

When A Woman's Fed Up

Labor Day Family Reunion

Vanessa Bell Armstrong

The Minority Voice

What You See Is What You Get, What You Read Is What You Know And Save.

Suffering Children Under Prostitution

AFRICA DIGEST

CENTRAL AFRICA

President attacks France

The president of the Central African Republic said French interests had been involved in a failed coup attempt in his country last month, and praised Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi for coming promptly to his aid.

Ange Felix Patasse told newsmen in an interview that the danger was now over and the capital, Bangui, was under his control.

"Bangui is calm. Bangui is under control and the outskirts of the city are calm. I ask the rebels to surrender. If they do not, I will go and get them by force," he said.

The poor, landlocked country saw a series of army mutinies in the mid-1990s, when the former colonial power sent troops to back Patasse.

This time France declined to intervene, and Patasse has said that French weapons found their way into the hands of the rebels, who were led by Andre Kolingba, a former military ruler.

Asked how he would prevent further unrest, Patasse replied: "Ask France not to send weapons to kill the people."

"These are the weapons we found at Kolingba's house," he said, indicating boxes of weapons bearing the French flag piled in the garden of his residence, where the interview took place.

SOUTH AFRICA

Mbeki salutes student uprising

President Thabo Mbeki led a march this week to salute the South African children who sparked a bloody revolt 25 years ago that signalled the beginning of the end of White rule.

But the march appeared to have less to do with politics than with making a statement against HIV/AIDS, which is one of the main challenges facing Mbeki's administration.

Former student leaders, many of whom were meeting for the first time since police fired on them 25 years ago, had one message for the younger generation: HIV/AIDS is killing them.

In a speech to about 8,000 young Sowetans, many of whom wore T-shirts bearing AIDS awareness messages, Mbeki touched only briefly on the issue.

"We must attend to the health of our young people. That includes the question of AIDS," he told a rally in the township, southwest of Johannesburg, urging people to use condoms.

"We want to save the lives of our people. The youth must take responsibility to look after itself."

BURUNDI

Civilians killed by rebel army

Ethnic Hutu rebels killed a military commander and three civilians in two road ambushes in central Burundi, the army said this week.

Guerrillas shot dead Major Thimothe Ntjina on Sunday evening three km (two miles) from the central town of Kayanza, army spokesman Colonel Augustin Nzabampema said.

"One hour later on the same place the rebels killed three civilians," he said. "Two of them were executed on the road after being mutilated. The third was burned in the car."

Residents said the attacks were believed to be the work of rebels from the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD), the biggest of two main Hutu rebel groups fighting the Tutsi-led Burundian army and government for almost eight years.

More than 200,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in a civil war which started in 1993 when the Tutsi military assassinated the country's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndayize, a Hutu.

UGANDA

Troops face long trek from Congo

Ugandan troops based in a remote Congolese town have been told to march 400 km (250 miles) towards home as part of operations to withdraw Ugandan forces from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Uganda says the United Nations will not let the battalion of 750 troops use the only large airport in the area — so they must march to another, 400 km away.

"Uganda's patience has run out after the U.N. failed to give them assurance on the use of Kisangani's Bangoka Airport," unnamed security officials told the state-owned Sunday Vision newspaper.

SUFFERING CHILDREN

Prostitution is claiming increased numbers of juveniles

Special to the Tri-State Defender

There are between 100,000 and 300,000 child prostitutes in the United States, and the number may be growing, activists, juveniles justice and law enforcement officials fear.

Reasons for the increase vary: from laws that don't do enough to punish pimps, to more children feeling alienated at home or suffering in dysfunctional families who run away and have increased problems with drug addictions.

There is also the challenge of bringing cases with no witnesses, except the victimized child, who either believes she loves, or knows she fears, her pimp.

Speaking under condition of anonymity, caseworkers in Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C., expressed frustration. They worry cases fall through the cracks and sometimes feel ill-prepared to help.

These aren't children of 10 and 15 years ago. At 9-, 10-, 11-years-old, they are in love with these men who talk nice to them, said the L.A. social worker.

The sweet talk is an introduction into what one

report called the most overlooked form of child abuse in America. In addition, local police often sees child prostitution as a nuisance crime and there is a misconception that the children are willing accomplices, it said.

