

The Minority Voice

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REVELATIONS 2: 23

"A CITY ON EDGE"

NEWS ANALYSIS

by Ralph W. Cooper

GREENVILLE, NC - Greenville is on edge, due to a recent surge in youth/gang violence. Meanwhile, a frightened, disillusioned community awaits solutions to combat youth violence.

Ofentimes, during local election seasons, officials sprinkle a tossed salad of public discontent and fear of escalating violence with condiments of public relations campaigns (i.e. press conferences) and grandstanding. They organize "feel-good" committees to appease a community thirsty for answers. Yet, the violence festers.

When Nancy Jenkins was mayor, I gave her a comprehensive crime control and prevention proposal that has yet to be enacted. One ingredient called for a strategic community-policing strategy where police officers walk and ride bikes in high-crime areas, check on elderly residents, and maintain a presence of deterrence.

Historically, blacks have had tumultuous relationships with the police. Targeted community policing will help restore confidence in the police, win advocates, and simultaneously curtail violent crime.

Among other strategies, I support a dusk-to-dawn curfew indefinitely. Within the past few years, researchers with the National League of Cities

found that 97 percent of over 534 surveyed cities with curfews indicated the following: Curfews help combat juvenile crime; 96 percent said curfews help fight truancy; and 88 percent said curfews help reduce gang violence.

Youth who violate a curfew ordinance should be taken to a nearby curfew holding center to await a parent or guardian. A warning may or may not be given for the first offense, depending on the nature of the violation. However, a second violation should carry a stiff fine that might lead to legal action if the fine is not paid on time. Community service might

also be an option or an ancillary provision.

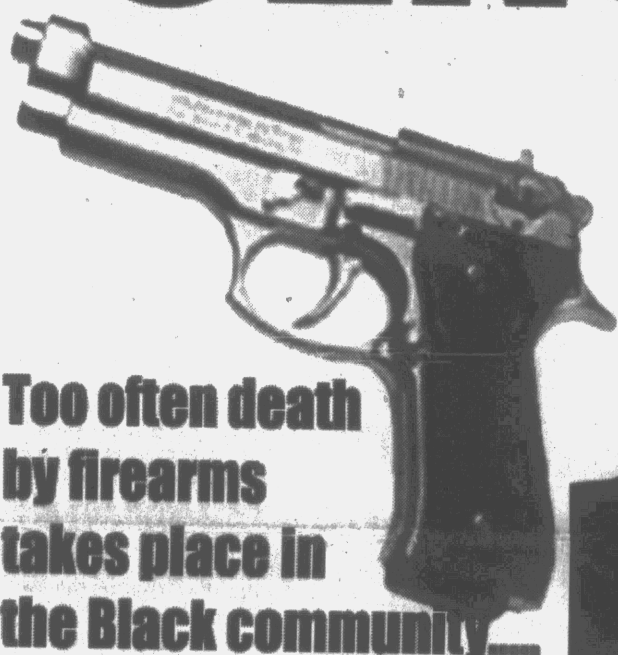
Parents may be held accountable for some violations, depending on the circumstances and whether the parents may be complicit in any illegal or offensive behavior of their children violating the curfew. Parents might be required to take parenting classes in some cases.

A reasonable percentage of the curfew fines should be placed in a scholarship fund to help send needy residents to college. This is surely a positive way of giving back to the community.



Community leaders meet during a press conference at the Phillippi Church of Christ following a shooting which left one young man seriously wounded and another young boy one dead at the scene. The meeting was in attendance by the press, educators, local politicians and the heads of several law enforcement agencies. According to one community activist, there has been as many as 12 gunshot fatalities involving black youth living in black communities in the greater Greenville area during the past four or five years. Photo - Guy Sims

SENSELESS!



Too often death by firearms takes place in the Black community... And too often it is the innocent bystander who becomes the VICTIM... of this Foolish and Violent Behavior



Jahmel Rashaad Little

13 Years Old - Jr. High
May 19, 1991 - Mar. 6, 2005

On Saturday March 12, young Jahmel Rashaad Little was laid to rest six days after being shot in the chest after being called outside his home, where he and his cousin were both assaulted. His life only took minutes to fade away. According to authorities and other published reports, Jahmel was a good boy. He was described to be quiet and respectful by his neighbors. He was preceded in death by his John Henry Little, Jr. and his grandparents John Henry, Sr. and Lizzie Mae Little.

Stacy Marie Carr

17 Years Old - College
Sept. 16, 1986 - Aug. 14, 2003

Someone said that Stacy Marie Carr had only been home for about thirty minutes when she was fatally wounded. Innocently she was preparing to braid the hair of the intended victim, and as the story goes she was struck in the head with a bullet from a high powered rifle. The bullet went through both victims. She died the next day. She attended D.H. Conley High School and at the time of her death was attending Pitt Community College. Her presence is continually missed.

Rap and Hip Hop Diva Convicted of Perjury

Charges stem from gunfight at a New York radio station...

NEW YORK CITY - Female rap and hip-hop artist Lil' Kim was convicted on Thursday Mar. 17th of lying to a federal grand jury that was investigating a shooting outside a radio station. She was convicted of perjury and conspiracy but acquitted of obstruction of justice.

Prosecutors accused the 4-foot-11 Grammy winner of telling "preposterous" lies to a grand jury relying on her eyewitness testimony about the 2001 gunfight outside WQHT, the rap station known as Hot 97.

The shootout occurred on Feb. 25, 2001, when Lil' Kim's entourage crossed paths with a rival rap group,



Ms. Kimberly Jones aka Lil' Kim
Cleared of obstruction of justice charges.

Capone-N-Noreaga. One man was injured as more than two dozen shots were fired.

Lil' Kim's assistant, Monique Dopwell, was also found guilty of perjury and both defendants shook their heads as the verdicts were delivered. The rappers supporters broke out in sobs.

Sentencing was set for June 24. The defendants had faced up to 30 years in prison if convicted of all the charges.

Lil' Kim, 29, known for her revealing outfits and raunchy hip-hop raps, had testified that the gun battle reminded her of the slaying of her legendary mentor, Notorious B.I.G., and even the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

It was "a heartfelt day — like the day Biggie was killed and 9/11," she said.

"This was a very serious situation," she testified. "I could not come into a grand jury and purposely tell false statements and lie."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Cathy
SEE LIL' KIM PAGE 11

Jackie Robinson posthumously awarded Congressional Gold Medal

By Erica Werner
WASHINGTON, DC - More than a half-century after breaking sport's color barrier, Jackie Robinson was posthumously awarded Congress' highest honor, a Congressional Gold Medal.

President Bush gave the medal to Robinson's widow Wednesday, Rachel Robinson, in a stately ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda. The Democratic

and Republican leaders of the House and Senate and baseball commissioner Bud Selig looked on.

"His story is one that shows what one person can do to hold America to account to its founding promise of freedom and equality," Bush said. "It's a lesson for people coming up to see. One person can make a big difference in setting the tone of this country."

When Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, he was the first black player on a major league team. He died in 1972 and his No. 42 was retired throughout baseball in 1997.

"This medal confirms what we know," Rachel Robinson said. "Jackie Robinson stands as a heroic role model for all Americans who believe in justice and equality."

Speakers extolled Robinson

as a courageous athlete who suffered taunts and slurs from fans and fellow players, ignoring them as he proved both a brilliant ballplayer and a civil rights hero. The latter role wasn't one he sought but it became inevitable after Dodgers owner Branch Rickey bucked much of popular opinion and signed him.

"He knew he was a symbol and a barrier-breaker, and that staying the course would have

ethics than anybody else," he said. "As we climb higher, some of us will fall but at least we're getting the chance to climb. I think in 2005, we're going to see a lot of progress that will far outstrip the negative news."

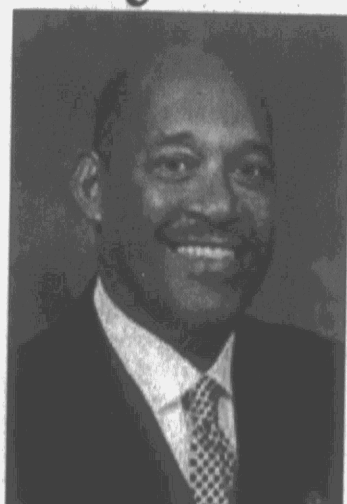
This time around, it was a scandal involving a white executive that put Bell on the top rung.

He replaced former CEO Harry Stonecipher on March 6, after Stonecipher resigned when it was revealed that he was having a consensual affair with a female employee. The woman did not report directly to Stonecipher and the affair was not against company policy, but Boeing's board decided Stonecipher should step down anyway because "the facts reflected poorly on Harry's judgment and would impair his ability to lead the company," according to a company statement.

Stonecipher was considered a stickler for ethical conduct and was hired out of retirement to help Boeing clean up its image following another corporate scandal in 2002.

Keith Reed writes for the BlackAmericaWeb.com

Boeing's Chief Financial Officer replaces ousted CEO



James A. Bell, Boeing Co.'s first black chief financial officer, was named interim president and CEO this week

By: Keith Reed,
BlackAmericaWeb.com

Boeing, the world's top airplane manufacturer, tapped its first black chief executive this week, fol-

lowing a scandal that saw the company's former top dog forced out for having an affair with an employee.

Now, James Bell, a 56-year-old veteran of corporate America, finds himself thrust in the position of leading Boeing through what could be a tough transition, while Boeing itself has the distinction of being the biggest corporation in the country headed by an African-American.

While significant, though, Bell's reign at the top is destined to be short because he was only named to the CEO's chair for an interim period. In the meantime, Bell is not a candidate for the job permanently and the board is searching for a new chief executive.

Officials said Bell was not commenting on his ascendancy.

Bell joins a handful of black executives leading huge American companies. Kenneth Chenault, 53, became chief executive at American Express in 2001. Alwyn Lewis, 50, became the CEO of Kmart last

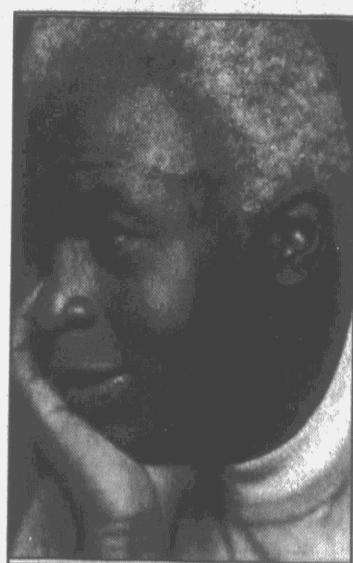
October, a month before the retail giant merged with Sears. He is now the number three executive at that company.

Stanley O'Neal has led Merrill Lynch & Co. since 2001, and Richard "Dick" Parsons became chairman and CEO of media titan Time Warner the same year.

At least one black corporate heavy hitter, though, has been undone by scandal in recent months. Franklin Raines, former chairman and CEO at mortgage giant Fannie Mae, was ousted after an accounting scandal in December. Ironically, Fannie Mae had been the largest company headed by an African-American before Raines' departure.

Alfred Edmond, editor-in-chief of Black Enterprise magazine, told BlackAmericaWeb.com in January that ethical scandals like the one that befell Raines would likely continue to affect African-Americans, who are now deeply entrenched in the corporate world.

"African-Americans are no less vulnerable to temptations and poor



Jackie Robinson, shown here in 1971, spent a lifetime opposing race discrimination.

consequences for millions of people to come," Rep. Mel Watt, D-N.C., chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said.

Robinson stayed the course, and excelled. He was rookie of the year in 1947, and was voted the league's Most Valuable Player in 1949 when he batted .342 and drove in 124 runs. He played 10 seasons with the Brooklyn Dodgers, often at second base.

He was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame in 1962.

Speakers at Wednesday's ceremony recalled hearing of Robinson's exploits or watching him play in their youth, proving once again that whatever ideological differences divide them, America's pastime rarely fails to

SEE JACKIE ROBINSON PAGE 9

Race, Gender and Corporate America

There is undeniable evidence that African-Americans have made impressive progress in Corporate America.



Kenneth Chenault is chairman and CEO of American Express. Richard Parsons is chairman and CEO of AOL Time Warner. E. Stanley

O'Neal holds a similar title at Merrill Lynch & Co. Aylwin Lewis is president and CEO of Kmart. Ann M. Fudge holds the same titles at Young & Rubicam Brands.

A report just released by the Executive Leadership Council in Washington, D.C. offers more encouraging news. According to its findings, African-Americans now hold 8.1 percent of the board seats on Fortune 500 companies.

What that means on an individual level is that some African-Americans are finally being allowed to advance to a level commensurate with their talent. Collectively, it means that young Black kids can now model their lives and careers after Black corporate superstars rather than professional athletes and entertainers.

As much progress as we've made in this area, there is still plenty of room for growth.

While it is impressive that Blacks hold 8.1 percent of the board seats on Fortune 500 companies, that's about double the African-American representation in the executive suite. In other words, it's twice as easy to be an outsider elected to set policy for a Fortune 500 firm than it is for a Black to rise to the top from within the company.

A 1995 report by the federal Glass Ceiling Commission observed, "At the highest levels of business, there is indeed a barrier only rarely penetrated by women or per-

sons of color. Consider: 97% of the senior managers of Fortune 1000 industrial and Fortune 500 companies are white; 95 to 97% are male. In Fortune 2000 industrial and service companies, 5 % of senior managers are women - and of that 5 percent, virtually all are white."

The Glass Ceiling report observes, "...The world at the top of the corporate hierarchy does not yet look anything like America. Two-thirds of our population, and 57 percent of the working population, is female, or minorities, or both." The commission projects that this year, people of color and women will make up 62 percent of the workforce.

U.S. Census Bureau projections show that over the next 50 years, the U.S. population will grow by 50 percent, with 90 percent of that growth occurring among people of color while the White population increases by only 7.4 percent. Given these dramatic changes in the population and the workforce, White males can't continue to enjoy the virtual monopoly they've held on the top jobs in Corporate America.

The Executive Leadership Council represents African-Americans at the senior level in corporations, two or three rungs below the CEO. What is striking about its inaugural report on Black board directorships is that while 67 percent of the Fortune 500 companies have at least one Black on their board, a third - 33 percent - have no African-American directors.

There are 5,572 total board seats for Fortune 500 companies. Of those, 449 or 8.1 per cent are held by African-Americans. Black men hold more than three times as many seats than African-American women. Black men hold 344 of the total board seats, or 6.2 percent, and Black women hold only 105, or 1.9 percent.

Interestingly, there was a major difference between the top 100 members of the Fortune 500 and the bottom 100. Of the top 100 companies on the Fortune 500 list, Blacks held 10.9 percent of the seats.

For the 100 at the bottom of the list, Blacks were only 0.6 percent of their directors.

What was surprising was the number of firms that have no Black directors yet expect African-Americans to continue supporting their products. They include: Safeway, Inc., Intel Corp., Kmart Holding Corp., Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co., Lehman Brothers

Holdings, Inc., Rite Aid Corp., Qwest Communications International, Humana, Inc., Whirlpool, Capitol One Financial Corp., Centex Corp., Pulte Homes, Guardian Life Insurance Co. of America, American Standard Cos., Boise Cascade Corp., Newell Rubbermaid, Inc., the First American Corp., Apple Computer, Land O'Lakes, Southwest Airline Co., N.C.R.

