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Women Recount Coerced Sterilizations

By: Amy Gardner
The News & Observer
A committee studies the state
sterilization program that
spanned four decades.....

Nial Ramirez was 17 in 1964, pregnant and living on welfare in Washington County with five siblings and her mother. If she didn't agree to be sterilized, North Carolina would cut off benefits to her family, a social worker told her.

On Friday, it was Ramirez's turn to tell her story to a committee appointed by Gov. Mike Easley to determine what should be done for victims of the state's eugenics program, which from 1933 to 1974 forced sterilization on more than 7,000 North Carolinians. Ramirez, now 56, wept as she described a social worker's threats that she was "feeble-minded" and that, if her mother, sisters, and brothers lost their home, the blame would fall to her.

"She came every day, every day," Ramirez said of the social worker's visits. "It's your fault. If you don't get this opera-

tion, your sisters and brothers are not going to have anything to eat. They're not going to have any place to live. All because of what you did."

North Carolina's sterilization program was born from the then-popular theory that mental and physical disabilities could be bred out of the species by preventing, through sterilization, some people from bearing children. That principle, known as eugenics, was the basis of a state law that allowed sterilization of the "mentally diseased, feeble-minded, or epileptic." For four decades, the Eugenics Board reviewed the cases of thousands of North Carolinians, many of them poor, black and female, and determined that they qualified for sterilization.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, the board did so without the individual's consent. Although such programs were common across the country during the 20th century, only California and Virginia forced more sterilizations than North Carolina.

Several state newspapers over the past year have retold this controversial chapter in North Carolina's history. Recent accounts have highlighted that eugenics, while born under a halo of science, was manipulated by public officials and doctors, nearly all of them white men, to coerce women, many of them poor and black, to submit to sterilization.

"When white people tell you you've got to do something, what are you going to do?" Ramirez told the panel. "What can you do? You've got to do what them white folks say, because they're going to give you that little bit of money to feed your kids with. That's the way it is."

In December, Easley issued an apology to victims and their families. In January, he formed a committee to study the program, make sure it can never recur, and determine what, if anything, can be done to help those who survive. As part of their task, committee members listened raptly Friday to the stories of Ramirez and

another woman, Elaine Riddick, who both were sterilized against their will.

Riddick was 13 and living in Perquimans County when she was raped and became pregnant, she told the committee. Now, 49, she said she too was told she was feeble-minded and must have the operation. She believes doctors severed her fallopian tubes shortly after she gave birth

to her son, Tony. She doesn't know for sure when the sterilization occurred ---- or what precisely it entailed ---- because no one explained it. Riddick found out more months later, living in New York, when heavy bleeding sent her to the hospital and doctors explained what she had endured. "My little body wasn't ready for what they

had done to me," she said between sobs.

Like Ramirez, Riddick was never tested for mental disability, she said. Like Ramirez, she is black. And like Ramirez, she grew up poor.

That profile was all too common among those chosen for forced sterilization by the eugenics board, according to Johanna Schoen, an assistant pro-

Cont. next issue



"Celebrating 100th Birthday Celebration....." Shown above is Ms. Martha H. Clark, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday on March 03, 2003, at the Phillippi Missionary Baptist Church in Simpson with Pastor AC Bachelor, along with a host of family and friends for this joyous occasion. Ms. Clark has been a lifelong member of the Phillippi MB Church family and is currently a very active member of the church. "You go Girl...Stay Young !!!" And many more from Brother Rouse and the M'Voice Newspaper family.
Staff Photo: J. Rouse

He who cannot agree with his enemies is controlled by them.

-- Chinese Proverb

Lt. Govenor Perdue Visits Navassa

by Johanna Thatch

According to Mayor Eulis Willis, the history of the town of Navassa revolves around the slaves who once worked and lived on the former Rice Plantations of Brunswick County. He explained that the small town grew out of two of these Rice Plantations lands that were developed into

four fertilizer factories after the Civil War. In a statement to The Journal, he said, "One of these fertilizer companies (named) Navassa Guano Company gave the town its name after the railroad company used the name of one of its stops, so as to not confuse people using train.....(who) only knew that area as "The

Bluff".

He continued, "With another 'Bluff' stop further along the tracks, the people from the two 'Bluff' stops were getting off in the wrong place...."

And so it was-the predominately African American town situated on the western bank of Northwest Cape Fear River, became known as Navassa; however, it was not incorporated into a town until 1977. And up until then it has only had two mayors, who are Bobby Brown and Mayor Willis. Although the town has a modest population of 1,492 citizens, it is faced with common issues that larger surrounding towns and cities have encountered. Just as any other North Carolina town, Navassa needs affordable housing, employment opportunities, and economic development altogether.

In order to listen to woes and worries of the residents, Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue offered her time, while touring Southeastern North Carolina, and dropped in at Town Hall in Navassa. After a brief background of the history and demographics were given, presentations were made by Mayor Knox of the town of Northwest, former mayor of Navassa, Bobby Brown, and Dr. Thurman Everett of the General Baptist State Convention. Each expressed their concerns about the future of Navassa and surrounding areas. One of the main points stressed by Mayor Willis that he felt Navassa was being penalized by state grand decision makers because it was not receiving preferential treatment for grants although its median in-

come level is low in comparison to the income level of Brunswick County at large.

The ultimate vision, Mayor Willis stated is economic independence for Navassa. Dr. Everett, who helps in the efforts of developing housing for displaced Floyd victims, felt the same, and added that such freedom could be achieved through affordable housing, which would attract young people back to their roots. He said, "You can go to school in Charlotte and Raleigh, and you can come back home and live comfortably."

In closing, Mayor Willis presented Lt. Governor Perdue with Navassa: The Town and Its People, a book that documents the history of the town. Perdue expressed her gratitude, adding that she was no stranger to poor communities and largely African American communities, considering she lived in Southeastern North Carolina for 26 years. She advised concerned citizens to "pick up the phone," and she would do all within her power including contacting Senator Elizabeth Dole.

In response to her visit, Mayor Willis told The Journal, "I think her coming to Navassa is an indication that they are at least I know they are willing to listen to the 'little people'."