"Black women and young girls especially, find themselves in a unique and extremely difficult position in society," said Verdita Nelson, a researcher and author of Prostitution: Where Racism and Sexism Intersect.

Trapped in a culture dominated by White supremacy and male dominance, the Black female becomes especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation," argues Ms. Nelson.

The case of a 13-year-old Black girl in Atlanta captured some attention in recent months. The juvenile was a dancer in a strip club that has come under investigation by federal officials. Her alleged pimp, a 43-year-old man, pleaded guilty to statutory sexual seduction and second-degree kidnapping in May, according to the Clark County, Nevada, district attorney. He faces up to 20 years in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for July 23 in the case.

The man allegedly took the girl to Las Vegas on a Greyhound bus in April and had sex with her. Atlanta officials are seeking the former strip club bouncer, and plan to draw up charges against him, according to local media.

There has also been a

request that an employee in the U.S. attorney's office be investigated because of the girl's allegations that he coerced her into sex while in his custody. She had been brought back from Nevada, but ran away.

Her mother allowed her to remain in the man's care over a week-end. No placement in a juvenile facility was available. The man has two daughters and adamantly denied the charges. He resigned his job, saying his integrity had been questioned. He had helped

spearhead a major effort to focus on child prostitution, after Atlanta officials were alarmed by signs of its rise. In one instance, a state official said a group home was a recruiting ground for pimps preying on young girls. Many suspect the 13-year-old, who allegedly stole the man's car, made the accusation to get back at him.

Misplaced devotion to pimps is a constant in the child sex trade. Pimps rule using combination of comfort, protection and terror to

control victims, who are in trouble, far from home and may suffer drug problems.

"It is a complete moral breakdown," a sex crimes unit investigator in Fulton County, Ga., told the Final Call, speaking under condition of anonymity.

"Unless we have a corroborating witness, which is going to be rare, who is going to turn on a pimp? It is extremely difficult to make a case. These children do not operate as adults, they do this (prostitution) for



KELLY DARDEN, JR TO BOTH APPEAR ON AND CO-HOST HIS OWN NATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAM

A difficult time in the life of Greenville native, Kelly Darden, Jr. has transformed into the opening and beginning of a life long dream becoming a reality. Having moved back to Greenville from Charlotte after a 20 year stay, as a result of needing to be near his mother who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer, Kelly went to an outdoor show in Raleigh, North Carolina, just to get away, clear his head, and try to think of things other than his mother's condition. There he met another young man, James Jackson, Jr. of Williamsburg, Virginia who had set up a display

called The Virginia Whitetail Collection, a collection and display of deer, bear and wild turkey James and his father had taken over the years. Out of the thousands of persons, each had met in their lives, there was an initial intense chemistry between the two, based on their intense passion for the great outdoors, which has subsequently made them more akin to brothers than business partners and began to propel them to the forefront. One of the last remaining areas of sports outside of auto racing where black Americans, have not yet fully entered and excelled, the outdoor sports. Hardly if ever is an African American depicted and shown hunting or fishing in the picturesque scenes in television, advertisements,

or magazines. Kelly and James are hopefully about to change this.

Having grown up here in eastern North Carolina, Kelly developed a love of the outdoors at an early age that made him always dream of hunting and fishing in the mountain stream of exotic places such as out West, the Alaskan wilderness and other places we see depicted by the media. He has finally begun to meet these dreams. He vividly remembers thumbing through outdoor magazines telling himself "One day" Kelly was asked by James to team up with him and begin touring and doing hunting and outdoor shows around the country, as he felt the two would make a dynamic team.

They appear and are featured at coliseum and convention centers doing major outdoor expositions nationally. There they display a breathtaking, 50-60 foot display of entire mounted deer, bear, turkey and other trophies the two have taken over the years. They transport their trophies around the county in a 30 foot enclosed trailer. The two have done shows from upstate New Jersey and Pennsylvania all the way down to Mississippi. They have been featured in places such as Richmond, Virginia, Charlotte, North Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia, to name only a few places. The two appear in front of over 3 to 400 thousand people annually who file past their display and come to hear them speak, where they are featured seminar speakers,

speaking on a host of hunting and outdoor topics in front of thousands. They are the only African Americans in the country to do such.