Corp., Barnes & Noble, Mattel, Maytag Corp., Caesars Entertainment, Dole Food Co., Goodrich Corp., Jones Apparel Group, Levi Strauss & Co., Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Ross Stores, Host Marriott Corp., and Gateway.

If those companies don't think enough of us to have an African-American on their board of directors, we should think enough of ourselves not to spend our money with them. And we should let them know why

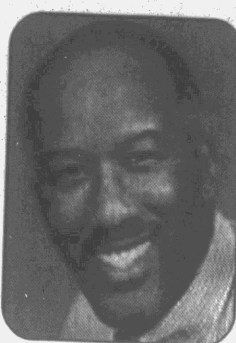
we're taking our business elsewhere.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. He appears on National Public Radio (NPR) three times a week as part of "News and Notes with Ed Gordon." Curry's weekly radio commentary is syndicated by Capitol Radio News Service (301/588-1993). He can be reached through his Web site, georgecurry.com.

Despite Bush's Social Security Pitch to Blacks, Let the Buyer Beware

By: Wayne Dawkins

Republican and Democrat voters in red and blue states can't even agree on the true color of the sky when they wake up each morning, yet on the question of Social Security



reform, most of them see purple.

Numerous polls are reporting that Americans are not jumping enthusiastically at the Bush plan to privatize Social Security, then dump the 70-year-old system. Since senior citizens were not scared effectively by exaggerated claims that Social Security was about to go bankrupt, and young adults appear indifferent about the future of the program, the Bush administration late last week announced it was going to step up their sales pitch and launch a rapid response campaign that posts op-ed essays and letters to the editor in response to critical press coverage.

Bush's Social Security plan is in trouble because of Bush himself. He tried a Chicken Little strategy, and most Americans understand that the sky is not falling, and Social Security will not collapse anytime soon. Plus, he

didn't offer up enough specifics about shifting a reliable retirement program from the federal government to Wall Street.

Conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats saw a big problem in accepting such a dramatic change with such flimsy detail.

Blacks, regardless of their political leanings, must eye this policy debate with the skepticism of hawks, then not hesitate to leap into the debate. Jump in, please, because the Bush administration is trying to play us for fools. Bush has sold the private investment accounts proposal as a no-brainer to black self-interest.

Blacks on average live shorter lives than whites - goes the administration pitch - so that means most blacks pay more into the government-run Social Security system and get less from program.

Right? Not quite. The Bush administration scheme is misleading.

Right now, Social Security levels the playing field for many black retirees who don't have as much investment income as whites, a disadvantage that reveals the legacy of legal segregation and job discrimination. About 63 percent of whites have asset income for retirement; for blacks, asset income is 29 percent, reports the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. Thirty seven percent of black beneficiaries rely

on Social Security for all of their income because of a lack of other income at retirement.

The government system is also good to blacks who have suffered disabilities. On average, blacks get more out of the system than they put in.

Maya Rockey Moore, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's vice president of research and programs, wrote last year that 17 percent of blacks received Social Security disability benefits, despite representing 12 percent of the population. Furthermore, 68 percent of blacks are kept out of poverty because of disability benefits.

"African-Americans must take care to understand the importance of Social Security and the implications of privatizing the system," wrote Rockey Moore, words worth repeating in this wrongheaded push by the Bush administration to force privatized retirement accounts down Americans' throats.

Black conservatives like Alvin Williams and Star Parker published op-ed essays in the last week suggesting that blacks and advocates like the NAACP either go against their self-interests or are simply knee-jerk opponents in resisting the Bush plan.

Actually, the skeptics sense a shady scheme.

An article in the Wilmington, N.C. Journal this week explained: In targeting blacks - then telling

them that Social Security cheats them out of money because of a significant disparity in life expectancy - what's not noted is that when you take the high black infant mortality rate out of the equation and compare the life expectancy of black and white young adults advancing to old age, a nine-year gap shrinks to a comparable two years.

According to a Reuters dispatch at the end of February, average life expectancy is now 77.6 years, but black men live 6.2 years less than whites, and black women live 4.4 years less, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Right now, Social Security serves most blacks well. The Bush administration has acknowledged that private retirement accounts are not substitutes for what is fiscally troubling with Social Security.

Most Americans right now are not feeling Bush's private accounts plan. So why are blacks being targeted to rally around a proposal that appears suspect?

Buyer, beware.

Wayne Dawkins is the former managing editor of BlackAmericaWeb.com. Previously he was an associate editor and columnist with the Daily Press in Newport News, Va. and before that newspapers in Indiana, New Jersey and New York. Dawkins is author of "Rugged Waters: Black Journalists Swim the Mainstream," published by August Press

Will Your Right To Vote Be Challenge in 2007?



By Susie Clemons

"Free by 63", and the significance of 07' and 40. To the naked eye the numbers 63, 07, and 40 are just that, numbers. Upon further inspection, however, and depending upon one's conversational pursuits, 07 - no matter its low numerical value - looms large when the number 20 becomes its front end companion. It's been 40 years almost to

the day when, The Civil Rights Act of 1965, the most significant comprehensive human rights bill, was passed by congress.

Several years prior to the ruling and in anticipation of which, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples coined the sum of the Black experience in America with the slogan: "Free by 63".

Two thousand - seven, August 2007 in particular, is when congress will vote to reauthorize the three parts, or sections, of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) set to then expire.

But then you knew that right? If not, the following freedoms now taken for granted could very much be on the front burner should the Congressional vote have a hiccup in memory:

Section 5- any change to the VRA cannot have the effect of denying voting access based on race or language in a minority group.

Section 203- Bilingual assistance must remain in place in polling areas where concentrations of

English Language Learners exist.

Sections 6 and 9- Federal examinees must continue to have monitoring access to polling sites to avert acts of intimidation (which the mentally challenged have been known to engage.)

Is it the case that "Free by 63" should now become "can't we all get along in 07". No less in anticipation of the best and the worst Congress have to offer. It is indeed incomprehensible to think that basic voting freedoms are at stake within a land where democracy clothes herself as the Statue of liberty, Capitol Hill, Hollywood and Religion.

All this and more while American troops are continually interspersed through out foreign lands bestowing tidings of Democracy on the one hand and spent bullet shells, Coca Cola and McDonalds on the other- knowing in the end they'll return home not as hero's but as has been's also caught in the struggle.

But then why bother with thoughts that the Voting Rights Act could be repealed? Furthermore, why think less than perfect thoughts

about the democratic duty of American troops in far away lands? And why shouldn't there be some degree of comfort in knowing that Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Push Coalition will always ride in on white horses and snatch up the poor, defenseless and marginalized from the claws of oppression.

Jesse is, in fact, gearing up for a mass mobilization march set to take place in Atlanta, GA this summer. But march for what? The march is to ensure that your voice will continue to be heard at the polls, no matter if some voices have become hypocritically tongue tied to issues attached to the Civil Rights (moral) agenda- and without merit.

But apart from that side bar is the very real notion that Atlanta, GA will become a hot bed for political goings on this summer. After all Jackson's march is set to occur the same time that T.D. Jakes will be hosting the Megafest family conference, which is rumored to be largest and best yet, August 3-6.

The powerhouse mix of Jackson and Jakes in Atlanta- at the

same time drawing hoards of people, and not just Black people- carries whispers of King's I have a Dream speech at the Washington Monument. Thoughts of which bring on "back in the days when things were good and we were close" memories. Recall that King foretold much in his speech including "Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!"

Clarity of mind is necessary when wrapping your thoughts around that, while also making some sense of the bizarre shooting incident in Atlanta most recently. The brother, Brian Nichols, appeared to have lost his last good sense. What with several families still in mourning, however, untold scores of friends, acquaintances, business associates and concerned area citizens still in shock, was his act of rage coincidental or just a blurb on the screen in view of the hit Atlanta will take this summer? No need to digress to conspiracy theories, but some things just- well...

On the matter of "Free by 63" and the significance of 07' and 40 just how far have we traveled, and who's been left behind in the dust of

Black Flight into the mindset of "having arrived?" Greater, how many more miles to Freedom and how much more will it cost us?

I caution that while your Constitutional Right to vote is not in jeopardy, should any portions of sections 5, section 205 or sections 6 and 9 be removed or rewritten to lesser extents, is when Jim Crow awakes from his semi-meditative state raising cain.

I'd like to take this time to thank Bev Smith and Tavis Smiley for keeping us all in the loop on very real yet oft hidden issues affecting our people and as well stifling our collective movement. I am as well deeply indebted to the genius of historian Mr. John Hope Franklin. For without his well-written Black history guide- From Slavery To Freedom, 7th edition, McGraw Hill, New York 1994- the succinct comprehension of our beginning-our collective struggle and our accomplishments would have remained well beneath my radar detector.

For comments and additional dialog email Susie Clemons at Opinionsandtalk@yahoo.com

Military Recruiters Face Resistance

by Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg

Amsterdam News
NEW YORK (NNPA) - The military spends about \$3 billion each year to convince young people that enlistment will give them college money, job training and an alternative to working at McDonald's. In the wake of the growing conflict in Iraq, which has resulted in more than a fifteen hundred U.S. casualties, the military has become more aggressive in scouting out high school students willing and able to serve.

In many New York City public schools that are predominantly Black and Latino, military recruiters are a heavy presence, promising young people financial security and a fulfilling career. Recruiters roam the halls, set up tables and even pull students out of class.

But in recent months, a group of teenagers and anti-war veterans have been canvassing the neighborhoods where the recruiters frequent, hoping to convince students to consider other options.

"We've heard everything up to and including having a desk in the guidance counselor's office," said Amy Wagner of Youth Activists-Youth Allies (YaYas), a group that focuses on counter-recruitment. "When the kid comes in to talk to the counselor about college, before the kid can get there, they've got somebody in their face saying, 'You

want to go to college? How are you going to pay for college?"

New York City organizers are educating people about alternatives to enlisting and the realities of military life. Vietnam veterans and anti-war activists Jim Murphy and Dayl Wise visit high schools, where they recount for the students stories about their time in the service.

In one class of juniors at West Side High School, Murphy told them that before the service, he spent time making money playing seven-card stud. Once he left community college, he was drafted.

"I wasn't smart enough to have fear about it," Murphy told the class. "I didn't have a clue."

Wise, who was in the infantry, didn't want to go to war when he was drafted. His father offered to help send him to Canada.

"I took the easy way out by reporting for duty," he said. "It takes a braver person. I let it happen to me? I didn't have a plan. I gave up control."

He warned the students: "Please have a plan. Don't let others make plans for you."

The YaYas, staffed almost entirely by high school students of color, work to make sure young people avoid falling into military service because it seems like the only option for advancement.

"It's either jail or the military," said Jeannel Bishop, a senior at

Brooklyn's South Shore High School and a YaYas staffer. Many students at her school think enlistment is the best they can accomplish.

When Navy recruiters visited her school recently, students were allowed to leave class to visit with them.

Bishop brought pamphlets and confronted the recruiters about their assurances of tuition and training. She pointed out to them and other students nearby that getting college money was a much more complicated and uncertain process.

"I was taking over their whole show," Bishop said. "[The recruiters] were amazed."

Three students who had been "pumped up about the military" had second thoughts after Bishop spoke. It took just a little information for them to have doubts, she said.

Besides speaking out in their own schools, the YaYas hold workshops for teenagers and make presentations to PTAs. They encourage students to post literature in the guidance office and set up counter-recruitment tables next to military recruiters. Most importantly, they want young people to make an informed choice, Wagner said.

For instance, most students don't know that:

- Two-thirds of recruits don't get any college money, according to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors.

- Most people in the military do not have time to attend college while in the service.

- To qualify for college money recruits have to pay \$100 per month for a year.

- The unemployment rate for veterans is three times higher than the national average.

- People who sign up with the Delayed Entry Program are told they can't change their minds, but getting out is as simple as writing a letter.

- The enlistment contract is for eight years.

- There are other ways to finance college, like federal financial aid, private scholarships, going to community college or joining AmeriCorps.

But educating youth is not just about these facts and figures, Wagner said. The war in Iraq makes their work much more urgent, she said.

"They're still telling people you can go to Germany, Japan, but the reality is the vast majority are going to Iraq," Wagner said. "You risk losing life and limb; you risk being a murderer."

Giving young people a complete picture of enlisting rests on the courage and initiative of activists, guidance counselors and principals. Often, the recruiters' sales pitches, brochures and posters go unchallenged.

Many educators fear principals will retaliate if they speak out, Wagner said. Some schools are reticent to limit the military's presence

because they think they will lose federal funding, she said.

No Child Left Behind, the educational policy touted by the Bush administration, requires that recruiters and college representatives have equal access to students. This is often misinterpreted as unlimited access. Policy on recruiter access in New York City public schools is determined school by school and varies widely.

But some school districts have taken a more active role and regulate recruiters' visits. In Madison, Wisconsin, recruiters are only permitted to be in each high school three days during the school year.

Their policy states that guidance counselors can distribute both military and counter-recruitment information.

There is also no uniform, enforced policy in New York City governing opt-out forms, which let students choose whether to release their personal information to recruiters. Many principals, Wagner said, are not even aware of the opt-out form. Some schools give out the form, without any explanation and make no effort to collect it from students, she said.

Wagner said some students think that signing the forms will mean their information is not released to any institutions, including colleges.

Other students, often immigrants, fear they will get in trouble for signing, she said.

Currently, New York City stu-

dents are often only given the opt-out form in the ninth grade, Wagner said. Because recruiters ask for 11th and 12th grade lists, schools should send out the forms each year, she said.

In Montclair, N.J., the high school sends a fact sheet with the opt-out form. Tenth-graders who have not returned the forms are called. If the form is still not turned in, it will be passed out the following year.

Activists have discussed working on a New York City Council resolution to require schools to collect the forms from every student. Members of the YaYas and the New York Civil Liberties Union have met with the Department of Education (DOE) to discuss putting together an information packet for principals about opt-out. Wagner said the DOE was receptive. Calls to the DOE were not returned.

Local counter-recruiters also plan to make use of the recent Third Circuit Court's ruling that Yale Law School, which has a non-discrimination policy, can ban recruiters from its campus without risk of losing federal funding, because the military discriminates against gays.

However, without the help of the Department of Education or the City Council, counter-recruiters' efforts can only go so far. This frustration is evident in veteran Dayl Wise when he said that giving presentations, classroom by classroom, is like "throwing grains of sand on the beach."

Minority Voice OP/ED

Because whatever happens to America happens to Black America first....

Still on the March 40 Years after 'Bloody Sunday'

by Hazel Trice Edney - NNPA, Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — John Lewis will never forget March 7, 1965, which would later become known as "Bloody Sunday." It was the first leg of the 54-mile Selma-to-Montgomery, Ala. march organized to help win passage of a national voting rights law. As chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Lewis was in front of the line as it formed at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, snaked through downtown Selma, and proceeded along U.S. 80 en route to the Alabama state capital.

