the situation,” she said.

Experts say you can start by checking online to find the lowest prices in your neighborhood. Or make sure your car is well maintained — get the oil changed, put air in low-pressure tires, and replace a dirty air filter — to increase gas mileage.

“I’m using more cash and making fewer credit card purchases. I’m driving to work 3 days and working at home 2. I started planning my errands,” she said. “Fill up the gas tank, but make fewer trips to the hair and nail salon. Eat less for lunch so the kids can have a healthy dinner. I buy healthy

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GAS PAIN — Rising gas prices are pushing many paychecks to the breaking point but surveys show more Americans are better prepared.

White House conference confronts school bullying prevention head on

By Chris Williams
NNPA Writer

Keeping children safe from the destructive effects of bullying took center stage when President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama lead the proceedings for the first-ever White House Conference on Bullying Prevention. In opening the conference, President Obama referenced his experience of being bullied as a child and how easily the problem can be overlooked by adults.

"...with big ears and the name that I have, I wasn't immune, Obama said. "I didn't emerge unscathed. But because it's something that happens a lot, and it's something that's always been around, sometimes we've turned a blind eye to the problem. We've said, 'Kids will be kids.' And so sometimes we overlook the real damage that bullying can do, especially when young people face harassment day after day, week after week."

Approximately 150 students, parents, educators, policymakers, and community leaders participated in the day-long conference. "If there's one goal of this conference," said President Obama, during the opening session, "it's to dispel the myth that bullying is just a harmless rite of passage or an inevitable part of growing up. It's not."

Following the opening session, some of the nation's leading experts on bullying alongside young people, who have been victims of bullying, joined forces to develop and implement solutions to this increasing problem facing the youth of America inside and outside of the classroom.

"As parents, this issue really hits home for us," said Mrs. Obama. "It breaks our hearts to think that any child feels afraid every day in the



President Barack Obama speaks to students, parents, community leaders, educators, and policymakers during White House conference on bullying.

classroom, on the playground, or even online." Results from a study conducted by the Journal of Adolescent Health in September 2007 stated that "Black adolescents reported a significantly lower prevalence of victimization than white and Hispanic students. Multivariate results indicated modest racial/ethnic variation in associations between bullying and family, peer, and school factors. Parental communication, social isolation, and classmate relationships were similarly related to bullying across racial/ethnic groups. Living with two biological parents was protective against bullying involvement for white students only. Furthermore, although school satisfaction and performance were negatively associated with bullying involvement for white and Hispanic students, school factors were largely unrelated to bullying among black students." The issue of bullying rose to the forefront of the American discourse recently with reports of children committing suicide at alarming rates due to the torment they were receiving from their classmates in school and on the internet.

These incidents influenced President Obama and his administration to take action. In conjunction with the conference, President Obama released an online video "It Gets Better," which targeted teens who were being harassed and teased about their sexuality and, thus, a Federal Task Force was created to combat bullying. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services played a vital role during the conference. Numerous senior officials participated in the discussion, including Kalpen Modi, associate director for the White House Office of Public Engagement, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and Domestic Policy Council Director Melody Barnes. Among the topics covered during the conference were effective programs and policies for bullying, cyberbullying, and identifying campus-based and community-based programs targeted at bullying. Senior Advisor to the President, Valerie Jarrett announced that in con-

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Gadhafi

Gadhafi's forces close in on Libyan rebels

AJDABIYA, Libya – Moammar Gadhafi's forces closed in on Libyan rebels in the east and shelled holdouts in the last western opposition stronghold Wednesday as the rebels voiced anger and frustration at the West for not coming to their aid.

Charred vehicles and bullet-riddled pickup trucks were piled on the side of the road leading from the strategic eastern cities of Brega to Ajdabiya and an Associated Press Television News cameraman counted at least three bodies, evidence of fierce fighting as the Libyan leader intensified his efforts to retake control of the country he has ruled with an iron fist for more than four decades.

The rebels lashed out at the West as the latest international effort to impose a no-fly zone over Libya faltered. Supporters in the U.N. Security Council were trying to push through a resolution to impose such a move along with other measures aimed at preventing Gadhafi from bombing his people, but Russia and Germany have expressed doubts.

"People are fed up. They are waiting impatiently for an international move," said Saadoun al-Misrati, a rebel spokesman in the city of Misrata, the last rebel-held city in the west, which came under heavy shelling

Wednesday.

"What Gadhafi is doing, he is exploiting delays by international community. People are very angry that no action is being taken against Gadhafi's weaponry."

Pro-Gadhafi forces had largely gained control of Ajdabiya after two days of relentless shelling, but they acknowledged they still faced pockets of resistance in the city of 140,000 people.

Habib al-Obeidi, a doctor at Jala Hospital in Benghazi, said that a colleague in Ajdabiya had told him 25 people were killed when pro-Gadhafi forces opened fire on civilian cars fleeing the city. That report could not be independently confirmed.

The breakdown in rebel defenses in Ajdabiya threatened to open the gateway to the long stretch of eastern Libya that has been in the control of the opposition, including Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city and and the de facto capital of the opposition.

The AP and other journalists were taken by the government from Brega to the western edge of Ajdabiya, but the convoy was then turned away because the commander said there were still pockets of resistance.

More than a dozen tanks were stationed at the arches marking the entrance to the city and a

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Rebels under siege

Schumer recommends Black jurist for U.S. Eastern District

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer announced that he is recommending Margo Brodie to President Obama to serve as a judge on the prestigious United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Brodie is an accomplished lawyer who has worked for the City of New York, in private practice, and in the United States Justice Department for over a decade. If confirmed, Brodie would become the only sitting federal judge of Caribbean descent. In recommending Brodie to President Obama, Schumer cited her experience, even-handed temperament, years of varied public service, and stellar legal credentials.

"I am pleased to recommend Margo Brodie to President Obama for an appointment on the federal bench. Margo's years working at the Justice Department and for the



Margo Brodie

City of New York, demonstrate the kind of commitment to public service that we need in federal judges," said Schumer. "Combined with her legal excellence, even-handed temperament, and New York roots, I can think of no one

better to serve us on the Eastern District Court."

Born in Antigua, Brodie earned her bachelor's degree from St. Francis College in Brooklyn, and her JD from the University of Pennsylvania. Upon graduating from law school, Brodie began her career in public service as Assistant Corporation Counsel of the City of New York in the Real Estate Litigation Division. There she defended City agencies and officials in state and federal court from litigation challenging the exercise of discretionary power in the management of municipal affairs. After working for the City of New York for three years, Brodie went to work at the law firm of Carter, Ledyard & Milburn, participating in a variety of commercial cases.

After 5 years at Carter, Ledyard, & Milburn, Brodie returned to public

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Dr. Carolyn Meyers

Meyers, Jackson State first female president

By Othor Cain
Special to the NNPA from The Mississippi Link

After 133 years of academic excellence, Jackson State University for the first time has a female as its chief executive officer. The state College Board voted unanimously in favor of hiring Dr. Carolyn Meyers, 64, as JSU's 10th president, ending the stronghold of male leadership.

"I've had a history of being the first in a lot of situations; either the first Black this or the first woman that so I don't feel any particular pressure to succeed in what is considered a male dominated field," Meyers recently shared with The Mississippi Link.

Meyers, who describes herself as a "researcher," a "collaborative leader" and a "thinker," re-

placed interim president Leslie McLemore, a political science professor appointed when Ronald Mason left in June 2010 to lead the Southern University System based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Meyers began her tenure at JSU in January. She has more than 30 years of experience in higher education, most recently serving as president of Norfolk State University. Prior to working at Norfolk State, Meyers was provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at North Carolina A&T.

Meyers has been praised for her spirited personality, sometimes bragging about students as though they were her own children. She is also known to be data driven, which brought criticism from those who thought she

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Angry workers march, fight back as wages fall, rights threatened

By Saeed Shabazz
Special to the NNPA from the Final Call

NEW YORK (FinalCall.com) - William Peterson, 46, the son of a Hartsville, South Carolina, brick mason, has worked at the Woodlawn Cemetery in The Bronx for the past four years. Now he is in a fight to keep his \$24.50 an hour union job. Management wants to lay him and 23 other workers off, saying it is cheaper to outsource their work to a private contractor. "My father was good at what he did, but he made little money to feed his family," Peterson told The Final Call after a rally and march against his Woodlawn Cemetery bosses. "We are taking a stand—fighting for what is ours—because if we don't, workers will be returned to the days of slavery," he said.

The conversation quickly turned to what was going on in Madison, Wisconsin, where pro-labor activists had started street protests and marches to the state house to protect the right to organize and fair treatment for young, poor, and working class Americans. "Seeing people in the struggle, standing up for the rights of all workers to organize, means a lot to us here in New York," Peterson said. "It's time for the labor movement here in the U.S. to grow up; the rank-in-file here in New York and in Wisconsin have been held in check by union leadership for too long," said Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer for Teamsters Local 808, the local union negotiating the new contract for the Woodlawn workers.

"A movement has emerged; we are seeing it in the streets of Wisconsin—in the actions of public employees—who are standing against the destruction of their right to organize," Silvera told The Final Call. So, from the streets of New York City, to the state house at Raleigh, N.C., to San Francisco, California, Des Moines, Iowa, and the Capital building in Madison, Wisconsin—angry

workers were on the march, fed up with wage and pay concessions and angry over efforts to curtail collective action used to improve wages and working conditions.

For a moment, Clarence Thomas, an executive board member of the San Francisco-based International Longshoreman and Warehouse Association, Local 10 and a member of U.S. Labor Against the War revisited history. He recalled that in the 1880s, when workers held rallies, marches and strikes, the end result was the eight hour day and end to child labor. A four-day strike in 1934 in San Francisco ushered in ILWU, Local 10, he added. "What is happening today in the Midwest has been working its way since the days of 'Reaganomics' when organized labor was attacked—now it is the crisis of capitalism—but it must have been seen as a movement to basically lower the aspirations of America's working class," Thomas argued.

"It takes time—and the conditions have to be right—which they are; and we are ready to push the 'Tea Partyers' into the sea," Silvera said. He was referring to the political alliance of conservatives that some analysts say are hiding union-bashing policies behind the threat of fiscal crises and are ready to "eviscerate" the middle-class in America.

"Make no mistake, the next election is the real target of this anti-public sector union movement," said Dr. Ray Wimbush, of the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University in Baltimore.

"The real issue for White conservatives is to knock out the unions, which are driven by Black membership, in particular AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees)—you know the janitors, the housekeepers—who contribute heavily to the Democratic Party, from being able to donate to President Barack Obama's second-term run," he said.

All of this is also part of an

effort to destroy any chance of American workers mounting a defense against the conservative onslaught—as the right wing pushes media stories claiming public sector unions pensions are bankrupting states, Dr. Winbush continued. "It is easy to see that with just seven percent of American workers now in unions, there won't be any real public outcry when scab workers are brought in," he added. A well-financed, well-orchestrated, and well-coordinated campaign is being waged by Republicans, the Tea Party and other right-wing ideologues, with the backing of corporate dollars to the tune of \$5,000 to \$50,000 from businesses such as Wal-Mart, American Express, Coors, Texaco, GlaxoSmithKline, Philip Morris, AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, the Corrections Corporation of America and the Koch Industries. These practices have remained hidden from public view, but are now exposed for all to see, analysts said. "The genie is out of the bottle," said Sharon Black of the Bail Out the People—Not the Banks/Baltimore Chapter, who is on the ground in Madison, Wisconsin. People are starting to see corporations and politicians have been working together for some time now in effort to take away rights from workers, not just in the public sector, but also the private sector, she said. The Democrats have been "sending out mixed signals about their concern for the middle-class," she said. "I don't understand what middle-class the Democrats are talking about," said Thomas. To be middle-class you have to be making between \$100,000 a year to \$250,000 a year, he said. "The people that are being trampled on with this right-to-work aren't making \$75,000 a year; so the politicians are blowing smoke about wanting to stand up for the middle-class worker."

"Through what is happening here in Wisconsin a national movement is being structured, some 40 union representatives from both coasts are here," Black

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The GOP is eyeing Black vote in 2012

By Tom Risen
NNPA Contributor

With two Black Republicans among the Republican freshman class, the GOP is looking into ways it can expand support from the Black community in 2012. It will be tough: the party has to sell its efforts to repeal health care reform and limit unemployment benefits to a population wracked by joblessness and with a history of supporting such programs.

But, Rep. Tim Scott (R-SC) and Rep. Allen West (R-FL) expect disenchantment with the economy coupled with support for socially conservative issues can build a foundation for the GOP in the Bcommunity for 2012,

and beyond.

Speaking before the Conservative Political Action Conference on last month, West denounced perceptions that the GOP is racist as part of the "politics of character assassination." "Liberal progressivism evolved after our Constitution. It has repeatedly failed all over the world. So, why do we think it could be successful here in the United States of America?," West opined to his audience. "America cannot survive as a bureaucratic nanny state."

Scott also believed the GOP can claim diversity and seek a more multicultural voter base, thanks to a recent crop of minority Republican politicians. Yet, Scott also recognized that the Democratic



Tim Scott



Allen West

Party's ties to the Black community will be difficult to dislodge while the Republican Party is pitching a return to limited government. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 Black voters have often and overwhelmingly voted in favor of Democratic candidates. "We'll have to spend a lot of money and we'll need a good communications strategy against an Obama campaign that will attract a lot of young people and minorities," said Scott. "But, if the Black vote remains locked at more than 90 percent for Democrats in 2012, people will think the Black vote is not in play, which will weaken its impact on American politics."

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6 Michelle Obama: First Lady, health advocate, role model

By Michael Brown
Special to the NNPA from the L.A. Watts Times

As Barack Obama took the oath as the 44th U.S. president, standing by his side and holding the Bible he used to be sworn in office was Michelle Obama.

Not only did millions of people across the world watch history unfold in 2009 as the United States' first African American ascended to the presidency, but those same eyes witnessed the nation's First Lady, a direct descendant of slaves, take center stage as well. Michelle's impact on America has taken on even more of a special meaning for some during March, which is Women's History Month. "Michelle's place with regards to the month is especially relevant, due to the fact that Women's History Month speaks directly to Black women," said Ange-Marie Hancock, an associate professor of political science at the University of Southern California.

"We use the struggles of the past to fight and get through the problems we're facing now. Michelle Obama is the epitome of Women's History Month." Similar to first ladies of the past, Michelle Obama's role during her husband's presidency has been in the background.

However, during presidential administrations the first lady typically takes on a cause, usually centered on charities.

Nancy Reagan's cause became D.A.R.E., which stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Michelle has also taken on a cause: fighting childhood obesity through her initiative, Let's Move! The initiative also encourages healthy eating habits and increased physical activity. "One of the reasons Michelle has a high approval rating among people, even when the administration's is down, is due to initiatives like Let's Move!," Hancock said.

"The work she does with military families along with Move is non-controversial and things everyone can stand behind."

Hancock added that Michelle coming under fire by some critics for comments made during the campaign "probably has something to do with her now focusing on non-controversial issues."

"That's no surprise," said Hancock, who followed the 2008 presidential election closely. "Part of Barack's success has been her keeping a healthy distance from the partisan side of



Michelle Obama

things. Politics is his job. None of us go to our spouse's place of business and try to make decisions." Changing Perceptions "The most important thing Michelle Obama has done to change America's perceptions of Black women is to offer a counter balance," said Hancock. "Of course, one woman can't possibly change an entire nation's viewpoint, but I think she's done an admirable job."

Hancock mentioned the images of Black women on reality shows as an example of what professional Black women like Michelle battle against daily. Congresswoman Karen Bass noted Michelle's accomplishments, potential to reach young people, and her status as a role model as some of her attributes.

"First Lady Obama is in so many ways, a woman that young girls across America can aspire to be like," Bass told the L.A. Watts times in an e-mail. "She is intellectually and professionally accomplished, and she has proven to be a leader in her own right with her 'Let's Move' campaign to combat childhood obesity."

Michelle's knack for fashion flair routinely causes a media frenzy among the tabloids, entertainment shows, and bloggers. Her attire and style has not only garnered her attention from fashion critics, but others as well who have compared her to a former First Lady. "She has become a fashion icon on the world stage the likes of which we haven't seen since Jacqueline Kennedy, and I greatly admire her championing of up and coming designers," said Bass.

The Future Prior to being the nation's First Lady, Michelle was an accomplished professional. Armed with a bachelor's degree in sociology from Princeton, and later on obtaining a degree from Harvard Law, the Ivy Leaguer from the South Side of Chicago worked in both the private and public sector. Michelle founded a nonprofit organization, Public Allies Chicago, which helps young adults foster leadership skills.

During her time in the private sector, the First Lady served as the University of Chicago Hospitals' executive director of community and external affairs.

Whether Michelle pursues politics after her husband's presidency or leaves the spotlight is anyone's guess.

"I don't see her being a person that's that interested in pursuing politics," Hancock said. "People would like her to go into politics because she's a likable person, but I think she'll probably concentrate on seeing her daughters grow up and possibly continue with charitable events and causes."

Fla. Board Of Executive Clemency urged not to restrict voting rights

Special to the NNPA from thedefendersonline.com

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Four of the nation's premier civil rights organizations, the American Civil Liberties Union, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, the Sentencing Project, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., recently sent a letter to Florida's Board of Executive Clemency ("Board"), asking the Board not to further restrict Floridians' voting rights by requiring every individual with

a criminal conviction to apply for restoration of their civil rights after a new waiting period that could be as long as five years.

Following a meeting with ACLU of Florida Executive Director Howard Simon and representatives from the NAACP, the ACLU learned that new mandatory waiting periods and application procedures may come before the Board as early as last week. Despite the pending action, the board has yet to make the proposal available to the public.

The civil rights groups urged

the board to maintain the current clemency rules in Florida and to continue to restore voting rights to individuals who have served their sentences and rejoined the community.

If Florida rolls back its clemency rules, it will be one of only four states left in the country (Kentucky, Virginia, and Iowa are the other three) that deny the right to vote to everyone with a felony conviction for life unless they receive clemency from the governor.

The Board was scheduled to meet to decide whether or not to adopt

the proposed change of clemency rules.

According to the letter: "As organizations dedicated to civil rights and criminal justice, we believe that the right to vote is not only fundamental to an inclusive democracy, but also a critical component of an individual's successful re-entry into the community. There is strong evidence that restoring the right to vote to people exiting the criminal justice system significantly reduces recidivism, strengthens public safety, and helps build a healthier democracy

and stronger communities."

The letter also explains that, "It is well documented that Florida's criminal disenfranchisement laws are a relic of a discriminatory past. The voting ban was an attempt to weaken political power of African Americans, and it continues to have its intended effect today. The current law continues to exclude African Americans from the polls at more than twice the rate of other Florida citizens. Currently, nearly a quarter of those who are disenfranchised in Florida are African-American."

OIC of America to raise \$100M for Black entrepreneurial initiative

Special to the NNPA

During President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address, he challenged Americans to "do big things." OIC of America, Inc. (OICA) is taking big action. For generations, African American unemployment and underemployment have been at least double that of White Americans.

While there have been gains in education, the wealth gap between African Americans and other groups has not closed. Given the proven correlation between self-employment and wealth creation, OICA, in a groundbreaking move, this week announced it is launching a focused initiative designed to encourage more African Americans to think like and become entrepreneurs. The organization expects

to reach more than one million people.

The Entrepreneurial Mindset Initiative will be funded perpetually by an endowment, raised in two parts. The first \$10 million will come from the community nationwide through "OIC-10," a funding initiative designed to turn one million, one time, \$10 contributions into a \$10 million endowment. The remaining \$90 million will be raised through "challenge grants" from foundations and interested individuals.

The endowment will fund grassroots programs that encourage, train, and support individuals in their quest to become successful business owners. OIC of America has trained more than two million people nationwide since its origin.

OICA's visionary founder, the

late Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, was a force in African American entrepreneurship and self-help when, in 1968, he started Progress Plaza. The North Philadelphia shopping center was the first Black owned enterprise of its kind in America. Philadelphia citizens, who invested in Reverend Sullivan's 10/36 Plan, funded the project. The plan involved thousands of individuals and families contributing small sums of money to accomplish a goal.

In keeping with 21st century technological advances, OIC of America also introduced a mobile giving option for OIC-10. Cell phone users can make their donation by texting the keyword "OIC" to "41010" from their mobile phone. This convenient option allows a wider audience to make their \$10 donation and support the

Entrepreneurial Mindset Initiative.

In addition to announcing the Entrepreneurial Mindset Initiative, OIC of America also announced that it has appointed business executive and entrepreneur Stanley H. Greene as National Director-Entrepreneurial Mindset Initiative. He will oversee both the fundraising initiative and the implementation of the training initiative. "I am excited to take on this important initiative," said Greene. "I have been involved in many projects over the years, and this is the most challenging and potentially rewarding for communities nationwide," he added.

"Consistent with our history, OIC of America will not wait for someone to wave a magic wand and improve the economic con-

ditions for African Americans. It has not happened in the past and will not happen in the future," said OIC of America Chairman, Art Taylor. "We are happy to have Stanley Greene on board as we make a big and bold move to help people make it in this economy."

President and CEO, Howard Sullivan added, "The foundation for economic success for African Americans was built close to 50 years ago. It is especially gratifying to me that we are launching this initiative today and using the simple but powerful principles my father put in place to help move African Americans forward."

To support the initiative, visitors should go to the OIC of America website at www.oicofamerica.org and click on the "OIC-10" button to make their \$10 donation today.

University of Kentucky to sponsor upcoming Black women's confab

The University of Kentucky African American Studies and Research Program hopes to empower activism throughout the 17th Annual Black Women's Conference on March 19, 23 and 24.

This year's conference, themed "Activism in the 21st Century" will provide an opportunity for participants to look at past, present and future opportunities for community action, through local and regional guests, as well as lectures by Spelman College activist Asha Jennings and former Black Panther Party member and human rights activist Ericka Huggins, a gender and women's studies professor at San Francisco State University and California State University-East Bay.

"We recognize that while we have come a considerable way in terms of issues that plague the African American community, there are still a lot of issues that require us to be involved as social activists," said AASRP director Sonja Feist-Price. "We need to be the change that we hope for."

Jennings, who will lead the conference's student town hall meeting, took a stand against the rapper Nelly when he wanted to conduct a bone marrow drive for his sister, who later died from leukemia. When Nelly refused to meet with the students about his negative depiction of women in his video "Tip Drill," they refused his request for the bone marrow drive. At the time, Jennings was the president of the Spelman Student Government Association and coordinator of the drive.

"Jennings and her peers were 19 and 20 years old" said Feist-Price. "But their actions brought national attention to a very important issue. Jennings shows how a few women on a college campus that had a concern about the objectification of women in rap videos banded together and refused to look the other way."

After Jennings' protest received national attention, she formed I.M.A.G.E.S. (Igniting Media Accountability for Gender Exploitation Schemes), which spreads the message for change to high schools, colleges and influential groups like the Illinois Humanity



Asha Jennings

Council.

For her efforts, the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence awarded Jennings with the Champions for Change Award in 2006. She was also named one of the Amazing 10 Women to Know by Onyx Woman in 2007. Jennings has made appearances on CNN's Paula Zahn Now, the NBC Nightly News and the 2007 documentary, "Beyond Beats and Rhymes: A Study of Masculinity in Hip Hop."

Huggins, the conference keynote speaker, is a former Black Panther Party member, political prisoner and human rights activist. She has spent the last 25 years lecturing throughout the United States about human rights restoration, whole child education and the role of spiritual practice in sustaining activism and promotion social change.

Other conference speakers include Melynda Price, the Robert E. Harding, Jr. associate professor of Law in the UK College of Law and William Turner, the distinguished professor of Appalachian Studies and Regional Ambassador at Berea College.

Price received the 2007 Best Dissertation Award from the Race, Ethnicity and Politics section of the American Political Science Association. Her current research focuses on the politics of punishment and the role of law in the politics of race and ethnicity in the United

States and its borders.

"What I love about Melynda is that she talks about igniting the activist in all of us," said Feist-Price. "Sometimes we fail to realize that a movement begins with one person, and we all have a responsibility to play a part in making society a better place for present and future generations."

Turner was the first to combine African-American and Appalachian studies and published a book titled, "Blacks in Appalachia." He has also held positions at numerous Kentucky universities, including UK.

In September 2007, Turner was inducted into the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame. He has received multiple honors including the Appalachian Studies Association's Cratis D. Williams/James S. Brown Service Award in 2009, the Christian Appalachian Project's Citizen of the Year award in 1994 and Kentucky's Dr. Martin Luther King Citizen's Award in 2007. He was also inducted as a Notre Dame Black Exemplar in 2006.

Currently, Turner serves on the board of directors for the Kentucky National Lands Trust, the New Opportunity School for Women and the Christian Appalachian Project. He has also been recommended to President Obama for appointment to the Appalachian Regional Commission.

The Black Women's Conference began in the spring of 1995 in observance of Women's History Month and in an effort to recognize, highlight and examine issues central to the lives of black women, including their historical and contemporary roles in the black community.

Each year the conference focuses on a theme relevant to the physical and mental well-being of black women in an effort to offer empowering information that can be used on a daily basis.

The conference is open to UK students, staff and faculty, as well as the Lexington community.

"Be a part of the solution," said Feist-Price. "This year, we are empowering activism and change. Everyone can do something."

For more information, contact Feist-Price at (859) 257-4270 or by e-mail at smfeis@email.uky.edu.



Andrew J. Young

Auburn Avenue Center to house Andy Young Papers

By M. Alexis Scott

Special to the NNPA from the Atlanta Daily World

The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History marked the opening of its Andrew J. Young Papers collection with a special conversation between Young and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, someone he has mentored since Reed was a 19-year-old student at Howard University.