He concluded, "My bottom line goal is for us to be independent and not depend on grants. I want us to be able to take care of ourselves....And it's getting better. We're not on the line of places like Charlotte or even Wilmington, but we do alright for the 'country'."

Dr. Jocelyn Elders visits ECU Ledonia Wright Cultural Center



"Black Folks and their Health....."

Shown above is Sister Nell Lewis of the ECU Ledonia Wright Cultural Center with former surgeon general Dr. Jocelyn Elders and the Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences Division at ECU School of Medicine pose for the M'Voice cameras at the "Act for Health" Fair that was held recently at the Greenville Hilton. The Health Fair was an education session and workshop for those unanswered questions those had concerning their health and other important issues concerning the African American communities. It is time for us as African Americans start being more aware of our health and how we treat our bodies.
Staff Photo: J. Rouse

He who will not accept an old mans advice
will someday be a beggar. - Chinese Proverb

"Maryland visits Greenville, North Carolina....." Shown above is Attorney Robert White and Brother Claude Mayo of Baltimore, MD., who is the father of Sister Lillie Smith (Attorney White's sister), who visited Greenville recently to be with his daughter who had to send her husband to be with the Lord. WOOW Joy 1340 AM & The M'Voice Newspaper send their condolences out to the entire Smith Family on their loss. God Bless !!!
Staff Photo: J. Rouse

STRANGE THINGS

Remain calm

After skepticism, ridicule and panic-buying greeted the government's advice to prepare for likely terrorist chemical attacks by stockpiling duct tape and plastic sheeting to create airtight safe rooms, President Bush and Homeland Security boss Tom Ridge insisted that such measures were the best the government could come up with. "We're working overtime to protect you," Bush declared during an appearance at FBI headquarters. Ridge subsequently pointed out that duct tape and plastic sheeting are "appropriately listed as emergency supplies" to have in case of a chemical attack but acknowledged that "we do not want individuals or families to start sealing their doors or windows." A few days later, Ridge, making his third such announcement in 10 days, urged Americans, "Stash away the duct tape. Don't use it; stash it away." Instead, in case of a chemical attack, the Department of Homeland Security's advice — for now — is to run. Its Web site, www.ready.gov, instructs citizens subjected to a chemical attack: "Take immediate action to get away."

Just don't rush to your child's school. School administrators in the Washington, D.C., metro area told parents that in the event of a biological or chemical attack, they would be strongly discouraged or actually prevented from picking up their children. The *Washington Post* reported that officials in Loudoun County, Va., intend to lock down schools and post signs in Spanish and English warning that nobody will be allowed to enter or exit.

Curses, foiled again

A man who robbed a bank in Port Royal, Va., stuffed the money in his pockets, but as he fled, \$100 bills fell out. When he reached his getaway car, he found he had locked the keys inside and tried to break the window with a log. When he failed, he hurled the log at a pickup truck parked nearby. The pickup's owner, Emmett Lowe, saw the incident from inside his store and confronted the man, not knowing of the robbery. After a short conversation, Lowe returned to his store, where bank tellers, who had witnessed the confrontation, called to tell him that the man had just robbed them.

According to Caroline County Sheriff's Capt. Scott Moser, Lowe grabbed a gun and, along with bystander Larry Aguilar, chased and tackled the suspect. The suspect tried to shoot them, but the hammer of his gun got caught up on his pocket. He finally got a round off but shot himself in the leg. He continued struggling, and Lowe shot him in the same leg. Police arrived and arrested Edward Butler Blaine, 61.

There'll always be an England

British police unveiled a new tactic in the war against crime: politely asking criminals to mend their ways. Inspector Geoff Miles sent personal letters to 22 persistent offenders in Wiltshire County, suggesting that the recipient "make it a priority in any New Year's resolutions you make from 2003 onwards, to cease forthwith your criminal activities." Miles said that sending the letters is an experiment that "will not do any harm," but he pointed out that he's being realistic. "These are career criminals," he added, "but we are career police officers."

Running out of disguises

Americans who wear Canada's red maple-leaf symbol abroad hoping that it shields them from hostility have been thwarted by Arab reaction to Canada's ban on the Lebanese-based Islamic movement Hezbollah. Anticipating violence, Raymond Baaklini, Lebanon's ambassador to Canada, said that because of the ban, "I am afraid it will be urgent for a Canadian to wear a non-Canadian T-shirt in Lebanon and the Arabic word."

Chicken Little was right

A 32-year-old woman was critically injured when a man fell to his death in an apparent suicide leap from a 44-story Waikiki, Hawaii, hotel and landed on the roof of her van. James Hagar III, who heard something smash into the woman's van, which was behind him, said that when he saw the man's body and the dent on top of the van, he dropped his moped and headed for shelter "in case anything else fell from the sky."

Not just another pretty face

Botox shots commonly used to smooth facial wrinkles may also fight smelly armpits by paralyzing sweat glands, according to a German study. The study's author, Dr. Marc Heckmann of Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, said that volunteers rated the armpits of 16 people injected with botulinum toxin A as lower in smell intensity than before the shots and more pleasant in odor quality. The armpits were also noticeably drier after the shots.

Rewriting the rules

The government's \$397 billion spending bill, which Congress approved Feb. 13, includes among its 3,000 pages a provision that lets livestock producers label meat as organic even if the animal has been fed partially or entirely on conventional rather than organic grain. The provision takes effect whenever the Agriculture Department confirms that available organic feed costs more than twice as much as conventional feed. The *New York Times* reported that Republicans added the provision on behalf of the Fieldale Farms Corp., a poultry producer in Baldwin, Ga., which has been trying since last summer to be permitted to label its chickens as organic while feeding them a mix of conventional and organic feed. A \$4,000 campaign contribution to Rep. Nathan Deal, R-Ga., apparently did the trick.

LEAD STORY

Poverty, hunger called prescription to terror

When deprived and underdeveloped nations feel the pinch of poverty and discrimination, richer nations can virtually count on coming under attack, Tanzania President Benjamin Mkapa said this week, setting a scenario wherein regional conflict and international crime can become the main components in a concentrated terror campaign.