"We were walking in an orderly, peaceful fashion with no one saying a word," says Lewis. "It was like military discipline, more than 600 of us walking in twos. We came to the highest point on the [Edmund Pettus] bridge, crossing the Alabama River. Down below, we saw a sea of blue — Alabama state troopers. And we continued to walk. And we came within hand distance of the state troopers. And a man identified himself and said, 'I am Major John Cloud of the Alabama State Troopers. This is an unlawful march. It will not be allowed to continue. I give you three minutes to disperse to your church.'"

In an interview with the NNPA News Service, Lewis, now a U.S. Congressman from Georgia, recalls what happened next.

"He left. And in a minute and a half, Major John Cloud said, 'Troopers advance.' And we saw these men putting on their gas masks and they came toward us, beating us with night sticks, bull whips, trampling us with horses, releasing the tear gas," Lewis recounts. "I thought I was

going to die. I thought I saw death. And I sort of said to myself, 'I'm going to die here. This is my last protest.' I just heard people hollering and crying. And 40 years later, I don't recall how I made it back across that bridge, back to that little church."

The graphic violence shown on national television news programs that night helped to win empathy and compassion for the protesters who retreated to the Brown Chapel, where they had begun the march.

Next Tuesday will mark the 40th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. While no one questions the effectiveness of the Selma-to-Montgomery March, some ask whether marching is a tactic that has outlived its usefulness.

"Dr. King said — and I think after all these years later, it's still very relevant — he said, 'There is nothing more powerful than the marching feet of a determined people,'" Jackson recalls.

Jesse Jackson Sr., who dropped out of the Chicago Theological Seminary to participate in the Selma-to-Montgomery March, agrees.

"Marching inspires people. It educates people," says Jackson, president and CEO of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. "When the mass march comes, the camera comes. The to and fro takes place. The anxiety rises. Involvement happens. Mass action gets mass results. Usually, class action gets class results. Inaction gets no results."

Jackson points to his hometown, Greenville, S.C., as an example of how protest still works. Greenville went for 19 years without recognizing the Martin Luther King holiday.

Jackson returned to his hometown to lead marches around the issue and help oust three council members opposed to honoring Dr. King. On February 1, the Greenville County Council voted 7-5 to begin observing the holiday next year.

"It's litigation, demonstration, legislation and registration. It has always taken that combination," Jackson explains.

Nat Irvin, founder of Future Focus 220, a futuristic think tank at Wake Forest University in neighboring North Carolina, thinks marching is quickly becoming a thing of the past.

"It will be difficult to find one issue that will cause masses of Black people to take to the streets," Irvin predicts. "It would have to be really an egregious kind of thing directed at Black people intentionally to cause Black people to respond."

Jackson is not convinced. "It's always been those who didn't want to march and complained about marching, who didn't understand marching," he counters. "We're debating a time-tested winner."

John Lewis and protesters in Selma certainly emerged as winners.

Eventually, more than 3,000 protesters marched across the bridge en route to Montgomery. After the rally in Montgomery, violence struck again.

Viola Gregg Liuzzo, 39, the wife of a Detroit Teamster official and mother of four who had gone South to support civil rights, had been shot to death by a carload of Klansmen as she and a young Black SCLC worker were on their way to Montgomery to return some demonstrators to Selma.

Three of the four Klansmen were charged with murder; the fourth was an undercover FBI informant. The first trial ended in a hung jury and the second in an acquittal. The three were finally convicted of violating Liuzzo's civil rights and each was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Moved by the continued violence against African-Americans and their supporters, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act that summer, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law on Aug. 6, 1965, removing many of the barriers to Black political empowerment. Black elected officials increased from 300 in 1965 to 9,040 in 2000, according to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Civil rights issues of the 21st century, including the need for

G.O.P. ONCE AGAIN ON CUTTING EDGE OF PROGRESS: CHANGING SOCIAL SECURITY FROM SAFETY NET TO SAFETY ROULETTE



health care, quality education, anti-war policies, and continued protections for voting rights are more than enough reason to continue marching, says Lewis.

Lucy G. Barber, author of "Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition," agrees that marching in America will increase — but for different reasons.

"It used to be something that's done by more liberal groups. Now, groups of all different stripes use protest at the local level and at the national level to publicize their causes and draw attention to it," says Barber, an archivist and historian for the California State Archives in Sacramento.

Recently, conservative groups have taken to the streets to highlight the issues of same-sex marriages and abortion.

Carl Mack, a former NAACP chapter president in Washington state and now executive director of the National Society of Black Engineers, says marching will remain an effective tool.

"You have to sustain it. And, of course, when you do something as dramatic as march on the freeway in rush hour traffic, it is impactful," Mack says.

He was referring to his NAACP chapter's response to the 2002 shooting death of a Black motorist by an off-duty White sheriff in Seattle. They marched on the freeway to call attention to the issue, then continued marches and protests over the next two years.

On the opposite coast, Damu Smith, chairman and founder of Black Voices for Peace, says his group will join anti-war marches at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, N.C. on March 19 and on Sept. 10 in New York during a special session of the United Nations.

"We have not been able to compel a fundamental change in the policy, but we have put the Bush administration on the defensive about this war," Smith says.

Shanta Driver, a convener of BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), the group that organized

at least 10,000 student marchers outside the U. S. Supreme Court two years ago as justices heard arguments in two University of Michigan affirmative action cases.

She is organizing a march for April 1 in Ann Arbor to oppose Black conservative Ward Connerly's ballot initiative to limit affirmative action in Michigan.

"We're calling it 'Operation King's Dream'," Driver says. "We believe his methods of fighting and his vision are one."

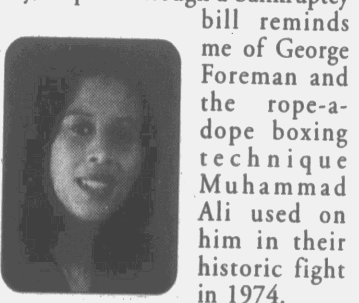
Meanwhile, Lewis is preparing to commemorate Bloody Sunday by marching with a group back across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Sunday.

"More than anything you have to have a group of people, dedicated, committed with a made up mind that are prepared, literally, to do the extraordinary," Lewis says. "They may not be beaten."

They may not get arrested. But, simple, organized marching will appeal to the conscious of the people."

The Bankruptcy Rope-A-Dope

By: Michelle Singletary
WASHINGTON — The relentless battle by Republicans in Congress, egged on by the credit card industry, to push through a bankruptcy bill reminds me of George Foreman and the rope-a-dope boxing technique Muhammad Ali used on him in their historic fight in 1974.



For several years now, the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act (and trust me there's little meaningful protection for consumers in this flawed piece of legislation) has stayed in the legislative ring.

The fight to get the bankruptcy bill passed is the classic rope-a-dope. Despite repeated punches, proponents of the bankruptcy bill just keep standing up against the ropes waiting for the time they can claim a victory

against already financially spent consumers.

Proponents of the bill argue that the current bankruptcy system needs a major overhaul because too many people who have the means to repay their creditors walk away from their financial obligations. To hear them tell it, people are jumping for joy when they come out of bankruptcy because they have cleverly avoided having to pay their debts.

That's just not so, argue consumer groups and others fighting to defeat the bill. In a letter to Senate leaders, a group of bankruptcy and commercial law experts argue that even if the system needs fixing, what's in the ring now is flawed. The current bankruptcy system works as it should, the groups contend. Bankruptcy judges and trustees overseeing consumer bankruptcy cases do exactly what they are supposed to do. They ferret out the system-cheaters. They make consumers with financial resources pay back their creditors. For example, when consumers file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy

and can clearly pay something, the courts have the authority to switch those people to Chapter 13.

Still, supporters of the bankruptcy bill say the system is being abused. They want debtors to submit to needs-based testing to determine whether they should be allowed to file under Chapter 7 or be forced into Chapter 13.

Under Chapter 7, almost all debts are erased. Filers are usually allowed to keep certain property, such as some equity in a primary residence and household goods. The majority of individuals filing for bankruptcy protection use Chapter 7. Under Chapter 13, creditors are repaid, in full or in part, in installments over a three-to-five-year period.

For many opponents of the bankruptcy bill, the means testing is the most worrisome. It doesn't allow the courts to consider whether a debtor is seeking bankruptcy relief because of some terrible circumstance, complains Edmund Mierzwinski, consumer program director for the nonprofit U.S. Public

Interest Research Group.

Other opponents of the bill have a problem with a requirement that would force individual debtors to get credit counseling. On the surface that sounds reasonable. However, recent Senate hearings found some disturbing problems in the credit counseling industry, as a group of bankruptcy and commercial law professionals pointed out in a letter to Sens. Arlen Specter, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Patrick Leahy, the ranking Democrat.

"The industry is plagued with consumer complaints about excessive fees, pressure tactics, nonexistent counseling and education, promised results that never come about, ruined credit ratings, poor service, and in many cases being left in worse debt than before they initiated their debt management plan," wrote the group of professors, who included leading authorities on bankruptcy such as Elizabeth Warren of Harvard Law School.

I know some of you are already scrunching your face up, ready to pen me a letter or shoot off an e-

mail with outrage. People need to be more responsible and shouldn't be so easily entitled to a get-out-of-debt-free card, you grumble. I'm not suggesting that some folks who file for bankruptcy haven't been financially irresponsible. But it is more likely the case that a divorce, major illness or job loss results in a consumer bankruptcy.

The truth is many people are just a paycheck, job loss or uncovered medical catastrophe away from bankruptcy. And the fastest growing group of bankruptcy filers is older Americans, according to bankruptcy and commercial law professors. More than 50 percent of those 65 and older are driven to bankruptcy by medical debts they cannot pay.

"Here again, abuse is not the issue," the professors said in an open letter to senators. "The bankruptcy filing rate reveals holes in the Medicare and Social Security systems, as seniors and aging members of the baby-boom generation declare bankruptcy to deal with prescription drug bills, co-pays, medical supplies, long-term care, and job loss."

I have spent hours talking to

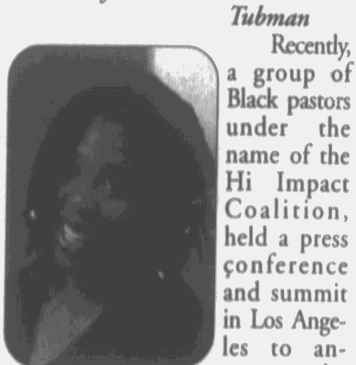
consumers who have filed for bankruptcy. The folks I interviewed didn't see a victory in their financial failure. Many people who file for bankruptcy feel ashamed. Most people file for bankruptcy as a last resort. They don't go skipping in and out of court gleeful that they didn't have to pay their debts. Many of the provisions in the bankruptcy bill are too harsh. This round, the bankruptcy bill needs to be knocked out for the count.

Listen to Michelle Singletary discuss personal finance every Tuesday on NPR's "Day to Day." To hear her reports online go to www.npr.org. Readers can write to her c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20071. Her e-mail address is singletarym@washpost.com. Comments and questions are welcome, but due to the volume of mail, personal responses may not be possible. Please also note comments or questions may be used in a future column, with the writer's name, unless a specific request to do otherwise is indicated.

Ms. Singletary writes for the Washington Post Writers Group

Purchased Pulpits And Spiritual Exploitations

by Jasmyne Cannick
"I freed a thousand slaves I could have freed a thousand more if only they knew they were slaves..." - Harriet Tubman



Recently, a group of Black pastors under the name of the Hi Impact Coalition, held a press conference and summit in Los Angeles to announce the kick off for their "Black Contract with America on Moral Values." Led by Bishop Harry Jackson of Washington and white Christian evangelical Reverend Lou Sheldon and his Traditional Values Coalition, the press conference and summit gave new meaning to the phrase "Sleeping with the enemy."

According to the newly formed coalition, topping the list of issues that Black Americans need to focus on is the protection of marriage. Never mind the war, access to healthcare, HIV/AIDS, education, housing and social security, the number one problem facing Black America is same-sex

marriage.

Standing before the press in their Sunday best and eager to get their fifteen minutes of fame and achievable share of President Bush's Faith Based Initiative, these Black pastors seemingly allowed their pulpits to be purchased by the GOP and Lou Sheldon, who is to gay people what Strom Thurmond was to Blacks. Sheldon at one time even went so far as to support the quarantining of people with AIDS and accused the federal government of "running a network of whorehouses," when the U.S. responded to the AIDS crisis with resources.

Later that afternoon over one hundred Black pastors gathered at Reverend Fred Price's Crenshaw Christian Center, another prominent mega-church, where Sheldon showed his infamous "Gay rights, special rights" video and urged the pastors to have their congregations lobby African American legislators who hadn't taken a position on the issue of same-sex marriage.

Listening from the outside, one might have thought they were listening in on a Klan meeting, but after one look around the room, I remember thinking of Dave Chappelle's portrayal of a blind Black white supremacist

cist who had never been told he was Black.

Black pulpits are for sale to the highest bidder and Black Christians are quite possibly being sold to the GOP under the guise of protecting America's moral values. With claims that gays are "hi-jacking" the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr.'s message, Sheldon is bribing Black pastor after pastor and church after church with check after check to take another look at the GOP and partnering with their white Christian counterparts all while using the Bible as a justification for their commonality. Yes, the same book that was used to justify racism, sexism and anti-Semitism has both Black and white Christian evangelicals reading from the same page.

Few remember, that there were significant members of the Black church including the National Baptist Convention led by Dr. J.H. Jackson in the 50's that vehemently opposed the civil rights movement and didn't want progressive ministers like Dr. King to have any confrontations with the government. So much so, that was one of the major factors in Dr. King's decision to create the Southern Christian Leadership

Conference along with Los Angeles ministers Reverend James Lawson and the late Dr. Thomas Kilgore.

These Black pastors who have aligned themselves with white Christian evangelicals and Conservatives, are the ideological descendants of the same people who opposed Dr. King in 50's and what he stood for but today want to claim his message as their own in the name of protecting the institution of marriage therefore giving new meaning to the name "Uncle Tom."

However, don't think that these new partnerships come without strings attached. The Black vote is expected to be hand delivered on legislative that supports discrimination against gays and lesbians and their right to protect their families, denying a woman's right to choose and pushing the President's abstinence only campaign. In addition, our religious leaders are also expected to remain silent and not be the prophetic voices they should be on issues of critical importance to Blacks. In exchange for money, they've essentially sold their congregations to people who continue to oppose universal access to healthcare, education and housing,

the very issues at the core of the Black struggle. There's a coordinated religious campaign to get ministers across the state to speak out against gays and the debate is not about religion but more about politics, power and keeping that political power in the hands of people who stood in the schoolhouse door, fighting for segregation and against the full inclusion of Blacks in society.

Zora Neal Hurston once said, "Not all Black skin is kin."

Can I get a witness?

Introducing Jasmyne Cannick

At 27, Jasmyne Cannick is frequent presence on television and radio and has appeared on numerous media programs, including Black Entertainment Television News, the Tavis Smiley Show, Fox News and the Bev Smith Show. She has also been featured or quoted in articles in the Associated Press, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, St. Petersburg Times, Africana.com, Eurweb.com and Bet.com. Cannick is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists, a board member of the National Black Justice Coalition, a Black gay civil rights organization and co-producer of the new cable series Noah's Arc, America's first Black gay series. Cannick is the Director of Public Relations for the

Black AIDS Institute. She lives in Los Angeles and can be reached via www.jasmyneccannick.com

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U.S. attorney has launched a quiet probe into the hip-hop music business

By Johnnie L. Roberts
NEW YORK - As gunplay between two chart-topping gangsta rappers and the trial of a rap diva vie for top headlines recently, federal authorities are pressing a wide-ranging investigation into the \$1.5-billion hip-hop music industry.