John F. Szabo, director of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, said Young's contribution of his papers has had "a positive impact on the system's ability to attract others." He also announced that the AARL will get a \$25 million expansion, including new gallery and archival space. Francine L. Henderson, AARL administrator, said she was

thrilled to have the papers, which show Young's commitment to people by making them accessible in this way.

Kerrie Cotton Williams, AARL archivist, said a \$900,000 grant in 2008 from the Council on Library and Information Resources, made it possible to preserve and digitize the papers of Young, the Atlanta Chapter of the NAACP, SCLC, the Voter Education Project, and to chronicle key moments in the Civil Rights Movement. The grant was split among three entities: Emory University, Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library, and the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans. During the conversation, Reed recalled that he was 10 years old the first time he met Young at a church he attended. But, it was at Howard University in Washington

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Editorial

New York Beacon

Walter Smith: *Publisher & Editor-in-Chief*

Miatta Haj Smith: *Co-Publisher & Executive Editor*

William Egyir: *Managing Editor*

The new Jim Crow

By Marian Wright Edelman
Child Watch

“Jarvious Cotton cannot vote. Like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, he has been denied the right to participate in our electoral democracy... Cotton’s great-great-grandfather could not vote as a slave. His great-grandfather was beaten to death by the Ku Klux Klan for attempting to vote. His grandfather was prevented from voting by Klan intimidation. His father was barred from voting by poll taxes and literacy tests. Today, Jarvious Cotton cannot vote because he, like many black men in the United States, has been labeled a felon and is currently on parole.”

“Cotton’s story illustrates, in many respects, the old adage ‘The more things change, the more they remain the same’... In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don’t. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind...”

Once you’re labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits,

and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.”

So begins the introduction to legal scholar and former litigator Michelle Alexander’s extraordinary book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The *New Jim Crow* has been praised for documenting in compelling detail how the current historic levels of incarceration in the United States have disproportionately targeted communities of color and function as a means of controlling people of color, just as slavery and Jim Crow did in their time.

Alexander acknowledges that many people find this argument hard to believe in the “age of colorblindness.” Many Americans wanted to see President Obama’s historic election as the final hopeful sign our nation has moved “past race,” and many believe the millions of other Black Americans who are imprisoned and disenfranchised are in that condition only because of individual bad choices. When we are confronted with the facts that our nation’s incarceration rates have quintupled during the last several decades and the United States has the largest prison population and imprisons the highest numbers of its minority population in the

world, Alexander says many Americans simply accept the prevailing myth that “there is, of course, a colorblind explanation for all this: crime rates. Our prison population has exploded from about 300,000 to more than two million in a few short decades, it is said, because of rampant crime.

We’re told that the reason so many Black and brown men find themselves behind bars and ushered into a permanent, second-class status is because they happen to be the bad guys.” But, as *The New Jim Crow* argues, the data show this is simply not true. While incarceration may be rooted for some in poor individual choices, the glaring racial disparities in searches, arrests, convictions, and sentencing for the same crimes suggest our nation doesn’t treat everyone’s poor choices equally. What has skyrocketed over the years are not our nation’s crime rates—which have actually fallen below the international norm—but the number of drug convictions in the U.S. as a result of our declared “War on Drugs.”

Many people assume next that, of course, Black criminals are being incarcerated for drug crimes at record rates because they are the ones committing them. In some states, Blacks comprise 80%-90% of all drug offenders sent to prison. But, *The New Jim Crow* painstakingly outlines how

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A time to strengthen foreclosure prevention

By Charlene Crowell
NNPA Columnist

In votes during the next weeks, two programs that provide mortgage help to troubled borrowers may be rejected by the U.S. House of Representatives. The Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) serves homeowners who cannot pay their mortgage or are in imminent danger of default. The other program known as the Emergency Homeowner Loan Program (EHLPP) would be stripped of funding to provide emergency loans for unemployed homeowners facing foreclosure. The U.S. House of Representatives wants to strip all funding from both programs.

The House also wants to scrap two more foreclosure programs: a Federal Housing Administration program that provides refinancing to homeowners who are current on their mortgage; and the Neighborhood Stabilization program that rehabilitates foreclosure-ravaged neighborhoods. According to the Center for Responsible Lending, cutting these programs would leave millions at risk and the nation’s economic recovery in jeopardy.

Current trends show 50,000 new foreclosures start every week and more than five million mortgage holders now are at high risk of losing their homes.

“When we’re in the midst of an epidemic, we don’t close all of the hospitals – we work faster and harder to find a cure,” said CRL president Mike Calhoun. “We call on Congress to strengthen foreclosure prevention efforts by holding servicers accountable and requiring a review of every mortgage loan before foreclosure proceeds.”

According to the March 2010 HAMP servicer performance report, more than half – 59.1 percent of participating homeowners identified loss of income as their pre-

dominant hardship. Additionally, the median savings for borrowers in permanent mortgage modifications is \$512.39 or 36 percent of the median before modification payments. States with the largest HAMP activity are Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and New York.

Although HAMP has helped about 600,000 homeowners across the country, the program originally was projected to help three to four million homeowners. This difference between modifications made and the much larger numbers of homeowners who need them has shaped opinions of those who call for program improvements as well as those who call for its termination.

EHLPP, the second program facing an imminent House vote, received \$1 billion via the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Administered by HUD, the program offers zero interest ‘bridge loans’ to qualified unemployed homeowners for up to 24 months or \$50,000 in assistance, whichever comes first. Geographically, it is designed to serve the 32 states where the U.S.

Treasury Department’s Hardest Hit Housing Markets program for unemployed homeowners is not available.

Many journalists and consumer advocates have observed that the problems with foreclosure prevention are the fault of mortgage servicers – not the government or homeowners. According to Dana Milbank, a Washington Post columnist, “The problem in the nation’s housing market now isn’t subprime lending. It’s subpar lenders.” In a recent column, Milbank shared his own household’s fretful dealings with servicers and cited a litany of issues including misquoted rates, legal documents issued in wrong names, freezing of bank accounts, and more.

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Gender equity is everybody’s business

By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

March is Women’s History Month, and the White House Council on Women and Girls, led by Valerie Jarrett, commemorated it by releasing a report on the status of women. According to the report, we’ve come a long way sisters, but we’ve still got a long way to go. Despite the fact that we out-enroll men in college, we under-earn them in the workplace. There are so many phenomenal women accomplishing amazing things, and at the same time there are so many women whose economic attainment is constrained by gender. We in the African American community must be

concerned with the social construction of gender and the ways that patriarchy shapes the futures of our young people, both young women and young men. The face of African American leadership, mostly all male, sends a signal to young women. It suggests that women’s voices don’t matter, that we have to scrap our way to the table. It denigrates the enormity of African American women’s accomplishments.

From this perspective, I am grateful that Roslyn Brock is the Chairman of the Board of the NAACP. The sister exhibited her leadership chops when she gave her Chairman’s award at the NAACP Image Awards to Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin and

lifted up a stalwart medical leader who has, against all odds, given of herself. That’s women’s history!

Dr. Regina Benjamin stands on the shoulders of other outstanding African American surgeon generals, including Dr. David Satcher, Dr. Jocelyn Elders, and others. She has the opportunity to deal with the crushing effects of health disparities, and she has the experience to illuminate the many inequalities that shape our health care system. Both race and gender shape the way that health care services are delivered, and we look forward to the ways that Dr. Benjamin will share that with the nation. Anna Julia Cooper said, “When and where I enter,

the interests of my race and my gender come with me.” She was asserting the many ways that African American women make a transformative difference in the development of educational, social, and public policy. When and where I enter, I represent, our sister said nearly a century ago. Today, the same is true. Yet, for many this women’s history month is not about us, not about women of African descent. But, it can be our month, if we assert it.

We must claim this month, not simply as a statement of history, but also as an opportunity to remind the nation and the world that gender equity is a human imperative. In other words, we don’t just want pay equity for women, but

we want pay equity for families and for a nation. When women aren’t well paid, families aren’t well cared for. When women are kicked to the curb economically, children suffer and we experience generational reverberations.

Fair treatment of women is an investment in the growth, development, and success of our nation. While women’s leadership is not as rare as it was a generation ago, it is still fairly scarce. Women represent less than one percent of the Fortune 500 leaders, are nearly absent in the civil rights leadership, and are fewer than 20 percent of our elected national leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

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Opinion

Mother of the Year Every Year

By George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist

Tabernacle Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga. honored my mother, Mrs. Martha L. Brownlee, last Sunday as "Mother of the Year" as part of its annual Women's Day celebration. Church members have learned what my three sisters – Charlotte Purvis, Chris Polk, and Susan Gandy – and I have known all of our lives: Mama is Mother of the Year every year. This is Women's History Month and many young females are studying historical figures in search of role models.

As a former history major, I can appreciate the need to know our history. It is equally important to realize that sometimes the role models we are searching for are within our own households. That's true of my mother and is true of many other mothers. Although Mama did domestic work most of her life, when I think of her occupation, I think of her as a teacher. In that respect, all four of her children were home schooled. We went to school, only to return home for additional schooling. At home, Mama taught us by example.

My mother has always been an extremely hard worker. During most of my youth, she worked two jobs, never complaining about the low wages, the long hours or, during the days of rigid segregation, having to ride in the back seat of the car when one of her employer's drove her home from work. That sight is forever etched in my mind. More than a half-century later, it remains a vivid memory, a memory that caused me to hunger for a better life for me and my three younger sisters.

One lesson Mama taught us was that even though we lived under an unfair system, we were still obligated to work for what we wanted. Sure, Mama would provide the necessities in life, but there was merit in hard work. Consequently, I held a series of jobs, beginning with my trimming my elementary school principal's hedges. When I wasn't playing football in high school, I was cutting yards with a lawn mower loaned to me by the head of my housing development or washing dishes after school in a dorm at the University of Alabama. I remember peering out of the window of the kitchen of Mary Burke Hall at Vivian Malone, the first African-American woman to graduate from the University of

Alabama. I was so proud of her and knew that I had a brighter future than washing dishes in my hometown. Because I was earning my own money, I could buy Chuck Taylor gym shoes and slip my Big Mama some money from time to time. As the first grandson, Big Mama and I had a special relationship, a relationship that included giving each other money and my eating dinner twice on Sundays – one at home and one at Big Mama's house. Amid her two jobs, ascertaining we did our homework and making regular visits to school to make sure we were getting our lesson, as we called it, and being well-behaved, Mama always made time to visit the sick, take them home-cooked food and to run errands for them.

There was one lady who stayed sick so often that they called her "Miss Sick Mary." I presume "sick" was added to distinguish her from the healthy Miss Marys in our neighborhood.

"Miss" is what we called everyone, even though many were married. Not a week passed without Mama visiting Miss Sick Mary and we had to drop by to check on her as

well.

Another mainstay was Ma Sis, the mother of one of Mama's closest friends, Mrs. Betty Gandy, who now lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Miss Betty's son, Iverson, married Sue, my youngest sister, but our families have always been extremely close. Miss Betty always claimed me as her own – a point I often make to my brother-in-law and Miss Betty makes with Mama.

When she worked as a cashier at Druid High School, I got all the extra milk for free. Sometimes it was difficult to know if Ma Sis was Miss Betty's mother or Mama's. We checked on Ma Sis or took her meals every day. She was always grateful and had a big smile and hug waiting for us every time we stepped foot in her house.

Of course, we did the same thing for Big Mama – but that was to be expected. But, Mama treated all of the old ladies, sick and well, in McKenzie Court as if they were our Big Mama. Anyone who meets Mama will know within five minutes that she has four children and nothing makes her happier than when we all pile into her house and regale her with stories about our childhood.

We usually end up laughing to the point of tears and have a propensity for embellishment. For years, I was the acknowledged family jokester. But, as we've grown older, I've been replaced by my sisters who contend, without confirmation from me, that I bribed them with nickels to wash dishes and not tell Mama I had slipped off to the basketball court after she had ordered us not to leave the house.

Throughout our lives, all of us have known without a doubt that Mama loves us and receives her greatest joy in not only our individual success but our staying together as a family. And, we can never tell her too many times that we appreciate the many sacrifices that she made for us and so many others. I can't begin to imagine where I'd be without the unconditional love and rock-solid support that I always received from Mama. She has been a blessing all of our lives.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site, www.georgecurry.com You can also follow him at www.twitter.com/currygeorge.

Urgent call to action: Save and support Black colleges

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

The survival of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is at stake. Today, more than ever before, there is an urgent necessity to stand up, speak out, and let the voice and fundamental interests of 45 million Black Americans be heard. Education has always been at the heart of our long struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. Proposed budget cuts by the U.S. Congress will put Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) in a severe fiscal crisis.

April 6 and 7, 2011 in Washington, D.C. there will be a much needed show of force in support of HBCUs and PBIs on Capitol Hill. This is an urgent call to action for students, parents, teachers, administrators, ministers, leaders, activists, and the masses of African Americans to turn out in opposition to the proposed budget cuts to our colleges and

universities. We have come too far, struggled and worked too hard, and sacrificed and bled too much in the establishment of these vital academic and career fulfillment institutions to now let the cold, damp hands of political dereliction snatch the fiscal life from our colleges and universities.

Power concedes nothing without a demand. There are too many in the U.S. Congress today who simply do not care about the future sustainability of African American institutions of higher learning. This is not a case of political or social ignorance. But, this is another clear case of racial discriminatory triage cloaked under the questionable guise of fiscal restraint and deficit reduction. We demand that the U.S. Congress refrain from cutting and gutting financial support for HBCUs and PBIs.

We join with the National Association For Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), United Negro College Fund (UNCF), Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCFF), the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), the Hip Hop Caucus, the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN),

and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to mobilize national support to let the U.S. Congress know that funding for our colleges and universities should not be cut.

Dr. Lezli Baskerville, the president and CEO of NAFEO, urged, "We need you to join us in D.C. and help us educate Congress about why HBCU and PBI funding cannot be traded away for sustained defense funding or partisan posturing. We need HBCUs and PBIs to continue preparing diverse students in the arts and sciences, technology and engineering, and mathematics, as well as teaching health, globalization, greening, and sustainability professionals." April 6 and 7, 2011 has been titled, "Lift Every Voice & Be Heard" days of support for HBCUs and PBIs in Washington, D.C. If you are in D.C. or near D.C. on these days, you should come out and join this most important gathering. We have to send the right message to Congress and the time is now.

We have to make sure that Fiscal Year 2011 Budget funding for HBCUs and PBIs is not rescinded by Congress and that Fiscal Year 2012 Budget funding for our colleges and universities is at least level-funded and adjusted for inflation. What gets cut and who gets cut should be a matter of public policy impacted by the express will of the people and not left solely to the political whims of an extremely narrow view of the nation and world.

While HBCUs represent just 4% of U.S. universities, HBCUs confer 22% of all bachelor degrees earned by African Americans, 24% of all bachelor degrees awarded to African Americans in engineering, and 35% of all bachelor degrees in astronomy, biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics. Fifty percent of all African American teachers attended and graduated from HBCUs. HBCUs and PBIs collectively employ more than 200,000 people and contribute more than \$10 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The historical legacy and the contemporary relevancy of these criti-

cal important educational institutions cannot be overstated.

Black Americans and all Americans should be proud of the academic and leadership track record of HBCUs and PBIs. We live at a time when hard and tough decisions are going to be made about the fiscal budgets at both the federal and state levels. If Black Americans do not assert the value of our educational institutions, who will? If we do not speak up now, who will? I will be in Washington, D.C. on April 6th and 7th. You should make every effort to join us. Our children and our grandchildren deserve the best and most equitable quality education from pre-K to post-graduate school. Now is the time, once again, for us to speak clearly and forcibly. The budget scuffle is swinging in our direction disproportionately. What are we going to do about it? Let's make sure our voices are "heard and felt" on this issue. Save, fund, and protect our HBCUs and PBIs.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. is senior advisor to the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) and president of Education Online Services Corporation.

African Scene



Egyptian women in march for equality

Egyptians in 'Million Woman March' defy men hecklers

Special to the NNPA from the GIN

Hundreds of Egyptian women, inspired by the recent uprising, returned to Cairo's central Tahrir square recently and faced down a mob of men heckling them and ordering them to go home.

The women's "Million Woman March" was planned to mark International Women's Day and demand more women appointees by the new prime minister, who has appointed only one to his cabinet despite the sizeable participation of women in the uprisings that led to the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak. "(The hecklers) said our role was to stay home and raise presidents, not to run for president," Farida Helmy, a 24-year old journalist told a reporter.

"I thought we were going to be celebrated as women of the revolution because we were present during the days of Tahrir," Passant Rabie said to a reporter. "Unless women are included now, we are going to be oppressed." Rabie said she was surprised to find women being verbally abused and

groped after the role they played in the citizen revolt. Women had been central to the protests, leading chants, spending cold nights in the square and even fighting during the battle of Black Wednesday, when pro-government henchmen attacked the protesters. Commenting on the heckling, feminist activist Mona Ezzat blamed it on the old regime.

"This is a natural product of the long years of dictatorship," Ezzat told Ahram Online.

"We need to change social and cultural concepts about what women's role is to begin with. That is one of the biggest battles," says Yasmine Khalifa, a graduate student. "This is a long process and today's event is not a beginning, it's just a continuation of the revolution."

In a related development, thousands of women in the Ivory Coast taking part in a Women's Day march while protesting the continuation of rule by President Laurent Gbagbo came under gunfire. Four fatalities were reported.

Africans huddle at Libyan border, abandoned by all

Special to the NNPA from the GIN

Black African men, women, and children, immigrant workers in the country lead by the one-time chair of the African Union, Col. Moammar Gaddafi, remain stranded at the airports and docks as boats from China, Turkey, and many other countries retrieve their citizens caught in the current crossfire.

A Nigerian woman with two children pleaded with a reporter: "Sir, I have been in this airport for three weeks, no food to eat, we sleep on the floor everyday waiting for a plane to come and evacuate us. Please beg Nigerian government to come with bigger planes to evacuate us." The U.N.'s refugee agency says there are hundreds of thousands of African migrant workers in Libya. Many have been there for years and U.N. officials are worried about their welfare as alarming accounts are received of their treatment. According to the Campaign for the Rights of Nigerians in Diaspora, some 7,000 Nigerians are awaiting evacuation, aside

from those trapped in Benghazi and other cities outside of Tripoli. Some 10,000 Ghanaians are still in Tripoli, after the rescue of some 684 citizens of Ghana, a minister confirmed.

"Right now, Gaddafi is a big danger to Black Africans," wrote Cameron Duodu, in the online news journal Pambazuka. "Any Black person found in Libya is likely to be given very short shrift by the White-skinned section of the Arab population, which believes that Gaddafi has imported—or is importing—Blacks from Chad, Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia and anywhere else that he has followers, to go and fight for him."

Meanwhile, the Chinese news wire Xinhua, reports that approximately 32,000 Chinese were "whisked" out of Libya with another 3,000 waiting to be airlifted out of the desert in the country's south. While no Chinese have been killed or injured, Chinese business and construction sites are reportedly looted and projects such as a half-finished public housing development worth \$2.67 billion have been halted.

African Union rejects military intervention in Libya: official

The African Union on Friday rejected military intervention in Libya to stop a crackdown on opponents of the regime of strongman Moamer Kadhafi, an AU official told the press.

"The council reaffirms its firm commitment to the respect of the unity and territorial integrity of Libya, as well as its rejection of any form of foreign military intervention," Ramtane Lamamra, the AU commissioner for peace and security, said.

The announcement came after NATO defence ministers meeting in Brussels on Thursday postponed any decision on a no-fly zone in Libya until it got a UN clearance.

The AU's 15-member peace and security council decided "to put in place a high level AU ad hoc committee" to monitor the crisis in the north African country where Kadhafi faces an uprising against his 41 years in power.

The committee, whose members were to be announced in the near future, would also be tasked with working towards "the immediate cessation of all hostilities", said Lamamra.

The council expressed its "deep concern" over the crisis in Libya which it said "poses a serious threat to the peace and security in the country and in the region as a whole".

"The AU has strongly condemned the disproportionate use of force," said Lamamara.

"The council took note of the readiness of the government of Libya to engage in the path of political reforms," he added.

"The council expressed the solidarity of the AU with Libya, and stressed the legitimacy of the as-



Gadhafi

pirations of the Libyan people for democracy, political reforms, justice, peace and security as well as economic and social development."

Lamamra did not want to comment on France's decision to recognise the Libyan envoys of

the opposition national council who represent those fighting Kadhafi's forces.

Libya is a member of the African Union's peace and security council and was represented at the meeting by Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa.

Google to create free Online Mandela Library

Special to the NNPA from the GIN

Thousands of previously unseen letters and scribbled meeting notes by former South African president Nelson Mandela will be included in a Mandela Archive, to be available free online

with support from Google and the Mandela Foundation.

The internet company has donated \$1.25 million to the Nelson Mandela Foundation Center of Memory to help digitize memorabilia related to the South African leader. Documents, photos, and

multimedia from the 92-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner's life will be included in this free online archive. The archive will also feature correspondence between Mandela and world leaders, activists, family, and friends in the time leading up to the end of apartheid in South Africa.

"The online Mandela archive... will be a wealth of information for those wanting to learn about and research the life and legacy of this extraordinary African statesman," Google said in a blog post.

"What sets this archive apart from other resources is that it will be made available for free to audiences around the world," said Achmat Dangor, the foundation's chief executive. Other recipients of Google grants include the Desmond Tutu Peace Center in Cape Town, which received \$1.25 million to document and digitize the Archbishop's works and create an interactive digital learning center. Caption: N. Mandela's Methodist Church membership card.





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U.S. Department of
Transportation



Opinion

For the State of Black America, the issue is jobs

By **Marc H. Morial** *To Be Equal*

From March 29th through the 31st, the National Urban League brings its fight for urban jobs to Capitol Hill with its 2011 Legislative Policy Conference. This year's summit will make the case for targeted action to tackle the persistent unemployment crisis in Black America.

Dozens of Urban League affiliate delegations comprised of CEO's, board chairs and the presidents of affiliate Guild and Young Professional auxiliaries will join us for meetings on Capitol Hill with U. S. Senators and Representatives.

The conference also serves as the backdrop to the release of the National Urban League's

landmark annual publication, The State of Black America, being held this year at historic Howard University, with a Town Hall event featuring Howard students, faculty and others, moderated by Jeff Johnson and Roland Martin.

The highlight of this year's legislative summit and State of Black America report is jobs, jobs, jobs. The great recession is officially over. But, with overall unemployment now at 8.9 percent and 13.7 million people still out of work, the recovery has been painfully slow and has yet to make a significant visit to communities of color. The U.S. Department of Labor's February jobs report shows Black unemployment at 15.3 percent. The rate is 16.2 percent for Black men and 11.6 percent for Hispanics. Clearly, the jobs crisis persists in urban

America and an immediate national response is long overdue.

In the past, our nation has declared war on poverty... war on drugs... even war on obesity. Today, I call on Washington to declare war on unemployment and the first line of defense must be urban America. The truth is, any recovery that fails to bring jobs and prosperity back to urban and communities of color is a recovery in name only. America can only succeed if its cities and the people who live and work in them have access to jobs and are fully prepared to excel and innovate in those jobs.

That is the key message of this year's State of Black America.

Our report takes an honest look at the reality and underlying

causes of double-digit joblessness in Black America. But, we don't just point out the problem, we offer a solution with a 12-point blueprint for quality job creation. Our plan recognizes that as the nation takes steps to reduce our ballooning deficit, we must make tough choices. But if, as the President has said, we are going to "win the future," this is no time to cut investments in our people.

That means, among other things, we must invest in summer jobs for teens, broadband and green jobs for their parents, and direct job creation for cities and states.

Our report will also unveil the National Urban League's 2011 Equality Index, our annual comparison of the social, political, and economic status of Af-

rican Americans and Latinos to that of Whites. It highlights some successful job-creating initiatives by the Urban League and others. And, we make it clear that every aspect of life in America is connected to jobs. Education is a jobs issue. Healthcare is a jobs issue. International trade is a jobs issue. Housing and transportation are jobs issues.

In 2011, the State of Black America is a jobs issue.

The National Urban League's State of Black America Town Hall event will be held on Thursday, March 31 from 10am - 12pm at Howard University's Crampton Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public. To view like webcast, visit nul.org.

Marc H. Morial is the president and CEO of the National Urban League.

TSA screeners need the right union: AFGGE

By **Bill Fletcher, Jr.** *NNPA Columnist*

A few months ago I was struck by the hypocrisy of the attacks on the TSA screeners for doing their jobs at our airports. The TSA screeners are the people who check our identification and belongings at the airport, as part of an effort to ensure air safety.

For this reason, I was astounded when I started hearing complaints being raised about alleged intrusive searches and about how some people did not want to be searched at all. Let's leave aside that much of the drama associated with these attacks on TSA screeners was politically motivated by conservatives who want to hit the Obama administration and want screening privatized.

What was striking was that these critics are probably the same people who, were there another terrorist attack, would be screaming about the lack of security and about how the Obama administration is not doing its job. The bottom line is that if there is going to be air safety, there will need to be screening. I would rather have screening than blow up in the air, thank you very much.

These screeners are subject to daily insults and stresses for just doing their jobs. Yes, some of them may not be warm and fuzzy, but I have found them to be quite professional. Yet, they are expected to tolerate our frustrations, anger

and impatience as if they were mechanical devices rather than workers doing an essential job in a world that is constantly filled with real and imagined fears of terrorist assaults.

Since shortly after 11 September 2001 and the creation of the Transportation Security Administration, the officers who conduct the screenings have been attempting to organize a union.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) stepped forward, despite the fact that the then Bush administration wanted to eliminate the right to unionize and collectively bargain. Many screeners, nevertheless, joined AFGE and began recruiting their colleagues.

Beginning this month (March) the screeners will finally get the chance to formally decide on whether to have a union represent them before the Transportation Security Administration.