A graduate of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte with a degree in Business Administration as well as a North Carolina State Teacher's Certification from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Kelly began writing for Advantage Outdoors, a minority owned and based outdoor magazine geared towards Black Americans based in Atlanta, Georgia. Since then Kelly has had stories and his pictures displayed in several other national magazines such as Mossy Oak's Hunting the Country magazine, The Carolina's Whitetail Journal, The Southern Sporting Journal, and various other publications with readers exceeding 3 million. He has been featured in various newspapers around the country including a feature in last year's Daily Reflector. He is and remains as one of the only black outdoor writers in the nation. Kelly and James are the first and only African Americans in the county to film, produce and market an outdoor video which they market throughout the nation. They are currently in the process of producing another video to add to their series. The video encompasses some of the hunts they have filmed and executed over the years. They took part in filming, editing and even cover design for their product. Kelly's knowledge and skills in the

outdoors has landed himself and his partner endorsements, advisory staff and Pro Staff positions with many major corporations in the outdoor industry. Some include Mossy Oak Camouflage Corporation, Parker Compound Hunting Bows, Scent Lok Odor elimination clothing, Outland Sports, Inc. which includes API Treestands, Kenco Feeders, Feather-Flex decoys, M. A. D. Calls, Lohman Calls, Blue Ridge Archery Products, and Big River Game Calls. Word began to get around in the outdoor industry regarding these black guys who were making quite a name for themselves in the industry. As a result Remington Corporation, America's oldest and largest gun manufacturer and Mossy Oak Camouflage Corporation called and invited Kelly to film an episode for their show, Remington County, America's second most watched outdoor program. This was as a result of being selected for their once a year writer's hunt, where they select an outdoor writer nationally to be sent on an exotic hunting trip, and to return to rewrite a story on such. On this trip Kelly was selected to go to the Land of Enchantment, New Mexico, where he described it as being one of the most beautiful places he has ever seen. There he made an exceptionally long shot and harvested a near record-book antelope on camera. It aired last July on TNN on Remington County. It was reviewed by over 13 million households.

THE MINORITY VOICE NEWSPAPER

cont from page
Children

investigator lamented.
The New York social worker agreed. "These girls have a false love and false sense as to what they want out of life. They lie for (pimps) and protect them. Most of them, though, operate out of fear, because they also believe that police and the courts can't protect them. They have seen what has happened to some of their friends," the social worker, who does street outreach, said.
In Washington, D.C., a social worker who deals with agencies in the District of Columbia and Maryland, said a great dilemma is identifying the crisis. "Even as a social worker, this isn't something we've discussed in any of our classes, nor has it been an issue. Even in the work I've done voluntarily in various women's health organizations, we touch more on assault and rape. But we don't necessarily talk about young girls in prostitution," she said.
Advocates note child prostitution has only gotten major attention in recent decades. U.S. media often cites exploitation of children in foreign countries. While child sexual exploitation in Asia, Africa, Central and South America is a problem, western countries also suffer from the scourge. In fact, child sex tours are often arranged from the U.S. and Canada to poorer nations.
In the United States, child sex workers, 14- to 17-years-old, may make \$500-\$600 a night, but rarely receive more than a \$25.00 as an allowance, according to a U.S. Labor Department report. Some officials estimate 25-30 percent of child sex workers are younger than 18.

Youngsters are often seen as safer than older women, less likely to suffer from sexually transmitted diseases. But experts say that perception is not true.
A national survey of juvenile court judges by the Atlanta Journal Constitution concluded child prostitution is on the rise. In rural areas, judges reported the sharpest increase since 1995, saying their figures were up by 75 percent and, on average, three youths a month were involved with prostitution. The reasons for the increase varied: In Flint, Mich., it was linked to drug addiction, where parents used their children to

make money. In Atlanta, most child prostitutes were from middle and upper class families, according to the Fulton County Sex Crimes Unit. These youth, mostly between the ages of 13-17, fill the city's hot spots of Five-Points, the Atlanta Underground and Lenox shopping malls. They become the prey of smooth talkers and sex predators, police said.
Selling sex is often linked to runaways. Kids usually turn to it as a kind of survival sex," said a hotline worker for a group that help runaways. About 3 percent of callers the hotline takes each year are from