According to top industry insiders, federal investigators are digging into a playlist of crimes, ranging from extortion and robbery to the industry's persistent violence and mounting casualties—including the unsolved murders of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G. Investigators are "asking about anyone in hip hop from what I understand," says a top music lawyer. Another top lawyer and a prominent entertainment business manager also said they were aware of an investigation. In a recent NEWSWEEK interview, one influential executive who was questioned recently by investigators adds: "It's a federal investigation of hip hop and the music business and the crimes that have come out of it."

Although the probe is months, if not years, old, these sources say, buzz about it began to resonate within hip-hop circles in recent days, fueled by a fresh round of violence when entourage for The Game, rap's latest phenomenon, and 50 Cent, perhaps rap's biggest star, allegedly engaged in a shooting match outside New York's top hip-hop radio station on Monday. The encounter left a member of The Game's posse with a minor gunshot wound, according to authorities. Later, several shots reportedly were fired in front of 50 Cent's manager's office. New York police are now taking precautions to try to prevent a rap war between the two camps, Raymond Kelly, New York City's police commissioner, said this week.

Ironically, the latest shooting occurred on the same day that rapper Lil' Kim went on trial for allegedly lying to a federal grand jury investigating a shootout in front of the same radio station in 2001. That firefight allegedly involved a longstanding rivalry between Lil' Kim and rapper Foxy Brown. Federal investigators "are pissed off," especially by the latest shooting outside the radio station, said one music industry insider who was contacted by the federal investigators.

As best can be determined, the U.S. attorney for Manhattan is leading the probe, either as part of a Justice Department Task Force, through a federal grand jury or both. "It's a revolving grand jury that basically has been going on for a couple years now," says the prominent entertainment attorney.

According to people familiar with the matter, Michael Scudder, an assis-

tant federal prosecutor in Manhattan, is deeply involved. When Scudder was asked about his role in the investigation he referred all inquiries to a spokeswoman for U.S. attorney of the Southern District of New York. Citing Justice Department policy, she would neither confirm nor deny the existence of an investigation.

For some of those caught up in the current investigation, it's a jarring experience. "It's scary," says the prominent industry executive who was questioned by investigators. This person, who isn't suspected of any crimes, said he was asked generally, "what's going on and what's the story" about shootings and unsolved murders.

Based on his contact with the authorities, the executive said he believes the investigators "have found many people who've come forward" with evidence about artists being extorted and robbed. "They are looking at money coming into the business and going out of the business," the executive said.

The executive said he was asked if he knew anything about two individuals in particular. One was Jimmy Henchman Rosemond of Czar Entertainment, a prominent talent-management firm whose clients include, among others, The Game. Asked whether he was aware that federal investigators were inquiring about him or whether he'd been questioned by the authorities, Rosemond through his spokeswoman declined to comment. "If there is an investigation, we're not concerned," said the spokeswoman, Sibrena Stowe de Fernandez. "We're legitimate business executives."

During their recent questioning of witnesses, investigators also have mentioned the recent indictment of Irv "Gotti" Lorenzo, cofounder of rap label The Inc. (formerly Murder Inc.). Last month, the federal government charged Gotti, as he is widely known, with using The Inc. to help launder drug money. (Hip-hop stars Ja Rule and Ashanti record for the label, but neither is implicated in the money-laundering case.)

During their questioning, investigators also expressed a deep familiarity with the case against Lil' Kim, say those who were recently interviewed. That investigators alluded to both the Lil' Kim and Gotti cases suggests that they might be linked to the broader investigation.

The hip-hop scene, most notably the gangsta rap music sub-genre, has long been plagued by violence. Hostility has been a staple of gangsta rap lyrics from the beginning, and many of rap's top stars acknowledge that they were former drug dealers or gang members.

The violence first erupted into public view in the mid-1990s. That was the beginning of the so-called East Coast-West Coast rap wars pitting Sean "P. Diddy" Combs's New York-based Bad Boy Entertainment against Suge Knight's Los Angeles-based

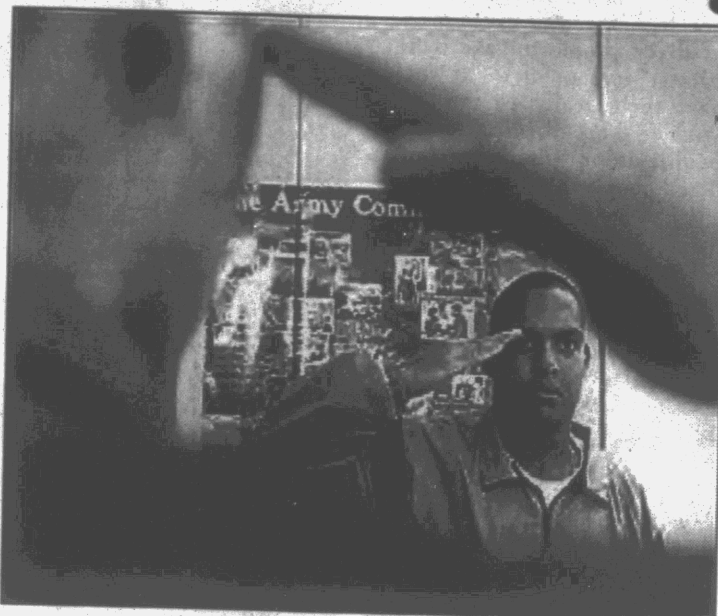
Death Row Records (now Tha Row). It took on all the bloodiness of a real war with the 1996 murder of Tupac Shakur, Death Row's star, and the slaying a few months later of Notorious B.I.G., Bad Boy's star. Both murders remain unsolved, despite massive inves-

tigations, including a long-running federal probe of Death Row Records and, according to sources, a second rap label that is highly familiar to the public. Since the murders of the genre's two biggest stars, a spate of other killings, shootings, stabbings and assaults

have left hip hop bloodstained. In 2002, Jam Master Jay of the pioneering rap group Run-DMC was shot dead. Authorities have yet to charge anyone with his murder.

Johnnie L. Roberts writes for Newsweek.

Army Finds Recruiting Young Blacks Tougher



By Robert Burns

WASHINGTON - Young blacks have grown markedly less willing to join the Army, citing fear of being sent to fight a war in Iraq they don't believe in, according to unpublished studies for the military that suggest the Army is entering a prolonged recruiting slump.

Fear of combat also is a leading reason fewer young women are choosing the Army, the studies say. Although female soldiers are barred by law from assignments in direct combat, they nonetheless have found themselves under attack by insurgents in Iraq, and 32 have died.

"More African Americans identify having to fight for a cause they don't support as a barrier to military service," concluded an August 2004 study for the Army. It also said attitudes toward the Army among all groups of American youth have grown more negative in recent years.

"In the past, barriers were about inconvenience or preference for another life choice," the study said. "Now they have switched to something quite different: fear of death or injury." Statistically, the fear factor is about twice as strong among potential recruits as a whole as it was in 2000, the study said. That and other studies, all of which are posted on an obscure Defense Department Web site, cited the Iraq war as a major turnoff for many.

The Army has suffered more of the 1,500-plus U.S. deaths in Iraq than any other service, and thousands have been wounded. Some soldiers will serve their second tour in Iraq this year. While Army leaders say soldiers have shown a strong interest in re-enlisting, the strains of war seem to have become a barrier to first-time enlistees.

The Army's recruiting challenge is critically important not only to the long-term commitment in Iraq but also to the Army's goal of expanding by 30,000 soldiers. Through the first five months of the budget year which began last Oct. 1, the active Army is about 6 percent behind schedule to meet its 2005 recruiting goal.

Explaining the overall drop-off, Army officials cite an improving national economy that offers more career opportunities as well as concern about the war in Iraq.

Blacks make up about 23 percent of today's active-duty Army, but the share of blacks in the recruit classes of recent years dropped. From 22.7 percent at the time of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the share slid to 19.9 percent in 2002; 16.4 percent in 2003 and 15.9 percent last year, according to figures provided by Army Recruiting Command spokesman Douglas Smith.

The slide has continued, dropping to 13.9 percent as of Feb. 9.

A July 2004 study of parents' influence on young people of recruiting age found that black parents have more say in their child's career decisions than is the case with white parents. Also, black parents trust the military less and have more moral objections to military service.

The Army isn't the only service having trouble finding recruits. The Marine Corps fell slightly short of its recruiting goal in January - the first month that had happened in nearly a decade - amid parents' concerns about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the Marines remain on target to meet their full-year goal.

The Navy and Air Force have had no problems meeting their goals.

A separate study, done shortly after President Bush declared major combat operations in Iraq had ended, concluded, "Combat is the number one reason why" blacks don't want to join the Army.

Smith, the Army Recruiting Command spokesman, said Monday that the current, reduced level of black recruits is closer to the percentage of young blacks in the eligible population. "Our strategy of being representative of America is working," he said.

As recently as 2001, before the global war on terrorism, young people tended to think of military service as less risky. The 1991 Gulf War had ended after only 100 hours of ground combat with relatively few deaths, and no American soldier died in the 1999 air war over Kosovo.

Females also are getting harder to recruit, with the share of females in Army recruiting classes falling for four years running, from 21.6 percent in 2001 to 19.2 percent last year. It has slipped still further this year to 17.1 percent.

"Over time, females are seeing less benefits to joining the Army and more barriers, particularly combat-related reasons," concluded another study done for the Army last spring by the market research firm Millward Brown.

Another study cited a survey that said 50 percent of youth rate the Army as their last choice for a career.

"There is a lot of work to be done, and it will take a lot of time to make major changes in the Army experience and the Army's image," that study concluded. "Risks of military service, and particularly the Army, are perceived to far outweigh the rewards for the vast majority of youth."

By Robert Burns writes for the AP

Study Says Branch's Image Suffering Among All Groups of Youth The active Army is about 6 percent behind schedule to meet its 2005 recruiting goal.



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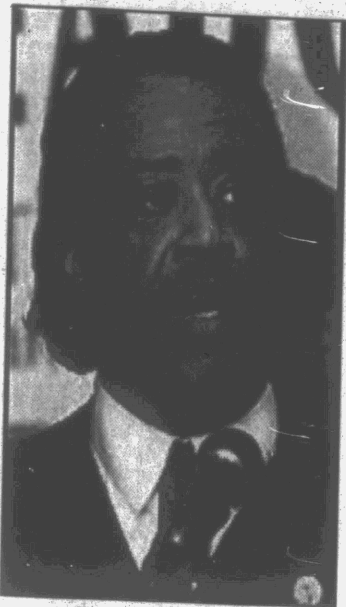
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Former Presidential Candidate Calling for Ban On Gangsta Rap



Rev Al Sharpton

By Tracy Connor and Bill Hutchinson
NEW YORK CITY - The Rev. Al Sharpton is calling for a 90-day ban on radio and TV airplay for any performer who uses violence to settle scores or hype albums.

"There has to be a way to step in and regulate what's going on with the airwaves and with violence," Sharpton told the Daily News yesterday. "The airwaves are being used to romanticize urban violence."

The activist minister plans to ask the Federal Communications Commission and the country's major radio broadcasters to back his proposal.

His call follows last week's shooting outside Hot 97 radio's SoHo studios that apparently was sparked by a feud between rappers 50 Cent and The Game.

A member of The Game's entourage, Kevin Reed, 23, of Compton, Calif., was shot in the buttocks after 50 Cent badmouthed The Game during an on-air interview at the radio station.

Bad blood between 50 Cent and The Game continued to boil over the weekend when The Game challenged his former mentor to "Come get me, you little bitch!" during a concert in Long Beach, Calif.

Last night, 50 Cent was escorted through LaGuardia Airport by Port Authority cops "for his own protection" when he arrived on a plane from Detroit about 8 p.m., a Port Authority spokesman said.

Said Sharpton, "We may not be able to stop people from shooting, but we can stop people from profiting from the violence." Sharpton declined to comment specifically on the beef between 50 Cent, who was born Curtis Jackson, and The Game, whose real

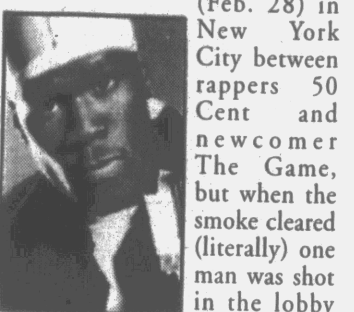
name is Jayceon Taylor.

Sharpton said he has no intention of trying to broker peace between the two rap stars, who have both recently released top-selling CDs.

"You can't deal with this on an

COMMENTARY: The 50 Cent cost of shooting a Man

MEMPHIS -Who knows exactly what happened Monday night



50 Cent

(Feb. 28) in New York City between rappers 50 Cent and newcomer The Game, but when the smoke cleared (literally) one man was shot in the lobby of radio station WQHT-FM (Hot 97).

It probably doesn't really matter how it all started, what was said

50 Cent, the Game Call for Truce, Give Boys Club \$250,000

By Nekesa Mumbi Moody
NEW YORK CITY - By March 9 after selling 1.1 million copies of his new album in four days has softened the heart of 50 Cent. Or maybe he has so many feuds going, he can afford to let one go.

On Wednesday, 50 Cent and The Game publicly squashed a bitter feud that had erupted into gunfire last week after 50 kicked Game out of his G-Unit clique for disloyalty.

The two platinum-selling gangsta rappers didn't exactly kiss and make up. When they emerged before a media throng at Harlem's famed Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, both looked as if they'd been shoved into apologies by a stern mother.

But they did shake hands, albeit at the end of the press conference, after speaking about contrition and the need for peace.

50 noted that Wednesday was the anniversary of the unsolved murder of Biggie Smalls in 1997, the culmination of a rap war between Biggie and Tupac Shakur that pitted East Coast against West.

Salary Disputes Nearly Crushed This Group's Reunion Before It Started

"We're here today to show that

artist-by-artist basis," he said. "I'm not going to become a mediator between artists. This is a recurring problem."

In a letter Sharpton plans to send to the FCC and broadcasters, he said the outcry against violence

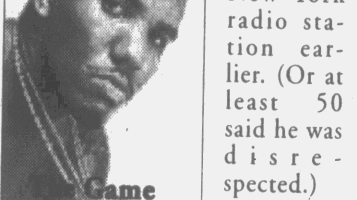
among entertainers should be just as loud as the response last year to Janet Jackson's breast-baring Super Bowl stunt.

"I recall the outrage that the FCC and others displayed in response to the Super Bowl perfor-

in response to The Game's disrespecting 50 on air at another New York radio station earlier. (Or at least 50 said he was disrespected.)