A critical aspect of this representation will be to negotiate a contract—a collective bargaining agreement—that will provide the basis for the screeners to receive the respect and rights that they deserve. But, the vote for unionization will also offer them an expansion on the voice that many of them have already gained by joining AFGE. That voice is critical not only in responding to the sorts of politically motivated, opportunistic attacks that they received a few months ago, but also so that their input can be offered when it comes to how to best secure the passengers.

While the TSA management, like most employers, feels that

they have little to learn from the workers who carry out the daily grind (and it is the case that bargaining over security matters is prohibited), it is generally the person doing the work that knows what is or is not both efficient and effective. Through a union the TSA officers will have the collective voice of

thousands in order to make their case to management and the broader public.

At a moment when the Republicans and their corporate allies are attacking the right of workers to join or form a union, the TSA officers have a chance to set a different course and stand up for themselves. Let's support them in

exercising this right!

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the Director of Field Services & Education for the American Federation of Government Employees. He is also the immediate past president of TransAfrica Forum and co-author of "Solidarity Divided." He can be reached at papaq54@hotmail.com.

Class size matters

By **Judge Greg Mathis** *Mathis' Mind*

The struggling economy has, unfortunately, forced state and local governments across the country to make cuts in much needed services and programs.

The nation's public schools have been hit particularly hard by these cuts. First, some districts reduced or completely eliminated physical education classes and arts programming — programming that has been proven to enhance student academic performance.

Then, others began to eliminate teachers, slowly growing classrooms sizes. Now, it seems even more school districts are looking to reduce the number of teachers on the payroll and combine classrooms...all in an effort to save money.

A recent article in the New York Times shed light on this disturbing movement toward larger class

sizes. According to the article, the size of 11th and 12th grade classes in Los Angeles has increased by more than 40 students.

Detroit is considering increasing the size of its high school classes to 60 students. Though school officials there say it's unlikely classes will grow that large, it's disturbing the conversation has even turned in that direction.

It doesn't end there. Georgia, Nevada, Ohio, and Wisconsin have all relaxed their restrictions on class size. Idaho and Texas are deciding whether or not they are going to grow their classrooms.

Those who see cutting back on teachers and increasing class sizes as a solution to budget woes are the same people who don't believe class size matters when it comes to student achievement. However, multiple studies have shown us that class size does matter. Research shows that, overall, stu-

dents perform better in smaller classes. Poor and minority children seem to do best in smaller classes and improve at twice the rate of the average student when the student-teacher ratio is low.

But, who needs research? Common sense tells us that more students mean more distractions for the teacher and less individual attention for the students.

During his State of the Union address, President Obama called on America to invest in education. By putting our resources toward our children, we will, in effect, be putting a down payment on a more prosperous future for America. School districts should not sacrifice student performance during a time of education crisis.

America has fallen behind other countries when it comes to producing skilled workers; our nation is no longer a nation of innovators.

To jeopardize our children's future is to jeopardize our nation's future.

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YOUR MONEY REALLY MATTERS

By Michael G. Shinn, CFP
NNPA Syndicated Writer

\$4 per gallon gasoline

By Michael G. Shinn, CFP
NNPA Syndicated Columnist

Political unrest in the Middle East continues to dominate world energy markets and many analysts are predicting \$4 per gallon gasoline by this summer.

Higher energy prices are on everyone's mind and we are all hoping for a return to the good old days. Unfortunately, the good old days of cheap energy in the U.S. are over! Look forward to continued higher energy prices from now into the foreseeable future.

Why High and Why Now?

There are several forces that are working in concert to raise the price of energy. Political unrest in oil producing areas such as the Middle East, Africa and South America is not a new problem, but the perceived instability undermines the confidence in future energy supplies. The thirst for energy in developing economies such as India and China has placed added pressure on the global energy supply and demand equation. The weaker U.S. dollar raises the price of all imported commodities, including oil. Finally, environmental constraints on energy exploration, refining, emissions and nuclear power add further costs to the energy supply chain.

What's Your Energy Expense?

First, let's get beyond the current media hype and look at some facts regarding your situation. Dig out your receipts for bills for 2010. How much did you spend on home heating, electricity and gasoline for the year? If you don't have the actual receipts, you

can contact your home heating and electricity suppliers to determine the amounts. You may have to estimate your gasoline usage for the year. What percentage is energy of your total family take-home pay— 5%, 10%, or more? What percentage do you estimate that your energy costs will increase in 2011? How can you lessen the impact of rising energy costs on your family's budget?

What Can You Do?

Short term- Over the next 1-2 years, your family's best opportunity is to operate as energy efficiently as possible, given the constraints of your current automobile(s) and home configuration. For transportation, this would include keeping tires properly inflated, clean air filters, consolidating trips, car pooling and public transportation. For the home, consider lowering the thermostat in the winter, minimizing the use of air conditioning in the summer, regularly changing air filters, caulking and weather stripping windows, consolidating clothes washing and turning off lights. Visit www.centerpointenergy.com for more information.

Medium term- Over the next 2-5 years, you may have the opportunity to change automobile(s) and improve the energy efficiency of your home. For transportation, big SUV's are out, while fuel efficient hybrids, smaller cars and even electric vehicles are in. Be careful and don't let rebates and hot deals on inefficient automobiles saddle you with a gas guzzler. For the home, consider energy efficient appliances and lighting replacements, in-

creased insulation and possibly a more efficient furnace.

Longer term- 5 years plus, may present significant opportunities to make changes in your family's use of energy and energy efficiency. The longer time frame opens up opportunities to reduce commuting distances, moving closer to public transportation routes, moving to a more energy efficient home and possibly installing solar panels or a geothermal heating and cooling system. There is an interesting website at www.sustainlane.com that studied the 50 largest cities in the U.S. to see which are most prepared and most vulnerable to sustained high gasoline prices.

Don't Fall Asleep

There is a pattern in this country to be lulled back to sleep after a crisis has passed. Think about it, the first energy crisis took place in 1974 and although there have been some improvements in energy efficiency; the U.S. is still extremely vulnerable to energy market gyrations. Although it would be extremely difficult to insulate your family from the market fluctuations you can lessen the impact by taking some responsible actions over the next few years.

Michael G. Shinn, CFP, Registered Representative and Advisory Associate of and securities offered through Financial Network Investment Corporation, member SIPC. Visit www.shinnfinancial.com for more information or to send your comments or questions to shinnm@financialnetwork.com. © Michael G. Shinn 2006.

Housing tussle still goes on in St. Bernard County

By Zoe Sullivan
Special to the NNPA from The Louisiana Weekly

After Katrina, St. Bernard Parish issued an ordinance restricting rental of single-family dwellings to people related by blood. It also put a moratorium on the construction of multi-family dwellings. Both of these steps were perceived as efforts to prevent African-Americans from moving into the Parish, and the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) won federal injunctions to overturn both of these policies.

Last week, the fight heated up again. After St. Bernard Parish President Craig Taffaro urged council members to "stand with him" while adopting a "resolution to this challenge that incorporates the concerns of the federal agencies while maintaining our ability to govern locally." The Parish President's office told The Louisiana Weekly that the multi-family housing development being planned for the parish is of a high-density type that doesn't fit with the agency for Housing and Urban Development's current policies. "They tore down high-density housing in New Orleans," the Parish President's office said, questioning why similar housing would then be built in St. Bernard. A press release from the GNOFHAC said that the organization filed a temporary restraining order against the parish because "St. Bernard Parish officials clearly stated their intent to violate the Fair Housing Act and the Consent Order by impeding the development of four mixed-income apartment complexes."

GNOFHAC Executive Director James Perry comments, "We are profoundly disappointed in Mr. Taffaro and other parish leaders for what is another backwards and wrongheaded step by the Parish to limit housing opportunities for people of color. We will continue to advocate in court and through HUD's processes until there is fair housing choice in St. Bernard Parish."

In his statement to the parish council earlier last week, Taffaro "acknowledged and rebuked discrimination both past and present." But, he said, "The timing of the Provident project is wrong, the agenda is flawed, and the implementation is skewed. At

the end of the day, the developers walk away with their profit, the tenants are herded away from home ownership opportunities in a recovering community, and the parish is left with the burden of being left with additional properties expanding the glut of existing rental and for sale housing." Perry countered the assertion of surplus housing, citing statistics that 40 percent of pre-Katrina St. Bernard residents say that lack of housing is one of the factors that prevent them from returning to the parish. Additionally, Perry argued, a "state-of-the-art" hospital is being built within walking distance of the Provident development, which means that the new homes would be suitable for the facility's staff. Parish officials say that they were forced by the federal government to re-issue a building permit to Provident Realty Advisors, Inc. although the original permit had expired and the firm didn't follow any re-application procedures.

According to the GNOFHAC, the current situation follows on the heels of a fifth motion for contempt that it filed against the parish in January, sustaining that the parish's actions violated the terms of a February 2008 Consent Order and the Fair Housing Act. The previous decree was extended through the end of this year by Judge Berrigan, who said that allegations against the parish, "if true, indicate that the parish is prepared to deviate from normal procedures in an effort to harass and delay Provident's ongoing construction."

Some of the steps Taffaro suggested in last week's council meeting for Provident include obtaining a wetlands permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, a release from the State Fire Marshal, and a review by the Water and Sewer Division. "Their assertions are laughable," said Perry. "Provident Housing has done everything they have been obligated to do under the permitting process. ...they intend to stop the project regardless of whether [Provident] do[es] anything right or wrong." Perry also pointed out that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is considering withdrawing hurricane recovery funds from the parish as a result of this situation. Additionally, in an extremely rare move, HUD's Secretary has initiated a complaint process. Perry says that Secretary Shaun Donovan "saw activities that were so egregious that he decided to launch the complaint process against St. Bernard Parish."

Double whammy: Blacks in the grip of foreclosure/wage-concession vice

By Doug Miller
Special to the NNPA from thedefendersonline.com

African Americans may find themselves in the middle of a potentially devastating financial squeeze play, disproportionately pressed from one side by foreclosures tied to the ongoing U.S. mortgage crisis and constricted on the other by growing government demands for concessions from Black-heavy public employee unions.

As governors and legislatures from Wisconsin to Indiana and Ohio continue to focus on fewer public-sector employees as the centerpiece of plans to slash the cost of government services, the

upshot could be more downsized Black employees with no regular income to pay mortgages that already may be in danger of foreclosure. According to Steven Pitts, a labor policy specialist with the University of California-Berkeley Labor Center, about 14.5 percent of all public-sector workers in the United States are African-American, which ranks that sector second only to health and education services in terms of a workforce that is heavily Black. More than one in five Black workers is employed in public administration in particular, either on a local, state or federal level. An Equal Employment Opportunity Commission report released last year added credence to those figures, showing

that 18 percent of people employed by the federal government in 2009 were African-American. A separate report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released earlier this year disclosed that Black workers also were more likely to be union members than Whites, Asians or Hispanics. Asked about the potential impact of widespread cutbacks in the number of workers employed in the public sector, Pitts said "the danger is that it would have a disproportionate effect on Black workers."

At the same time, African Americans find themselves bearing an unequal burden in what has become a prolonged national crisis in mortgage foreclosures. Research published last year by the

Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) in Washington, D.C., revealed that Blacks and Latinos are nearly 75 percent more likely to experience foreclosure than Whites. A separate study published last fall by Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs went so far as to call the foreclosure mess "a highly radicalized process."

Researchers Jacob Rugh and Douglas Massey contended that segregation created a unique bloc of minority clients who were differentially sold risky subprime loans. According to Rugh and Massey, the outcome of the crisis "was not simply a result of neutral market forces, but was struc-

tured on the basis of race and ethnicity through the social fact of residential segregation."

"Ultimately," they concluded, "the racialization of America's foreclosure crisis occurred because of a systematic failure to enforce basic civil rights laws." Reaffirming that the mortgage foreclosure problem continues to have a disproportionate impact on Blacks and Hispanics, Kathleen Day, a spokesperson for the CRL, added: "To the extent that someone loses their job, they can't pay their mortgage. That compounds the problem even more." Doug Miller is a former director of internal communications for Citigroup and has written extensively about the use of technology in financial services.

Kidney Day: The Mike Jones story

By Juliana D. Norwood
Special to the NNPA from Our Weekly

Mike Jones is the founder, president and CEO, of the One Miracle Celebration of Life Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting living organ donors and recipients. His mission is to help bring awareness and educate the public on how to give the "gift of life" (i.e. kidney, liver, bone marrow or blood transfusion) and remain healthy in the process. Jones, a kidney recipient and organ donor educator, received a kidney after waiting five long years. But, while he was waiting, Jones refused to let dialysis stop him from leading a normal, productive life. On Sept. 25, 2001, Jones, a young African American Christian man, found a donor in Patricia Abdullah, a White Muslim woman whom he met while enrolled in a four-day, personal self-development seminar earlier that year.

"When I was at the self-development seminar and told them my story, these people and these strangers actually started to work together to help me find a kidney donor, and they all agreed that they would go home and ask five friends and just continue spreading the word. At one of the days of the seminar, I was talking to a guy about my situation and I told him that my blood type was O positive. A lady overheard and just came over and said that she



Mike Jones

also was O positive and that I should make a proper request. I asked her would she donate her kidney to me and she agreed. She got tested at UCLA and it turned out that not only did we match ... we were a perfect match. The doctors said we could not have been a better match unless we were born identical twins. God was truly at work."

After the surgery, Jones was told that it would take him in excess of a year to get back to his normal course of activities, but he determined to best that time. Jones pushed himself so that he was able to participate with his normal activities within six months of his transplant.

But, he didn't stop there. Jones became a dedicated advocate for transplants and participated in a number of events to help the cause.

In July 2002, Jones participated in the Dina LaVigna Breath of Life Triathlon Relay where he rode 24.8 miles on his bicycle. On Sept. 25, 2002, Jones celebrated his one-year anniversary as a Gift-of-Life recipient and helped raise money for the Salud Foundation to open the first dialysis center in South Africa. In March 2003, Jones celebrated the launch of his dream – the One Miracle Celebration of Life Foundation. Through the foundation, he has been able to help facilitate suc-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 25)

Rare diseases afflict over 25 million

By Larry Lucas
NNPA Columnist

Many in our community have dedicated their lives to addressing issues that others felt powerless to change – from someone as prolific as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement to the everyday hero feeding the hungry in the toughest neighborhoods. When it comes to helping the 25 million people suffering from rare diseases, the spirit to overcome must continue. When a disease is categorized as "rare," many assume it's a faraway problem or something you only hear about in the news. But, that is not necessarily the case: There are nearly 7,000 rare diseases. In fact, a disease is considered "rare" if fewer than 200,000 people suffer from it – hardly a small number.

What's more, those that impact African Americans are often genetically linked – and difficult to prevent. Some rare diseases, like Alzheimer, are well known and have a strong advocacy community surrounding them.

Though technically considered "rare" today, the number of Alzheimer's patients is expected to rise to 13.5 million by 2015 – moving it decidedly into the "common" category. Other rare diseases are less visible to the gen-

eral public – but extremely visible within our community. Sickle cell anemia is a rare, genetic blood disorder nearly 72,000 Americans live with, most of whose ancestors came from Africa.

In fact, one in 12 African Americans carries the sickle cell trait, according to the U.S. Department of Energy Biological and Environmental Research. Sickle cell anemia affects hemoglobin, the red blood cell component that carries oxygen from the lungs to your organs and tissues, then returning carbon dioxide to the lungs. When someone suffers from sickle cell anemia, defective hemoglobin causes red blood cells to stiffen and misshape, clog narrow veins and block the oxygen-filled blood from reaching the body's organs.

Whereas healthy red blood cells live about four months, sickle red cells typically die within three weeks. Some sickle cell patients suffer more mild side effects, such as hand or foot swelling, slight fever and skin discoloration. But others can suffer from extreme pain, blindness or stroke. Sickle cell patients are much more vulnerable to infections and have a harder time fighting them.

Like many rare diseases, there is no cure for sickle cell anemia today. But, there is hope. Just 20 years ago, patients had no pre-

scription options to manage the disease's effects. Today, there are many different treatments. vFor sickle cell anemia and many other diseases the future is promising: a new survey released by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) reveals that there are 400 new medicines in development for rare diseases by America's biopharmaceutical research and manufacturing companies.

Developing these medicines means very little, if patients in need can't access them. Luckily, there are programs available to help patients find and pay for their prescriptions. Since 2005, America's biopharmaceutical researchers and manufacturers have supported the Partnership for Prescription Assistance (1-888-4PPA-NOW; www.pparx.org), which connects patients in need to 475 assistance programs that offer more than 2,500 medicines for free or nearly free. Patients and their families living with rare diseases shouldn't feel powerless. Every day, America's biopharmaceutical researchers are working to ensure they feel just the opposite – hopeful.

Larry Lucas is retired vice president for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).



Teresa White

AIDS Network to brothers: 'Man up,' attend conference

By James Harper
Special to the NNPA from the Daytona Times

Black males in Volusia County are being asked to "man up" when it comes to learning about their HIV/AIDS status.

"More Blacks in Florida are living with HIV or have died from AIDS than any other racial or ethnic group," according to information provided by the Florida HIV/AIDS Minority Network.

"Man Up" is a Department of Health men's initiative focusing on sexually active men who account for the majority of HIV/AIDS cases in Florida. The initiative encourages men to "Man Up" and become involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to accept responsibility for the consequences of their sexual actions. The Volusia/Flagler Minority AIDS Network is hosting a "Man Up" Conference on Saturday, March 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Bethune-Cookman University's L. Gale Lemerand School of Nursing. The event will include lunch.

The free conference will include breakout sessions about sexually transmitted diseases, misconceptions about HIV and HIV and the church. Free rapid HIV testing and flu shots will be available. Tabitha Robinson is the Minority AIDS coordinator for this region based out of Jacksonville. The Florida HIV/AIDS Minority Network was restructured in January 2007 to become more inclusive of all racial/ethnic minorities, improve communications, provide better coordination and eliminate duplication.

"We expect to be able to educate attendees and make them aware of what is going on in our community in reference to HIV/AIDS," Robinson said.

Robinson, who says women are also welcome to attend, added that those attending will be taught how to practice safe sex and can learn their HIV status. HIV/AIDS has disproportionately impacted the African-American community because of the stigma, she stated. She says many feel ashamed if diagnosed with the disease and "they are afraid of being associated with the disease." In spite of the fact that HIV/AIDS has been around for decades, Robinson says there is still a lack of education.

"They (Black men) are not aware of how they can be infected and are afraid to be tested," she added. Teresa White, also known as "Condom Miranda," will be one of the speakers at the event. White, a Minority AIDS coordinator, created a character-based HIV prevention presentation called "Spicin' up Prevention" with Condom Miranda."

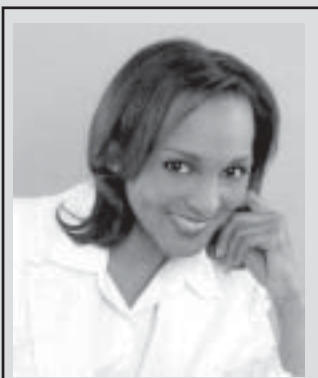
White as Condom Miranda has received many awards from the community during the last eight years of performing throughout Florida and Georgia. She has received national media attention for her presentation. She is an active volunteer in the community for the Gainesville Rosa Parks Quiet Courage Committee where she serves as the secretary for the committee; a member of the local NAACP branch in Gainesville; chairperson for the Alachua County Health Department Linguistic Access Resource committee; and an adjunct Medical Spanish instructor for University of Florida Medical School. White is also the founder and facilitator of Positives Empowering Positives, an HIV/AIDS Support group that meets in Alachua County.

Caption: Teresa White teaches about HIV/AIDS as "Condom Miranda."

THE ADAMS REPORT.®

Fashion, Beauty & Stuff

By Audrey Adams



Audrey Adams

Extra time?

Yippee! This past weekend we gained an entire extra hour of daylight! So, I started to think about what that meant to me in my life and wonder what I was going to do with it. Imagine an extra seven hours of extended light each week. It's almost like getting another full day, or is it? More time to do more things? Whatever happened to "there are only but so many hours in a day?" How do you squeeze an "extra hour" into a conventional twenty-four? There are still only twenty-four hours in a day, right? Uh oh, too many questions and not enough time to get philosophical right now!

For a moment, I am going to go out on a limb and assume that you too "sprung forward" along with your clocks. My hope is that you are feeling newly energized and anxious to make good use of these extra minutes. Refuse to give it up or away! Why? Surely you can use that extra hour to catch up on *your needs*.

The first step is to decide how to use the time. Approach the thought process as if you were planning a party, go through the old who, what, when, where and why scenario to help you zero in on something that will be worthwhile and fulfilling. Use your first hour to think about all the things you could do or have

wanted to do that you have put off for one reason or another. You have seven hours a week to fill with as many different activities as you want. Think creatively.

WHO: You

WHAT: How to put yourself first. What do you want to do?

WHEN: Now. Make a commitment to set and honor your appointment with self.

WHERE: An indulgence or adventure of your choice, step out of your comfort zone for a change.

WHY: Why not? We're only talking about an hour—*your* hour. The time is yours and yours alone to do with as you please.

It's easy enough to get caught up in everyone else's life and forget that you have one too. So, although it's always tempting to give time to someone or something else, think about putting yourself first for a change. You might find that loving and spending time with yourself allows you to prioritize and put other responsibilities and obligations in better perspective. Of course, I have a few suggestions to get you started:

Make a standing appointment to have a manicure and pedicure and keep it.

Grab a blanket and go to the nearest park or your backyard to just lie there and look at the sky and watch the clouds go by.

Go fly a kite!

Sit on a beach, by a pond, stream, fountain anywhere soothing with an exotic drink.

Rent a convertible and take a nice drive in the country with the top down.

Keep a daily journal or finish writing the novel you started years ago.

Go to an art gallery, museum, the zoo, botanical gardens for some culture, peace and quiet.

Contemplate your navel!

Take a self guided tour of antique and thrift shops.

Start a decorating project.

Learn to meditate.

Book a facial, massage or multiple spa treatments.

Listen closely to hear the beat and sound of your life's rhythm.

Go ahead, extend that invitation to yourself right now to take time with and for yourself. Don't give *your time* to anyone else; be totally selfish with it. Surely you can give yourself one hour a day; if not—don't you feel it's about time! Think about it. See you next week.

Visit my website, TALKWITHAUDREY.com and checkout my online radio show, *Talk! with Audrey* for a series of interviews that will inform, motivate and inspire you. Discover your personal power and use it to create the life you want. Tune in to listen to a live broadcast of *TALK! with AUDREY* . . . every Tuesday from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M. on Harlem's WHCR 90.3 FM.

RADIO ON DEMAND: This week's features on TALKWITHAUDREY.com

Author GLORIA FELDT joins, Audrey Adams to talk about her book, *NO EXCUSES: 9 Ways Women Can Change How we Think About Power*. Feldt served as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the nation's largest reproductive health and advocacy organization, from 1996-2005. *Power Make-Over*: Feldt explains how women can change the way they think about power, and therefore achieve the life they want. She coaches women through a power make-over by providing 9 ways that women can achieve the career, personal, and leadership goals. To listen anytime visit www.talkwithaudrey.com

LOVING IT!

By Tony Felton

No 'I' in team

TOGETHER ON ONE ACCORD. On April 24, CHRISTIANS will celebrate the birth, life, death & ASCENSION of the *one* called JESUS CHRIST. And on that date, the ARTS ministry of CRENSHAW CHRISTIAN CENTER EAST (96th & CPW/3PM) will glorify that LIFE in a lavish production of a cast of fifty or more. But no matter how grand of a display it is expected to be, the 'TEAM' consists of so much more than articulate actors in exposition; expounding the GOSPELS as interpreted by its expositor, in this case, Mr. Jesse Kearney. 'TEAM' consists of, the all too often forgotten, behind the scenes mastery and passionate dedication of stagehands, carpenters, make-up artists, costume coordinators/designers, and stage managers who keep the show moving and moving and moving towards perfection.

"I love ministering the Word of God through theater and creating what my colleagues and I call a 'living parable.' It is a highly effective format that is accessible to a congregation of believers and non-believers of all ages. And I cannot say thank you enough to the individuals who work so hard on and off-stage who make all this happen! They give of their time and talent for the glory of GOD! (Jesse Kearney, writer/director)

"The WORD of GOD teaches me to be generous with the Gifts that I've been given. To minister those Gifts to others, as a good steward of JESUS CHRIST. That is what I am called to do!" (Moné Bourne, Costume Coordinator)

"I love what I do because there is never lack in what I can learn. It's so vast that I have more than enough room to spread my wings. And even though I've done it before I'm

still learning new things every day. It aids in my growth as a Child of GOD. And I get to have fun doing it. It is truly like nothing that I've ever experienced." (Charisse Tompkins, Stage Manager)

"It gives us the opportunity to perfect our craft and GOD gets all the praise! It's because of GOD that we do this. This production was actually a sign from HIM that we're doing the right thing. This is our Calling. We know by being a part of this production, we'll be helping to get the WORD out and show everyone GOD's LOVE." (Garry & Jason Clemmons, Thespians)

"I love what I do in the Church Ministry because it gives me the opportunity to help people in the most important area of their lives: Their personal spiritual growth. Everything else in life flows from spiritual growth." (Baltimore Scott, CCCE Church Administrator)

"To be or not..." There is no question whatsoever that the ARTS Ministry of CCCE WILL 'B' in full swing to present their version of this MAN whom the world can't quite figure out: Was HE the MESSIAH? The CHRIST? The self-proclaimed SON of GOD? Just a prophet or a just another lunatic among the sea of others during his day? But one thing is undeniable: It has been over two thousand years and HE remains the TALK; a plethora of stories, documentations, artistic displays, board room discussions and verbal controversies continue about this MAN. The mere mention of HIS name can cause a riot in certain circles. This MAN known as JESUS CHRIST, crucified by the Romans, the superscription of HIS accusation, written above HIS head, in Greek, Latin and Hebrew proclaiming HIM to be the KING OF THE JEWS; now proclaimed by CHRISTIANS world-wide as LORD of Lords and the KING of Kings, HE continues to fascinate us all, saints or sinners. It WILL be interesting to see how Jesse L. Kearney, Jr. expounds upon HIS birth, life, death and RESURRECTION. Yyyyyyyyyyyyyy TEAM!