Even before the September 11 attacks, there was a recognition that poverty in one part of the globe creates the scope for regional conflict and international crime.

"It is futile, if not foolhardy to think there is no link between poverty,"

Links to Al Qaeda have been found in several African countries — and Kenya and Tanzania experienced the direct effects of terrorism in 1998 when their citizens died in bombings of U.S. embassies. Kenyans suffered again last year when a tourist hotel was blown up.

There has been a growing realization that there can be no security in the world unless globalization is managed with greater social and economic justice.

U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair has acknowledged how terrorism can come from "pent up feelings of injustice and alienation from divisions between the world's richer and poorer nations."

African leaders have devised a plan to change the equation — pledging themselves to deliver transparent government in return for more support for Africa's development plans from the world's wealthy nations.

During the 1990s, aid to Africa fell by a third, from \$17 billion at the start of the decade to \$12 billion. As a result, "Africa is the poorest continent and it's getting poorer," says UK International Development Minister Clare Short.

Since the end of the Cold War, the world's richer nations have preferred to ignore places such as Somalia and Sudan, where their

attempts to quell conflict have failed.

But there is now greater engagement in Africa's failures than would have been thinkable a decade ago. Britain's military intervention in Sierra Leone in support of the elected government is one example, and contrasts with Europe's failure to prevent genocide in Rwanda.

Blair has said that if Rwanda happened again, his country would have "an absolute duty" to intervene.

But although prospects for peace are better now than for decades — with hope for Congo, Angola and Sudan — the challenges to development as a result of war are enormous.

Some 20 percent of Africa's people are affected by conflict, and most of the victims are innocent civilians.

The World Bank estimates that conflict is knocking 2 percent a year off Africa's economic growth.

Large numbers of refugees place a burden on neighboring countries; Tanzania, for instance, has taken in 1.5 million refugees in the last decade.

Regional instability also cripples efforts to control the spread of HIV.

Lectures on fair trade doled out by industrialized countries, whilst protecting their own local interests, have been widely resented, particularly on farm subsidies.

African states are being conditioned "not to subsidize agriculture on which the lives of our people depend," says Tanzania's President Mkapa.

A unified stance and more internal trade could increase Africa's clout, standing and power.

"If the whole of Africa works together then it is much more realistic to consider a greater equality of power," said Alec Erwin, South Africa's trade minister, pointing to "immensely rich" energy, mineral and agricultural resources.

Perhaps the biggest challenge Africans now face is to recognize that there is potential for progress.

Sharpton brings diversity, controversy to Democratic presidential campaign

WASHINGTON — The presidential candidacy of Al Sharpton brings diversity to the growing Democratic field, but the Black activist's record of controversy and legal trouble also poses a political challenge for the party.

Democrats, Republicans and an increasing number of editorial writers are calling on Sharpton's rivals to take the New York preacher on, citing his conviction for tax evasion, his eviction from his office for failing to pay rent and his refusal to apologize for wrongly accusing a New York prosecutor of raping a 15-year-old girl.

"His own record really is just shocking," said Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., who is supporting fellow Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry for president. "Al Sharpton bragged about not paying taxes. If this came out about any other candidate for president, that would be the end of the candidacy."

Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who assailed Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson for intolerance during the 2000 presidential campaign, said in a speech Monday that Democrats should do the same to Sharpton, another "agent of intolerance."

Despite the calls, Sharpton's presidential foes have declined to criticize him, and many Democrats say they welcome his candidacy because he can mobilize black and urban voters.

"Reverend Sharpton may draw people into the caucuses who might not otherwise participate," said Iowa Democratic Party Chairman Gordon Fischer. "He obviously brings a different perspective and talks about issues that the other candidates might not be raising."

A frequent candidate in New York who has never held public office, Sharpton has been an articulate defender of civil rights, outspoken in his criticism of police brutality and the Navy's bombing exercises on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

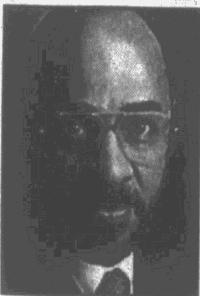
His positions have made him a polarizing figure among Blacks and Whites — a *CNN*-Time poll of Democratic voters last month found six in 10 Blacks say they have a positive view of him, compared to 27 percent of Blacks and Whites overall.

Sharpton's critics, including Frank and several editorial writers, say Democrats are afraid to challenge Sharpton and offend Black voters. In the 2000 election, Al Gore won the support of 91 percent of the Black vote.

Others argue that Democrats should copy Bill Clinton, who during the 1992 campaign criticized rap singer Sister Souljah in what was seen as an effort to separate himself from racial politics and appeal to moderate voters.

Peter Beinart, writing in both *The New Republic* Feb. 17 and in an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* Feb. 24, called Sharpton a "charlatan" and accused him of "racial political extortion." Syndicated conservative columnist Mona Charen wrote on Feb. 25 that Sharpton "has a despicable history as a racist provocateur."

Jonetta Rose Barras, in an opinion piece for *The Washington Post* Feb. 26, said Blacks deserve more attractive and able representatives on the ballot, such as Rep. Harold Ford Jr., D-Tenn., and former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer.



Dennis Archer



Rep. Harold Ford Jr.



Johnnie Cochran

In an interview, Barras said it was an insult when Black candidates weren't vigorously questioned and subjected to a thorough examination of their past.

"To me, that's also racism, it's just a different kind of racism," said Barras, author of a book about former Washington Mayor Marion Barry. "You aren't debating me seriously, you aren't taking me seriously, you just deal with me because you don't want to alienate a certain population."

Leon Panetta, White House chief of staff in the Clinton administration, said although Sharpton brings a new perspective to the race, it's important for a Democratic candidate to bring people together, not divide them.

"He represents one extreme of the party," Panetta said. "That's not to say he shouldn't participate in the process, but clearly if a Democrat wants to get elected president, he or she is going to have to reflect views that are more reflective of the center of the spectrum."