As a result, while

50 was on the air with Funkmaster Flex, The Game and some of his crew allegedly went to the station attempting to gain entrance and got into a confrontation



The Game

As a result, while 50 was on the air with Funkmaster Flex, The Game and some of his crew allegedly went to the station attempting to gain entrance and got into a confrontation

mance of Janet Jackson," Sharpton wrote. "Yet, when acts of violence happen around radio stations that actually have caused bloodshed, there has been a strange and disturbing silence from all quarters."

with some men in the lobby who were leaving the building when the shooting took place.

(And there you have it. The good thing is that in a twist of fate, this horrible situation will likely play well for 50, who are about to release his new album, appropriately titled, "The Massacre." Is he psychic or what? It also goes without saying that The Game too, will likely benefit from increased sales of his already top-selling CD, The Documentary. In other words, in the rap game this is a win-win situation - if you don't count the man who was shot in the leg. And no doubt, there are a few out there who do count him!)
Tim Butler - Tri-State Defender

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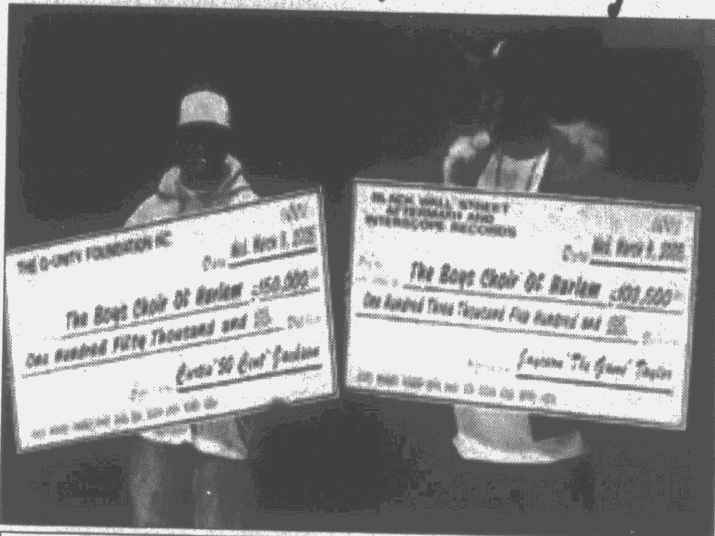
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Rappers 50 Cent and The Game appear at the Schomburg Center For Research in Black Culture on March 9, 2005 in Manhattan to announce they will end their feud and donate money to the Harlem Boys Choir

people can rise above the most difficult circumstances and together we can put negativity behind us," said 50, a native New Yorker. "A lot of people don't want to see it happen, but we're responding to the two most important groups, our family and our fans."

"I just want to apologize on behalf of myself and 50," said Game, who's from the Los Ange-

les suburb of Compton. "I'm almost ashamed to have participated in the things that happened in the last couple of weeks."

50 presented an oversized check for \$150,000 to the Boys Choir of Harlem. Game donated \$103,500. It was not clear why Game chose that amount or whether he had been reinstated in G-Unit; no questions were taken

at the press conference. They also both made contributions to the Compton schools music program.

Is the truce sincere?

"Of course it was genuine," said hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons, who was at the event. "They stood on stage together."

At the very least, it was a remarkable concession for rappers who routinely brag about killing their enemies.

"It is the first time we've seen 50 publicly take a step back" from a battle, said Elliott Wilson, editor in chief of the hip-hop magazine XXL.

In a statement earlier Wednesday, 50 Cent said: "I'm launching a new foundation, the G-Unity Foundation, Inc., to help people overcome obstacles and make a chance for the better in their lives ... to help them overcome their situations. I realized that if I'm going to be effective at that, I have to overcome some of my own. Game and I need to set an example in the community."

50 Cent has always set an example - usually as an unapologetic criminal gleefully wreaking havoc on other rappers. He almost single-handedly dismantled the multi-platinum career of Ja Rule by relentlessly targeting him in songs, magazines and his 2003 debut, the eight-million selling "Get Rich or Die Tryin'."

Last week 50 released his sophomore CD, "The Massacre," which including a song attacking rappers like Fat Joe, Nas and Jadakiss for making a record with Ja Rule. But his beef with Game was unusual because it involved a member of his own camp.

As 50 was on the radio announcing the expulsion of Game from G-Unit - apparently because Game wouldn't turn his back on some of 50s many enemies - Game's crew rolled up to the station. Guns were fired inside the lobby and a member of Game's posse was wounded.

Game is a protégé of superproducer Dr. Dre, who put Eminem on the map, who in turn made 50 Cent a superstar. They're all on the same parent label,

See Rappers Page 11

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Community Voices

Reflections, Expressions & Reviews
with Suejette Jones



"Reflections"

Older Unmarried Couples

The newly analyzed census data has received a shocker: The number of men and women 65 and older who choose to live together without getting married had nearly doubled in a decade, says Linda Greider, a freelance writer in Washington, DC. In fact, some 9.7 million unmarried partners were cohabiting in 2000. The census counted 266,000 couples in the 65 plus group. With some couples are reluctant to report their living arrangements, many experts think those numbers are much higher—and expect those numbers to climb as baby boomers age and Americans in general stay healthy and live longer. Nancy (alias), 65 and Joe (alias), 64 met at a dance. After a full year of debate, they decided to set up housekeeping together. "If someone had told me 10 years ago I'd feel this way, I would have said they were crazy," said Nancy, a widow who was married for 39 years. But wedding bells are not in Nancy and Joe's future. What earlier generations used to call "living in sin" has become the

most reasonable-and economically feasible-way for many older people to have companionship, especially after a divorce or the death of a spouse. What stops many of them from tying the knot is the prospect of financial loss, a worry that trumps any desire for the religious or social blessings of marriage. Remarriage may mean giving up a former spouse's pension, Social Security and medical insurance. Nancy, who has hepatitis C and is a breast cancer survivor, would lose the health benefits of her late husband, an Air Force officer, that help pay her substantial medical costs.

Some older couples stay single in order to avoid the objections of their grown children who fear they will be displaced in their parent's affection-and in their will-or that a new spouse will take advantage of their parent financially or emotionally. Bob (alias) 66, comments, "I don't want a remarriage. I want a friend and confidante-someone to hike and travel with, someone who shares my values. I'm not against marriage, but it's not the right choice for me."

While many cohabitation decisions seem based on

practicalities, romance can be a big part of the equation. One gerontologist referred to the steamy prime time TV show Beverly Hills 90210 by saying that, "the human drama is the same whether you are 18 or 88." Older people are sexual, too," he added. Not that long ago an older woman wouldn't consider romance, let alone sex and cohabiting, if her husband had died. If she did, it was in secret. But today, both society and religious theory accord that God wants people to be happy and that in Jesus Christ there is liberty. Nancy's priest has assured and enlightened her to this attitude about her relationship.

Regardless of the judgment of people, she knew that before her husband died, he had told her that he wanted her to have companionship which made her more comfortable in her new relationship. Her friends, who were once "preachy" and judgmental about her live-in arrangement, have warmed to the idea. Her most "judgmental" friend has since developed a relationship of her own. That's a long way from when Nancy and Joe first got together and friends asked, "When are you two lovebirds going to get married?" Nancy's reply, "When I get pregnant."

Note: This article does not necessarily reflect the sanction of, or neither disapproval of the writer nor the publisher of Minority Voice Newspaper. It is for your information only.



From the Chancellor's Desk

A monthly column by East Carolina University Chancellor Dr. Steve Ballard

By Dr. Steve Ballard

The word "diversity" often evokes thoughts and images of differences. In fact, the dictionary defines diversity as "the fact or quality of being diverse; difference."

Another way to think about diversity is in terms of variety, such as having a diverse background, or exploring a diverse set of viewpoints on a particular subject.

Here at ECU, we value diversity for all of these points, and even more. We believe diversity means having a wide array of thinking, viewpoints, ideas, experiences, cultures, values and philosophies.

Cultural diversity should mean something to each of us, both professionally and personally. For us to live together as a peace-abiding society, each of us must be aware of and sensitive to all members of the community. That, in turn, will enrich our lives. Everyone benefits from a society that honors and understands all approaches to living.

Because we value different approaches, we have taken a series of steps to help us enact our commitment to diversity among faculty, staff and students.

One of the most recent steps we've taken is the current set of interviews for a newly created position of Assistant to the Chancellor for Institutional Diversity. This position will report directly to me. The person chosen will be responsible for ensuring this university delivers its commitment to diversity. I will look to this person to ensure we are doing everything we can to honor differences and to engage in issues of equality, multiculturalism and inclusion.

These interviews are set for the latter part of March; I hope to have the position filled soon. Look for a public announcement on the successful candidate.

Another recent development is the reopening of the Japan Center East at ECU's Regional Development Services. Following the untimely death in 2004 of Don Spence, a long-time ECU faculty member who worked to develop economic development ties between eastern North Carolina and Japan, the Japan Center

My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me.
HENRY FORD

East now is up and running under the direction of Chikako Massey, a native of Japan, who serves as interim director.

With her extensive experience in international business and consulting, Massey comes to ECU with an impressive background well suited for this region. She has worked in numerous American companies, helping business people learn the subtleties and traditions of Japanese customs as they relate to business.

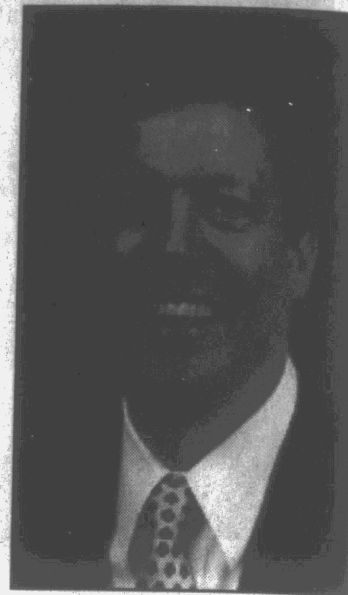
It is just this kind of attention to detail that makes her a great choice for the Japan Center East. Not only will she be carrying on the work of economic development, but she will teach the cultural nuances of Japanese business to American companies, and will help Japanese businesses learn more about American styles of business and management.

Massey also will be introducing to Greenville a very old Japanese tradition called a "bon dance" during the upcoming International Festival.

During summers in Japan, people in many communities gather to celebrate and honor the memories of their ancestors. A main feature of the celebration is a community dance that involves men and women, young and old.

Participants wear colorful outfits (many of us know them as kimonos), and they form a circle in a wide open area. The slow, graceful movements of the dancers are emphasized by the deep, resonant sounds of large drums, called "taiko" drums. As the drummers keep the beat, the dancers engage in rhythmic, beautifully choreographed steps, always honoring and remembering their ancestors through their movements.

While this Japanese tradition goes back hundreds of years, its



Dr. Steve Ballard, Chancellor

popularity in the U.S. is just beginning. In cities and communities with sizeable Japanese populations, the bon dance is gaining followers from many ethnic backgrounds. It's one way that people of different and diverse backgrounds can share a cultural event under the guise of a community experience.

This year's International Festival, co-sponsored by ECU's Office of International Affairs and the City of Greenville, is set for April 16 at the Town Common on First Street. Last year's event attracted nearly 7,000 people who visited booths featuring exotic and delicious foods, clothing and handicrafts from 24 different countries.

This year, you can expect a day of entertainment, education and fun activities that will contribute to our community's efforts to celebrate our differences and make Greenville a city that embraces diversity and welcomes all those who call her "home."

ECU names Marty Hackney to direct new Entrepreneurial Initiative



Margaret "Marty" Hackney
GREENVILLE – East Carolina University has named Margaret "Marty" Hackney of Washington, N.C. to direct the newly organized Entrepreneurial Initiative.

Hackney, age 52, currently serves as the regional director for the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at ECU. Working through the UNC System's Office of the President, and in partnership with the Small Business Administration, the SBTDC helps small businesses improve their operations and expand, as well as providing help to serious start-up businesses.

The Entrepreneurial Initiative will focus on fostering entrepreneurship within the university community and eastern North Carolina. A major goal of the initiative is to help regional entrepreneurial companies develop and grow.

The new effort will create partnerships with public and private organizations to stimulate innovation in the region, and it will coordinate and offer entrepreneurial seminars and

networking opportunities.

"This initiative is designed to build on the talents of individuals in eastern North Carolina and at ECU to develop and keep companies in eastern North Carolina," said Dr. Ron Nowaczky, associate vice chancellor, who heads ECU's Regional Development Services.

"I am excited to have the opportunity to work with university and community leaders to create products and companies that will improve our region," Hackney said. "Our challenge will be to build a seamless system from concept to commercialization that can compete in the global economy."

The Entrepreneurial Initiative has three primary objectives:

- Create regional partnerships with public and private organizations that help the university develop companies and take products to market.

- Create partnerships with public and private organizations to stimulate innovation throughout the business community in eastern North Carolina.

- Foster practical experience for ECU students in an entrepreneurial environment.

The Entrepreneurial Initiative works with a few select companies each year, as well as potential companies that develop from faculty ideas and products. These companies will be:

- re-screened by the SBTDC and ECU's Office of Technology Transfer.

- Companies may be either "spin-ins" – companies from outside ECU but from this region that need ECU research or technology help – or "spin-outs," companies developed by ECU faculty that are ready for commercialization.

Students and faculty from across the different colleges at ECU will have to opportunity to be involved in this development process as part of their teaching/learning process. Student teams will learn the process of taking an idea from concept to commercialization.

Hackney, who earned her master's degree in business administration from ECU, has more than 25 years of experience in finance, administration, technology, manufacturing, retail, real estate and consultation. She is active in various civic organizations, including the ECU College of Business Commerce Club, Self-Help Credit Union Regional Advisory Board, the Greenville Noon Rotary, Eastern Carolina Research Foundation Board, North Carolina World Trade Association, Pitt Greenville Chamber of Commerce and the Pamlico/Tar River Foundation.

Hackney assumed her new duties on March 14, 2005.

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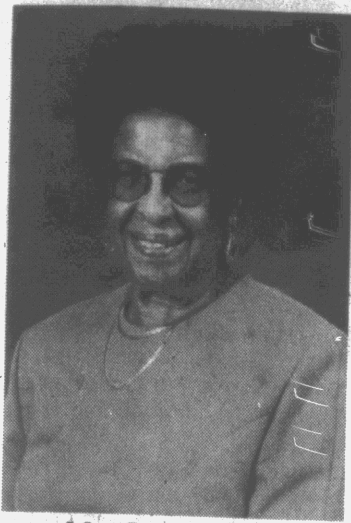
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Community Voices

From the Desk of Mrs. Beatrice Maye



Mrs. Beatrice Maye
"SHEROES"

Each year during the month of March, citizens across our country pause to honor the many "sheroes" whose diligence, determination, courage and vision have made history.

This year's theme is "Women Change America/7 Let's celebrate some women or "sheroes" from a wide range who are "firsts" here in Greenville and Pitt County. Dr. Ha-

zel Brown, Black dentist, Velma Harper, Winterville, Alder woman, Nancy Jenkins, mayor, Pattie Elizabeth Kearney, owner, Hat Shop, Dickinson Avenue and one of the founders of Carver Library, Lucille Gorham, Board of Education, Mildred Council, councilwoman, Shirley Carraway, principal, J.H. Rose High School, Belle May Atkinson, librarian, Carver Library, Elizabeth Copeland, librarian, Sheppard Memorial Library, Carolyn Ferbee Edwards, Trustee, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, Hannah Brown, Pitt County Public Health Nurse, Bernita Demery, Director, Financial Services, Louise McConnell, Supervisor of Pitt County Schools, Laura Marie Leary Elliott, Black graduate of ECU, Shirley Person, Police lady and Beatrice Maye, a park and first to integrate schools.