Will Angola be the next Libya?

Special to the NNPA from the GIN

More than a dozen protestors including a popular rap artist were arrested recently as the Angolan government attempted to head off a protest against the 32-year rule of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos.

The protest began when an anonymous group of individuals set up a website announcing "a new revolution of the Angolan people." Government officials rebuked the protest. "Angola is not Egypt. Angola is not Libya. Angola is not Tunisia," said one official. Dino Matross, secretary general of the ruling party, was more blunt. "Anyone who

demonstrates," he said, "we're going to get you." Luaty Beirão, a popular Angolan rapper also known as Brigadeiro Mata Frakus believes the political parties are out of touch with Angolan people.

At a recent gig, he called on President Dos Santos to step down while a large audience chanted "Fora!" ("Out!") Although Angola is the continent's first producer of crude oil along with Nigeria, the majority of its people live beneath the poverty line and the gap between rich and poor is one of the widest in the world.

Rafael Marques, a noted journalist, observed: "Opposition is weak, but unhappiness with the ruling MPLA party is overwhelming."



The Team: Ladies (l/r) Moné Bourne/Charisse Tompkins Men (l/r) Jesse Kearner, Jr./Garry & Jason Clemmons/Baltimore Scott



Arne Duncan

Education Secretary: Most schools may miss No Child Left Behind goals

Special to the NNPA from the
AFRO-American Newspapers

Changes to the No Child Left Behind program must be made before the abandonment of America's at-risk children to failure becomes more deeply engrained, Education Secretary Arne Duncan told a House committee last week.

"No Child Left Behind is broken and we need to fix it now," Duncan told the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Duncan said that 82 percent of U.S. schools could fail to meet the education goals set by No Child Left Behind—up 45 percent from last year. Duncan wants Congress to examine the Bush-era law to make sure students are getting the best education possible.

"This law has created dozens

of ways for schools to fail and very few ways to help them succeed," Duncan said. "We should get out of the business of labeling schools as failures and create a new law that is fair and flexible, and focused on the schools and students most at risk."

Duncan argued that the law requires all states to use uniform standards in how they meet Adequate Yearly Progress; a measure he said prevents states and local jurisdictions from tailoring their curriculum to meet the needs of students. However, some disagree with Duncan's assessment, claiming that changing the law would give underperforming schools a free pass.

"If we're going to try, in the name of closing the achievement gap, to whitewash the underperformance

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 25)

Novelist Sapphire to headline City Tech's Literary Arts Fest

Bestselling author and poet Sapphire, whose novel *Push* became the Oscar-winning 2009 film *Precious*, will read from her work at New York City College of Technology's (City Tech) 30th Annual Literary Arts Festival, to be held in the College's 900-seat Klitgard Center Auditorium, 285 Jay Street (at Tillary), Downtown Brooklyn, on Tuesday, April 12, 2011.

The festival begins at 5:45 p.m., with Sapphire scheduled to read at 6:45 p.m. Admission is free and the festival is open to the public. For more information, contact Prof. George Guida, festival coordinator and host, at gguida@citytech.cuny.edu/718.260.5394.

Sapphire will be introduced by Michael Cirelli, director of the high school poetry program Urban Word NYC, and will share the stage with the Norwegian jazz/poetry ensemble The Science Fair, and with City Tech's own award-winning student and faculty writers.

Her long-awaited second novel, *The Kid*, will be published by Penguin in April.

Sapphire's novel *Push* (1996) won the Book-of-the-Month Club's Stephen Crane Award for First Fiction, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's First Novelist Award, and in Great Britain, the Mind Book of the Year Award. *Precious* received the Academy Award for Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actress, in addition to the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Awards in the U.S. Dramatic Competition at Sundance.

Sapphire is author of two collections of poetry. The first, *American Dreams*, was cited by *Publisher's Weekly* as "One of the strongest debut collections of the nineties." About her latest book of poetry, *Poets & Writers Magazine* wrote, "With her soul on the line in each verse, her latest collection, *Black Wings & Blind Angels*, retains Sapphire's incendiary power to win hearts and singe minds."

Sapphire's work has been translated into more than 15 languages



Sapphire

and has been adapted for stage in the United States, South Africa and Europe. She has performed her work at the Nuyorican Poet's Café, Franklin Furnace, the Bowery Poetry Club, Literaturwerkstadt in Berlin and Apples & Snakes in London.

Her poetry, fiction and commentary have appeared in *The Black Scholar*, *Bomb*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New York Times Book Review*.

Sapphire has taught literature, fiction and poetry workshops at SUNY Purchase, Trinity College and the Writer's Voice in New York City. She has taught graduate writing workshops in MFA programs at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Brooklyn College and the New School for Social Research. In 1990, she received an Outstanding Achievement in Teaching Award from Joyce Dinkins, then First Lady of New York City, for her work with lit-

eracy students in Harlem and the Bronx.

In 2010 she received the Distinguished Alumna Award from Brooklyn College and she was a recipient of a United States Artist Fellowship in 2009. She lives in New York City.

This year's festival is sponsored by City Tech's Departments of English and African American Studies and generous grants from Poets and Writers, Inc., and the New York City College of Technology Foundation. Light refreshments will be served.

New York City College of Technology (City Tech) of The City University of New York (CUNY) is the largest public college of technology in New York State. Located at 300 Jay Street in Downtown Brooklyn, the College enrolls more than 15,400 students in 62 baccalaureate, associate and specialized certificate programs. An additional 16,000 students annually enroll in continuing education and workforce development programs.

Public school parents are fed up with budget cuts threats

Concerned NYC Public School parents spoke out this week at City Hall regarding the state's proposed \$1.5 billion education budget cuts. In strongly worded statements, parents expressed their collective frustration and displeasure regarding the rising class sizes, program cuts, and teacher layoffs that would happen if budgets are slashed. Parents directed most of their anger not at their Governor in Albany, but rather at their long lost education mayor.

"NYC cannot afford to allow

Mayor Bloomberg to cut our education budget and get rid of our teachers," said parent organizer Rebecca Woodard. "As parents, we are fighting for our children and teachers to receive the funding they need to be successful. We must stop him from exercising his ridiculous power and demand he lives up to his self-proclaimed title as the 'Education Mayor'. I am here on the steps of City Hall letting him know that we will NOT go away, we will NOT stop and we will keep coming back."

Parents are particularly angry at

the threats Mayor Bloomberg is making about their teachers' job security and fed up with the Mayor trying to draw them into a collective bargaining negotiation concerning LIFO. High School parent, Larry Wood comments, "What's particularly outrageous to me is that the Mayor has spun the teacher lay-offs into a debate on HOW the lay-offs should be conducted. That's NOT the issue. The issue should be WHY are we laying off thousands of teachers at all!! We should be focused on stopping the cuts not a better pro-

cess to implement them."

Having experienced last year's cuts, including the loss of some 4000 teachers through attrition and mid-year in-school reductions averaging 6%, parents voiced anger at additional proposed reductions on kids and schools: "My fourth grader now gets gym once every six days, my 5th grader's combined music and drama program takes place with 60 other kids on a piece of a shared auditorium stage, and my special needs Kindergartener was placed in a class of 27 kids even

though the DOE's own Committee on Special Education recommended a program no larger than 12 kids," said Noah E Gotbaum, President of Manhattan's Community Education Council for District 3. "At the classroom and school level, the fat has been cut; now the Mayor wants to go after the bone."

Why these cuts are necessary, however, was not clear to the parents, who offered up some alternatives: "Despite the Mayor's fear mongering and layoff threats, New York City will see

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 25)

AUDREY'S SOCIETY WHIRL



By Audrey J. Bernard
Lifestyles & Society Editor

In 1970, Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. became executive director of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. During his tenure, UNCF's widely recognized motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," campaign was launched by Y&R, the advertising agency, and the Ad Council, which placed the UNCF spots and advertisements around the country.

"When 'A mind is a terrible thing to waste' made its debut, the idea that African Americans should attend college was neither familiar nor widely accepted," said Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D., UNCF president and CEO.

"But forty years of seeing and hearing the famous phrase catalyzed a revolution in attitudes and reality, and today African Americans attend almost every college and university in the country. We are marking this anniversary, not only to celebrate how far we've come, but how far we still have to go before every American can get the education they need and the nation needs them to have," Dr. Lomax concluded.

The motto which is one of the best known and most successful ad campaigns in history has yielded measureable results: 280,000 college graduates, and \$3.3 billion raised to provide scholarships to students at over 900 colleges and universities around the country and financial support for UNCF's 39 member historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

UNCF celebrated this groundbreaking collaboration by presenting its lifetime achievement awards to Jordan, Y&R and The Ad Council at its "A Mind Is...Gala" celebrating the fortieth anniversary of its famous motto "A mind is a terrible thing to waste" Thursday, March 3, 2011 at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel in Times Square, New York City.

During the tribute, former President William Clinton praised his longtime friend Jordan and the other honorees via video and applauded UNCF for its decades of work educating people of color.

Dr. Lomax presented UNCF's highest honor to Jordan, Y&R and the Ad Council. Y&R was represented by its global chairman and UNCF board member Hamish McLennan, and Edward N. Ney, who was the chairman and CEO

UNCF presents Vernon Jordan, Y&R and Ad Council with lifetime achievement awards



Vernon E. Jordan Jr., Edward N. Ney, Peggy Conlon, Hamish McLennan, William F. Stasior



Roberta Flack, Vernon Jordan



UNCF presidents



Dr. Michael L. Lomax, CESA student Velvet Gunn (Lane College), Pharrell Williams



Linda Johnson Rice, Stephen Gregory Barr, Carol Sutton Lewis



Leecia Eve, Hon. David N. Dinkins, Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.



Barbara North Lightning, Kenneth & Kathryn Chenault



Tamara Harris Robinson, Mark Mason



Dr. Michael L. Lomax, Marc Morial

when UNCF's motto was created and is presently Y&R's chairman emeritus. The Ad Council was represented by president and CEO Peggy Conlon.

The gala raised 2.8 million dollars for UNCF including \$1 million that will go toward UNCF's Campaign for Emergency Student Aid (CESA), a scholarship program to help recession-impacted seniors at UNCF member colleges graduate on schedule.

The nationally-attended annual event was co-chaired by UNCF board members Tamara Harris Robinson, vice president of the Robinson Harris Foundation, and

Mark Mason, chief operating officer and managing director of Citi Holdings, and attracted financiers, attorneys, senior executives from Fortune 100 corporations, prominent education advocates, athletes and entertainers; along with the presidents and alumni of the 39 UNCF member institutions who were presented by UNCF longtime announcer G. Keith Alexander.

David Ushery, anchor, WNBC 4 New York served as Master of Ceremonies. Others participating in the elaborate program included Johnson C. Smith University singers; Rev. Dr. Lester W. Taylor, Jr.;

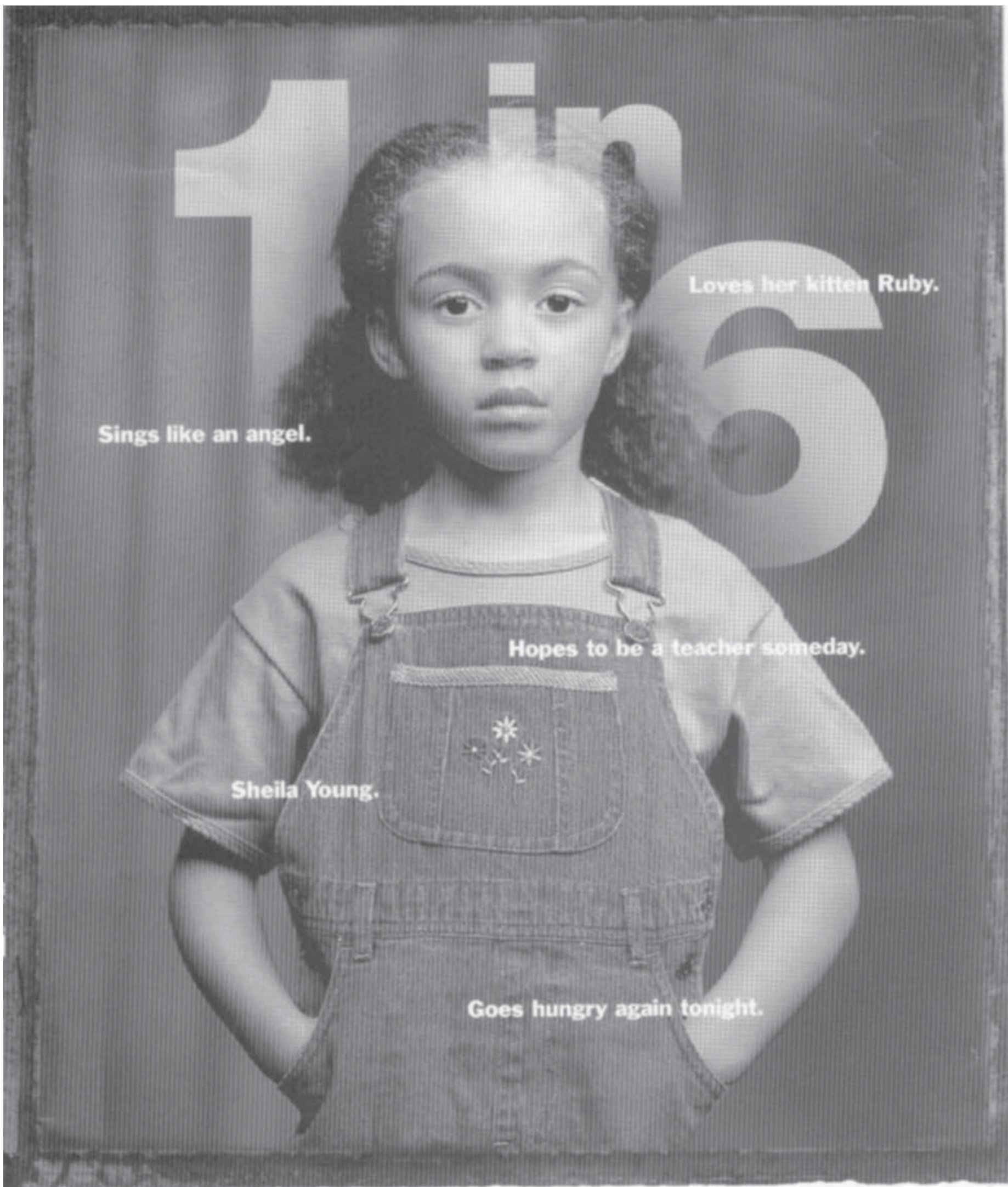
William F. Stasior, David Miller, Esq., and Dr. Wesley C. McClure. During a live musical tribute, legendary singer Roberta Flack serenaded guests with hit songs including "Killing Me Softly" and "First Time Ever I Saw Your Face."

Grammy Award-winning artist and producer Pharrell Williams credited UNCF with helping him see he could be anything he put his mind to and made a commitment to help. "We owe it to them to do what we can, to help UNCF help these great young people, said Williams. "UNCF is on their side, making a commitment to the future and making a difference. Count me

in,"

"Forty years ago the idea that African Americans could and should aspire to a college education was neither familiar nor widely accepted. The fact that today almost every college has African American students — and that the country is led today by an African American president who built his remarkable life on a good education — attests to the power of the idea, and of the campaign that carried the message across the country," remarked Dr. Lomax in his closing remarks.

(Photos by Margot Jordan and Earl E. Gibson III)



Sings like an angel.

Loves her kitten Ruby.

Hopes to be a teacher someday.

Sheila Young.

Goes hungry again tonight.

One out of every six children in America is living in a state of poverty. And that's one too many American dreams broken. One too many American childhoods at risk, threatened by the daily struggle to secure enough food, enough shelter, enough medicine just to survive. Nearly 12,000,000 precious lives hanging in a brutally uncertain balance. Sixteen percent of all our children **POVERTY.** — a poverty rate that's higher than any other age group. But who cares to notice? *America's forgotten state.*

Catholic Campaign for Human Development



1.800.946.4243 • www.povertyusa.org

BET's *RIP THE RUNWAY* is fun, fierce, funky and fabulous!



Rip The Runway sexy co-hosts Mehcad Brooks, Selita Ebanks



LaQuan Smith stands out in front of his sexy designs



On Monday, March 21, 2011 at 10 p.m. (ET/PT), tune into BET Networks for a catwalk celebration of music and fashion featuring some of today's hottest singers performing along with models wearing daring fashions from top designers while delivering an unforgettable evening of fashionable fireworks!

All of these incendiary elements can only mean that it's time for *RIP THE RUNWAY* and once again the provocative fashion forward show did not disappoint. The seventh annual spectacular

fashion extravaganza was hosted by equally sexy **Mehcad Brooks** and **Selita Ebanks**.

What makes this show such a dominating force on Seventh Avenue is its verve. The combination of thumping music coupled with pulsating movement of models struttin' their stuff in the sexiest designs imaginable — before a hyped to the max spectator crowd — will make your heart skip a beat . . . or two! It is truly *off the hook!*

The live broadcast celebration took place on Saturday, February

26, 2011 in hot New York City's Hammerstein Ballroom. This year's *RIP THE RUNWAY* featured striking collections of **Rachel Roy**, **Tennille White**, **LaQuan Smith**, **Man vs. Machine**, **Lila Nikole**, and Haitian designer **WISB "Way It Should Be" Apparel**, along with vibrant performances by musical heavyweights **Wiz Khalifa**, **Keri Hilson**, **Fabulous**, **Lloyd**, **Melanie Fiona**, **Miguel**, and **New Boyz**.

Returning to the hippest runway show on earth was **Cossette Productions**, the famed producers of the GRAMMY Awards and the

record-setting BET AWARDS shows. **Stephen Hill**, president of music programming and specials for BET Networks, along with **Lynne Harris-Taylor**, vice president of specials for BET Networks, are executive producers of the telecast.

Joining the sexy models on the catwalk is the winner of the "Rip The Runway's Amateur Model Contest." The competition finalists appeared on BET's "106 & Park" to compete for the opportunity to walk the runway in *RIP THE RUNWAY*. The as-

piring models were judged by Selita Ebanks, stylist **June Ambrose**, and celebrity makeup artist **Sam Fine**. The winning model was chosen based on personality, photogenic appearance, and sexiness of runway strut.

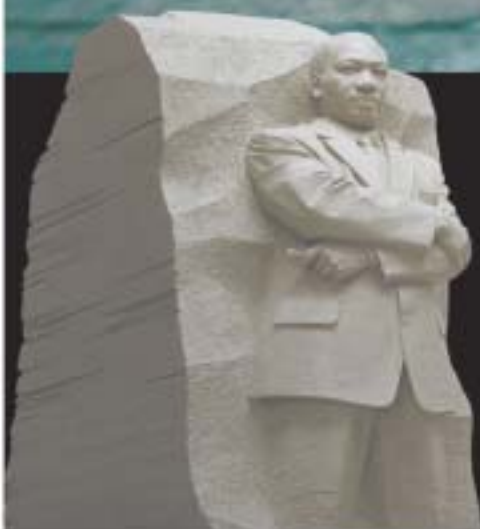
BET Networks, a subsidiary of Viacom Inc. (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), is the nation's leading provider of quality entertainment, music, news and public affairs television programming for the African American audience.

(Photos by Ronnie Wright)



A GENUINE LEADER IS NOT
A SEARCHER FOR CONSENSUS
BUT A MOLDER OF CONSENSUS.

- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Memorial will celebrate the powerful words of Dr. King and their ongoing ability to lead us toward a better world for everyone. Visit this historic landmark in the heart of Washington, D.C., and feel inspired to turn dreams into actions.

AWAKEN HIS SPIRIT IN ALL OF US.



CHEVROLET IS HONORED TO CELEBRATE THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
OPENING AUGUST 2011 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Auburn Avenue Center to house Andy Young Papers

(from page 7)

D.C., where he served as a student trustee alongside Young when they got to know each other.

"I was thinking of going to New York," Reed said. "We sat together for a year as members of the Howard Board of Trustees." It was during that time that Reed said Young told him he needed to come back to Atlanta where the city would need him to be mayor someday. Reed recalled seeing Young weep while viewing Martin Luther King Jr.'s papers at

Sotheby's in New York in 2006 before Young, in conjunction with former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin, got private investors to buy them for \$32 million to be housed here at King's alma mater, Morehouse College. Reed asked Young what moved him to tears.

"The thing that moved me so much was how much I didn't know," Young said about viewing King's papers. "I didn't know how much he worked on his sermons. He made outlines, card files that listed reference books, dates and places where he preached. I don't know where he found the time to do

it." Reed asked Young how he dealt with the stress and controversy of the Civil Rights Movement. Young said "none of us knew how important what we were doing might be. We knew people respected what we were doing.... But, we were a bunch of young men having fun doing the right thing." Young said they were not afraid, and as he read the notes and messages, including those in his own handwriting among the King papers, he didn't really remember many of them.

"I was humbled to have a little something to do with those papers," he said. As for his own papers, Young said he had all these things in his basement where they might get wet or the rats might get at them. "Y'all come get these papers," he said he told the library officials. "If you can find something that might be of interest to somebody, then they need to be preserved and protected."

He said AARL Administrator Henderson said "y'all got some juicy stuff in here." Young added, "There may be a lot of things somebody else might be ashamed of for me, but I have no shame and no guilt. It's important for young people to realize what and how we were doing things. You never know what might inspire the next generation."

Cheryl Oestreicher, Young Papers archivist, said Young's memorabilia was in 686 boxes and included all aspects of his private and public life from his childhood up until now. She said it was both "daunting and thrilling" to go through each box and learn about his life. The boxes included correspondence, speeches, books, scrapbooks, awards, audio-visual material, sermons from Hartford Seminary where he studied after graduating from Howard University, movie scripts, campaign material, radio spots for Congress, items from his eight years as mayor of Atlanta, and his campaign for Georgia governor in 1990.

"All these collections tell stories," Oestreicher said. They are stories more than about Andrew Young. They are about Atlanta, Georgia, the nation, international community, the Civil Rights Movement, history, government, politics, minority business, sports the arts. . . . And, they contain new stories waiting to be told.

"The life he's led and the willingness to share it with others is a gift," she said. "His life and

legacy will be preserved for years to come."

During their conversation, which was moderated by WAGA-TV Anchor Amanda Davis, Reed also asked Young how he prevented his heart from hardening from his detractors. "How did you manage the difficulty and the controversy?" Reed asked. "Counsel me," he added with a smile.

Young said he "learned not to worry. . . . You really have to trust in God. . . . If it's supposed to be, it's supposed to be." "The whole pattern of the Civil Rights Movement was to do the best you could, knowing that you were going to fail," Young said. Referring to the tough campaign in Birmingham, Young said after three months, both White and Black leaders wanted them to give up. Young said King retreated to a room, got into bed with the pillow over his head talking with his wife Coretta. He then emerged with his overalls on and said he was sorry, you may be right, but we have to go on. When King was arrested and jailed during the Birmingham campaign, he responded to a newspaper advertisement by White preachers condemning him by writing what is now famously known as the "Letter from the Birmingham Jail." Young said Quakers made 100,000 copies and circulated it around the world.

"That changed everything," he said, and the Civil Rights Act was passed followed by the Voting Rights Act followed by the dismantling of segregation throughout the South. Young praised Reed for his work as Atlanta's 59th mayor, noting that he has been able to get federal dollars to support several Atlanta projects, and is involved in helping the state secure federal funding for the ports in Savannah — \$70 million, Reed interjected. He noted Reed's relationship with President Barack Obama, which predates Obama's election as president, is helping the entire state.

"Atlanta mayors have always had enough vision for Georgia, even when it has not been the other way around," Young said.

Pain at the gas pump

(from page 2)

discounted food at Wal-Mart and eat out less. I'm the family breadwinner. I'm at a breakpoint so I have to manage every penny."

Taylor says she and her sons collect cans and bottles and exchange them for cash at a local recycling facility. She and her neighbors sell oranges, lemons, and grapefruits from their backyard fruit trees. "My boys love juice. Instead of paying \$3.00 for a half gallon at the supermarket, we're squeezing our own using a juicer I bought from Goodwill," she related. Last semester she had to borrow text books from classmates and plans to continue buying used books to stretch her paycheck. She says the food pantry in her neighborhood, which distributes foodstuffs to the needy,

is on life support. "They were always my backup when I got into trouble. No more," she said. Experts say families living from paycheck to paycheck are hurt most because of lower income levels and longer commutes. Working families with two full time commuters spend more than 14 percent of their after tax incomes on gasoline.

From neighborhood convenience stores to mega retailers like Wal-Mart, merchants are already seeing the effects said Kiley Rawlins, a spokesperson at Family Dollar. "We've noted that more customers are running out of basic essentials like food, and diapers sooner in the month," he said. At this busy market on East Highland Avenue in San Bernardino, a shopper is buying deeply discounted bananas and lunch meat because he can't afford the rising prices at the nearby big chain

supermarket. He's hoping to get a gas voucher from a nearby church.

He admits that's iffy.

"Since gas is so expensive, we now have more people coming who are saying, 'I need a gas voucher to get to work, or to get to the hospital.'" said church volunteer Ed Cleveland. "Sadly, we're only giving vouchers to the neediest people." As for Taylor, these days she's happy to have a job and a smaller car. She said, "you might only save a few dollars, but at least you'll feel like you've gained some control, like you're sticking it to Libya's Qaddafi. Sure, these prices are painful, but fortunately more people like me are better prepared."