Sharpton said voters he encounters want to talk about issues and have not asked him about his past; the one exception was a forum in which he was asked about his support for Tawana Brawley, an upstate New York teenager who claimed she was raped by county prosecutor Steven Pagnones.

A grand jury concluded in 1988 that there was no evidence to sustain Brawley's story, and Pagnones won a \$65,000 defamation judgment against Sharpton.

Sharpton's income was garnished to cover part of the debt and his supporters, including lawyer Johnnie Cochran and *Essence* magazine Publisher Ed Lewis, helped pay the rest.

Sharpton said all politicians have baggage and dismissed the criticism as recycled allegations.

"It's a lot of overplayed hysteria that will probably backfire," he said. "If anything, you will galvanize my support base to come out."

And other Democrats said the talk was unnecessary because Sharpton is a long-shot for the nomination.

"I don't see him on the Democratic ticket," said Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga. "I think he will appeal to a segment of the electorate, and maybe he can get people to get out and get registered, but in the final analysis, I think minority voters are like all other voters and they want a winner."

'AIDS, hunger claim one life every minute

Special to the Tri-State Defender

SOUTH AFRICA — Southern Africa's "ugly sisters" — HIV/AIDS and hunger — now claim a victim every minute, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Unicef said in a statement this week that the deadly combination of HIV/AIDS and hunger continued to devastate lives across southern Africa, with the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance rising to 15 million across Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho.

The HIV pandemic is now claiming a life every minute in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Unicef said recent figures from southern Africa showed that one in six AIDS-related deaths in the world in 2001 occurred in southern Africa, and four million children have been orphaned in the SADC region alone.

"Life-saving humanitarian interventions, including large-scale food aid, health, nutrition and agricultural outputs in the region have helped to avert mass starvation since July 2002, but danger has not been eliminated, and the region remains in the grips of an insidious disaster requiring an exceptional response from the international community," said Unicef's London office.

Its statement was issued ahead of United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan's address in New York to G8 ministers on the link between food security, HIV/AIDS and governance.

Unicef said that to compound the current crisis, a wave of secondary casualties was appearing as young adults died from AIDS, leaving behind orphans and the elderly who are at high risk of hunger and illness.

Unicef executive director in the United Kingdom, David Bull, who visited the SADC region in 2002, said: "AIDS stabs at the very heart of families, and cripples agricultural production.

"An HIV-affected family can see its income drop by up to 80 percent and its food intake by up to 30 percent. As people become absolutely desperate for food, they are more likely to turn to measures like prostitution, which of course has an immediate impact on HIV rates."

He said children were the most affected by this deadly combination.

"Unicef is working to make sure these children get the support they desperately need. We are approaching everything through the lens of HIV/AIDS and its impact on women and children," said Bull.

Latrell Sprewell's ex wants \$2 mil a year

NEWS YORK — Mitalene Marrow Maclin wants her daughter's father, New York Knicks basketball star Latrell Sprewell, to pay more in child support, so she's taking him to court.

Maclin, 31, said in court papers that Sprewell, 32, has acknowledged that he is 14-year-old Aquilla's father, and has been paying \$2,000 a month in child support.

But Maclin is saying that now she needs more. She is asking the court to grant her 17 percent of Sprewell's adjusted gross income, which would increase her child support from \$24,000 a year to about \$2 million a year.

Sprewell will make about \$40 million over the last three years of his contract with the Knicks.

About \$2 million every year is a lot of money for child support. Some argue that a child should live the same lifestyle as their parents.

Others argue that if \$2,000 a month has been enough for 14 years, it should be enough now.

AFRICA DIGEST

NIGERIA

Opposition official assassinated

A senior Nigerian opposition politician was shot dead this week in what could be the most serious political killing in the build-up to the country's elections in April, police and party officials said.

Harry Marshall, a leading member of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and a weighty opponent of President Olusegun Obasanjo, was killed in the capital Abuja. "It is true he was killed in the early hours of this morning," Ibrahim Modibo, the ANPP's spokesperson explained.

A police spokesperson confirmed the killing, which appeared to be the latest in a growing list of political assassinations adding to public apprehension ahead of Nigeria's critical polls.

National police chief Tafa Balogun ordered an immediate investigation.

Shocked ANPP leaders gathered for an emergency meeting in Abuja to discuss the loss of their stalwart politician. The ANPP is Nigeria's second largest party and most serious opponent of Obasanjo's ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Marshall, from Rivers state in the oil-producing Niger Delta, was a founding member of the PDP. But he quit the ruling party last year and was working to deny Obasanjo and the PDP victory in the coming polls.

Nigeria is due to hold a series of national and regional elections in April. The most important is a presidential poll on April 19 in which Obasanjo is seeking re-election.

ZIMBABWE

State seizes 16 more farms

Zimbabwe farm lobby group Justice for Agriculture (Jag) said the government had seized another 16 commercial farms in the past week.

This contradicted claims by President Thabo Mbeki that Zimbabwe's controversial land-redistribution program had ended.

Jag said the latest evictions brought the total this year to 97.

Zimbabwe's Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU), the main body representing the few remaining white farmers, has also dismissed claims by Mbeki that they are negotiating successfully with the government for the return of some of their farms.

Mbeki told the Malaysian *New Straits Times* last month that South Africa had persuaded the Zimbabwe government to start returning farms to evicted white farmers who had nowhere else to go.

On the basis of this and other alleged concessions by Mugabe, Mbeki and his Nigerian counterpart Olusegun Obasanjo are lobbying to end Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth.

But CFU president Colin Cloete said the government had evicted farmers with crops still in the ground.

Even ruling party officials are now complaining about land reform. Zanu-PF MP Victor Chitongo upbraided agriculture minister Joseph Made for allowing most seized farms to lie idle.

SENEGAL

Senegal abandons mutilation

Siraboye Diallo begged her parents to allow her to be "circumcised". At nine, they thought she was too young. But she was determined to join other village girls in a centuries-old coming-of-age ritual celebrated with feasting, drumming, dancing and gifts.

Years later, the reality of the ordeal — referred to by some as "sitting on the knife" — changed her mind completely.