youth who admits having to survive by selling themselves. It happens to straight and gay youth, the hotline worker said.
There are roughly 1.3 million runaways in America, often fleeing abusive homes, and ripe for exploitation, the hotline worker noted.
Child advocates say education and communication with children are needed to avoid runaways and forays into the sex trade. Teachers and professionals who work with children daily also need to be educated about the problem and community awareness needs to increase, they add. Some

suggest teaching junior and senior high school students about the problem and community awareness needs to increase, they add. Some suggest teaching junior and senior high school students about the problem and the gritty reality—usually rape and other violent outcomes of the street life.
According to stats from the Georgia Department of Corrections, male pimps control the sex-for-hire trade in the state. Yet, women are far more likely than men to be sentenced for prostitution-related crimes.
Each state and the

federal government criminalizes some aspect of child prostitution. The federal government's primary law is the Mann Act, which forbids transport of children under age 18 in interstate or foreign commerce for the child to engage in prostitution or any sexual activity. State laws are much broader and focus on individuals who advance, promote, or induce prostitution. These laws, however, rarely penalize patrons of child prostitutes, advocates say.

Strange Things

He should have shut his mouth

In Bayou Vista, La., a 36-year-old man choked to death on a six-inch tropical fish he popped into his mouth while showing off for friends. And in Fairfax County, Va., a 22-year-old man, described by his grandmother as "smart in school," died in a bungee-cord accident off a railroad trestle. Said a police spokesman: "The length of the cord that he had assembled was greater than the distance between the trestle and the ground."

Creating a style

After his conviction in Nashville, Tenn., Clemmie Jones, 35, complained to a federal judge about the circumstances of his arrest. Jones had been the object of a manhunt about which Sheriff's deputies had grown so intense that they had t-shirts made with photos of Jones on the front and his wife on the back, and were wearing them when they collared him. Said Jones to the judge: "I felt as though I was being targeted."

Chutzpah

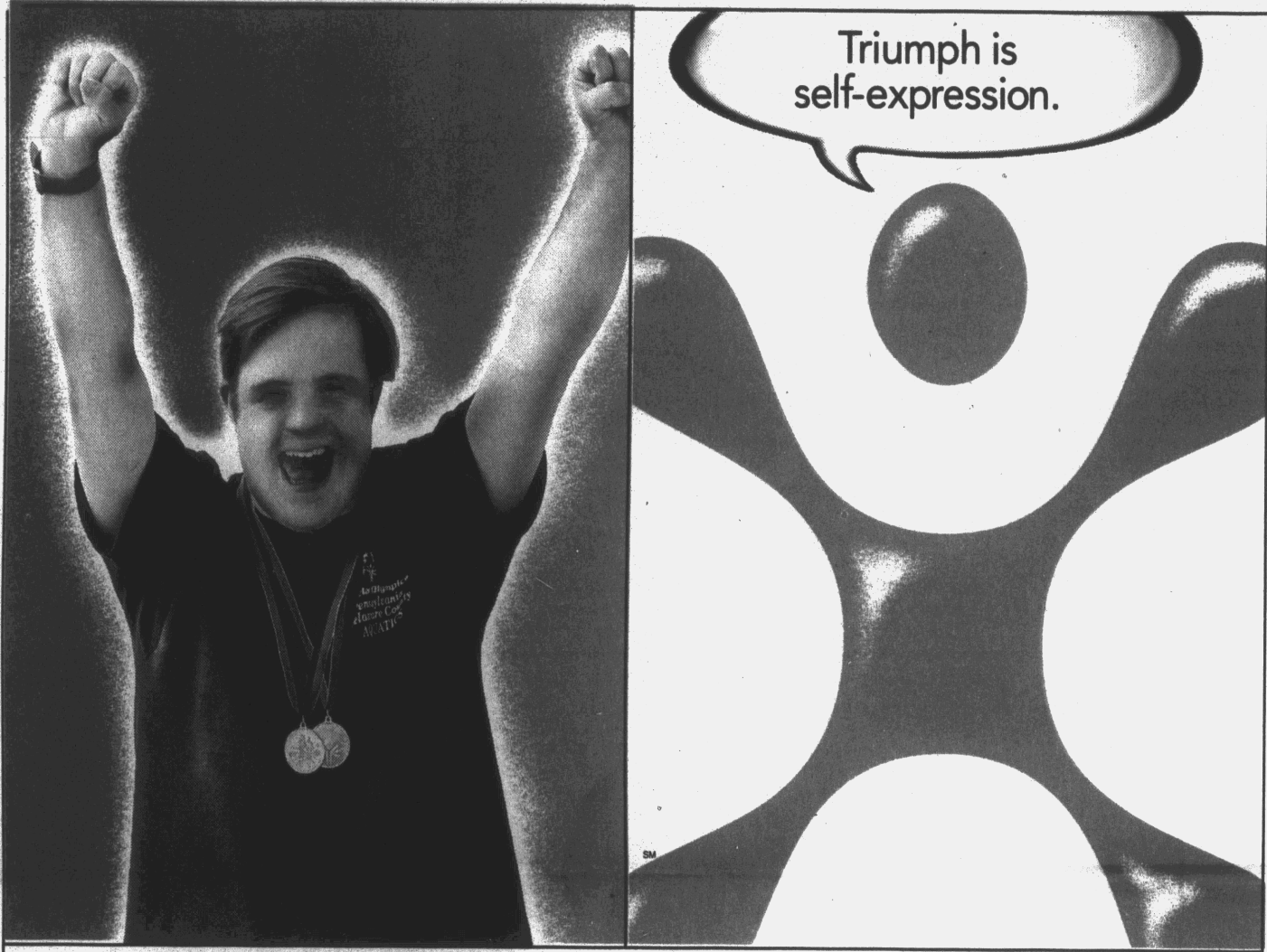
In Lexington, Ky., police were searching for Delbert Buttrey, 47, who they believed kidnapped a transient couple from Indiana, took them to an isolated spot, and forced them to perform oral sex on him while Buttrey's girlfriend snapped photographs. After that, according to police, Buttrey took the couple home with him and forced the man to mow his lawn.