Rising gas prices are pushing many paychecks to the breaking point but surveys show more Americans are better prepared.

The GOP is eyeing Black vote in 2012

(from page 4)

While West joined the Democratic-leaning Congressional Black Caucus at the start of the 112th Congress, Scott declined. Scott explained to NNPA that while he hoped to work with the Caucus on economic development and education he did not expect the Congressional group to shift party allegiances in the near future, despite socially Conservative leanings among Black voters. "If Black people vote their issues they will vote Republican more often than not, but it's very difficult to overcome the emotional connection to something, even if the facts of their decision don't line up with the intent." Said Scott. Both West and Scott have spoken out against same-sex marriage and abortion rights. Republicans in California received a boost from Black voters in 2008 with the Proposition 8 ballot initiative to repeal a court ruling in favor of gay marriage, and again in 2010 in the vote against the Proposition 19 ballot initiative to legalize marijuana.

Yet, House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) observed that because of the recession the current GOP strategy is heavily based on fiscal conservatism and predicted his party's focus will "be on jobs and not so-

cial issues in the coming election." Scott agreed, saying the right outreach strategy to attract low-income voters is to pursue the government spending cuts as part of that platform without alienating that voting bloc.

"We have to do a better job of stressing how we can encourage entrepreneurship in communities and the improve job searches better public education," said Scott.

"I was raised by a mother who worked 16 hours a day to keep us off welfare.

To help the unemployed and those in need we need to look beyond the compassion of immediate gratification spending that is already killing our finances." The February jobs report from the U.S. Department of Labor indicated Black unemployment is at 15.3 percent, which is the highest of any demographic in the country. With the Black community struggling to find working-class jobs, West has advocated stricter immigration enforcement as a chief plank for the 2012 campaign.

"When you look at immigration it is a multi-headed hydra. It is an economic issue, it is an education issue, a national security issue, it's a health care issue and it's a local criminality issue," West told NNPA.

"We have to start looking at it that way, and not allowing people to

pigeonhole us into thinking that we're xenophobic, because that's not the case." One of Scott's key strategies to win over Black voters regarding public education is private sector reform, where he cited competitive federal Pell grants to improve schools in absence of increases to education spending.

The Affordable Health Care Act is also in the crosshairs for spending cuts sought by Scott and West. Alice Rivlin, a senior economist with the Brookings Institute, said GOP efforts to cut or repeal the law would "make gaining the Black vote difficult" for the GOP in 2012 because more than 30 million low-income voters in the Black and Latino community have benefited from its coverage.

While low-income minorities benefit from the law, Congressional Black Caucus Member Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-SC) recognized the risk that it could alienate Conservative voters. Clyburn compared the passage of the Affordable Health Care Act to former President Leonard B. Johnson's declaration that enacting the Civil Rights Act of 1964 meant "signing away" Democratic influence with Conservative-leaning Southern states for "at least a generation."

Meyers, Jackson State first female president

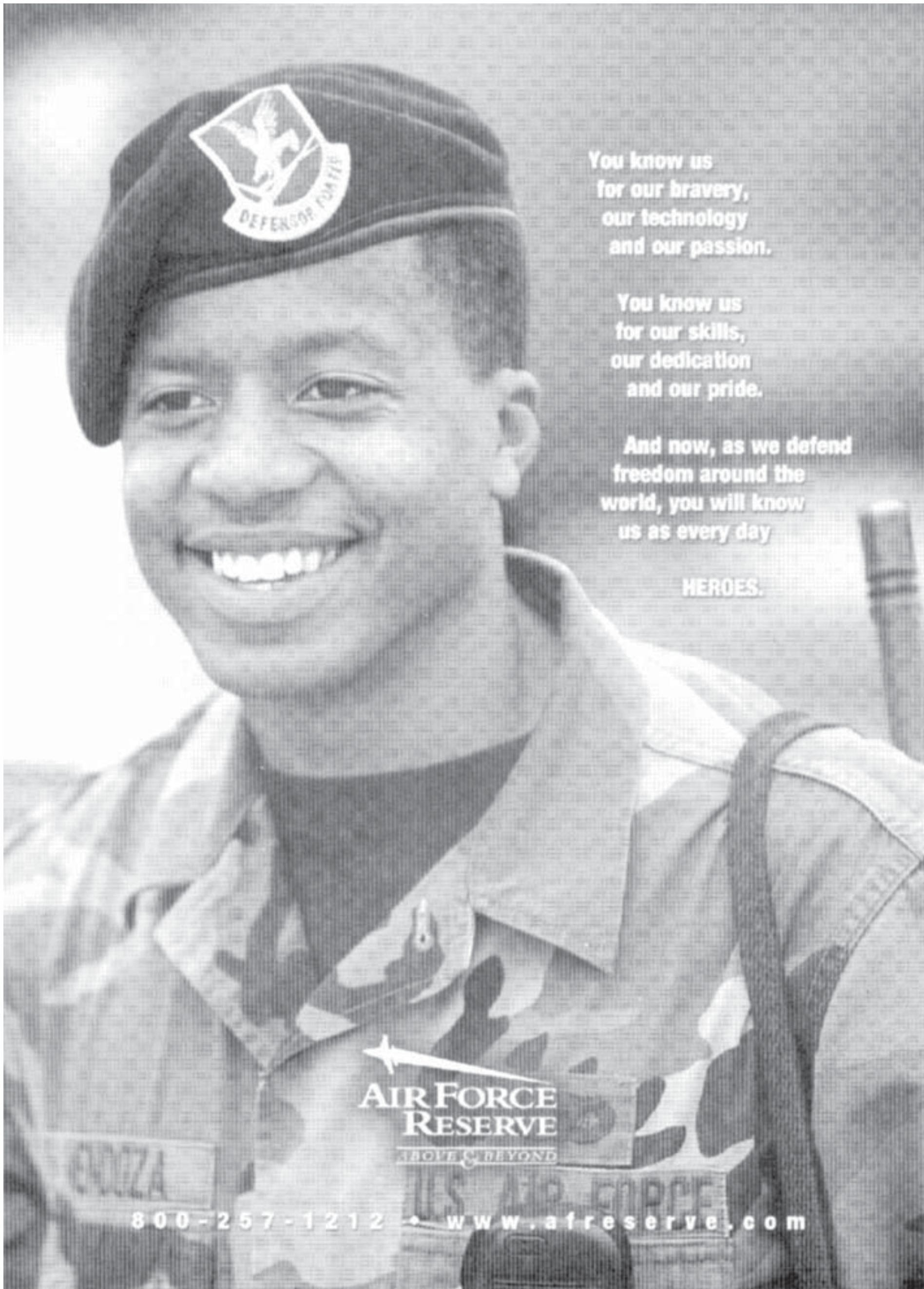
(from page 4)

moved too slowly but accolades from those who appreciated her analytical view. Her hiring at Norfolk State in 2006 was seen as a coup: a female scientist with degrees in mechanical and chemical engineering who completed postdoctoral work at Harvard University.

Meyers is ready to ensure the masses know about JSU. She plans to start in an unlikely place...Mississippi. "I want to take Jackson State to the people, create listening tours and forge new and build upon old relationships," she said. "We must get a buy in from everyone across this state and I'm excited about getting out and meeting the great people of Mississippi." Community members and staffers alike are excited to have Meyers at the helm of JSU.

Dr. Donna Antoine LaVigne, associate director of the JSU Heart Study Program recently told members of the media that Meyers "seemed like she was a big force in a tiny package. Not only being a scientist and being able to look at evidence based on data but also to have compassion for knowing the university must have a role in the community is very positive." Meyers said she's excited to be at JSU because it is a benchmark school. "As a leader among HBCUs, Jackson State was one of the institutions against which other institutions benchmark," she said. "The growth, scholarly productivity, and solid reputation made Jackson State University attractive to me. Meyers made it clear that together, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the community would shape the vision for JSU."

"This is not Meyers State University, this is Jackson State University and together we win," she said.



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The appointment of Constance C.R. White completes new *dream team* at *Essence* magazine

Edited by Audrey J. Bernard
Lifestyles & Society Editor

Veteran journalist, editor and culture & style expert **Constance C. R. White** has been named editor-in-chief of *Essence* magazine, it was announced by Time Inc. editor-in-chief John Huey. Her appointment is effective March 21, 2011.

Prior to joining *Essence*, White served as style director, brand consultant and spokesperson for the leading online company eBay, where she developed content and strategies aimed at women. She is credited with conceiving and creating eBay's first web-zine, as well as developing a comprehensive editorial environment.

White was previously the founding fashion editor for *Talk* magazine, a celebrated style reporter for *The New York Times* and the executive fashion editor for *Elle* magazine. She also served as associate editor at *Women's Wear Daily* and *W* magazine and began her career at *Ms.* magazine, as assistant to co-founder Gloria Steinem.

"We are pleased to welcome this highly accomplished journalist to *Essence* and to Time Inc.," said Huey. "Her 20-year career in editorial has exemplified excellence at the highest levels for many of the world's most trusted brands, and her leadership will assure *Essence's* position as the preeminent publication for African American women."

"As a visionary and consummate communicator, Constance has established an unparalleled connection with women across multiple platforms," commented *Essence* president Michelle Ebanks. "Constance is passionate about the needs of Black women and making sure that they have the tools to make their boldest dreams come true."

Additionally, White is the author of "Stylenoir," a groundbreaking book on Black style, published by Perigee/Putnam. She has written extensively on culture, style, lifestyle and contemporary issues and her work has appeared in *British Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Essence* and *The International Herald Tribune*. White earned a B.A. in Journalism from New York University and has been active in the National Association of Black Journalists. She's also a Black Retail Action Group (BRAG) advisory board member.

Former *Essence* editor Marcia Ann Gillespie, who assisted in the search for the new editor-in-chief, will join the magazine as special projects director, effective immediately. Gillespie will work closely with the editor-in-chief and the president on a range of issues regarding the magazine and the *Essence* brand. With the appointment of White and Gillespie to their respective positions, and Ebanks already in place, the new dream team at *Essence* magazine is now poised to take the magazine to new heights.

As president of *Essence* Communications, Inc., **Michelle Ebanks** leads the number one me-



Constance C.R. White with her proud mom Hazel White

(Photo by Audrey J. Bernard)

dia and communications company dedicated to African-American women. With a multi-platform presence in publishing, live events, and online, the *Essence* brand is "Where Black Women Come First".

The organization is comprised of diverse media and entertainment properties including *Essence* magazine, the preeminent lifestyle magazine for African-American women, with a readership of more than 8 million; *Essence.com*, the largest and fastest growing African-American magazine website; and the internationally renowned *Essence* Music Festival, one of the largest annual cultural and enter-



Michelle Ebanks
(Photo by Joseph Moran)

tainment events in the world attracting more than 400,000 attendees to New Orleans during July fourth weekend.

Ebanks joined the *Essence* family in March 2001 as group publisher and the brand continues to flourish under her leadership. Within an increasingly competitive publishing landscape, the magazine has increased its share of mar-

ket versus its competitors and remains well positioned to serve its audience via innovative brand extensions.

Most recently, Ebanks orchestrated a joint-venture between *Essence* and the Warner Bros Television Group to expand the *Essence* brand across a number of platforms, including the Internet and television.

Prior to joining *Essence*, Ebanks was a vice-president in Time Inc.'s corporate division. She was previously the general manager and financial director for Time Inc.'s *Money* magazine and also served as corporate business manager for Condé Nast's 13 titles.

Fashion journalist and style expert **Constance C.R. White** is one of the country's most respected fashion experts. Prior to her appointment at *Essence* magazine, she was the style director at eBay where she created the first online style magazines for the site and was instrumental in developing eBay's fashion business.

The former *New York Times* style reporter and full frontal fashion reporter/anchor was one of the first fashion journalists to cross over into the digital space where she has become an expert on style marketing and merchandising online and off.

White is the go-to gal for advice on fashion trends, expert commentary and industry analysis. She regularly hosts fashion segments, showcasing trends and style tips on the "Today" show and LX TV. She has appeared as a guest expert on "Project Runway," MTV, "Dr. Oz," "Oprah," "E! Fashion File," "America's Next Top Model," "Rachael Ray," "Entertainment Tonight" and the Style Network's "Style Star."

Her fashion commentary regularly appears in stories by the *Baltimore Sun*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *New York Daily News*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Post* and many other outlets across the country. From 2008-10 she was named one of Fashion's Top 50 Powerbrokers by the *New York Daily News*.

In 2005, White was instrumental in resurrecting the charity fashion event 7th on Sale. She helped make the fundraiser – which brought top designer fashions to a global online audience through eBay – the largest sample sale ever on the Internet. The sale raised millions of dollars for HIV/AIDS charities and was repeated successfully in 2007.

She also helped spearhead the eBay Style Suite at the Academy Awards in 2006 and 2007, introducing Hollywood to the designer clothing and jewelry on eBay. The event has landed eBay fashion on "Good Morning America" and "Access Hollywood" and in *Business Week* and *The New Yorker*.

White has covered the women's and men's collections in Paris, Milan, London and New York and the haute couture. She has brought her expertise to *The New York Times*, to her role as executive fashion editor at *Elle*, associate sportswear editor at *Women's Wear Daily*, and as the founding fashion director at *Talk* magazine.

White ranked in the top ten of the *New York Daily News's* 2008 "Fashion's 50 Most Powerful" and is the author of "Stylenoir," a groundbreaking book on Black style published by Perigee/Putnam. Her work has also appeared in *British Vogue*, *People*, *Essence* and *The Chicago Tribune*.

A trailblazer in the magazine industry, a leader in the women's movement **Marcia Ann Gillespie**



Marcia Ann Gillespie

is a respected and award winning editor and writer. She is a former editor-in-chief of two groundbreaking magazines, *Essence* (1971-1980) and *Ms.* (1993-2001) and was also the president of Liberty Media for Women, the company she co-founded that took ownership of *Ms.* in 1998. Currently the director of special projects at *Essence* she is also a



Constance C.R. White

professor at SUNY Old Westbury College where she teaches writing for media.

Appointed the editor-in-chief of *Essence* at the age of 26, Gillespie rapidly transformed the then fledgling publication into one of the fastest growing women's magazines in the United States. During her tenure the magazine won a National Magazine Award the industry's most prestigious honor. In addition to her role as editor she also served as member of *Essence* Communications' board of directors.

Prior to taking the reins at *Ms.* magazine Gillespie was a contributing editor and featured columnist for the feminist publication. Under her leadership *Ms.* became known for its award winning in-depth articles and investigative pieces.

Gillespie has written extensively about issues relating to the African American community and about women, particularly Black women; several of her articles and essays are required reading in women's studies classes and can be found in anthologies and collections.

The co-author of *Maya Angelou: A Glorious Celebration* (Doubleday 2008). A rousing and inspiring speaker, Gillespie has received numerous honors including the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism, from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and Lifetime Achievement Awards from the New York chapter of the Association of Black Journalists and New York Women in Communications. She was also awarded a Doctor of Letters by her alma mater, Lake Forest College.

Essence Communications Inc. (ECI) is the number one media and communications company dedicated to African American women. With a multi-platform presence in publishing, live events, and online, the *Essence* brand is "Where Black Women Come First."

The company's flagship publication, *Essence* magazine, is the preeminent lifestyle magazine for African American women; generating brand extensions such as the *Essence* Music Festival, *Essence Black Women in Hollywood*, *Window on Our Women* (WOW I & II) and *Smart Beauty I, II & III* consumer insights, the *Essence* Book Club, *Essence.com*, and ventures in digital media (mobile, television and VOD).

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an almost \$2 billion budget surplus in 2011, primarily due to higher Wall Street revenues. Allocating just 15% of this will prevent all teacher layoffs," said Stefanie Goldblatt, public school parent of two. "And at a time when services for our most vul-

nerable are being decimated, it is unconscionable to be offering tax cuts to the wealthiest among us. The Millionaire's tax alone could generate enough to make up for all education cuts - statewide."

Some wondered where the mayor's business expertise has gone. Shino Tanikawa, District 2 Community Education Council

Member, said: "The Mayor, who prides himself as a business leader, apparently is unable to manage the City's budget. He threatens to lay off teachers while increasing the budget for IT related contracts for the DOE, because the DOE did not budget properly. Are computer consultants more important to education

than teachers? Our children need teachers before they need high-priced consultants, many hired on no-bid contracts."

Parents also shared their observation that weak schools drive families out of the city faster than anything else, something that seemed lost on Mayor Bloomberg, whose PlaNYC invited new residential development, full of family amenities and multi-bedroom apartments, but did not address the long term needs of the city's school system.

"It is uncertainty about what will be left of our public schools

after the education budget is slashed yet again, and not the extension of a modest existing tax, that will drive families and their tax dollars from our City and State. Preserving the existing source of funding in a budget shortfall is both good policy and good business," said Mark Diller, public high school parent. There is a citywide schools meeting at 6pm this evening at The High School of Fashion Industries (225 West 24th Street) to continue the discussion about education budget cuts and determine next action steps for parents.

Angry workers march, fight back as wages fall, rights threatened

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

said. "All of them are focused on stopping Gov. Scott Walker's bill that would dismantle the union rights of 1,000 public sector workers." In Virginia, Montana, Ohio, Iowa, and several other states, bills have been introduced to incorporate anti-collective bargaining laws into their respective state constitutions.

There is also a movement to end the dues-check off, which the right wing calls "paycheck protection" laws. This legislation passed in Alabama, Utah, Idaho—and is being pushed in Wisconsin as well as Arizona, Kansas, Mississippi, and Missouri. This "budget bill," as the Wisconsin law is called, would deny public workers collective bargaining rights over anything except wages, according to activists.

Most of these workers, who work in state government and public jobs, are not high paid and privileged as the corporate media has portrayed, they added.

"Walker's actions are a signal to big business minded governors in all states that this is the way to go," argued Saladin Muhammad, national chairman of the Black Workers for Justice and an executive member of the N.C.

Public Service Workers Union-UE Local 150.

On Feb. 22, a coalition of labor activists, the NAACP, other civil rights organizations, and religious leaders rallied in front of the N.C. General Assembly in Raleigh, calling for an end to N.C. law banning public employees from collective bargaining. The law has been in place since 1959. The protestors in North Carolina noted that Black workers earn higher wages and receive better workplace protections through bargaining.

According to Muhammad, the Black worker is the "800 pound gorilla" in the room. "Across the country, about 30 percent of public sector workers are Black," Muhammad said.

"It was the civil rights and Black power movements that brought most Blacks into public sector jobs and now there is an attempt to portray the public sector as charity for Black people." Black and White workers are being pitted against each other, but this strategy is starting to backfire, he argued. "In my opinion the term 'middle-class' is a code word for White people," said Ms. Black. "The media likes to portray White public sector workers as being better off, compared to the low-wage Blacks," she said. "But, now White workers in places such as Wisconsin are being hit with the

same red pen."

Junior Ricardo Stanton, internet radio host and producer of the Digital Underground and The Cyberspace Sanctuary, told The Final Call class warfare in the U.S. is heating up.

"The goal of the super-rich and their flunkies in government is to accomplish in the U.S. what their totalitarian idols did in Germany and Russia, shut down or co-opt the union movement," said Stanton. "This is part of their overarching plan to gut the middle class and usher in a neo-fascist police state in this country." Currently some 16 states are weighing laws to trim the power of unions, including New Jersey, Michigan, Idaho, Tennessee, Indiana, and Florida. Brenda Stokely, the eastern regional organizer for the Million Worker March, said no one wants to talk about "the greatest rate of public sector workers has been Black African-descendent women," who have risen up from the welfare movements into these unions—but the unions tend to want to overlook their role. "The cosmetic face of union leadership must change in order to fight this public warfare," Stokely said. "If a real movement is to be built, workers must realize they need a leadership that is militant."

Education Secretary: Most schools may miss No Child Left Behind goals

(from page 17)

of schools, that's really regrettable," Bush administration Education Secretary Margaret Spellings told The Washington Post.

Duncan has seen resistance on his own education policies. Duncan's "Race to the Top" plan tied federal compensation to academic achievement, but many officials at at-risk school districts said education should be funded on the basis of need and not achievement.

"There's a tremendous problem with 'Race to the Top' and it's fundamental," Nathan A.

Saunders, president of the Washington Teacher's Union, told the AFRO last year. "The structure is that we are going to reward achievement. The problem is not all children achieve at the same level or at the same time."

At last week's hearing, committee members largely listened to Duncan without offering criticism, and agreed with the need for change to the American educational system.

"Although we may not always see eye-to-eye, you and I share a belief that the current system is broken and in desperate need of repair," Rep. John Line, (R-MN), told Duncan during the hearing.

A time to strengthen foreclosure prevention

(from page 8)

Hilary Shelton, NAACP Washington Bureau director and senior vice-president for Advocacy in part said at a recent panel convened by the National Council of LaRaza, "We're looking for transitions. We're seeing victims being blamed for what happened to them . . . The government has to be involved." Had the mortgage industry done its job well, the response to the foreclosure crisis

would have been more effective. Against a backdrop of millions of foreclosures that in turn triggered a national recession, government indeed has an important role to play.

Charlene Crowell is the Center for Responsible Lending's communications manager for state policy and outreach. She can be reached at: Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org. For more information on foreclosures and other consumer lending issues, visit: www.responsiblelending.org

Kidney Day: The Mike Jones story

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cessful donations to four people by bringing awareness about the need.

"I realized when I was going through it that there was a real lack of information out there about kidney disease, and dialysis. The Internet is helpful, but I really had to educate myself. I didn't want anyone else going through what I went through. I wanted to share this information with the masses. I wanted to give people information from a patient's perspective, not a

doctor's or psychiatrist's. I wanted to let people know what they were going to experience through someone who had already experienced it."

In an effort to support his foundation, Jones (a music industry veteran) combined his love of jazz with the One Miracle Celebration of Life Foundation to create an annual Evening of Jazz that is gathering some of today's top smooth jazz artists to help him spread the word. On Sept. 9th in Los Angeles, the foundation will host its sixth annual Evening of Jazz. The event will feature Paul Jackson Jr. and special

performers Greg Adams, Jeff Lorber, and a surprise guest.

In addition to this event and a host of upcoming speaking engagements—including being a panelist at the California Science Center in honor of World Kidney Day—Jones is a donate life ambassador for organ and tissue donation as well as a co-author of "Chicken Soup for the African American Soul, The Power of Mentorship—Finding your Passion," and his upcoming book "In the Company of Angels" which is a written account of his life. Mike Jones.

Gender equity is everybody's business

(from page 8)

Indeed, with elected leadership, our numbers are dropping. We must celebrate this scarce leadership, and more importantly commit to find new leaders, young women who have been nurtured and encouraged to step up and step out into leadership.

In these harsh economic times, it makes sense to pay attention to the macroeconomic beat down

that the African American community has experienced, which often fully manifests itself with the marginalization of African American men in the labor market. Concomitantly, the status of African American women cannot be ignored. We lead too many African American families, are responsible for too many of our children, and are paid too inequitably to be able to manage.

Gender equity is not a women's

imperative, it is a community imperative.

During this Women's History Month, and moving forward, our community must commit to our women as a way of committing to our future.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is president of Bennett College for Women and author of *Surviving and Thriving: 365 Days in Black Economic History*, available at www.lastwordprod.com.

The new Jim Crow

(from page 8)

media and political strategies manufactured the popular images of the War on Drugs as an assault on scary, violent Black male drug dealers, when in fact "[s]tudies show that people of all colors use and sell illegal drugs at remarkably similar rates.

If there are significant differences in the surveys to be found, they frequently suggest that whites, particularly white youth, are more likely to engage in drug crime than people of color." Meanwhile, as The New Jim Crow clearly shows, the dramatic increases in mandatory sentence lengths even for nonviolent offenses and the far-reaching consequences that come with being classified as a felon even after a sentence is com-

pleted have made incarceration today a historically punitive form of social control and social death—at exactly the same time as record numbers of African Americans are being confined.

This is how mass incarceration functions as the new Jim Crow, with predictably destructive results for Black communities and families. For those of us concerned about our nation's Cradle to Prison Pipeline crisis, this latest danger threatens to overwhelm and destroy millions of our children's futures. By identifying it and giving it a name, Michelle Alexander has placed a critical spotlight on a reality our nation can't afford to deny. We ignore her careful research and stay silent about mass incarceration's devastating effects at our own and our nation's peril.

WHAT'S GOING ON

By Victoria Horsford

OUR GLOBAL VILLAGE

HAITI: Ousted Haiti President Bertrand Aristide returns home this week after seven years of exile in South Africa. He returns home days before the March 20 Haitian presidential runoff. A The Trinidad Express piece "Why Does The U.S. Fear Aristides Return" is as pregnant with facts related to Aristide's tumultuous time as Haiti's president as the 3/15/11 NY Times op-ed piece by Amy Wilentz, "The Haitian Lazarus" is devoid of same. Why would US State Department spokesman Philip Crowley say that Aristide's return to Haiti is "an unfortunate distraction. Mark Toner, another US State Department colleague adds. "Aristide's return before Sunday's decisive vote can only be seen as a conscious choice to impact Haiti's elections." And, why not? May that same spirit of democracy that has infected North Africa spread to North America's oldest republic, Haiti!

JAPAN: Our planet is a constantly shrinking global village. Whenever one village is afflicted it affects all others around the planet. The 9.0 magnitude earthquake which devastated Japan last week seems like 3 Mile Island, Chernobyl, Katrina, and Haiti earthquake 2010 writ large. The earthquake, the accompanying tsunami, and the subsequent radiation leaks from its nuclear reactors all conspire as a cautionary tale for the entire family of man about technology versus the forces of nature.