Now, Diallo is among a growing number of people across Senegal, including religious leaders, tribal chiefs and even some "circumcisers", who are helping to persuade hundreds of villages to stop the ritual cutting of their girls.

"I don't want any other girl to go through what I did," Diallo tells a group of women, some suckling babies, sitting in the shade of a giant baobab tree in Nangar, a clutch of thatched-roofed huts deep in the hills on Senegal's southeastern border.

The village pledges against female genital mutilation began five years ago, on the other side of the country, in a place called Malicounda. After taking an aid group's class in human rights, health and hygiene, women there decided the practice was dangerous and convinced the community to issue a public declaration formally abandoning it.

Since then 708 villages — just over 10 percent of those practicing female genital cutting in Senegal — have issued similar declarations, with about 400 more pledging to do so this year.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia bank to help farmers

Approximately 500,000 farmers in drought-affected areas of the South Ethiopia Regional State are to benefit from 69-million birr (almost \$65-million) in loans from the government-owned Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), local media reported this week.

The credit would be used to buy 40,000 tons of fertilizers and 5,000 tons of seed, the Amharic language daily *Addis Zemen* stated.

Twenty-seven million birr (\$15 million) was being provided immediately to help during the dry "small-rains" season (February to mid-May).

The rest would be given at the onset of the main rainy season (June to September) according to Lakew Teshome, CBE vice-president of operations.

Farmers who would benefit had already been identified from the worst affected parts of the region, according to Simayehu Tadesse, crop production and conservation team leader with the regional Agriculture and Natural Resources Bureau.

African American Community Targeted For Health

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Joycelyn Elders



Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders was the keynote speaker for a free event at the Greenville Convention Center. Registration began at 9 a.m and Dr. Elders was scheduled to speak at 9:30. The ACT (African-American Community Targeted) for Health Summit includes area professionals leading health-related workshops and discussions about medical problems that challenge many African-Americans. The event was conceived by local black leaders who wanted to bring attention to health statistics that continue to spike in a negative direction. "Our health statistics for African-Americans are not getting any better," said Nell Lewis, director of the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center at East Carolina University. "The incidence of these diseases is higher, and we have the diseases worse and more African-Americans die."

Event workshop titles included: "Winning with Diabetes: The Tip of the Iceberg," "Eating Well, Spending Less: Low Cost-good Nutrition," "Speaking of Sex: The things you may not know," and "Depression: Helping those you know who have it." Eight workshops will be presented at two separate times beginning at 10:30 a.m. Free blood pressure and diabetes screenings also will be available and door prizes will be provided. Ms. Lewis said it was an honor to have Dr. Joycelyn Elders as the keynote speaker.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

By A. ASADULLAH SAMAD

African American Learners Initiative: Controversial Policy Requires Collaboration

Los Angeles Unified School Board Member, for District One, Genethia Hudley-Hayes will be appearing at the Urban Issues Breakfast Forum this week (Feb. 28) to discuss the challenges of getting the board and the district to address the disparities in achievement among African American students summed up in a piece of public policy authored by Hayes called the African American Learners Initiative.

Over the past few weeks, the Initiative—controversial from the outset for targeting a segment of the district's 700,000 plus students—has been a source of public discussion (and harsh commentary), not necessarily for the benefit of policy implementation; but as campaign fodder, if not a source of confusion that requires clarification and further discourse.

Much of the confusion has been centered in the perception that after Hayes got passed one of the most controversial motions in recent

board history, in a district that always seems to have a reason why they can't help black children—one that many suggest cost Hayes her board presidency, that the initiative was later compromised because it was made to include, as some incorrectly perceived, Latino children.

Moreover, an even more ridiculous assertion was made that Hayes didn't come to the community and get "the community's" permission to collaborate with "the Latinos" at the perceived expense of African American children. Thus, a big, "public" ballyhoo (that has since been clarified and squashed) that was followed by community meetings, commentaries by colleagues I respect rebuttals by the board member (whom I respect AND support), more commentaries and subsequently a declaration of what has actually transpired.

But there is still need for a greater understanding of what is going on here—the need to understand how

government and political systems work, and how policy gets implemented—many times by collaboration, not compromise as some choose to assert.

The African American Learners Initiative is one of the first initiatives that I've seen that seeks to acknowledge and address the learning deficiencies of black children in the public school, as unique and culturally deficient. It is a controversial policy that the District, quite frankly, is still trying to figure out how to implement. That's often the case with controversial policy.

If you remember (those who can remember) in the case of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, where the U.S. Supreme Court ordered schools desegregated "with deliberate speed" took, in some instances, 22 years to occur. Forces bussing in some communities took almost 10 years to occur. Trying to address the needs of underserved students, while trying to pay attention to a growing, un-

der-resourced school district is a tough balancing. One that requires some key coalitions to facilitate.

In this instance, the Los Angeles Unified School District is 65 percent Latino students, who also have learning deficiencies—complicated by language deficiencies—something the Latino board member, Jose Huizar, recognized quite quickly once the African American Learners Initiative was passed.

Huizar then asked Hayes to co-author a second achievement gap initiative to address the needs of the largest segment of underserved students that would include both African American and Latino children. Now those of you who understand the history of civil rights and social policy advocacy in this country and in this state know that wherever African Americans have been, and whatever door they have gone through, Latinos have soon followed. So this wasn't unexpected. However, it was a very strategic move on the part of Hayes to insure

that the African American Learners Initiative wasn't derailed or replaced by another initiative that did not give priority to African American children.

In effect, instead of having one initiative that focuses on African American children, because of the coalition approach used on the second initiative, there is now two (or one and a half, depending on how you look at it) initiatives that focus on closing the achievement gap among African American children and other children. Now, was this the spin in the community? No.

What was spinned in the community was that one initiative replaced the other and that "a deal with the Latinos" had been cut behind the community's back, which couldn't have been farther from the truth.

The truth of the matter was that there was an unreasonable expectation that elected officials have to run every proposal or counter-proposal by the community, which is in effect "some individuals" who speak for segments in the commu-

nity. That's not the way politics works. Moreover, to interject "ethnic politics" at a time when coalition politics keeps blacks in the loop undermines our ability to get what we truly need for our interest. Sometimes, you have to "give to get."