It happens

Britain's Environmental Agency threw 500 cucumbers into the Irish Sea to find out why sheep droppings are floating ashore on British beaches and where they're coming from. The biodegradable cucumbers were painted five different colors to be dropped off at different marine "launch sites." They were chosen because they float below the surface and are driven by tides, not wind. "It may seem unusual," agency spokesperson Mike Weston said, "but cucumbers are ideal for this experiment."

Beauty not skin deep

British doctors warned that visiting the hairdresser may be hazardous to some customers after a woman suffered a stroke while having her hair washed. When the woman stretched her head backwards over the sink, she damaged the carotid artery in her neck. Doctors who examined the woman found that the lining of one of the arteries had torn away and was blocking passage of blood to her brain. One doctor recommended that hairdressers not overextend customers' necks.
And in Chicago, Ernie Talarico, Jr., who used a stun gun to commit battery and sexually molested two men, blamed his crimes on acne medication. As a result, Talarico said he's suing the dermatologist who prescribed the medicine, as well as the manufacturer.



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THE BOTTOM LINE



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Too many wage and salary disparities exist within the City of Greenville. Employees not making a comfortable salary are barely surviving while those making high salaries manage to keep the bills paid. The issue of salary disparities and pay equity must be placed at the forefront of city council and community discussions.

Greenville will never become that "shining city on the hill" until all city employees are treated fairly on the salary scale. It's a shame that refuse collectors with a family of four could qualify for food stamps in Pitt County. These garbage collectors have a "thankless" job not respected by elitist city officials. The City of Greenville doesn't ascribe a premium to the hard work and honesty shown by refuse collectors who are the back-

bone of the city.

It's unconscionable for city officials to approve paying refuse collectors \$18,408 as a starting salary while giving the sanitation superintendent the opportunity to make a maximum of \$74,880 a year. Sanitation superintendents don't get their hands dirty as do the garbage collectors. Sanitation superintendents often are likened to overseers on a plantation worked by poorly paid trash collectors. Garbage collectors work very hard just to keep the city clean. Yet, they don't get the compensation they deserve.

Why pay a garage superintendent almost \$70,000 when the Great buses, seemingly, are broken down at least half of a given week? This is wrong. These administrative leaders should work hard to earn their exorbitant salaries. This must be demanded.

How can the city justify allowing the Recreation and Parks director to make a maximum of \$107,224 annually when the park ranger gets a starting salary of under \$24,000? If this is not a clear salary disparity and inequity, the world will end tomorrow.