Already European countries have temporarily shut down their nuclear reactors. The US will have to revisit any new adventures with nuclear reactors while monitoring extant ones. Japan acknowledges this earthquake as its worst disaster since WWII. Japan requested assistance from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. The world responds to Japan; but the radiation leaks are airborne and have spread, endangering those who are there to help stem the crisis. Japanese and foreign nationals alike are leaving the country as news spreads about the nuclear reactors and the widespread radiation leaks, which are airborne traveling along the borders, contaminating water supplies.

HARLEMNEWS

The Museum for African Arts on Fifth Avenue on 110 Street, in Harlem, is the recipient of a \$3 million Ford Foundation gift. The Museum's lobby will bear its name. The Museum for African Arts which will be housed in the new \$90 million, 19-story condo building which opens this fall. Elsie McCabe-Thompson is the Museum director.

The Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement celebrates 25 Years of Service and will host its silver anniversary Let Us Break Brad Together Awards Dinner in grand style at Harlem's premier supper club, the Uptown

Grand, located 2110 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, on April 14 at 6 pm. The 2011 HCCI Gala honorees are Honorable David Dinkins; Bruce S. Dale, Sr. VP Community Preservation Corporation; Reverend Dr. William M. James, Pastor Emeritus, Metropolitan United Methodist Church; James Allen, Executive Director, Addicts Rehabilitation Center; Stephanie Weldon, Board Member, Greenhope Services for Women, Inc. Ticket price points are \$500 to \$2500. Sponsorship categories range from \$5000 to \$50,000.

Founded 25 years ago, HCCI is a consortium of Harlem-based, interfaith congregations determined is to make a difference in the lives of Harlem residents, via programs such as affordable housing, safe streets, economic development - individual and group - health care, education, and community action empowerment. Gala proceeds will benefit ongoing HCCI work. For more info, visit www.hcci.org.

NEWSMAKERS

CBS NEWS named Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews, who was born in the Dominican Republic, the Vice President of News.

A Toast to A Very Special Lady, Inez Dickens, Assistant Deputy Majority Leader, NYC Council, on March 23, 6-9 pm, will be held at the Woolworth Tower Kitchen, located at 9 Barclay Street, NYC. Tickets are \$100, \$250, \$1000. RSVP to Dickens2013@gmail.com or 212.749.2580.

Black Enterprise and Jacqueline Morrow's Sachelle Hair Company are indistinguishable. A native New Yorker, Morrow navigates the \$5+ billion hair weave/wigs industry with focus, aplomb and escalating profits. A 25-year veteran hair stylist/specialist Morrow is not only the African-American entrepreneur who owns a factory that manufactures hair for weaving, she owns the building where it is housed as well. The Sachelle Hair Company is located at 195 Utica Avenue in Brooklyn. Morrow buys most of the hair used from India and Brazil. Black women are major consumers of hair weave products.

Donna Summer, diva Grace Bumbry, book publisher Karen Hunter, journalist/publisher Flo Anthony, mannequin Beverly Johnson are among Morrow's long list of notable clients. For more info Sachelle Hair Company info, visit besthairontheplanet.com.

According to a recent, first-ever Forbes Magazine list of richest HIPHOP/RAPPERS. Sean (P. Diddy) Combs heads the top five list with personal wealth of \$475K. He is followed by Jay-Z who is worth \$450K, who is followed Dr. Dre at \$125K. Chris (50 Cent) Jackson ties with Bryan Birdman Williams at \$100K each. I have always had problems with the Forbes' evaluations. A few weeks ago, this column referenced 50 Cent and his Black Enterprise Magazine cover story which identified his personal worth at \$250K.

WINTER/SPRING EVENTS

A mind-body workshop titled HAITI, Sharing Stories, Healing



Jay Z



Dionne Warwick



Janet Jackson



Diddy Combs

Minds," a conversation with Deepak Chopra, trauma specialist Dr James Gordon, will be held at ABC Carpet, at 888 Broadway, 18/19 Streets, Manhattan, on March 17 at 6:30 pm. Actor Jamie Hector, author and mental health advocate Terrie Williams and psychologist Glorious Dunkerly are Workshop's special guests. Workshop special guests

William Shakespeare's characters are alive and will in NYC. The Take Wind and Soar TWAS Productions presents the epic tragedy ANTONY AND

CLEOPATRA, a story about doomed lovers, a Roman general and the queen of Egypt respectively. Michael Early and Debra Ann Byrd play the title roles. Directed by Petronia Paley, the play is housed at The Poet's Den, located at 309 East 108 Street, in East Harlem, opens on March 17 and runs through March 27. Tickets are \$18. A special opening night event, ticketed at \$50, includes a black-tie gala reception where NYC Councilwoman Inez Dickens will be honored. Founded by Debra Allen Byrd, in

1991, TWAS is a women-led NYS nonprofit dedicated to supporting women, youth, and classically-trained actors of color. Call 718.764.7559 or 212 427.1445 for ticket reservation and performance details.

Another Shakespeare tragedy, MACBETH, starring an African American actor, John Douglas Thompson, opened recently at the Theatre for a New Audience in Manhattan.

Janet Jackson brings her "Number Ones, Up Close and Personal" concert tour on 3/18, 3/19 and 3/21, to Radio City Music Hall on Sixth Avenue at 50th Street, in Manhattan.

Music muse and current NBC-TV Celebrity Apprentice Dionne Warwick promotes her new book MY LIFE AS I SEE IT at the Dwyer Cultural Center at 258 St. Nicholas Avenue, on 123 Street, Harlem, on Sunday, March 20 at 4 pm. RSVP at 212.926.2550.

An international soiree. The FASCINATING AFRICANS COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE (F.A.C.E list) Awards group hosts its inaugural Gala Fundraiser, a black-tie celebration of the continent of Africa and its culture and business ambassadors throughout the Diaspora, at Manhattan's Broad Street Ballroom, on Saturday, March 26. Gala honorees are Angelique Kidjo, entertainer; Lilian Blankson; BET International' Ngo Okafor, boxer/model; Bibila Boko, Spain/US Chamber of Commerce executive director' and Edward Armah, fashionista. A fashion show extravaganza produced by Adiree, will showcase African haute couture by Cote Minou and Aya Morrison is on the menu of events. Entertainment will be provided by Kaissa and Janelia. Mpule Kwlagobe Africa's first Miss Universe will serve as mistress of ceremony. Visit www.face2faceafrica.com for more info and ticket reservation.

The Board of the NY Web Center hosts a Spring Educate To Graduate Reception, honoring Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, Catherine Hartnett, WEB Dubois H.S. Principal; and Danny Simmons, Chairman, NYS Council on the Arts and fine artist, at the Akwaaba Mansion, located at 347 MacDonough Street, Brooklyn, on Thursday, March 24 at 6:30 pm. Tickets are \$50. The NYC Web Center is a nonprofit, with four programs - HIPHOP Academy; A Culture Of Respect; Pride-TV and HITZ Magazine - which encourages its HS students to graduate and go on to success in college or a vocation. About 95% of Web Center coeds graduate from HS and are college or vocation friendly. For more info, call 917.887.4816 or visit nywebcenter.org.

Lights, action, camera! The Brooklyn film premiere of "FELONY: NYC: Fresh From Africa," will be held at Le Grand Dakar Restaurant, located at 285 Grand Avenue, Brooklyn, on Sunday, March 27 at 6 pm. Filmmaker's Jaheed Ashley's 97-minute documentary, about a portrait of an artist, stars Nigerian music legend, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, during his 1980s visit to NYC, which includes concert footage. For reservations, call 718.398.8900.

A media consultant, Victoria Horsford, is a Harlem-based journalist and culture historian. Email victoriahorsford@yahoo.com.



By Don Thomas

Jazz Chat

‘Music is something personal for me’

By Deardra Shuler
Contributing Scribe

If you are a jazz aficionado and like the vocal styling of Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughn, Billie Holiday and Nancy Wilson, you should put Jann Parker on your list of extraordinarily talented jazz vocalists as well. Parker has a way of singing the songs of the greats using her own arrangements to make each song uniquely her own.

Her intonation and diction elevates her music to another level. I would even dare to say that after listening to her CDs *Masterpieces and Voicings*, you will agree she is in top form as a charismatic artist and gifted chanteuse. Plan to catch her live with the Harlem Renaissance Orchestra at Tian in the Village of Harlem (TONIGHT) Thursday, March 17th.

“Music is something personal for me. I think one has to live life in order to reflect passion and inject emotion into their music” claims Jann who established the Jazz Preservation Society in her hometown of New Bern, North Carolina. “I enlisted the help of other family members who still live in New Bern since I now live in New York. It is they who are the body and nucleus of the Foundation.”

In 2010, New Bern celebrated its 300 year anniversary. “When I left New Bern at age 15, New Bern was segregated. I was invited to sing at the Jazz and Blues Festival so it was an opportunity to see family. My mother and her two sisters sang with big bands



Jazzy song stylist Jann Parker

as a trio when I was a kid so music is a part of my family,” commented the singer.

“What was stellar about my returning to sing at the Festival in 2004 was that I played to a mixed audience of both Black and white. At the first concert I did in 2002, maybe just 2 whites attended. Change comes about slowly. However, in 2004, I was approached by a white town leader

who wanted to bring whites to the festival because he felt Caucasian town members would enjoy it.

“So he raised the money, brought in and involved the white community. As it turned out, the white folks actually did enjoy the occasion. I think it was an event that marked history in the town,” stated Jann who appears at The Garage located on 7th Avenue South and Christopher Street in

Manhattan with Lou Caputo’s Not So Big Band. She started March 8 and will perform every third Tuesday beginning in April.

Throughout her career Parker has appeared with several jazz luminaries including the late great Leon Thomas. She appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music with Randy Weston wherein she sang his music entitled “African Lady” which encompassed arrangements by Melba Liston and lyrics by Langston Hughes. She has also performed with vocalist and hard bob and soul-jazz drummer Grady Tate.

Parker has worked with the Bob Cunningham Trio as a featured vocalist and with the Larry Ridley Jazz Legacy Ensemble, Spirit of Life Ensemble, Ron Anderson’s Versatile, The Harlem Renaissance Orchestra and in clubs like Sweet Basils, Greene Street Café, West Bank Café, St Peter’s Church, the Rainbow Room, and the New Cotton Club among others.

Jann not only sings but whenever inspired she puts pen to paper and writes lyrics. “Anthony Branker wrote music to a song called “Paris in April.” We all know the song “April in Paris,” so I asked him about his song. He told me it was based around his loving daughter Paris who was born in April.

He described her as a warm and loving person who was a great light in the lives of people around her. After listening to him talk about his daughter I was inspired to write the lyrics to his song.”

When Parker determines her songbook or eclectic musical rep-



Jann poses with renowned drummer Grady Tate (Photo: Deardra Shuler)

ertoire she sometimes chooses her songs via subject or how she feels at the time. “I go with my gut or go with a subject. Love is always a good subject matter. I might choose Ellington or Cole Porter and then put my own spin on it.

“Then again, I might select from the American Songbook but of course it’s always about the jazz musicians’ take on the particular song. Once I get on stage and see the audience, I might change my selection based on the spirit in the room. If audience members make a request and I know the song, I might even include the requested song,” commented Jann.

Parker claims she works with some of the best musicians in the business which includes her own band members: pianist Aaron Graves, drummer Dion Parson, bassist Marcus McLaurine, and alto Mark Gross. Interested parties can obtain Jann Parker’s CDs “Masterpieces” and “Voicings” at www.cdbaby.com



(PICTURED) Tito Jackson with his mother Katherine. He is poised to release his first-ever solo album, So Far So Good, this summer. The lead single is “We Made It.” The last of 9 Jackson siblings to parlay the legendary family name into a solo career with his upcoming release, Tito already holds the distinction of being an inductee of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame for his work as a member of the Jackson 5. A father of three, Taj, Taryll, and TJ, known to the music world as 3T, Tito works closely with his sons who play a heavy hand in the production and creation of So Far So Good and encouraged their father to break back out onto the music scene. “Since losing my brother Michael, I needed to let time pass to heal and repurpose. While I still miss my beloved brother, I’m finally in a good place in my life right now and thrilled to be back performing in front of such large audiences. We broke stadium attendance records with our Jackson 5 concerts, and Janet is doing the same thing now with her Number Ones Tour. It’s who we are and when we step on that stage we just let ‘em have it,” says Tito. Visit him on Twitter @TitoJackson5 and visit: <http://www.TitoJackson.com>

'70s premier Black sexy singer *Teddy Pendergrass* – *Live In '82* on DVD

Edited by **Audrey J. Bernard**
Lifestyles & Society Editor

In the late '70s and early '80s, **Teddy Pendergrass** was an unstoppable musical force. Having come to fame as lead singer for the hit Philly soul act Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, he launched a hugely successful solo career and became the first African American artist to earn five platinum records in a row.

A beloved fan favorite, Pendergrass' sex appeal is still felt and now Shout! Factory is set to release a spectacular performance by the R&B singer — *Teddy Pendergrass – Live In '82* on DVD March 29, 2011. Filmed at London's Hammersmith Odeon in 1982, this incredible concert showcases Pendergrass at the peak of his powers.

Performing hits from his four platinum albums — *Teddy Pendergrass*, *Life Is A Song Worth Singing*, *Teddy* and *TP* — the R&B legend delights the London crowd with energetic soul stompers and steamy serenades.

Filmed weeks before a car accident left him confined to a wheelchair, the concert concludes with a rousing rendition of "Reach Out And Touch (Somebody's Hand)," as he is joined onstage by an adorable chorus of London schoolchildren.

Teddy Pendergrass – Live In '82 set list includes: Medley: I Don't Love You Anymore / The More I Get, The More I Want / You Can't Hide From Yourself; Love T.K.O.; Lady; Where Did All The Loving Go; Come Go With Me; Close The Door; Turn Off The Lights; Only You; Reach Out And Touch (Somebody's Hand). The album contains three bonus performances: I Can't Live Without Your Love; You're My Latest, My Greatest Inspiration; and The Whole Town's Laughing At Me.

Teddy Pendergrass started singing gospel music in Philadelphia churches, becoming an ordained minister at ten years old. While attending public school, he sang in the citywide McIntyre Elementary School Choir and in the All-City Stetson Junior High School Choir. A self-taught drummer, Pendergrass had a teen pop vocal group when he was 15. By his late teens, Pendergrass was a drummer for local vocal group the Cadillacs.

In the late '60s, the Cadillacs merged with another more established group, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes. In 1970, when the Blue Notes broke up, Melvin, now aware of Pendergrass' vocal prowess, asked him to take the lead singer spot.

It's no secret that Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff wanted Marvin Junior of the Dells for their Philadelphia International Records roster. Since the Dells were signed to Chess, they were unavailable.

So, when the gruff'n'ready vocals of Pendergrass came their way, they eagerly signed the group. Beginning with "I Miss

You," a steady stream of hit singles flowed from the collaboration of Pendergrass and Gamble & Huff: "If You Don't Know Me by Now," "The Love I Lost," "Bad Luck," "Wake Up Everybody" (number one R&B for two weeks in 1976), and two gold albums, *To Be True* and *Wake Up Everybody*.

Unfortunately, the more suc-

tenderly," thereby "reaching both those who like sweetness and those who prefer swagger." Nearly all his albums went platinum, and Pendergrass was acknowledged as the premier Black sex symbol of the late 1970s.

Pendergrass signed a new contract with Philadelphia In-

can Music Award for best R&B performer of 1978, and awards from *Ebony* magazine and the NAACP. He was also in consideration for the lead in the movie biopic *The Otis Redding Story*.

The '70s ended, but Pendergrass kept racking up the hits. *TP*, his fifth solo album, went platinum in the summer of 1980 off the singles "Turn Off the Lights," "Come Go with Me," "Shout and Scream," "It's You I Love," and "Can't We Try." *It's Time for Love* gave Pendergrass another gold album in summer 1981, which included the hit singles "Love TKO" and "I Can't Live Without Your Love."

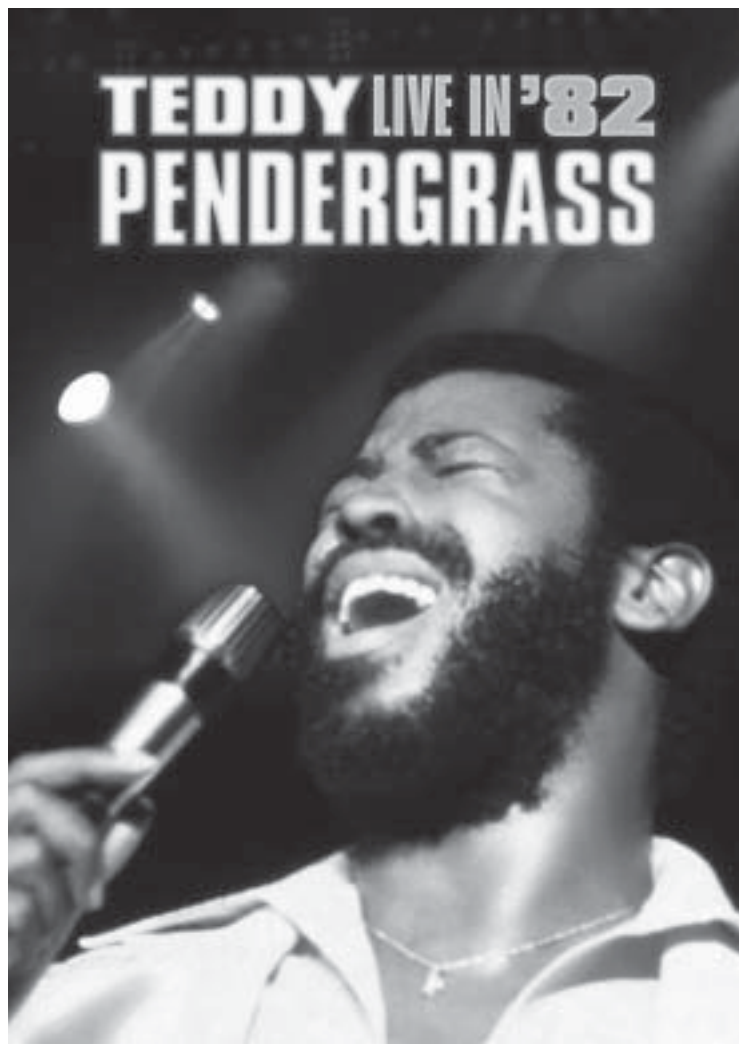
Things changed dramatically

Language. It became his sixth platinum album, affirming both his musical abilities and his fans' loyalty.

His ninth solo album and Elektra/Asylum debut, *Love Language* went gold the spring of 1984. Philadelphia International issued two albums of unreleased tracks, *This One's for You* (1982) and *Heaven Only Knows* (1983).

Other albums included *Workin' It Back* (1985), *Joy* (1988, whose title track went to number one R&B for two weeks), and *Little More Magic* (1993). The latter half of the '90s found Pendergrass recording for the Surefire/Wind Up label.

Another milestone in the



Teddy Pendergrass Live in '82 cover art

cess the group had, the more friction developed between Melvin and Pendergrass. Despite the revised billing of the group, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes featuring Theodore Pendergrass, Pendergrass felt that he wasn't getting enough recognition.

Around 1976, Pendergrass left Melvin's Blue Notes and formed his own Blue Notes, featuring Teddy Pendergrass. Briefly, there was some confusion as to which Blue Notes was which.

In 1977, Pendergrass left his Blue Notes to pursue a solo career. Women were even more enthusiastic about seeing him alone on stage than they had been about watching him front the Blue Notes. They flocked to special "For Women Only" midnight shows to hear Pendergrass sing "Close the Door," "Turn Off the Lights," and other hits.

As a solo performer, Pendergrass expanded his range to attract new listeners: a *Stereo Review* writer noted that while he still "belted out his funky amorous entreaties with a raw virility that set many female libidos a-quiver," he had also learned to "set aside his club and loincloth to sing

ternational Records in 1977. He burst back on the scene with *Teddy Pendergrass*, a platinum solo debut that included the top-notch singles "I Don't Love You Anymore," "You Can't Hide from Yourself," and "The More I Get the More I Want."

Pendergrass' fame and fortune were built on his provocative stage presence and the intimate rapport he established with his audiences. Female fans frequently swooned or tossed their undergarments onstage in response to his earthy baritone and forthright sexuality; one fan even went so far as to shoot another in a struggle for a scarf the singer had used to wipe his face.

Around this time, Pendergrass began to institute his infamous "Ladies Only" concerts. His next three albums went gold or platinum: *Life Is a Song Worth Singing* (1978), *Teddy* (1979), and *Teddy Live (Coast to Coast)*. The hit single "Close the Door" was used in the film *Soup for One*, where Pendergrass had a small role.

The singer received several Grammy nominations during 1977 and 1978, Billboard's 1977 Pop Album New Artist Award, an Ameri-

can Music Award for best R&B performer of 1978, and awards from *Ebony* magazine and the NAACP. He was also in consideration for the lead in the movie biopic *The Otis Redding Story*.

The '70s ended, but Pendergrass kept racking up the hits. *TP*, his fifth solo album, went platinum in the summer of 1980 off the singles "Turn Off the Lights," "Come Go with Me," "Shout and Scream," "It's You I Love," and "Can't We Try." *It's Time for Love* gave Pendergrass another gold album in summer 1981, which included the hit singles "Love TKO" and "I Can't Live Without Your Love."

Things changed dramatically on March 18, 1982. While Pendergrass was driving his Rolls-Royce through Philadelphia's Germantown section, the vehicle jumped the center median and crashed into a tree. Pendergrass told *Life*: "[After] the initial bang I opened my eyes, and I was still there. For a while I was conscious. I know I had broken my neck. It was obvious; I tried to make a move and I couldn't."

Pendergrass was correct in thinking that his neck was broken; his spinal cord was also crushed, and bone fragments had severed some vital nerves. Movement was limited to his head, shoulders, and biceps. When the full extent of the damage became apparent and doctors told him that his paralysis would probably be permanent, Pendergrass cried until his "eyes looked like golf balls," he told *Life*.

He was further informed that injuries such as his usually affect the breathing muscles and, consequently, the ability to sing. Several days after the accident, Pendergrass cautiously tested his voice by singing along with a coffee commercial on television. "I could sing," he remembered, "and I knew that anything else I had to do, I could do."

Once released from the hospital, Pendergrass faced the difficult period of adjustment to his new limitations. From the outset, he was determined that his handicap would not stop his career. "I thrive on whatever kind of challenge I have to face" he told Charles L. Sanders in *Ebony*. "My philosophy has always been 'Bring me a brick wall, and if I can't jump over it I'll run right through it.'"

singer's recovery came at the 1985 Live Aid concert, when he made his first stage appearance since the accident, singing "Reach Out and Touch" with Ashford and Simpson.

"I don't know how to fully describe those few moments onstage," he confessed in *People*. "Before I went on, I was scared, afraid of the unknown. Afterward I felt like I was larger than anybody there. It reaffirmed one very important fact to me, that it wasn't important that I shook my booty right or that I had legs that turned a certain way. What the audience most appreciated was what I was saying in the song."

"I ain't going to lie, this thing's a bitch," Pendergrass said of his paralysis. "You go through living hell, through all kinds of anxieties, and you suffer enormous apprehensions about everything. At first you don't know how people will accept you, and you don't want to be seen. You don't want to do anything. Given thoughts like that, you don't want to live. But ... you have an option. You can give it up and call it quits, or you can go on. I've decided to go on."

He could still sing, however, and within two years of the accident he had released his comeback album. His fans remained loyal, and many critics declared that Pendergrass' tragedy had brought new depth to his music.

Truly Blessed, the name of a 1991 Elektra album is also the title of the autobiography Pendergrass co-authored with Patricia Romanowski. Apart from an appearance at a 2007 ceremony held in his honor, Pendergrass spent his later years away from the spotlight. He had difficulty recovering from colon cancer surgery and passed away on January 13, 2010. (Information provided by Joan Goldsworthy and Ed Hogan)

"I thrive on whatever kind of challenge I have to face" –
Teddy Pendergrass

Miss Lawrence joins the cast of 'Steve Harvey Project'

Compiled By Don Thomas

Miss Lawrence Washington from TV reality show "Real

Housewives of Atlanta" will host a segment titled "Spilling the Tea with Miss Lawrence" and provide reviews of the lat-

est in celebrity news/music/entertainment, red carpet, and fashion/beauty critiques.

"I'm so excited about join-

ing The Steve Harvey Project!! I've found the chemistry and talent between us to be really natural. I'll be 'Spilling the Tea' on all the latest Who's-Who's, something Miss Lawrence loves to do! Talking music, entertainment, beauty and fashion is so me, Honey! They picked the right girl for this one, and it's *always* tastefully done!" says Miss Lawrence.

Washington resides and works in Atlanta, Georgia as the owner and operator of the successful Lawrence Washington Atlanta salon. In addition to being a celebrity stylist, he is also a contributor on the Steve Harvey Project and the Real Housewives of Atlanta, and a recording artist with a hit single "Closet Freak" rising up the iTunes charts.

He is currently in the studio

preparing to release his new music project, collaborating with well-known and award-winning music professionals such as Cazwell, and dance hit songwriter Christopher Willis.

Comedian Steve Harvey's television show, "The Steve Harvey Project," provides new and long-time fans a behind-the-scenes glimpse of his daily syndicated radio show. The hour-long nightly series is filmed daily and airs Monday through Friday on Centric 89.

"I am elated to present "The Steve Harvey Project" on Centric, a network that is committed to providing programming that is innovative and new. It's fun to show fans of the "Steve Harvey Morning Show" all that goes on behind the scenes and how much their support inspires us every day," Harvey said in a statement.