That doesn't mean you have to "compromise to get," but you do have to "collaborate to get." In the meetings I've been in, once Hayes put the issues and circumstances forward, nobody had a problem with what was done. Now we have to focus of the challenges of getting the African American Learners Initiative implemented, which is where the focus should have been in the first place.

Controversy, like the black community, is never without its challenges. I'm real interested in what Ms. Hayes will have to say about moving forward.

(Anthony Asadullah Samad is a national columnist and author of *Souls For Sale: The Diary of an Ex-Colored Man* (www.Kabilipress.com))



VERONICA'S VIEW

By VERONICA HENDRIX

The Rudiments and Resonance of Reparations

Part I

If you are black and live in the United States, you have undoubtedly heard some rumblings or read a story about reparations for people of African descent.

Much to many folks' surprise, the discussions that are resonating across the country are more than just rumblings. They are substantive discussions taking place at town hall meetings, on talk shows, at universities, and even in the halls of Congress.

For the past 20 years, Dr. David Horne, tenured professor in the Pan African Studies department at California State University Northridge and co-chair of the Reparations Platform Coalition, has been one of the leading advocates and published authorities on reparations. In honor of Black History month, I sat down to discuss the subject of reparations in its most rudimentary form.

vsview: People define reparations in many different ways. How would you define it? Is it simply an apology, a resolution, an acknowledgment of guilt, a paycheck?

Dr. Horne: The denotative defi-

nition of reparations is a repair, and a restoration back to where you were before an event an activity occurred. Generally reparations is applied to warfare. The victor would impose the cost of the effort to win on the loser.

Reparations is also now used—particularly after the end of WWII, the Nuremberg Trials and the formation of the United Nations with the human rights declaration and the identification of certain activities being crimes against humanity—to identify and to restore victims of some horrendous activity to some points of dignity, maybe in granting monetary compensation or it could be in terms of actual land.

Reparations for African Americans and Africans who have been victimized by the slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism by having their land, lives and labor exploited, is both a regional, national and global movement for having what was theirs taken away. Slaves participated in a fundamental way in building this country. Their labor and their blood are part and parcel of what has made America great. So what we are talking about here is there should be justice for

that activity. People who were exploited and not properly compensated should be.

Secondly, there should be, and there must be an apology which acknowledges the wrong that was done. America has to say, "we did it, yes we grew rich while making you poor." But in order for an apology to be meaningful there must be an atonement. You have to show that you mean it, and there has to be a tangible demonstration that you mean it. Lastly, there must be some kind of compensation.

vsview: If reparations are a restoration of back to where we were as people of African descent, where will it restore us to because our origins in this country are of slavery, our ancestors were kidnapped and brought unwilling to this country, and we are not talking about repatriation of African Americans when we speak of reparations?

Dr. Horne: What we are talking about is regaining the respect and dignity that we did have as a people, and must have now. When it all comes down to it, every problem that black people have as a people, our barriers of being discriminated against, our going to jail in higher

portions than anyone else, our going to the electric chair, police profiling, our shooting each other, the problem when you put it all together comes down to one simple core. That core is called disrespect.

vsview: But this country has a fundamental problem with respecting African Americans and it's a problem we face each day and a philosophy that is imbedded in this American culture.

Dr. Horne: This is true. This country teaches that you cannot politically, economically, and intellectually respect people that were owned like animals. That philosophy came directly out of slavery. It's interesting, many Asian and Latino immigrants come to this country and open business in our communities. Many of them can barely speak English. In their learning of English and American culture, they learn that black people, the very people who come in to spend their money in their business, are the people they can disrespect.

vsview: This country has made some attempts to make amends for the some of the abuses African American have suffered with the

passage of civil rights laws, affirmative action policies, which have suffered a backlash, but these measures have not been effective at all. Why?

Dr. Horne: All of the things the government has said they have done have been piece meal. And they are all about social programs and trying to show that they are interested in making changes, but they have never ever really tried to provide the foundation for respect. So until they do that, America will never provide fundamentally what African Americans need to be self sustaining. I'm not talking about welfare. And remember welfare was never set up for black people. Most of the people on welfare from the day it was set up are white and still are. Affirmative action has helped more white people than it has us. The various civil right bills passed in 1964, 1965, and 1974 have been good, but those are not attempts to achieve reparations. Reparations simply cannot be achieved piece meal.

vsview: One of the problems with these kinds of piece meal policies is that you can't legislative fairness, but you can legislative

some form of restitution.

Dr. Horne: Exactly. But restitution that is only in terms of money or compensation or a social service program is not enough because it does not deal with the fundamental issue, which is no respect for being black in this country. Being black is not a positive value. We don't teach that in our schools even though they talk about Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver and historic African American figures.

These are individuals and their accomplishments are discussed, but there is no discussion about the positiveness of being black. So we grow up not feeling worth while. That's why we chase white women, that is why we are always trying to get on stage and show them that we are as good as they are. None of the legislation has dealt with that.

Reparations for African Americans is equivalent to justice, based on honoring our ancestors and honoring what they went through. It's justice for them, it's an apology, it's atonement, compensation, all equal in the restoration of respect. That's reparations.

(If you have comments about Veronica's View, email them to vsview@yahoo.com)



URBAN PERSPECTIVE

By LARRY AUBRY

National Retreat on the State of Black Education

A group of concerned black activists and educators are inviting all interested persons to join in a black education retreat to address the deplorable state of black education. The retreat, "National State of Black Education: Breaking the Ignorance Chains," will be at Fort Valley State University (Georgia) May 16-18.

The purpose is not only to assess current conditions, but to develop plans and strategies for quality, equitable education for African American children.

Many people concerned with educating African American children continue to meet at conferences and conventions, discussing what can be called an on-going crisis, but not much has changed in the past 50 years since Brown v. Board of Education.

In fact, the state of education for many African American children can be seen as a crime. The achievement gap is daily paraded before us in the media, while research of African American scholars and educators has been ignored. Hundreds of thousands of black youth move from high schools to prisons in the continual cycle of dysfunction that prepares them for neither college, work nor life.