There are so many unsung women whose contributions have made life better for their families and their communities. Perhaps you know some "sheroes" that I don't know. If so, let me know for inclusion another year.

Note - We centered primarily on African Americans.

How to Judge A Woman By Her Handshake

You can get a feel for more than just a woman's hand by giving it a shake. You can get a grip on her personality. "A handshake sends a message," says Robert E. Brown, a California management consultant, longtime handshake observer and lecturer on the psychology of handshakes. According to Brown, the best greetings engage the full hand and involve eye contact and a brief linger, all of which signify sincerity, confidence and openness. Beware of shakes that are:

◆ Half-handed - A fingers-only squeeze may show a lack of connection and a fear of intimacy.

◆ Clammy - A cold and indifferent shake typically conveys fear or nervousness.

◆ Two-handed - This double grab tells you the woman wants intimacy too quickly; it may be a sight that she can't be trusted.

◆ Over-the-top - When her palm faces down in relation to yours; she is expressing superiority and dominance.

The definition of a real man.

He is one who has self-confidence but does not show it. He keeps his word, his temper and his friends. He can be courteous in the face of discourtesy. He wins respect by being respectable and respectful. He

has a steady eye, a steady nerve, a steady tongue and steady habits. He is silent when he has nothing to say, and he is calm when he judges and humble when he misjudges. That defines a real man and a gentleman.

Don't Skip Breakfast!

Few of us would dream of leaving the house in the morning without brushing our teeth, but many people don't take time to eat before starting their day. This is a mistake. Upon waking, your body has been fasting for 6, 8 or even 10 to 12 hours and needs nourishment.

According to numerous studies, a balanced breakfast helps to maintain health. Nutrients found in a healthy breakfast-including protein, B vitamins, essential fatty acids, and complex carbs-improve concentration, mental performance, mood, and memory. Breakfast is also linked to reduced risk for diabetes or excess weight gain, both by kicking your metabolism into gear and by decreasing the chance that you'll grab a high-calorie snack. By eating first thing, you give your hungry body the chance to replenish blood sugar levels, burn calories effectively, and maintain more consistent energy all day long.

Boost brainpower and metabolism with a quick and healthy morning meal. By Devin Alexander, Delicious Living Beatrice Maye

Pitt County 4H To Have Babysitting Workshop

The Pitt County 4-H Office has announced that a babysitting workshop will be taught on April 11th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Cooperative Extension Center, 403 Government Circle in Greenville. The workshop is open to youth between the ages of 12 and 16. It will cost \$1.00 per participant. Preregistration is required and the class size is limited.

The workshop will cover babysitting preschool information related to nutrition, play, developmental stages, dealing with siblings, safety issues and rules. The instructors for the class are East Carolina University seniors in Family Life Education in cooperation with the Pitt County 4-H staff.

Call the Pitt County 4-H office at 902-1712 to preregister before April 1st. Slots will be filled on a first come basis. Come and learn about the "Ins and Outs" of babysitting preschoolers and pick up some valuable information as it relates to caring for one or more preschooler.

Is Work Making You Fat?

by Kat Carney (NAPSM)—Whether it's the tall vanilla latte you grab on your way into work, the donuts served at your morning meeting or the pizza that your boss orders because there is no time to take a lunch, working can be a very fattening proposition. As CNN Headline News health anchor for more than three years, my work routine certainly helped me put on the pounds. I spent my days doing research at a computer, writing and broadcasting on-air in a busy studio environment.

The irony was that as a health reporter, I was covering every weight loss method in the book. I tried countless programs but just couldn't find one that fit into my busy lifestyle. Finally, after struggling with my weight for years, I have taken off 41 pounds and feel great. I discovered NutriSystem.com.

Here are some work place tips that I learned along the way that can benefit anyone who wants to lose weight and feel great.

- Eat a balanced breakfast
- Like mom said, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. To make things easier, write out several easy-to-prepare meals so you don't have to think about what to eat. Better yet, stock up on healthy, prepackaged, "grab & go" breakfast options. Using NutriSystem foods made this really easy for me to do.
- Plan your lunches ahead of time.
- When you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Whether you plan your lunches the night before, or even over the weekend, having a plan will help you avoid diet-disasters at work.
- Keep healthy, single-serving snacks in your office
- Don't starve yourself during the



Former CNN Headline News Health Anchor Kat Carney went from size 16 to size 8 within four months.

workday. Make it easy to have a healthy "pick me up."

- Find ways to sneak in extra physical activity. Park further from the building. Walk to your co-worker's office rather than sending an e-mail. Don't keep a trash can near your desk (so you have to get up each time you need to throw something away). Take a walk around the building during your lunch hour.
- Stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Keep a large bottle of water at your desk and sip through out the day. Maybe add a slice of lemon or lime.
- For other great tips and free weight loss counseling, go to NutriSystem.com.
- Ms. Carney was CNN Headline News health anchor for three years.
- Former CNN Headline News Health Anchor Kat Carney went from size 16 to size 8 within four months.

EDIFICATION OF A GENERATION



A Monumental Decision: Supreme Court & Federal Court Considers Constitutionality of Ten Commandments and The Official Seal

by Faith May

On March 2, 2005, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in Van Orden v. Perry (No. 03-1500) and McCreary County v. American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky (No. 03-1693). The two cases involve challenges to several government-sponsored displays of the Ten Commandments. Those who are bringing the challenges contend that these displays amount to governmental endorse-

WITH FAITH

ment of the Ten Commandments' religious message, and that such an endorsement violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Those who defend the displays argue that they reflect the government's constitutionally legitimate acknowledgment of the Ten Commandments' significant role in the development of American law and government.

Van Orden and McCreary County offer the Supreme Court the opportunity to clarify its approach to a controversial question: Under what circumstances may the government sponsor the display of religious messages or objects? The Court's resolution of these cases will strongly influence future decisions in official seals and mottoes, and the use of religious language in otherwise civic ceremonies such as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also, The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, site of the infamous lawsuit to outlaw the phrase "under God" from the pledge of Allegiance, has been sued because its official seal bears the image of woman representing the "Majesty of the Law".

The plaintiffs point out that this woman is reading a book resembling a tablet containing ten lines.

They claim that the small tablet rests at the woman's feet is a depiction of the Ten Commandments and must be removed from the courthouse and the court's letterhead because it constitutes a government endorsement of religion.

The attorney bringing the suit complained that the certificate admitting him to practice before the Ninth Circuit Court contains the court's seal that he finds offensive.

It appears that the purveyors of secularism don't simply want to wipe out all palpable symbols of faith, but also want to eradicate even ill-defined public works of art that may or may not pay tribute to religious artifacts.

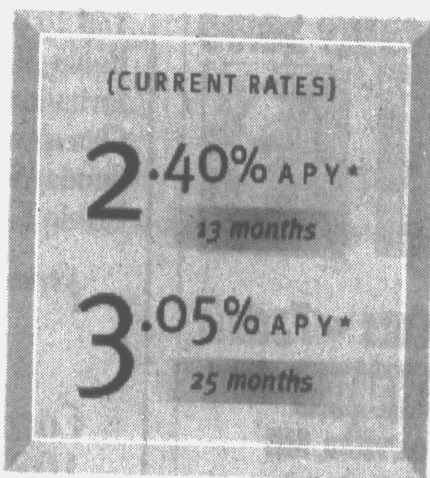
If the government were to rule in their favor, the momentum to eradicate all vestiges of religion from the culture would be dramatically quickened.

Matthew Staver, president of Liberty Counsel has initiated the "Defend The Ten" coalition at the Liberty Counsel website.

Readers are encouraged to visit the website to learn about this new program.

Resource: March 2005 National Liberty Journal

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NEWSWORTHY TRENDS

Handling Office Stress Is Hard Work

(NAPSA)-It's important that dealing with work-related stress doesn't become a full-time job. That's one conclusion of a recent study that found stress is becoming a prominent fixture in the American workplace, with only half of workers able to deal effectively with it.

The study revealed that workers now take up to two weeks of sick time a year to deal with stress-related illness and that many use over-the-counter analgesics in an effort to remedy their stress-related sickness.

The study, conducted by the Hadassah women's organization, in partnership with Aetna and the United States Tennis Association, polled approximately 1,000 people at companies across the Northeast. It was created by stress expert and author Dr. Deborah Bright, who served as co-investigator with Dr. Mark Popachin, a prominent gastroenterologist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital's Weill Cornell Medical Center.

One in three respondents said they are "highly stressed" at work, with nearly four in 10 reporting that they have more stress at work today than two years ago. Only 50 percent rated themselves as "very effective" in handling this stress. As a result, 32 percent admitted missing anywhere from one to 14 days of work in 2004 due to stress-related illness and just about one-quarter (24 percent) disclosed taking anywhere from one to five aspirin or acetaminophen tablets daily because of stress-related complaints.

According to the study, there are numerous factors contributing to on-the-job stress. Fifty-five percent of respondents cited their foremost stressor as being given more tasks and responsibilities than time to do them. Forty-three percent cited being on the receiving end of criticism as the second greatest source of stress, while having to give criticism rated as the eighth highest stress-producing situation (36 percent).

"Americans are experiencing higher levels of stress than ever before," said June Walker, Hadassah's National President and a health care professional. "The challenge of balancing work, family, and finances in an increasingly more competitive, demanding world is definitely taking its toll."

"Stress has become a health concern for people both in the workplace and home setting," said Dr. Popachin. "It cannot be eliminated from our lives. Our study assesses which coping strategies are being utilized by those who successfully manage their stress. From these findings, we hope to identify practical methods for all of us to minimize the negative effects of stress in our lives."

Building "to do" lists seemed to be the most effective way respondents managed workplace stress, while smoking was the least effective. Unfortunately, most people said their work-related stress doesn't leave them when they leave work. Fifty-five percent said they frequently

ing, billiards, table tennis . . . and much more.

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think about work while at home, and 20 percent said they have difficulty sleeping at night due to stress-related problems from work.

Also, people may want to be careful about just how quickly they climb the corporate ladder. If you are a manager between the ages of 25 and 44, chances are you are among those who are least effective at handling everyday work-related stress.

Stress Busters In The Workplace... results from a Hadassah survey

- Seventy-four percent of people said they build "to do" lists.
- Sixty-nine percent break larger tasks into smaller parts.
- Sixty-two percent talk to a co-worker.
- Sixty-four percent clean and organize their work areas.
- Fifty-eight percent establish clear goals.

Stress Busting After Work

- Seventy-four percent talk to family members, one's mate and friends.
- Sixty-four percent said reading is the most effective way to deal with stress.
- Fifty-seven percent said playing a sport or exercising effectively busts stress.
- Fifty-six percent said they listen to music.
- Smoking was found to be the least effective stress-busting method—on or off the job.

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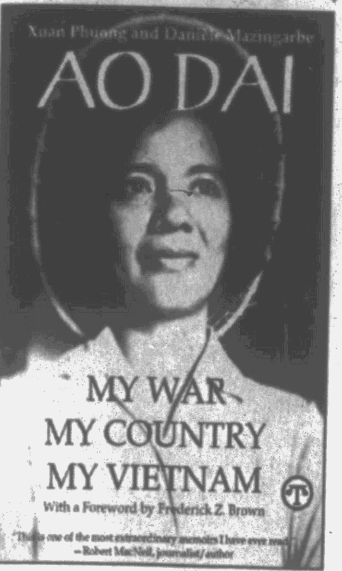
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WORLD VIEW

A New View of Vietnam

(NAPSA)-Americans from all parts of the political spectrum may be intrigued and inspired by the life story



of one unusual woman.

Member of the Vietcong Resistance, journalist, physician, filmmaker, and art dealer, Xuan Phuong has now added "author" to her resume. She tells the story of her fascinating life to journalist Danielle Mazingarbe in "Ao Dai: My War, My Country, My Vietnam" (Emquad International).

In Washington D.C. recently, she participated on a panel discussion at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, along with Stanley Karnow, author of the best-seller "Vietnam: A History." Dr. Phuong later visited with students at the Vietnam Center of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

Said Robert MacNeil, former co-anchor of "The NewsHour" on PBS, "This is one of the most extraordinary memoirs I have ever read: heroic in the scale of human courage and character it describes...and deeply inspiring."

You can learn more at www.emquad.com/aodai.html.

Studies Reveal Chinese Educational Priorities

The findings of delegation of North Carolina policymakers, educators, foundation officials and others who studied education in China have been released by the Public School Forum and the Center for International Understanding, the groups that led the study. The purpose of the study was to examine China's approach to education and to identify best practices that could be incorporated into North Carolina's school improvement plans. Key findings included:

- Education is very much part of China's economic expansion drive. The country's goal is to provide a high quality education to all of its young people.
- From elementary school through high school, China's schools place a priority on the teaching of mathematics, science and foreign languages.
- Teaching is a highly respected career in China. Teachers can advance up to as many as six different levels during their careers - each level is at a higher pay level.
- There is a clear distinction between academic high schools and high schools that focus on technical or occupational skills. Technical high schools, however, are academically demanding and focus on skills that will be needed as China modernizes.

SEE CHINESE PAGE 9

Black child, White parents - The green color in foster care business

By Lloyd Nicholas

Mother Teresa may have only seen the color of love in caring for the homeless. The Biblical Christ wanted grown-ups to embrace the young. So too for many White couples. But according to Robert L. O'Connor, professor of social work, Metropolitan State University, the foster care offered by White folks to Black children is a mere business venture that chunks away the tax coffers.

"White people who provide foster care to children of color make big bucks from special payments—a difficulty of care rate which is prorated on the basis of the level of challenge a particular child presents and it is a very lucrative business, almost an industry, for a lot of European Americans.

"Some of them do not even work — all they do is take care of these kids [sometimes three or four kids at a time] and rake in \$2,000-\$3,000 per month per child," said O'Connor.

Bob Denardo, adoptions and guardianship supervisor, Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), explained that total adoption assistance for all children adopted from the foster care system amounted to \$26.3 million for 2002, and increase on the \$23.2 million allocated

during the previous year.

In an interview with the local media, he said, "Financial assistance [to adoptive parents] is offered in the form of a monthly cash grant calculated by adding a base assistance rate and a supplemental rate [subject to eligibility], based on the level of the preponderance of difficulties the child presents."

Foster parents are paid an average of \$17 to \$21 per day per child in addition to fees for providing special care to the kids under their charge. Basic foster care payments are based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates of the cost of raising a child.

And given this level of generosity by the state, O'Connor wants Black families to also cash in on the deal; after all, he says, people of color are more culturally sensitive to the needs of their young.

On the point of trans-culture, psychologist John Taborn of J. Taborn Associates psychological services says he has "seen quite a few kids having coping problems" in his practices and agrees that black kids in white homes will eventually need help.

"White parents are just as loving as black parents but whites may have trouble in providing a culture transition for the kids of color in

later life when the kids are older and no support system is available for these parents during this challenge," said Taborn.