Lawrence Washington

Doc meets Minnie



Medical expert and best-selling author Dr. Ian Smith, who co-stars on the VH1 reality show "Celebrity Fit Club," poses with Nurse Minnie Mouse at Disney's Hollywood Studios theme park at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Smith is also the creator of "The 50 Million Pound Challenge." He was recently on vacation with his family. (Photo: Todd Anderson)

fugitive
celebrity
slacker
joker
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By Kam Williams
Movie Critic

Louis Cameron Gossett, Jr. was born in Coney Island, Brooklyn on May 27, 1936 to Helen Rebecca Wray, a nurse, and Lou, Sr. a Pullman porter. Lou's stellar career started in 1953 while he was still in high school, when he landed a role in the Broadway production of "Take a Giant Step."

One of a select group of actors to win both an Academy and Emmy Award, he is best known for his Oscar-winning performance as a gunnery sergeant in the film classic, *An Officer and a Gentleman*, and for his Emmy-winning portrayal of the character Fiddler in the historic TV-miniseries "Roots."

In 2006, Lou decided to devote his energies to fighting social ills, so he founded the Eracism Foundation, a non-profit designed to create a "conscious offensive against racism, violence and ignorance." Toward that end, the organization has sponsored programs focused on youth mentoring, anti-gang violence initiatives, and diversity sensitivity training sessions at its Shamba Centers.

Last year, Lou published his aptly entitled autobiography, "An Actor and a Gentleman." Here, he talks about his new movie, "The Grace Card," a faith-based tale of reconciliation and redemption.

Kam Williams: Thanks for the time, Lou. I'm very honored to have this opportunity to speak with you. **Lou Gossett, Jr.:** Hey, Kam, what's going on? **KW:** Jimmy Bayan says that he's spoken to you on the street in Malibu about your Eracism Foundation on a number of occasions, and he hopes that you'll talk about it during the interview. **LG:** Absolutely!

KW: But first, I have to ask you what interested you in *The Grace Card*? **LG:** Actually, *The Grace Card*'s aim is the same as that of the foundation, the elimination of racism. How synergistic and opportune is that? It seems to me that if we can create a society where racism just can't thrive, it'll go away.

"My concept is to teach children everything from self-respect to respect for elders and the opposite sex to a dress code to how to conduct themselves and how to live in harmony with the planet. When you start teaching kids these things at a young age, even before they start school, it sticks. It's our responsibility to teach our children and to prepare them for the next level, just like Jews do in temples and synagogues.

Interview

A chat with a Gentleman

"That's not happening right now, and you don't see it onscreen often. But "The Grace Card" is a perfect example of what I'm talking about. The magic word is "forgiveness." And from forgiveness comes healing. We have to do the best that we can, with God's help, to clean up our act, and to eliminate the negatives which prevent us from seeing the "Sunlight of the Spirit," and then let the kids copy that. They have nothing to copy right now.

KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier asks: What has the feedback been like about your lovely autobiography? **LG:** It's amazing, when I visit churches and schools to speak about the book and about the work that I just discussed, the audience is like a sea of bobble-head dolls.

"Everybody agrees that we have to take the responsibility for ourselves and for raising, mentoring and teaching our children so they have appropriate role models to imitate. That's the natural function, and the way it used to be. It seems like we abandoned our responsibilities when times got hard," said Gossett.

KW: Dante Lee, author of "Black Business Secrets," asks: Is it important for an actor to also be an entrepreneur? **LG:** Oh, it's absolutely necessary. It's very important for each successive generation to push the envelope further than the previous one. **KW:** Attorney Tim Plunkett asks: Did you really fly in the fighter jet in *Iron Eagle*?

LG: I did. I knew Tom Cruise had lost his lunch when they put him in the cockpit. And I was warned by the Israeli Air Force, which has the best-trained pilots in the world, not to eat, because they fly like darts. So, I didn't have any breakfast. After we landed, I felt kind of woozy when I climbed out of the plane.

"After I assured everyone that I felt fine, I walked fifty yards to my dressing room, closed the door behind me, and lost my meal from the night before. Nobody knew. That ride was exciting but, boy, you have to be in shape for that one. I'd never do it again," said Gossett.

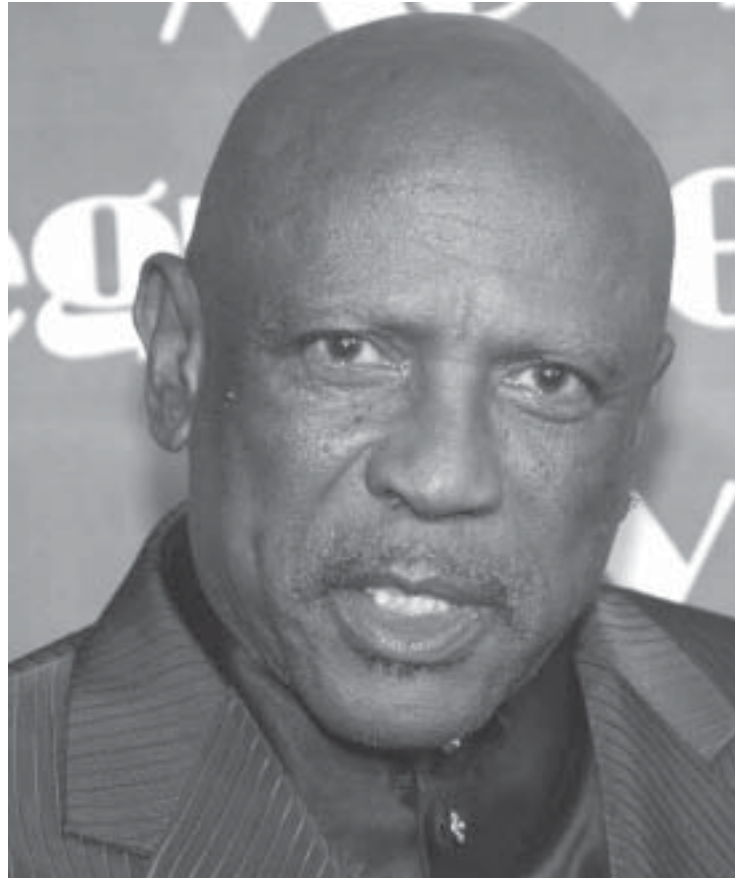
KW: Children's book author Irene Smalls asks: What makes you get up in the morning with a smile on your face? **LG:** Meditation and prayer. I have a checklist for the beginning of the day, and another one for the end of the day. It's also very nice to be this age and to wake up every morning with something to learn. School is never out. There's always something new to learn. **KW:** Irene also asks: What is the one skill an actor must have to be successful today?

LG: First of all, an actor's aspiration has to be the art, not the job. Then he has to be relatively naked to be able to take onto himself aspects of the character and to make everything look like it's happening for the

first time. Easy to say, hard to do, but that's the aspiration. I never want to see an actor acting. I want to see him being.

KW: FSU grad Laz Lyles asks: Do you still get anxious when starting a new project? **LG:** I always do, because I never think I know enough. That's the impetus to prepare thoroughly and then to trust. **KW:** Attorney Bernadette Beekman observes that you're

against racism and violence—and how do these roles conflict with those goals? **LG:** I certainly don't do anything conflicting with those goals any more. And I don't think I've done any in the past either. I pick and choose those roles which educate, uplift and entertain. By way of example, *Iron Eagle*, *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *The Choirboys* and *Enemy Mine* are all uplifting, informational, educational movies.



"My concept is to teach children everything from self-respect for elders and the opposite sex to a dress code to how to conduct themselves and how to live in harmony with the planet."

playing a role with religious significance. She asks: Are you now more religious than when you were younger. Is your faith stronger?

LG: My faith is stronger. There's more spirituality, and that inside job, that character builder is essential because it's priceless. They can take all the material things, but nobody can take your spirituality away from you. And faith is most important when things appear to be down.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: How did you arrive at the name "Shamba" for your Eracism Foundation Centers. Can you speak to the origin and meaning of the word and to its special significance in your choice? **LG:** "Shamba" comes from Azim, a friend born in Kenya, who's on the board of directors of the foundation. "Shamba" is a Swahili word meaning farm. That's a place where you plant seeds which yield fruit. So, Shamba Centers are where you plant seeds in the minds of children and all people really about how to live better.

KW: Harriet also asks: How do the roles you and other African-American actors play in the movies and on TV contribute to Eracism's conscious offensive

"I wouldn't play a villain unless the film's overall message is positive. There's a responsibility not only to entertain but to educate and to pick roles carefully, especially after you've become famous. I'm not going to exploit my audience. **KW:** Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

LG: Yeah, Would you like a hundred million dollars? Nobody's ever asked me that. **KW:** The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

LG: I'm always afraid. But I have a philosophy: Where there's no fear, there's no faith. When fear comes up, I have to pray to turn that fear into faith. **KW:** The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

LG: I'm very content and spiritually happy. And very, very grateful. **KW:** The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh? **LG:** About ten minutes ago. **KW:** What is your guiltiest pleasure?

LG: Chocolate! **KW:** What is your favorite dish to cook?

LG: I like lamb chops when they come from a farm where they don't put chemicals in the meat. But my favorite dish is always whatever's the freshest fish I can find. And I love all fruit. I think eating food from the ocean, from the ground and from the trees are the keys to

a long life. That stuff was put on this planet for us to thrive on.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read? **LG:** "The Audacity of Hope." **KW:** The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer? **LG:** Me. I have a new line coming out in about six months called Afro Fusion. I hate ties, so I created a suit similar to the Nehru that doesn't need one.

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for? **LG:** 100 percent optimum health: physically, mentally and spiritually.

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

LG: I can remember screaming at the feeling of oxygen rushing into my lungs for the first time at birth. **KW:** I recently interviewed your cousin, the actor Robert Gossett about his TV show, *The Closer*. How close were the two of you during childhood?

LG: Very. Our fathers were brothers. We fought over the turkey drumstick on Thanksgiving. I was raised with a whole lot of cousins.

KW: The Rudy Lewis question: Who's at the top of your hero list? **LG:** Sidney Poitier. I wish I saw more of him nowadays. But he was very influential in my life, especially on my acting.

KW: He was the first African-American actor to win an Oscar. You were the second. **LG:** Well, actually, I was the first African-American actor to win one. Sidney's Bahamian. **KW:** I forgot that. What was it like the night you won? **LG:** I didn't believe it when they opened the envelope. My agent had to poke me in the ribs and say, "They said your name!"

KW: What has been the biggest obstacle you have had to overcome?

LG: Drugs and alcohol, and they're overcome on a daily basis. **KW:** I won't mention any names but I got an email from someone who knows you from a 12-Step program. **LG:** My 12-Step group has given me the keys to the kingdom. It makes us the Chosen People, when we really adhere to a self-help philosophy that makes us heal. So, a negative has been turned into a great positive.

"Our noses are to the spiritual grindstone. Everybody on this planet needs some sort of guidance from a higher power in order to uplift their lives. And now we've become the ones who humbly help others. **KW:** What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

LG: There's no such thing as impossible. Don't follow so much in my footsteps. Just go for it!

KW: The Dulé Hill question: To what do you attribute your success?

LG: God runs it all. That's my filling station. And I have to do the right thing with the message.

KW: Thanks again, Lou, and I hope to speak to you later this year when your next faith-based film, "The Lamp," is released. **LG:** I look forward to it, Kam.

KICKIN' IT with Lifestyles & Society Editor Audrey J. Bernard

10,000 attend Harlem Fine Arts Show at historic Riverside Church



Harlem Fine Arts Show at Riverside Church

The National Black Fine Arts Show (NBFAS) was a main cultural attraction during Black History Month for the past 14 years providing discerning art aficionados with an art extravaganza featuring African American artists from around the world at the Puck Building. The show no longer exists. In the tradition of NBFAS emerged the 2011 **Harlem Fine Arts Show (HFAS)**.

The HFAS took place at the historic Riverside Church on Riverside Drive in Harlem. The 3-day artistic extravaganza attracted thousands of New York area school children, local media celebrities and luminaries. The

show brought a climatic close to the festivities surrounding Black History Month.

The stunning exhibition of creative expression was attended by thousands of art enthusiasts from the New York metropolitan area, Philadelphia, Washington DC - and London. "We had anticipated a few thousand people; but nearly 10,000 actually visited the show," explained **Dion Clarke**, president of JWD Enterprises, the creator of HFAS. "But to surpass those numbers was amazing. We couldn't be more thrilled!"

HFAS is one of the nation's largest and most prestigious collections of works (paintings, photographs, sculptures) featuring African American emerging and established artists from around the world.

More than 100 artists and internationally renowned galleries were featured including **Poncho Brown, Leroy Campbell, Robert Carter, Najee Dorsey, Ray Grist, Woodrow Nash, Michele Wood, and E&S Gallery**. Participating galleries in-

cluded E&S Gallery of Louisville, Kentucky and Golden Gallery of Denver, Colorado, which offered work of art masters such as **Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence**.

The spectacular art show commenced with an Opening Night gala reception Friday, February 25, 2011 hosted by **Susan L. Taylor**, editor-in-chief emeritus of *Essence* magazine and **DeMarco Morgan** of WNBC-TV New York. Earlier that day HFAS hosted 1,000 New York City middle and high school students with Art, History and Ancestry day sponsored by *Diversity Prep* magazine. A portion of the proceeds was donated to Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention.

On Saturday, February 26, the fine arts exhibition opened from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. with lecture series concerning collecting art, appraising art and aging art. That evening, a cocktail reception was hosted by **Cheryl Wills** of New York 1 and benefitted The Brotherhood/Sister Sol. On Sunday,



Event consultant Ruth Clark, Cong. Charles B. Rangel, Dion Clarke

February 27, after an ecumenical service and continental breakfast, the show opened and came to a final close at 8 p.m.

The show was an overwhelming success thanks to HFAS partners Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention, Brotherhood/Sister Sol, The Metro-Manhattan Chap-

ter of The Links, Inc., The New York Times, NAACP, and Black Ivy Events Inc.

Sponsors for the 2011 HFAS included Bacardi/Grey Goose Vodka, represented by executive **Juan Coronado**, Amtrak, Fiduciary Management Group, Papyrus and The *New York Times*. (Photos by *Jasmin Ortiz*)



B. Smith, Juan Coronado



Ruth Clark, Andrea & Maurice DuBois, Susan L. Taylor, Dion Clarke, Juan Coronado



Hazel N. Dukes



Congressman Charles B. Rangel, Cheryl Wills, Dion Clarke



2011 HFAS staff



Barry Mason, Susan L. Taylor

Gospel Music

Stellar Award winner Ted Winn's video on YouTube

Compiled By Don Thomas

One of the hottest young artists on the gospel scene today is Stellar Award winner Ted Winn. For almost a decade he was known as half of the Ted and Sheri duo that moved listeners with hits such as "Come Ye Disconsolate" and "Celebrate."

For the last two years, Winn has electrified audiences with his own unique musical ministry that has seen the radio singles "God Believes in You" and "The Lifter" chart. The latter reached Billboard magazine's Top 10 Hot Gospel Songs chart.

It also rated as one of the most played gospel songs in 2010 by the magazine in its annual "Year in Music" issue. Winn's BMI-affiliated publishing company, Teddy's Clever, was also rated one of the Top 12 gospel publishing companies in the periodical.

Winn isn't resting on his laurels though. He's recently released a third single, "Connected To The Kingdom," from his debut solo CD. The song was in-

spired by a sermon. "My pastor was talking about the economic crisis and that there's a shaking in the land.

"He went into this teaching about how things were shaping up for those who understand the principles of the Kingdom of God. While he was preaching, I began writing the song on my iPhone. It's simply about identifying with the Kingdom of God and showing that by serving the needs of others," said Winn. To stay in the know on Ted Winn, visit him online at <http://www.tedwinn.net>

Jonathan Nelson is expecting great things in 2011

Stellar Award winning gospel artist Jonathan Nelson is riding into the New Year of 2011 expecting great things in his life and career. On the heels of his 2008 smash "My Name Is Victory" that peaked at #4 on the Billboard Hot Gospel Songs chart, Nelson has cracked the Top 10 again with "Expect The Great."

"The song says the blessing is

on you," says Richmond, VA Radio One Praise 104.7 FM program director, Reggie B. "It's a great record to play that is upbeat and makes you feel good when you hear it and gives you hope that your blessing is on the way!"

Nelson and his group, Purpose, performed the song on BET's special, "Celebration of Gospel." Nelson's sophomore CD, *Better Days* recently debuted at #1 on Jet Magazine's Top Gospel CDs sales chart and #4 on Billboard's Top Gospel Albums chart.

The 10-song CD of faith-inspired tunes was produced by Nelson with Grammy Award winning producer Aaron Lindsey. "I'm so thankful to God and to all of my supporters for helping make this new project so successful and well-received," says Nelson who also wrote Donald Lawrence's classic tune "Healed" and Youth for Christ's "The Struggle Is Over," another #1 hit.

"Although, this is a huge milestone, the journey continues. I Expect the Great for myself and for you," concluded Nelson



Ted Winn



Jonathan Nelson

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Tonya Baker's 'Miracles' now on iTunes

Compiled By Don Thomas

Kingdom Records recording artist, Tonya Baker's new radio single "Miracles" is now available on iTunes, Amazon Mp3, and all of the major online digital stores. Already fans are bestowing the tune with five star ratings and enthusiastic reviews. A fan named Joel Buckner calls the song "a must get" while a different admirer calls it "another great vocal masterpiece from Tonya."

The rousing ballad hails from Tonya Baker's forthcoming sophomore CD, "The Live Encounter." The follow-up to Baker's 2008 Kingdom Records debut, "Special Friend," the new set is the Dayton, Ohio native's first live album. It was staged at The Ginghamburg Church outside of Dayton, Ohio in July 2010. Grammy Award winner Myron Butler, who's collaborated with stars such as Smokie Norful and Kirk Franklin, produced the project.

"Miracles" is a sophisticated declaration of the Almighty's omnipotence. Backed by a tight group of singers, the song climaxes with Baker's engaging, and heartfelt adlibs over a joyous call-and-response with the ensemble. The song was composed by drummer Romel Gibson.

"I'm excited! Okay. . . Excited isn't even the word! I don't know the word right now but it's way deep down inside. There's a level of expectation that exceeds the normal. I think it's the exceeding abundantly above that I'm able to ask or think kind of thing.

"The first single from the release is "Miracles" and it's on radio NOW!! Call and request at your radio stations. Please make sure you let me know if it's playing in your city. I'd love to know who to thank for supporting the music. It's really a great song and I pray you're blessed by it. As soon as I get the song snippets, I'll put them online so you can hear them," says Tonya. Visit www.tonyabaker.com for more information.



Tonya Baker

Radio News

Donnie McClurkin airs in Jamaica

Compiled By Don Thomas

Sunday mornings on the island will never be the same. The Donnie McClurkin radio program is set to debut on local powerhouse station ZIP 103FM from 6am to 8 am. Besides being one of the best-selling Gospel recording artists in the history of the genre selling millions of records, McClurkin will be celebrating five years of hosting the most successful radio program ever in the Inspirational format.

Donnie's radio show airs in every major city and is so highly rated that it even beats programming in more mass appeal formats like Hip-Hop and R& B. "The Donnie McClurkin Show" airs daily on WBSL in New York City and is rated #1. According to WBSL/WLIB New York Operations Manager Skip Dillard, "Donnie is better than 95 percent of the DJ's that are trained, he is that good!" This is significant because Donnie is not a trained on-air personality. He is the founder and senior pastor of Perfecting Faith Church in Freeport, Long Island.

For a man who has declared at any moment he may cease making music to concentrate fully on his passion for ministering,

McClurkin uses his platform of more than 5 million weekly radio listeners to inspire people about what he is most passionate about – and that is his love for God.

Besides playing the music that he loves, listeners will also hear the powerful spoken word presented by the man of God – sharing the good news with his new Jamaican extended family!

Humbled by all of his accolades, McClurkin has received every major award including, three Grammy Awards, over ten Stellar awards, two Soul Train awards and two Dove Awards.

Jamaica's exciting new Sunday morning program, "The Donnie McClurkin Show," debuts on the island after recently receiving the Crystal Mic Award for best syndicated Gospel Show by the GMWA (Gospel Music Workshop of America) and also recognized by the New York International Radio Festivals as one of the world's best over-all music shows in all categories. Because McClurkin wants to integrate ZIP FM listeners into his program, Jamaicans will have a significant presence in some of his weekly shows.

Chad Young, managing director of Zip FM says, "I am thrilled to be able to bring a program of this caliber to Jamaica. Gospel music lovers



Pastor Donnie McClurkin

and entertain each and every week to the beautiful people of that great island. They should also know we are planning a big 5th anniversary concert and we hope to bring the celebration to Jamaica," says McClurkin.

Oceanic Tradewinds Inc, syndicator of Donnie's radio program, has already begun discussions with local officials for what is being deemed a three-day anniversary celebration complete with praise and worship, educational/ motivational seminars, live concerts, health and well-being clinics, all integrated with competition from the kids and locals of the island that will all reflect the culture, talent and artistry of the country.

"Donnie's five year anniversary celebrations will take place throughout the USA but will likely culminate in Jamaica towards the end of the year in what will hopefully be an event of historic proportions.

"We have just begun discussions with local hotels, production companies, and the Jamaican Tourist Board, with the ambitious goal of not only presenting the Island with something spectacular, but also inviting thousands from abroad to attend," says Gary Bernstein, President of Oceanic Tradewinds. For people who want to get a sneak peak of Donnie's radio program, you can visit www.donnieradio.com

are going to love waking up on Sunday's to Donnie's program. He has the complete package of great guests, music, inspiration, and humor.

"His credibility and dedication to excellence in everything that

he does insures that our listeners will get an incredible listening experience each and every weekend!" says Young.

"I have always had a love affair with Jamaica and it is a dream come true that I can now minister



Broadway Musical *Baby It's You* at Broadhurst Theatre

Recently at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square in New York City, the cast from the hit Broadway bound musical, *Baby It's You!*, knocked media members off their feet with a sneak peek performance of what theatergoers can expect to see when the curtains rises at Broadway's Broadhurst Theatre (235 West 44th Street).

Baby It's You! features **Beth Leavel** in the starring role as Florence Greenberg, the woman who changed the recording world forever when she discovered **The Shirelles** and created Scepter Records

Theater with 2nd Night Reviewer **Audrey J. Bernard**

Hit 60's girl group The Shirelles' story unfolds in B'way musical

written by Mutrux and **Colin Escott**, with performances beginning Saturday, March 26, 2011, and opening Wednesday, April 27, 2011.

Baby It's You! features a cast of 19 that includes **Allan Louis**, **Geno Henderson**, **Erica Ash**, **Kelli Barrett**, **Kyra DaCosta**, **Crystal Starr Knighton**, **Barry Pearl**, **Christina Sajous**, **Brandon Uranowitz**, **Alison Cimmet**, **Erica Dorfler**, **Berlando Drake**, **Adam Heller**, **Jahi A. Kearse**, **Annette Moore**, **Zachary Prince**, **Ken Robinson** and **Chelsea Morgan Stock**.

The design team behind the play includes **Birgitte Mutrux** (choreography); **Rahn Coleman** (musical supervision & arrangements); **Don Sebesky** (orchestrations); **Shelton Becton** (musical direction); **Anna Louizos** (scenic design); **Lizz Wolf** (costume design); **Howell Binkley**



Beth Leavel with producers of *Baby It's You*

American Pop Anthology in association with Universal Music Group and Pasadena Playhouse,

— **The Shirelles** — at her daughter's high school,

was Scepter Records.

Baby It's You! is the true story of how Florence Greenberg launched



The Shirelles-Kyra DaCosta, Crystal Starr Knighton, Erica Ash & Christina Sajous

— becoming the music industry's first female powerhouse.

The electrifying play was conceived by **Floyd Mutrux**, directed by **Floyd Mutrux** and **Sheldon Epps** and

(lighting design); **Carl Casella** (sound design); **Jason H. Thompson** (projection design); and **David Lawrence** (hair & wig design).

Baby It's You! is produced by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures and



Geno Henderson

with **Jonathan Sanger**, **Artie Ripp**, and legendary record producer **Richard Perry** as Consulting Producers for American Pop Anthology.

According to the playbill, after discovering one of the greatest girl-groups of all time

her car, drove across the George Washington Bridge to New York City, and embarked on a trailblazing journey from New Jersey housewife to record mogul, creating the independent house of hits that

the careers of such groundbreaking musical sensations as **The Isley Brothers**, **B.J. Thomas**, **The Kingsmen**, **Chuck Jackson**, **Burt Bacharach**, **Hal David**, and **Dionne Warwick**. (Photos by **Walter McBride/Retna Ltd.**)



Beth Leavel & Allan Louis

Four-time 2010 Tony Awards winner including Best Musical, Best Original Score, Best Book and Best Orchestrations, *Memphis*, co-stars Montego Glover and Chad Kimball were joined by Sardi's president Max Klimavicius and their *Memphis* cast ensemble and producers to celebrate the unveiling of their Sardi's caricatures. *Memphis* takes place in the smoky halls and underground clubs of the segregated 50's, where a young white DJ named Huey Calhoun (Chad Kimball) fell in love with everything he shouldn't: rock and roll and an electrifying Black singer (Montego Glover). *Memphis* is an original story about the cultural revolution that erupted when his vision met her voice, and the music changed forever.



Broadway "*Memphis*" stars **Montego Glover** and **Chad Kimball** are surrounded by producers at the mounting ceremony at reception at Sardi's before their caricatures join Sardi's distinguished Wall of Fame. (Photo by **Walter McBride/Retna Ltd.**)

'Battle: LA,' is an old fashion war flick

By Kam Williams
Movie Critic

Between an apocalyptic plotline and a \$100+ million budget, it's no wonder that "Battle: L.A." is being touted as the first summer blockbuster of 2011. Forget the fact that it's still winter, from the breathtaking panoramas to the bombastic pyrotechnics to the eye-popping special f/x to the mob scenes of mass hysteria, this film is filled with fixings which just scream 4th of July weekend.