In the 1960s, many fought for black studies to challenge eurocentric curricula to recognize the knowledge base of African Americans. Yet, four decades later most of our children attend schools that are still, in reality, segregated and unequal with the curricula still eurocentric, despite the rhetoric of multicultural education and diversity.

Race, class, gender and culturally biased standardized tests are

increasingly being used to justify the myth of low intellectual abilities of African American and other students of color. Pathological constructs of low cognitive capabilities, "inadequate" linguistic styles and dysfunctional family structures are used to explain the "underachievement" of African American students. Hence, disproportionate numbers of black children are labeled and relegated to dead-end and demoralizing special education classes. The labeling has shifted from being "culturally deprived" to "at risk."

To add insult to injury, public schools are now being placed on the auction block of privatization where our children, once again, become commercial fodder for corporate profit seekers. The vast majority of African Americans remain in educational institutions that are not only mis-educating, but seriously under-educating them. The conference convenors ask—what can we do about this?

It is time for all those deeply concerned with this critical state of affairs to coalesce around new ideas and programs to actualize serious solutions to the problems. The question is—how can we intervene in the current black educational crisis? What can we do? If we do not take responsibility for our children, who will?

Those calling the retreat want to consider how the crisis of educating the black child can be addressed on a national level. In this effort, they're calling upon educators from pre-school to graduate school, as well as participants from independent black educational institutions and the black home-schooling movement, parents and grass-roots community advocates, behavioral and social scientists and all other

sectors of the African American community who are seriously concerned and committed to redressing the state of black education. All interested persons are being urged to convene at Fort Valley State University to grapple with this critical issue.

This will be a working retreat, with roundtable sessions. It will not be a conference dominated by speeches and on-action. The purpose is to learn from past anti-racist battles so as to begin to build an education movement where black

pride and intellectual development are at the center of children's education. Focus areas will include:

- Where are we since Brown vs. Board of Education? What are some of the lessons we have learned?
- Education models that have worked and continue to do so.
- Major education initiatives that have failed and why.
- On-going initiatives for quality education that are making a significant difference.
- How to nurture, support and implement sustainable efforts.

• Ways of effectively teaching mathematics and science to young people.

• Building a structure in which African Americans can begin to network to support each other nationally.

Those who are currently involved in a pro-active educational initiative that is making a difference for our children (and adults) and would like to share what you are doing with participants at the retreat should send a brief summary description of the initiative. It

should state who you are (name of group), location, contact information, how long the initiative has been in place concrete indicators of impact of success rate, to what you attribute to your success and its potential for replication.

Retreat planners are in the process of organizing the logistics and at this time are unable to other assistance with travel, but complimentary housing will be provided at the university.

Correspondence e-mail sobe2003@tbwt.com or call (718) 270-6287.

A CITY ON TRIAL

Mayor Eric Perrodin Asks Appeals Court to Hear On-Going Compton Election Fraud Case

By LANEÁ AUSTIN
Sentinel Staff Writer
COMPTON—The 2nd District Court of Appeals in Compton heard arguments Tuesday from Mayor Eric Perrodin's attorney on his appeal to permanently overturn a judge's ruling from last February that reversed the challenger's election victory over incumbent Omar Bradley.

In June 2001 Perrodin was elected mayor after a run-off that brought him 280 more votes than Bradley.

But Bradley convinced Superior Court Judge Judith C. Chirlin that he would have had over 300 additional votes had his name been first on the ballot, instead of second.

Judge Chirlin agreed and re-

versed the outcome of the election.

She based her decision primarily on the "primacy effect," in which experts theorize that a small number of voters will simply select the candidate whose name is first on the ballot.

While the panel may not rule on Perrodin's appeal for three months, they were somewhat skeptical of the theory, used in a 1990 election in Ohio.

Especially when Grimes admitted the theory expert did not interview Compton voters.

Perrodin's attorney Frederic D. Woocher told the justices that "the primacy effect cannot be justified as the reason to overturn the will of the people. That should never be sufficient.

He said Chirlin did not "merely invalidate the election, but reversed it...a truly remarkable and unprecedented decision that caused serious damage to the democratic process," Woocher said.

Bradley's attorney, Milton Grimes, said the former mayor was cheated and that Chirlin made her decision on evidence.

"Judge Chirlin found 144 illegal ballots, evidence of nonresidents voting, [and] a dead person voting," Grimes said.

"The primacy effect isn't voodoo, and Judge Chirlin wasn't tricked. The theory is scientifically accepted," he said.

As Bradley prepared to re-enter office, Perrodin promptly appealed and a three-judge panel

stayed Chirlin's judgment and reinstated Perrodin pending the result of his challenge.

Chirlin also reimbursed Bradley \$678,672 in legal fees, but said the appellate court should review any payment.

Last February, the state Supreme Court turned down an appeal by Bradley.

But the 2nd District panel in Los Angeles also will hear arguments from former Compton City Councilwoman Leslie Irving, who defeated Melanie Andrews in June 2001—a turnout that was also invalidated by Chirlin.

Chirlin also barred Irving from holding a state office, ruling that she intentionally registered non-citizens to vote.

Cornel West at Mendenhall Student Center



Cornel West Speaker - Sponsor Ledonia Wright Cultural Center

Cornel West is a Princeton professor and author whose books include "Race Matters," "Breaking Bread" and "Prophetic Reflections and Postmodern Times." Professor West is a prolific writer and frequently cited scholar. "Race Matters" is widely read and evokes much discussion on the topic of race in the 21st century.

He came to Greenville at the invitation of Ms. Neil Lewis of ECU's Ledonia Wright Cultural Center.

In addition to self-examination, West said, the complex history of the United States, its greatness and its failures, also must be considered.

"It is impossible to talk about race matters — America's rawest nerve — it's impossible to

talk about that without talking of the legacy of a multi-faceted democracy and the vicious legacy of white supremacy," he said.

All people in the United States, he said, are influenced by white supremacy in some way.