And "at the time of dating or early college years the teenagers and young adults emerge into a world without a living history of themselves in a race-tinted America and a culture not passed on, so when they experience negative racial attitudes in the 'real world,' they end up in a tailspin," he said.

But few white prospective adoptive parents are now seeking to avoid the trans-culture hassle, says attorney Christopher O. Obasi, who is involved in a controversial court battle over the termination of parental rights from an African American mother now serving time at a Shakopee correctional facility. "Some whites go overseas now to avoid the hassle of adopting black kids," he noted.

In 2002, Minnesota families adopted 383 foreign-born children but this amount is significantly lower than the 548 in 2001, the 565 in 2000, and 551 in 1999.

The DHS is blamed for the trans-culture problems.

O'Connor says, "The agencies responsible for [facilitating] adoptions and foster care are the same people who take away your children

— the institutions are White, the people who work in these institutions are White, and they don't have healthy connections with the communities of color, so they do not do culturally competent recruitment [of adoptive parents]."

Human services officials, he claims, will say "We can't find any black parents, we can't find any Native American parents, we can't find any Hmong parents, and as a result the children are labeled hard to place, when the real deal is the agency is inept and communities of color get blamed for not coming forward."

O'Connor also noted that an investigation of 200 African American family prospective adoptive parents conducted by Robert B. Hill for the National Urban League showed only two of the families were successful in their bid.

In a publication titled Dispelling myths and Building on Strengths: Supporting African American Families, Hill explained that social welfare policies and family support programs ignore the strong kinship networks among black families.

He stated that while some claim that the extended family in the urban areas is declining, the proportion of black extended families continued to increase during the 1970s

and 1980s. During this period, extended families living in single black households rose from 23 to 28 percent, and in 1990 two out of five Black households were made up of three generations.

It is not known if this trend is continuing.

Hill also argued that the African American extended families often extend beyond a household and may include significant persons who are not related by blood or marriage. These kinship networks, Hill claims, already provide a wide range of support services such as daycare, services to unwed mothers, informal adoption and foster care.

Across the United States, some 80 percent of the one million blacks who live in households without parents are informally adopted by kin, the remaining 20 percent are in foster care.

Hill concluded, "While the government could not find permanent homes for the 200,000 foster children, the black kinship succeeded in finding homes for 800,000 children. Yet children of color still account for the majority of children in foster care in many cities."

This article appeared in Edition 157 of Voices That Must Be Heard.



Former Surgeon General David Satcher

WASHINGTON - Middle-age black men are dying at nearly twice the rate of white men of a similar age, reflecting lower incomes and poorer access to health care, a study says. But mortality among black infants is dropping.

While overall longevity for both black and whites has improved over the past 40 years, the gap between the races has narrowed little, former Surgeon General David Satcher said in a paper published Wednesday in the journal Health Affairs.

Satcher's paper was one of several in the journal, which is devoting most of its March/April issue to the topic of health care discrepancies between races.

Elimination of this racial gap would prevent an estimated 83,570 early deaths annually, Satcher said.

Some 10,472 of those deaths occurred among black men who were 45 to 54 in 2000, according to research based on a death rate of 1,060 per 100,000 black men in that age group compared with a rate of 503 for white men.

In 1960 the rates were 1,625 for black men and 932 for white men in that age group.

One reason for the differences is that gains in health care access generally have not included black men unless they were older or disabled, Satcher said. For example, when Medicare be-

MEDICINE: Satcher Says Poor Health Care Hurting Blacks

came law, the average black man did not live long enough to become eligible, he said.

Other factors include the relatively low incomes of black men compared with whites, a rise in gun-related deaths among blacks, their disproportionately high death rate from AIDS, and higher rates of heart disease and diabetes, Satcher said.

While a gap remains, there has been progress for infants, Satcher notes.

Deaths per 100,000 black males under 12 month fell from 5,307 in 1960 to 1,653 in 2000, he found. Comparable figures for whites were 2,694 in 1960 and 656 in 2000.

For baby girls the infant death rate fell from 4,162 in 1960 to 1,363 in 2000 for blacks and from 2,088 to 530 for whites.

Social factors, including neighborhood quality and residential segregation, contribute to the differences in health care, according to a separate paper by David R. Williams of the University of Michigan and Pamela Braboy Jackson of Indiana University.

Additional factors include education, income and health practices such as diet, physical activity and tobacco use, they report.

"Strikingly, the homicide rate of black males in the highest education category exceeds that of white males in the lowest education group," Jackson and Williams wrote.

In an accompanying paper, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., calls on Congress and the Bush administration to act to improve health care for minorities.

"It boggles the mind that for a generation the United States, with all its wealth and leadership, has been the only industrialized country in the world that does not guarantee health care to all of its citizens," Kennedy wrote.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., agreed that it is crucial to seek the goal of health security for everyone. But his approach would differ from Kennedy's.

"The best way to eliminate health disparities is through improvements in the care we deliver to each patient," wrote Frist, a heart-lung surgeon before coming to Congress, in an accompanying paper.

Frist said he wants to foster competition to lower health care costs and favors proposals such as health savings accounts.

The disparities in health care are unacceptable, Frist wrote, "They are an affront to the U.S. promise of equal opportunity for all."

The collection of studies echoes a report in 2002 from the Institute of Medicine that concluded that minorities receive lower quality health care than whites for serious conditions and routine services.

That report represented a call to action, but "little clarity has been achieved as to who is doing what to

eliminate gaps in health status and treatment," according to a forward published in Health Affairs.

"Solving this national embarrassment will not be easy," the forward said. It was signed by Rita Lavizzo-Mourey, president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; William C. Richardson, president of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Robert K. Ross, president of the California Endowment and John W. Rowe, chairman of the insurance company Aetna.

TAR RIVER COMMUNITY BAND POPS CONCERT

GREENVILLE - The Tar River Community Band will present its annual Spring Pops Concert on Saturday, April 9, 2005, at 7:00pm at C.M. Eppes Middle School in Greenville. Admission is \$3.00 per person, with tickets available at the door. The Band has planned a variety of tunes that are sure to provide something for everyone. This is a family oriented evening with complimentary snacks included in the admission price.

For further information, call the Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation Office at 830-4216

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The Voting Rights Act: 40 Years After "Bloody Sunday"

JACKIE ROBINSON
FROM PAGE 1

For those of us old enough to remember, March 7, 1965, is a day that will forever be etched in our memories. It was on that Sunday 40 years ago that a courageous group of civil rights activists set out from Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, Alabama, en route to the state capitol in Montgomery to demand voting rights for blacks in southern states.

Just weeks earlier another group attempted to make the trek but encountered violence on the way, as a young protester, Jimmie Lee Jackson, was shot and would die days later from his wounds. In a state where blacks lived a subterranean existence under Jim Crow, the simple act of seeking the right to vote could be a death sentence.

Although the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted after the Civil War, conferred the right to vote on citizens regardless of race or color, state and local officials across the country spent the next 100 years finding ways around the statute. If poll taxes or literacy tests didn't work, then intimidation usually did the job. People were killed merely for trying to vote.

The demonstrators on March 7 were determined to complete the journey to the state capitol, in part as a tribute to Jackson. Their determination was matched and overwhelmed by the

racism of Alabama officials on that day. As the marchers made their way across the Edmund Pettus Bridge they were greeted by a phalanx of club-wielding Alabama state troopers. The brutality that ensued left the activists bruised and bloodied. The beatings the marchers endured were so graphic that the day has come to be known as "Bloody Sunday."

People were killed

for trying to vote. The events of "Bloody Sunday" triggered a culminating moment in the civil rights movement: the Voting Rights Act. The use of clubs and tear gas against a non-violent group of Americans marching to dramatize the right to vote was broadcast on national television. This finally proved too much for the established powers in Washington.

President Lyndon Johnson called on Congress to pass far-reaching legislation that would ensure the voting rights of all Americans. "The right to vote with no ifs, ands, or buts, that's the key," said

Johnson. He signed the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965, just five months after "Bloody Sunday."

The Act outlaws discriminatory practices such as literacy tests, the "grandfather" clause, and the poll tax that had been used to disenfranchise blacks. The Act prohibits any changes in election laws unless approved or "pre-cleared" by the federal Department of Justice. It provides for federal election monitors to be deployed as deterrence to the use of intimidation to keep blacks from the polls. It also requires bilingual electoral assistance where necessary.

Impact Beyond Voting

The impact of the Voting Rights Act extended beyond voting. It created the environment for blacks to seek public office from city halls to Congress, laying the groundwork for the election of an unprecedented number of elected local officials and a significant number of members of Congress.

Even with the law on the books,

efforts to deny people of color the vote have persisted. Violations of the Act continue today across the country. The nation has experienced two consecutive presidential elections during which the rights of black voters in some states were subjected to segregationist era tactics to suppress their participation.

Discriminatory practices against blacks, Latinos, and immigrant groups in the North persisted into the 1960's. New York State's literacy test, which was law until the Voting Rights Act, acted as a barrier to voting among Puerto Ricans as well as immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.

In New York City, we are particularly challenged to secure voting rights for large segments of citizens of certain language minority groups who comprise an increasingly significant share of the city's population. For this group language and literacy barriers must be addressed in the reauthorization of the Act.

Renew Crucial Sections

Three crucial sections of the law requiring pre-clearance of election law changes, authorizing federal observers to monitor elections, and mandating bilingual election assistance – will expire in 2007 unless Congress votes to renew them. We must work with our Congressional delegation to pressure the Bush administration and Congress to extend those sections.

As we pay homage to the courage of those activists who stood tall on Bloody Sunday, our moral obligation is to make certain future generations are apprised of the legacy they have inherited and see voting as a definitive cultural statement. Many bridges remain to be crossed on the path to full voting rights in this country.

From the New York Amsterdam News and Community Service Society of New York • 105 East 22nd Street New York, NY 10010 • 212-254-8900 • info@cssny.org

unite the country's political leaders.

Bush said he hoped for a Robinson baseball card, even though he rooted for the Giants. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., recalled going to a Cubs game with his grandfather, and being told the Dodgers were playing and he would see history being made.

Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid remembered listening to ballgame broadcasts growing up in Searchlight, Nev., and hearing the play-by-play announcer describe Robinson come through with a game-winning hit.

"He was so much more than just a baseball player," Reid said. "Jackie Robinson brought the civil rights movement to my hometown."

Born in Cairo, Ga., Robinson was raised in Pasadena, Calif. and was a four-sport letterman at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The legislation to give him the medal was sponsored by Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., and Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass. It was awarded on the same day Bush honored the Boston Red Sox at the White House for winning the World Series last year.

The Red Sox, the last major league team to integrate, gave Robinson a tryout before he signed with the Dodgers, but chose not to sign him.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor the legislative branch can bestow on a civilian and must be co-sponsored by two-thirds of members in the House and the Senate.

Robinson is only the second major league baseball player ever to get the award – the first was Roberto Clemente in 1973.

Ironically, the House approved legislation in January that could have made Robinson ineligible for the honor by restricting posthumous medals to a 20-year period beginning five years after a person's death. The legislation, which arose from concern that the distinction was being diluted by overuse and also limited medals to two a year, has not yet been approved by the Senate.

North Carolina's Business Climate Viewed Favorably by Small Businesses

State's business outlook positive but business conditions lag behind.

WASHINGTON - North Carolina's overall business climate is supportive of small business, but the state's business conditions are lagging against its peers, according to the inaugural North Carolina Small-Business Conditions report. The report's data, which is the first compilation of its type, was released today by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)/

North Carolina. It provides an overview of small-business conditions within North Carolina and compares them with neighboring states.

A net 36 percent (positive percent minus negative percent) of respondents to a recent survey indicated North Carolina is supportive of small business. Comparatively, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia registered a net 40 percent, net 31 percent and net 36 percent, respectively. However, only a net 38 percent indicated business condi-

tions in their market area are good, which compared to a net 55 percent in South Carolina, net 47 percent in Tennessee and net 53 percent in Virginia. Nonetheless, a net 27 percent of North Carolina small employers said business conditions are improving, which was slightly higher than South Carolina (net 26 percent), Tennessee (net 21 percent) and Virginia (net 24 percent).

"North Carolina's climate for small business is improving, as the

data indicates, but we've got some ground to make up against our rivals," NFIB/North Carolina State Director Gregg Thompson said. "While North Carolina is viewed nationally as a business-friendly state, we shouldn't be trailing our neighbors by as many as 17 percentage points when it comes to business conditions."

Not surprisingly, employee health premiums (37 percent) ranked No.1 as the most rapidly rising business insurance cost followed by vehicle collision and liability (14 percent), and workers' compensation and property and casualty (both 11 percent).

As a result of last year's hurricanes, 6 percent of responding small businesses suffered significant damage, 13 percent suffered minor damage and 81 percent said they suffered no damage at all.

A net 70 percent characterized the outlook for business over the next three months as good, citing sales prospects (57 percent) and greater productivity (17 percent) as primary reasons for their view. A net 24 percent indicated that profits were "good," and a net 39 percent of those same respondents characterized sales as "good." Overall, a net 54 percent of small employers reported that over the last three months their purchasing prices rose, which was higher than its peer group, while a net 17 percent reported they had increased selling prices.

For information on small-business conditions in North Carolina, visit www.NFIB.com/object/sbnc0305.html. Visit www.NFIB.com/NC for information about NFIB's activities in North Carolina. For information about the Small-Business Conditions project and other small-business research studies conducted by the NFIB Research Foundation, visit www.NFIB.com/research

SEE CHINESE PAGE 8

This study is the sixth in a series of studies of education in foreign countries. The studies have been planned by the Public School forum and the NC Center for International

Understanding. According to John Doman Executive Director of the Forum, "By exposing legislators, members of the State Board of Education and leading educators to the best educational ideas in other countries, we hope to see new and effective approaches incorporated into North Carolina's schools."

"Additionally, as North Carolina is more and more impacted by and a part of the growing global economy, we hope to create ties between North Carolina and countries around the world," Doman added.

The study of education in China was made possible with the support of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the Kenan Family Charitable Trust.

Please Note: Previous studies of educational practices in Great Britain, The Netherlands, *6833 Japan, Denmark and South Korea are available upon request.

China begins HIV vaccine trials

Several human trials of vaccines are being held globally

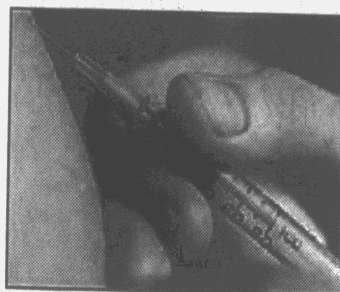
China has begun its first human trials of a new HIV vaccine, the state news agency Xinhua news agency reports.

A 20-year-old man became the first volunteer to receive the vaccine on Saturday. He will be followed by seven others, four of whom are women.

A total of 49 volunteers aged between 18 and 50 will take part in the tests to be carried out over three stages, officials were quoted as saying.

China says 840,000 people have HIV but experts fear the figure is higher.

The first stage of the test will last



14 months, Chen Ji, director of the disease control agency in southern China's Guangxi region, was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

No details on the test were given, but the second stage would cover "immune nature and safety of the vaccine."