And provided you're prematurely in the mood for such unseasonably-overblown fare, "Battle: L.A." won't disappoint. Directed by Jonathan Liebesman (The Texas Chainsaw Massacre prequel), this high-impact, action flick revolves around the daring exploits of a rag-tag team of Marines representing the last hope for humanity in the wake of an alien invasion which is decimating the planet.

As the film opens, we are introduced to Staff Sergeant Michael Nantz (Aaron Eckhart) as he's called on the carpet for his soldiers having suffered heavy casualties in Iraq. The humiliated platoon leader grudgingly agrees to retire, but not before first helping to whip their replacements into fighting shape.

The new unit is a motley crew of readily-recognizable



Actor Aaron Eckhart portrays (Staff Sergeant Michael Nantz) in emotional scene in new "Battle: LA." war flick

archetypes. There's Nantz, the proverbial, battle-hardened veteran who now has to report to an untested Lieutenant (Ramon Rodriguez). We also have a raw recruit (Noel Fisher) so young he had to get his parents' permission to enlist; a corporal (Jim Parrack) suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder since his last tour of duty; a soldier (Ne-Yo) set to marry his sweetheart; another (Taylor Handley)

who knows about Nantz's checkered past; and the brother (Cory Hardict) of a G.I. who died overseas under the disgraced Sergeant's command. You get the idea.

This freshly-forged band of brothers is about to ship out when a mysterious meteor shower morphs into a lethal legion of hostile extraterrestrial armed to the teeth and bent on world domination. With the en-

tire globe suddenly under siege, instead of being deployed to the Middle East, our intrepid heroes are sent to the City of Los Angeles. While staging a last stand there, they join forces with Elena Santos (Michelle Rodriguez), a feisty Air Force Sergeant on a reconnaissance detail.

Despite the film's futuristic pretensions, "Battle: L.A." is basically an old-fashioned war flick which unabashedly employs every cliché associated with the shopworn genre. For instance, the fate of apprehen-

sive Lieutenant Martinez (Ramon Rodriguez) is sealed, cinematically, the moment he sits down to write an ominous letter to his pregnant wife back home. Yet, the squad leader's untimely demise does dovetail ever so conveniently with his replacement's need for a shot at redemption. Like a kid operating a computer game joystick, Nantz proceeds to spearhead a strategic search and destroy mission for the aliens' command and control center.

The frenetic action consists of wave after wave of mindless mayhem intermittently interrupted by sentimental reminders that God is on our side and by simplistic sloganeering such as "Marines don't quit!" and "Let's go show 'em how Marines fight!" With no message deeper to impart, some might suggest that the film amounts to little more than a two-hour PSA for the United States military.

On the other hand, the less cynical are just as likely to rally behind the defenders of Mom and apple pie, and to cheer their every kill with approving howls of "Hoo-rah!" (Marine shorthand for "Heard, understood, recognized and acknowledged.") After all, you don't have to be tiger-blooded Charlie Sheen to know what really matters most in a showdown with any worthy adversary. Duh? Winning. **Very Good (2.5 stars)** **Rated PG-13 for profanity, scenes of destruction and sustained, intense violence. Running time: 116 minutes. Distributor: Columbia Pictures.**



R&B recording artist Ne Yo makes his acting debut in "Battle: LA," as a soldier set to marry his sweetheart. The flick captured the #1 slot at the box-office over the weekend with \$36 million in ticket sales.

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Gadhafi's forces close in on Libyan rebels

(from page 3)

large green flag had been used to cover up the pre-Gadhafi banner that has been adopted by the rebels. Anti-Gadhafi graffiti also had been painted over.

Some buildings had bullet holes, and a bloodstained green army jacket was left on the ground along with discarded ammunition boxes.

The rebels also claimed a small victory, hijacking a Libyan tanker ship that was transporting fuel from Greece to Gadhafi's regime. Opposition spokesman Mustafa Gheriani said fighters seized the ship on Tuesday off the Mediterranean coast and that it was carrying about 25,000 tons of fuel for Gadhafi.

The tanker, Anwaar Afriqya, was visible Wednesday in Tobruk's harbor. According to online shipping records, the Libyan-owned vessel departed several days ago from a Greek refinery port and had been due to arrive Tuesday in the western oil port of Zawiya.

Gheriani also claimed the rebels were still fighting on the outskirts of Ajdabiya and attacking regime forces with warplanes, although he was not more specific about the aircraft and that could not be verified.

Gadhafi's son, Seif al-Islam, warned the rebels the regime was closing in on them and urged them to leave the country.

"We don't want to kill, we don't want revenge, but you, traitors, mercenaries, you have committed crimes against the Libyan people: leave, go in peace to Egypt," he said in an interview with Lyon, France-based EuroNews television. "Military operations are over. Within 48 hours everything will be finished. Our forces are almost in Benghazi. Whatever the decision, it will be too late."

Gheriani said rebels in Benghazi would be ready for an attack.

"A large percentage of Benghazi's population is armed. Can Gadhafi bomb the city? Sure he can. Can he go in? I don't think so," he told The Associated Press. "Also, I think it is too far for his sup-

ply lines."

Gheriani said anti-aircraft equipment has been deployed, and the army mobilized, although he didn't know where. There have been few signs in recent days of the rebels digging in defensive preparations on the city's outskirts.

An activist hiding out in Ajdabiya said rebel holdouts in the city were expecting reinforcements from Benghazi to arrive and help them regroup. He said that the shelling stopped at about 2 p.m. but clashes continued on the southern and eastern fringes of the city.

"We are optimistic," Abdel-Bari Zwi said by cell phone as he headed to a nearby mosque for night prayers. "Yes, the families left but the youths and the men are still here."

The city's loss would be a major setback to the rebels, who less than two weeks ago were poised to march on Tripoli, the capital, and had appeared capable of sweeping Gadhafi out of power, inspired by successful uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia. But the regime's better

armed and organized military has reversed the tide.

Gadhafi's forces also launched an attack on Misrata — which for days has been under a punishing blockade, its population running out of supplies. The barrage came a day after the government recaptured the last rebel-held city west of Tripoli, solidifying his control over the coastline from the capital to the Tunisian border. "There is coordi-

nated shelling by Gadhafi's brigades firing artillery and machine guns from three different city entrances," al-Misrati said, speaking by satellite phone.

Momammed Ali, an opposition activist based in Dubai, said he was in contact with people in Misrata and water, electricity and cell phone service had been cut off. At least eight people were killed and 11 injured in the attack, he said, although the toll could not be confirmed.

White House conference confronts school bullying prevention head on

(from page 3)

At the White House conference on Tuesday, a new website - www.stopbullying.gov - was being launched simultaneously. The website provides information from various government agencies on how kids, teens, young adults, parents, educators and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying. According to the National Education Association (NEA) "across school levels and communities, staff working in middle schools and in urban areas were more likely to report that they had frequently witnessed bullying (66% and 65% respectively) and were more likely to perceive it as a serious problem (59% and 54% respectively)."

President Obama related even more staggering statistics on bullying. "A third of all middle school and high school students have reported being bullied during the school year," Obama said. "Almost 3 million students have said they were pushed, shoved, tripped, even spit on." President Obama has prioritized \$132 million to the 2012 fiscal budget to help bring a swift end to bullying. The monies will be placed in the U.S. Department of Education's Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students program.

In a show of bipartisan leader-

ship, Democratic Sen. Bob Casey, of Pennsylvania, and Republican Sen. Mark Kirk, of Illinois, presented anti-bullying legislation called the Safe Schools Improvement Act. The Act would require schools and districts that receive federal funding to enforce penalties for anyone participating in bullying and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and sexual orientation. It would also make states integrate prevention programs in those schools and districts and they would be required to report their findings to the U.S. Department of Education.

President Obama stressed the importance of adults role in ending bullying. "We've got to make sure our young people know that if they're in trouble, there are caring adults who can help; that even if they're having a tough time, they're going to get through it, and there's a whole world full of possibility waiting for them," Obama said. "We also have to make sure we're doing everything we can so that no child is in that position in the first place. And this is a responsibility — we all share a responsibility we have to teach all children the Golden Rule: We should treat others the way we want to be treated. Photographs: Fred Watkins

Schumer recommends Black jurist for U.S. Eastern District

(from page 3)

service and began working at the United States Justice Department, where she served as an Assistant United States Attorney representing the United States in a variety of cases including those involving public corruption, money laundering, and narcotics and gun trafficking. Since 2007, Brodie has been Chief of the General Crimes Unit, where she supervises 25 Assistant United States Attorneys and 3 Deputy Chiefs. She is admitted to practice in a number of federal courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States.

In addition to her extensive le-

gal experience, Brodie has been involved in a wide variety of organizations outside of the courtroom and served as a legal advisor to countries around the world. She has been a former president of the Association of Black Women Attorneys and has been a member of the association for 15 years. Brodie is also a member of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, the Metropolitan Black Bar Association, and the National Black Prosecutors Association.

From 2005 to 2006, Brodie served as a legal advisor to the Nigerian Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, an anti-pub-

lic corruption commission. In 2008, she served on a panel on Financial Crimes and Intellectual Property for law enforcement officials in Trinidad, sponsored by the United States Department of Justice and the United States Embassy. She also served as a panel member for the FBI's African and Middle Eastern National Academy Associates Conference in Ghana.

If confirmed, Brodie would be the only Caribbean-born federal judge serving in the United States. She would also be the only judge of Caribbean descent on either the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York or the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

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Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/07/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000422-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Gabriel Shur the right to assume the name of **Gabriel Emanuel Shur**. The place of birth is Brooklyn, NY, the date of birth is June 17, 1999 and the present address is 1435 Dahill Road, Brooklyn, NY 11204

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/07/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000441-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Lenny Ortiz the right to assume the name of **Lenny Ortiz-Rodriguez**. The place of birth is New York, NY, the date of birth is Nov. 10, 2006 and the present address is 565 W 215 Street, Apt. 44, New York, NY 10034

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/09/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000481-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Hasani Olushola Issa AKA Jeffrey Wayne Wilburn, Jeffrey W. Wilburn, Jeffrey Wilburn, Jeff Wilburn, Hasani O. Issa, Hasani Issa the right to assume the name of **Jeffrey Wayne Wilburn**. The place of birth is Washington, DC, the date of birth is May 29, 1975 and the present address is 455 Fort Washington, Apt. #3, NY, NY 10033

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/04/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000345-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Shannon AKA Lorenzo S. Hudson, Lorenzo Hudson the right to assume the name of **Lorenzo S. Hudson**. The place of birth is Brooklyn, NY, the date of birth is June 7, 1965 and the present address is 116-23 207th Street, Cambria Heights, NY 11411

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/09/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000482-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Alexander Ayberk the right to assume the name of **Aidan Alexander Ayberk**. The place of birth is New York, NY, the date of birth is Dec. 2, 2010 and the present address is 825 West End Ave. Apt. 7D, New York, NY 10025

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 01/11/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000014-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Andrew Michael Isiah Jesse Adore III AKA Andrew M Adore, Jesse Adore III, Jesse Andrew Adore, Jesse A. Adore, Andrew Michael III, Andrew Michael Adore the right to assume the name of **Andrew Michael Adore III**. The place of birth is Bronx, NY, the date of birth is July 14, 1998 and the present address is 3073 Hull Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/08/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000465-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Christopher Dean Waldron AKA Christopher Dean Mapp, Christopher D. Mapp, Christopher Mapp the right to assume the name of **Christopher Dean Mapp**. The place of birth is Brooklyn, NY, the date of birth is Sept. 13, 1984 and the present address is One Columbus Place, Apt. S6H, New York, NY 10019

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/11/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000519-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Vinner Law AKA Vinner Brooks the right to assume the name of **Vinner Brooks**. The place of birth is Queens, NY, the date of birth is Feb. 2, 1979 and the present address is 1731 Hung Avenue, Apt. 2, Bronx, NY 10462

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/11/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000537-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Gloria Esther Medina Muniz AKA Gloria E. Medina, Gloria E. Ramos, Gloria Ramos the right to assume the name of **Gloria Esther Medina Martinez**. The place of birth is Puerto Rico, the date of birth is Nov. 10, 1939 and the present address is 422 Bleeker Street, Brooklyn, NY 11237

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 01/21/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000064-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Fatoumata Binta Bah the right to assume the name of **Mackenzie Fatoumata Bah**. The place of birth is New York, NY, the date of birth is Nov. 8, 2006 and the present address is 340 Cherry Street, Apt. 15F, New York, NY 10002

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, New York County, on 03/11/2011, bearing, Index Number NC-000511-11/NY, a copy of which can be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at 111 Center Street New York, NY 10013, grants Katherine Faser Lyon AKA Katherine Faser Arthur, Katherine F. Arthur, Katherine Arthur the right to assume the name of **Katherine Arthur Lyon**. The place of birth is Darlington, SC, the date of birth is Jan 16, 1980 and the present address is 385 West 12th Street, TH2, New York, NY 10014

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Knicks fans are asking, 'Where's the defense?'

By Derrel "Jazz" Johnson

Whenever a big trade happens in any sport, too much is made of a win or a loss. In the Carmelo Anthony Era, the New York Knicks traded victories and losses through their first seven games, with supporters of the trade validating it, most notably in a 91-86 win in South Beach over the Miami Heat. The detractors of the trade pointing out home and road losses to the team with the worst record in the National Basketball Association, the Cleveland Cavaliers, 115-109 in Cleveland and 119-115 in New York, and to the team desperately holding on to the eighth seed in the Eastern

Conference, the Indiana Pacers, 106-93 at Madison Square Garden, and 119-117 at Conseco Fieldhouse.

One thing has been consistent for the Knicks through all six losses since the Carmelo Anthony trade: the lack of defensive effort. The Knicks have given up an average of 117.0 points in their six losses during the 12-game Carmelo Anthony era, 11 points more prior to the trade. Meanwhile, in the six wins during the Big Three on Broadway era, the Knicks have given up 96.3 points, almost 10 points lower than the 106.0 they allow on the season.

When the Knicks are playing their best defensively, they can

play with anyone in the league. When they are playing their worst defensively, they are a team that players look to get their season highs against, and sometimes, career highs, as was the case with Indiana Pacers power forward Tyler Hansbrough, who scored a career-high 29 points on Sunday at Madison Square Garden, only to surpass it against the Knicks Tuesday night with 30 points. It's as if Hansbrough imagined the Knicks in Duke uniforms, and himself in a Carolina Blue, as he has not experienced that kind of offensive success since his Tarheels days.

Defense is all about effort and the Knicks are not putting out that effort consistently. The fault has

to fall jointly on the team, players, and general manager. The Knicks lack a large defensive presence at the center position who can rebound, forcing Amar'e Stoudemire to log too many minutes at the center position, which leads to second-chance points by the opposition. That falls on the New York Knicks general manager Donnie Walsh. This is a flawed team, and Walsh is aware of it, and I am confident he will try his best to correct this problem.

The Knicks don't come out with a strong defensive effort on all nights, and this is on Knicks head coach Mike D'Antoni and the players. The biggest knock on D'Antoni

when he coached the Phoenix Suns was that his team lacked a strong defensive mindset, and New York Knicks fans are beginning to see why. At the same time, you do have players on the team like Landry Fields, Toney Douglas and Jared Jeffries who play hard on both side of the ball every game. The two biggest superstars on the team, Stoudemire and Anthony, must make that same commitment to defense, along with D'Antoni working on defensive principals in practice, and rewarding players with minutes who produce on that end, while penalizing players who are sub par. Until then, Knicks fans will continue asking "Where's The Defense?"

Nets go for six straight against Bulls

By Derrel "Jazz" Johnson

Yes, you read that correctly. The New Jersey Nets have won five in a row, defeating the Toronto Raptors twice in London, former Knick David Lee and the Golden State Warriors, eventual Rookie of the Year Blake Griffin and the Los Angeles Clippers, and for an encore, defeating Kevin Garnett, Ray Allen, Paul Pierce, and the Boston Celtics. Boston coming in, had the best record in the Eastern Conference and the Nets beat them, 88-79, at the Prudential Center Monday in front of a sold out crowd. They host the Chicago Bulls Thursday, who happen to have the best record in the Eastern Conference now.

I know some of you out there are saying "The Nets just acquired Deron Williams, so that is

why they are playing so well." Williams, the All-Star point guard acquired from the Utah Jazz by the Nets last month, missed two games to head to Dallas for the birth of his son, so they won two of the games without him. "Mental and physical toughness" was Nets head coach Avery Johnson's answer to the question I asked him about the team's ability to win games they would have lost a month ago. He added, "For us, to beat a team of this magnitude that's a big hurdle for us."

Nets center Brook Lopez has carried the offensive load, averaging 25.8 points on 57% shooting from the field, with 7.6 rebounds, and 3.6 blocks during the winning streak, while Nets power forward Kris Humphries has tallied seven-straight double-doubles, averaging 16.8 points and 16.8 rebounds during the win-

ning streak shooting 57%. Deron Williams has averaged 17.7 points and 12.7 assists, with 2.0 steals in the three games he has played during the winning streak.

Garnett noticed a change in the Nets. "They have been playing well lately, with a lot more energy. D-Will has come over there and given them a winning mentality. It seems to be working for them. Kris has been playing real well." "Give them credit. They found a way to win" Celtics point guard Rajon Rondo added.

"We're playing with a lot of confidence right now. It's the team chemistry. We're getting more comfortable with each other" Nets center Brook Lopez said after the game. Jordan Farmer praised the play of Kris Humphries. Jordan Farmer talked about the impact of Kris Humphries. "He has been (huge) for us all season. We call

him lumberjack and he's the guy who goes to work for us every day. He's tough, he's the man on the floor and he makes things happen. He rebounds, he guards the other team's best player, he's setting screens, he's doing all of the little things to help our team be better."

With Williams, Lopez, and

Humphries playing so well, New Jersey Nets fans are dreaming of making the playoffs. A long-shot for this season, but a definite reality with the talent and balance they have on the current roster, a far cry from the team last season that was trying to avoid going down in the history books as one of the worst ever.

Now it is going to get ugly

(from page 40)

lion dollars last year and that revenue stream is expected to grow. How many businesses made that type of money last year during this recession borderline depression? It is not that the League is losing money. In essence, the Owners just want to keep more of the pie indicating that their operating expenses are expected to rise in the next five to ten years and they just want to maintain a certain profit level. That is why they asked the NFLPA in a letter last year that opened with "In the spirit of partnership....." to give back a billion dollars from their piece of the pie. The only problem is that most Owners do not look at the players as *partners*. They look at them as employees so they do not feel that they have turn over all of the financial records.

Smith has maintained all along that if the Owners demonstrate that they truly need that billion dollars from the players, NFLPA would fork over the money in a heartbeat. But, without the proper documentation they are not going to concede that money. Since most NFL cities are not being held hostage any longer by the teams when it comes to financing new stadiums, the Owners are forced to pay for their modern football palaces, accounting for their rising operating

cost. With most of the country receiving foreclosure notices, neither party is going to garner public sympathy, especially with some of the moves they have made over the past week. NFLPA is suggesting that the future rookies boycott the upcoming draft while some teams have already sent out notices indicating that they will be raising their Private Seat Licensing agreements and ticket prices where they still expect fans to hand over their down payments even if there is no football this fall. The Jets even announced on Monday that they will cut all contracted coaching personnel's salaries by 25% and furlough the remaining staff a week per month until the lockout has been lifted.

Yes, this is getting ugly and it will get uglier as time goes by. You know no good could come from this if you put it in the hands of lawyers. The phrases "billable hours" and "negotiation" generally do not mix. Most fans do not care how they resolve this. They just want them to resolve it. In these hard times, it is hard for the common man to comprehend trying figure out how to split up nine billion dollars. Then, again, neither party is really concerned with the common man or fan. There in lies the problem.

Just another week in the Big East

(from page 40)

beat Syracuse, 76-71. In the night cap, Louisville rallied from 14 points down to overtake Notre Dame, 83-77.

After the smoke cleared, The Big East earned an unprecedented 11 teams to the Big Dance. If one saw what took place at Madison Square Garden this past week, you can understand why.

Folks have complained that the Conference did not deserve that many slots since the brackets were announced. Not only did they have seven to eight teams in the top 25 all season long, they had the best out-of-conference record of any League in the country. St. Johns won the Alaskan Shootout and that was before they caught fire. UCONN took the Maui Classic defeating Kentucky and Michigan State in the process. Then they went on the road and beat Texas in Austin. Even Providence, a team that dwelled in the conference cellar, defeated Alabama, 82-72. Now 'Bama is one of those teams complaining that they missed the cut but they

could not ever beat one of the conference's lower echelon teams.

There were stretches this season when certain Big East teams had to play two or three of the top twenty squads in a single week. The schedule was grueling to say the least. One would think that this should prepare the eleven teams for the NCAAs or it also could be the conference downfall.

Will the teams, especially the ones that went deep into the conference tourney, be spent as they roll through the NCAAs? It might have been a blessing in disguise that Pittsburgh and Villanova were sent home early. They will get a chance to regroup and recharge their batteries for the tourney that really counts. On the other hand, do you think UCONN has anything left in the tank after winning five games in as many days as they captured the Big East Conference Championship?

Kemba Walker put on a performance for the ages as he led the Huskies to the winners circle. He scored 33 points, grabbed 12 rebounds, handed out 6 assists and swiped 5 steals in the semifinals alone. Now he has to garner up

the same energy to lead the young *Husky Pups* to the Final Four in Houston. Remember, most of the Huskies other key players are freshman or sophomores. I'm more worried about them being mentally exhausted than physically tired. But Kemba and the Kids did beat several top ten teams on the road so they are battle tested. Freshmen Jeremy Lamb, Shabazz Napier, and Roscoe Smith and sophomore Alex Oriakhi showed that they have Walker's back. It will be interesting to see how they handle this test.

Louisville and Notre Dame have a chance to advance beyond the Sweet 16. The Cardinals have hit their stride after an injury riddled season. The senior-laden Fighting Irish squad is deep and talented.

Watching the Big East Tournament made me tired so I know that it had to take a toll on the participants. The intensity alone drained me. The conference tournament was like watching a steel cage single elimination match. Whether it is mid January or the first week in March, it was just was another week in the Big East.



Marc Rasbury

BEACON SPORTS



Just another week in the Big East

By Marc Rasbury

The Big East has been the best conference this year and that is not even up for debate. So when the members got together for their annual post season tournament at Madison Square Garden most basketball fans were expecting one heck of a ride. Trust me amidst the splendor, pageantry and partying that took place during the week long festival, we were treated to some great basketball.

The ninth seeded Connecticut Huskies won its seventh conference championship by defeating the fourth seeded Louisville Cardinals, 69-66, in a game that was the culmination of a terrific week of basketball.

This tournament had a little bit of everything. You had upsets and controversies in addition to compelling basketball. Villanova, whom many thought would be a Final Four participant earlier in the season, was bounced in the first round by South Florida, 70-69.

Then, in the second round, all hell broke loose. Three of the League's best referees collectively experienced brain-lock as they not only appeared to have swallowed their whistles on three very questionable plays during the final minutes of the St John's-Rutgers game, they also failed to call three blatant violations in the final five seconds of the contest.

In the quarter finals, the ninth-seed UCONN upset, if you want to call it that, the top-seeded, Pittsburgh Panthers, 76-74. St Johns gave Syracuse all it could handle even without the services of DJ Kennedy who tore his ACL six minutes into the contest. The 'Cuse pounded the Red Storm on the boards as they defeated Steve Lavin's upstart crew 79-76.

As exciting as the second round was, it failed to match the level of intensity of the semifinal round when both games were decided in overtimes. UCONN



Clinton: Even former President Clinton was impressed with the level of play during the Big East Championship.



Kemba: Kemba Walker put on a clinic during UCONN's five game journey to the championship.



Cuse: Syracuse was head and shoulders above the Red Storm in the quarterfinals



Kennedy: It is a shame that St. John's DJ Kennedy will not be able to play in the NCAAs
(Photos by Marc Rasbury)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)

Now it is going to get ugly

By Marc Rasbury

For the past month, the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) and the NFL Owners played nice, mainly due to the request of Federal Mediator George Cohen. Now that both parties have walked away from the bargaining table, the kid gloves are off.

Last Friday, the talks broke down setting up what some considered to be the Armageddon of the negotiations. As expected, the

NFLPA went through with their promise to decertify their union and a few hours later the Owners exercised their lockout threat, barring the players from the teams' facilities. By decertifying, the NFLPA basically disbanded their union and will act from here on out as a group of individuals instead of a united front. So now you have approximately 2200 individuals working to solve this issue vs. being represented by DeMaurice Smith and teams' players representatives.

These two moves, in essence,

put the ball in the lawyers' hands instead of the negotiators. Individual players including Drew Brees, Tom Brady and Peyton Manning filed a class action lawsuit that would block the Owners' ability to lock the players out. That hearing will not take place until April 6th. Until then, both parties could continue to negotiate but do not hold your breath on that one.

They spent over two months negotiating extending the deadline twice giving the casual observer the impression that progress was

being made. Now, we come to find out that very little progress was made at all. That is why the words "lockout" and "decertification" have become part of every football fans' vocabulary and reality. And now that the gag order has been lifted, the verbal barbs have been flying at record pace.

The Owners fired the first shot stating that the NFLPA walked away from the negotiation table that and they had no choice but to lock them out. The NFLPA responded by stating that the Own-

ers have not been negotiating in good faith from day one. They went on to say that the Owners first tried to establish a nest egg to sustain them financially by making their television partners agree to pay them in their last contract in the event of a lockout. They also claim that the Owners are not forthcoming when it comes to sharing their financial statements and opening up the books.

The NFL generated over nine bil-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)