"When I look at myself, I see white supremacy, too. There is no way, as a 49-year-old black man today, the white supremacy stereotype does not affect me," he said. "Not one of us is free of white supremacy; it's the quality of our struggle against it." West called upon the next generation to cast off the mass-media representation of themselves and start engaging in compassionate, compelling discussion.

"The question for the younger generation is how to cultivate Socratic sensibilities with showing love and (empathy). TV culture is one big orgasmic expectation. It's all foreplay. The

younger generation is more and more shaped by this, and non-marketable values like love and hope and compassion are being pushed to the margins," he said.

IMPORTANT EVENTS at The Ledonia Wright Cultural Center

2003

ACT (African American Community Targeted) for Health

March 1, 2003

African American Firsts Dinner and Recognition (Special Guest)

Carl Brashear: Men of Honor February 1, 2003

2002

Herman Boone (Remember The Titans) speaks at ECU's African American Firsts Event February 9, 2002

EMPLOYMENT

PROCUREMENT OFFICER

Procurement Officer: The Housing Authority of the City of Greenville, North Carolina is seeking an individual to fill a position as Procurement Officer for supervising the administration, general purchasing, contracting, warehousing/inventory management of the procurement department, preparing and reviewing complex bid specifications, soliciting bid proposals, reviewing bid replies and proposals, awards purchase orders for services and materials and administers contracts for materials, supplies and/or services consistent with Federal requirements.

The successful candidate must have thorough knowledge of HUD procurement requirements; such as Federal Acquisition Regulations, NC State Statutes, Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations § 85.36, HUD Handbook 7460.8 Rev.-1, internal procurement policies, Excluded Parties Listing System (Debarment/Suspensions), etc. He/She must also exercise tact and courtesy in frequent contact with vendors, have strong organizational skills, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and knowledge of State and local laws and regulations related to contracting. A complete Job Description is available upon request.

The evaluation factors for the position are as follows:

- Knowledge and experience involving the application of procurement statutes, policies, and regulations
- Knowledge of construction technology and construction contract administration
- Knowledge of specialized procurement functions, contract pre-award activities and knowledge of contract post-award activities
- Ability to identify and analyze procurement issues and their impact upon local procedures
- Ability to negotiate
- Ability to procure complex or diversified supplies, services, construction, or research and development
- Ability to communicate verbally and in writing
- Experience in applying contract cost estimating and analysis techniques

The salary for this position is negotiable and commensurate to the qualifications. The deadline for submission is the close of business on March 31, 2003. Applicants should send their resume and salary history to: Attn: Phyllis Barrett, Acting Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Greenville, P.O. Box 1426, Greenville, NC 27835-1426.

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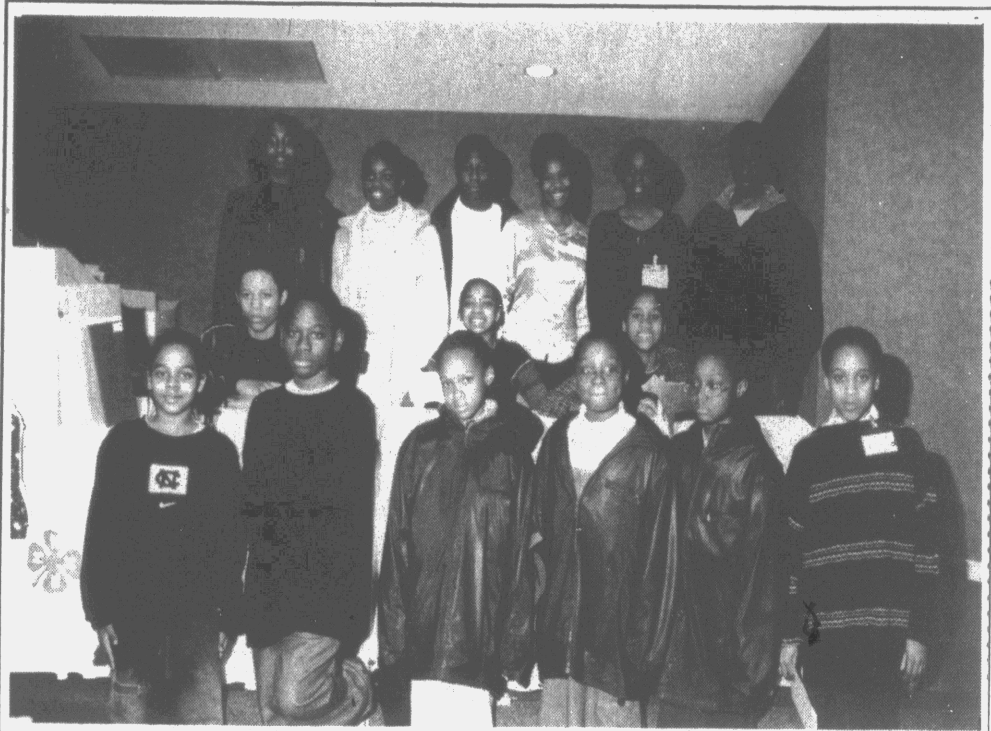
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4H County Champions - AllStars Club



AND THE WINNERS ARE picturd from left to right is, volunteer leader, Mildred Council,Valencia Speight, Logan Council (Pitt County 4H president), Pierre Westmoreland, center Catherine Wills and Dale Panero (Pitt County 4H Agent) not pictured was Kimberly Nevelle



Winners of County Blue Ribbons Awards & 4-H Certificates of Achievement - Pierre Westmoreland Shandell Jones Ryan Savage Jaron Jones Shakena Spellman Johnathan Fields Latina Nevelle Garrett Jones Megan Fields Melanie Fields Melinda Fields Naimi Savage For membership call 757-1037

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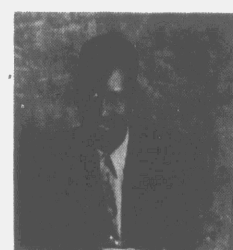
THE MINORITY VOICE NEWSPAPER SALUTES MR. GASTON MONK

The Hilton Hotel was filled with excitement and appreciation for a black man who has given so much to his family and the Black Community. The Mayor of Greenville along with family and friends gave him his flowers while he still lives.

photo by Jim Rouse

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