All of those taking part in the

tests have received physical check-ups and signed waivers, Xinhua said.

The tests were approved by China's drug regulators last November.

The Chinese government says 80,000 of its 1.3 billion population have developed full-blown Aids.

The UN has warned that the number of people affected by HIV and Aids in China could rise to 10 million by 2010 unless much is done to fight the disease.

More than 43 million people around the world have been infected by the HIV/Aids virus and around 25 million people died.

Human trials of vaccines are being carried out in several countries but none have yet proved to be significantly effective against the disease.



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Existing HWTF grantees as well as groups not currently working with HWTF are encouraged to apply.

The deadline to apply is March 29, 2005 at 5 p.m. So apply now. When teens' lives are at stake, we need all the heroes we can get.

To apply for a grant, visit HWTF's Web site at

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WHAT ARE WE TO DO... REALLY DO?

A Jim Rouse Pictorial

The massive turnout to the funeral of yet another young innocent shooting victim once again cripples a somber community with more grief...

Jahmel Rashaad Little

SUNRISE: May 19, 1991 SUNSET: March 6, 2005



Court Clears Execution for Nobel Prize Winner, Crips Founder

David Kravets
San Francisco, CA —
A federal appeals court refused to consider blocking the execution of Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a founder of the notorious Crips street gang who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize while in prison.

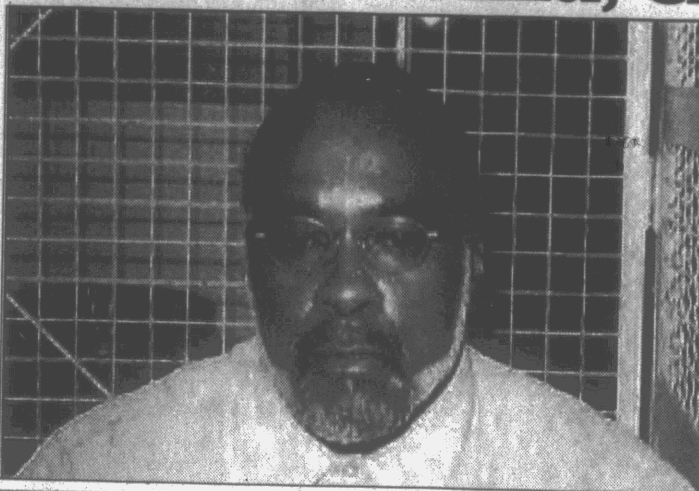
The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused to grant Williams another hearing based on his argument that prosecutors violated his rights when they dismissed all potential black jurors from hearing the case. Agreement from a majority of the 24 active judges is required to grant a rehearing.

Judge Johnnie Rawlinson

was joined by eight other judges in a written opinion favoring a rehearing. She said Williams, who is black, deserves a new trial because his attorney did not object to the unlawful removal of black panelists during jury selection.

"If our judicial system is to inspire a sense of confidence among the populace, we must not, we cannot permit trials to proceed in the face of blatant, race-based jury selection practices," said Rawlinson, a Clinton appointee who is black.

"The very legitimacy of our system of justice depends upon continued vigilance against such



In this undated photo provided by the family of Stanley Williams, Stanley "Tookie" Williams poses for a photo in the visiting area of San Quentin State Prison in California. A federal appeals court on Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2005, said Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a founder of the notorious Crips street gang who was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize while in prison, can be executed for killing four people in 1981. (AP Photo/Courtesy of Williams Family, File)

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practices."

Williams, who was convicted in 1981 of killing four people, will appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, said his attorney, Andrea Asaro of San Francisco.

"If you have a biased jury considering your guilt or innocence, that's unconstitutional," Asaro said. "This raises constitutional implications for the fairness of the trial."

She noted a 1986 Supreme Court ruling prohibiting race from being a reason for excusing jurors.

The majority of judges who declined a rehearing did so without comment.

Nathan Barankin, a spokesman for California Attorney General Bill Lockyer, made a brief statement after the appeals court ruling: "A jury determined that the appropriate sentence for Stanley Williams for his crimes was death. We're defending that judgment."

Wednesday's decision was the latest setback for the former Los Angeles gang leader. In 2002, a three-judge panel of the San Francisco-based court approved his execution but did not fully consider the jury selection process or whether Williams' counsel was ineffective. Asaro then asked the court to rehear the case, leading to Wednesday's decision.

In the 2002 decision, the panel said Williams had run out of legal options but suggested he was a good candidate for clemency. The judges cited the children's books he has written from prison, in addition to messages of peace he posts on the Internet.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has rejected clemency for the first two condemned men asking to commute their terms to life without parole. In Schwarzenegger's latest rejection, just last month, he said an inmate's model behavior in prison was not enough to sway him to grant mercy.

If Wednesday's ruling survives scrutiny by the Supreme Court, it could pave the way for as many as three executions in California this year. That would be the most since the death penalty was reinstated in 1978.

Last month, a Redwood City man was executed for killing two women in 1981. A week later, the 9th Circuit cleared for execution the leader of a Fresno crime ring who ordered murders from his cell at Folsom State Prison.

Williams and a high school buddy, Raymond Washington, started the Crips street gang in Los Angeles in 1971.

Williams was sentenced to death for fatally shooting Albert Owens, a Whittier convenience store worker in 1979. He also was convicted of using a shotgun a few days later to kill two Los Angeles motel owners and their daughter during a robbery.

He claims he is innocent, arguing that jailhouse informants fabricated testimony that he confessed to the murders.

If this is OK with the public for a person to be executed who could not get a fair trial, if that is OK, I don't know what to say," said Barbara Becnel, who has co-written the children's books with Williams.

She said Williams has received more than 40,000 e-mails since April, when "Redemption: The Stan Tookie Williams Story" aired on television. Many messages came from young gang members who said his life story helped them turn their lives around, she said.

While in San Quentin, Williams has been nominated five times for a Nobel Peace Prize and four times for the Nobel Prize for literature for his series of children's books, Becnel said.

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Seibel told the Manhattan jurors that Lil' Kim, referred to throughout the trial by her real name, Kimberly Jones, had repeatedly lied to them, just as she did to the grand jury.

"The testimony was preposterous. It was insulting. It was insulting to your intelligence. It was insulting to the judicial process," Seibel told jurors before they returned their verdict on perjury, obstruction of justice and conspiracy charges.

Seibel had belittled the defense that the sunglasses-laden Lil' Kim did not notice two people she knew at the scene of the shootout — her manager, Damion Butler, and a friend, Suif Jackson, both of whom have since pleaded guilty to gun charges.

"You would have to believe they were magic sunglasses that only block out your friends who were shooting people," Seibel said.

Lil' Kim defense lawyer Mel Sachs had argued that his client had no reason to protect Butler and Jackson because she had already eliminated them from her life.

When Lil' Kim was testifying, Seibel confronted her with evidence she owes nearly \$1 million in back taxes. The singer told jurors she leaves decisions about her finances to her manager and accountant.

Among witnesses at the trial were Antoine "Banger" Spain and James "Lil' Cease" Lloyd, Brooklyn rappers who once teamed with Lil' Kim in a group called Junior M.A.F.I.A. They testified they saw Butler and Jackson at the radio station with her.

The jury had been shown security photos taken at the station showing Butler opening a door for her and the pair outside together just moments before the shooting.

Lil' Kim had testified that after the shooting she had a falling out with Butler, Banger and Cease because they were freeloading at her New Jersey town house. She said she decided to cut off Butler completely after he caused a ruckus outside a video shoot with Phil Collins (news), the basis of a defense argument that she had no incentive to lie for him.

"I was just fed up," she said. "They were taking advantage of me."

The rapper also testified at length about her modest background and mercurial career, which began with an impromptu audition with rapper Notorious B.I.G. on the street in their Brooklyn neighborhood. She described traveling the world to perform and promote her records.

Lil' Kim won a Grammy Award for her part in the hit remake of "Lady Marmalade" in 2001.

Rappers Continue from Page 5

Interscope Records.

Those relationships probably played a hand in Wednesday's reconciliation.

"It's pressure for 50 to look at it from a business perspective and not a personal perspective," Elliott said. "I think the press conference was forced by the mainstream media's reaction to the incident. They don't benefit on a business level to be associated with violence."

Could the whole thing have been a publicity stunt for two rappers with albums in stores now?

Elliott doesn't buy it. "There really was a beef. I think there was a genuine conflict that 50 felt The Game was unappreciative of all the work he did on his album ... and Game is feeling like, 'I'm my own man now.'"

But the two have apparently decided that they have more to lose going against each other.

"I think (50) will continue to beef with other artists," Elliott said. "But to beef with your own artist and someone who you're in business with, it doesn't help you."

United Congratulates

Loretta Bond

is a sophomore majoring in Religion and Philosophy at Shaw University. She is the recipient of a \$5000 scholarship from United Insurance Company of America/UNCF Scholarship Program.

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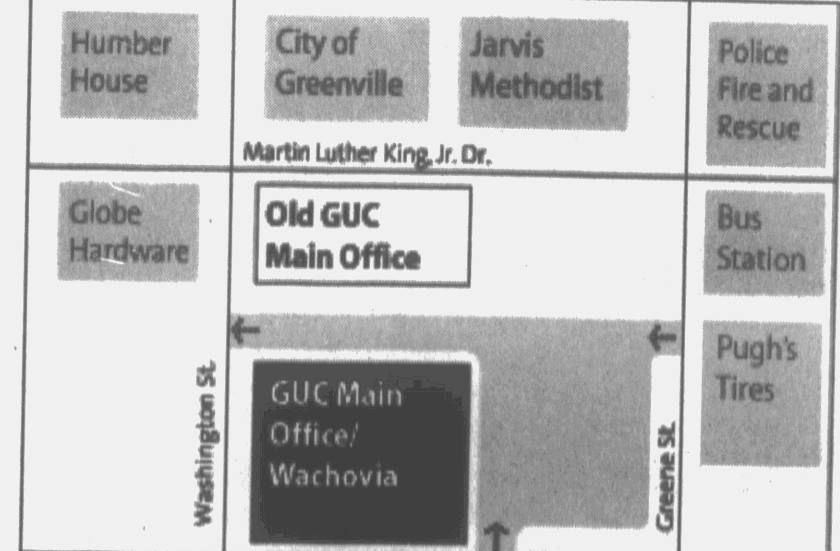
Host signs with Public Radio International for weekend show.

*Three months after leaving National Public Radio following a contract dispute, Tavis Smiley will soon return to the public airwaves after signing a deal with Public Radio International to host "The Tavis Smiley Show" and produce other programs.

Premiering April 29, the show will run two hours and is slotted to air in the Friday-to-Sunday window. The program will feature newsmakers and regular commentators including Princeton professor Cornel West and former congressman J.C. Watts.

Smiley will continue to serve as host of his late-night PBS talk show "Tavis Smiley" and is creating a series of prime-time specials for PBS. The first, "American Ascension," is set to air this summer.

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Preachers Would Leave Us At the Back of the Bus

By Rev. Barbara Reynolds
NNPA Columnist

There was a time when black preachers could be counted on to confront the ruling pharaohs of their day when the powerless were receiving a raw deal. But if black folks had to depend upon today's clergy for leadership, they would still be confined to the back of the bus.

At a time when black America is in murky, troubled waters, too many of the black clergy, especially those heading mega-churches, are either apolitical or apologists for the status quo.

The Rev. Clarence James, a social critic and author of the "Lost Generation: Or Left Generation," says the trouble with today's clergy is there are too many priests and not enough prophets. "The priests are the servants of the privileged, criticizing little crimes at the bottom, while ignoring those at the top. The prophets remind the rulers they are not exempt from the laws of God, but the priests are blinded by wealth and power."

Recently a small group of conservative preachers (the priests) have been hotfooting it over to the White House. But these are not the kind to trouble the water. With no agenda that encapsulates the needs of black America, they are in danger of being perceived as sell-outs.

One group is the newly established High-Impact Leadership Coalition, formed by Maryland pastor Bishop Harry Jackson. It has unveiled the Black Contract with America on Moral Values to gain more clout within the Republican Party. Bishop Charles E. Blake Sr., senior pastor of the 25,000-member West Angeles Church of God in Christ and the Rev. Fred Price, pastor of the Crenshaw Christian Center are among the West Coast leaders of the movement, according to the Christian Examiner.

Even the Right wing, anti-black Heritage Foundation is organizing a group of blacks to focus African-Americans on moral issues.

Jackson says the new movement supporting President Bush would return the black church to its once-prominent place. That, of course, sounds reasonable only to blacks suffering from amnesia. The black church did not become black America's most significant institution through appeasement or accommodation. Black preachers brilliantly led opposition to slavery, Jim Crow, segregation and fueled the political movements resulting in electing more than 10,000 black officials.

With so many issues plaguing African-Americans, the top issue for Jackson's black contract is fighting same-sex marriages. This provision was a successful strategy concocted by Karl Rove, Bush's top gun, to throw enough red meat at evangelical Christians to have them running to vote for Bush. While the guys at the top split the wealth of billions in tax cuts, plus the booty flowing from Iraqi oil contracts, the little folks can occupy themselves with their butterfly nets chasing gays.

No matter what you think about same-sex marriages (I am against them), banning them as a top priority for black folks is ridiculous. Are married homosexuals responsible for draining billions from health, education and housing for the poor to spend on blowing up Iraq? Are gays responsible for the failure to prevent the murder of thousands of black Christians dying in Sudan? No, the genocide could be stopped if Bush used his clout in the UN Security Council to send troops to Sudan that could drive the murderers out.

Gay marriages are something that the president can afford to spend rhetoric on because it doesn't cost him a dime, but for black America it is a diversion we can not afford.

When the black conservatives talk to Bush I bet they do not mention access to higher education for blacks because that would embarrass

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Bush, who has aggressively opposed affirmative action, including two cases involving the University of Michigan.

I bet they do not talk about the budget, a moral document reflecting the values paid for in taxes and in the blood of our daughters and sons in the U.S. military. The current budget projecting a \$427 billion deficit, with its severe cuts in

social programs and tax cuts for the rich, is so immoral you'd think the preachers would be rising up in outrage, but little church mice make more noise than most religious leaders.

Where are the pointed questions coming from those bragging about dining with the president? Why when North Korea defiantly announce it has weapons of mass de-

struction Bush looks the other way, but attacked an oil-rich country with no weapons of mass destruction that had not attacked America?

Since they have so much clout inside the White House, why are the black preachers not telling the president that since black America depends more on Social Security in their senior years for survival than whites, the system can not be left to the mercy of his

rich friends on Wall Street.

Are these well-meaning preachers tending me presuici mul wnnc wu-iii-ingtonians, many of whom are African-Americans, are dying and Deing wounded in Iraq, they have no vote in the U.S. House of Representatives nor the Senate.

So while so much is threatening our survival, many of our nation's clergy are busy cracking down on gay

marriages. Do you want to laugh or cry?

Rev. Barbara Reynolds is the religion columnist/or NNPA is an author of four books, including "Out Of Hell & Living Well: Hearing from the Inside Out" and a graduate of the Howard University School of Divinity and the United Theological Seminary, where she earned a doctorate degree in ministry. She can be reached at www.reynoldsnews.com.



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