I screamed when I learned that the Public Works director's salary could reach \$118,913.60. Let's stop the madness. Greenville City

Council. I ask that the Greenville City Council make the necessary adjustments to promote salary equity and meaningful compensation for those hard-working employees at the bottom of the salary scale.

This year, city employees making \$35,000 or more will get a 4 percent salary raise plus a 2.5 percent cost of living increase while those receiving less than \$35,000 will get a measly 2 percent raise plus the same COLA. Now, make sense out of that!

At the rate many city employees are paid, they can ill afford to put collard greens, steak with gravy, and chocolate cake on the table. Moreover, when employees are paid well, a win-win scenario occurs.

First, morale is boosted. This is beneficial for both the employee and the employer. Secondly, absenteeism and tardiness will be reduced. Employees will feel good about going to work on time. Thirdly, employees are likely to remain on the job for a long period of time. They are not likely to leave the city in search of a higher salary with better benefits elsewhere. People of good conscience must pressure the Greenville City Council to "shape up or ship out."



At The Movies w/ Nureya Namaz

Sexy Beast: The Power of Will

reviewed by: Nureya Namaz

Sexy Beast is written by Louis Mellis and David Scinto, and directed by Jonathan Glazer.

Sexy Beast is one of those films that revolves around a simple notion: fear of death at the hands of an awful situation of circumstance. This notion of death portrays itself in the life of Gal (Ray Winstone). He has everything he has ever wanted, (a great Spanish style villa in the Spanish country, a beautiful wife Deedee (Amanda Redman), and charming friends that care) and even though he gives the impression of being a pompous rich and lazy slouch in the first minutes of the film, you later realize that hes a kind man that just loves his wife more than anything in the world and wants to protect those

that mean something to him.

Ah, yes theres always a devil in sheeps clothing and when all is at peace and harmony expect things to fall apart. It happens to Gal from time to time in a crescendo of escalating mind and even sometimes physical torture, as his fears and worries literally appear in physical form before him. Yet as the film tells us and what Gal comes to learn is when theres a will, theres a way. Always. And I have to say what gets Gal through his situations is that little simple will and his deep love for his wife. I really enjoyed this film. I really didnt know much about it coming in and Id recommend you doing the same. Dont read much on this film. The film has a simple premise and is only one hour and twenty minutes long, but that in no way signifies a poor film. What this film really is great at is

giving messages through action and images of situations and beings, not words. Youll know what Im referring to when you see the film for yourself. Its thick with symbolism, yet easy to understand. When I first found out about the title, I raised my eyebrows. Yet within the first ten minutes you realize what and who the title is referring to and yes, its hilarious and not vulgar. This film is rated R and I dont think its suitable for young children even with an adult. There is a mention of homosexuality and some nudity. The actors speak in a thick English accent thats difficult to understand at first, but after a while youll begin to understand them right along with the best of them. Cheers and see the Sexy Beast, that is, if you can get to a Cineplex thats actually showing it. Good luck and skip Tomb Raider.



An Important Message for Survivors of Hurricane Floyd

To aid the many families who lost homes in the Greenville area during Hurricane Floyd, DHIC, a not-for-profit affordable housing agency, announces the opening of **MacGregor Village Apartments**.

These two- and three-bedroom family apartments offer eligible families a high-quality, affordable apartment community in which to live. Located at the corner of Allen Road and MacGregor Downs Road in Greenville, MacGregor Village is convenient to schools, shopping and major employers.

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OPINION

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EDITORIALS

An end must soon come to world-wide executions

In Illinois, the odds of executing the correct person for a capital crime were so desolate that the governor, George Ryan, declared a moratorium on executions until a foolproof method for determining guilt with reasonable doubt could be found. In Texas, the state over which President Bush presided, 40 Death Row inmates were sent to their doom last year, the most of any state in any year in U.S. history. All of them were guilty, the governor said, but how many of the near-700 prisoners executed across America since the death penalty was reinstated in our bicentennial year of 1976 might have been truly innocent of the crime for which they died?

a spiritual adviser to Death Row inmates was depicted in the film "Dead Man Walking," as well as Amnesty International are commended for their praiseworthy efforts in seeking a world-wide moratorium on executions. Already, more than three million people have added their names to such a petition. More than 100 nations have exhibited their humaneness and compassion by banning the death penalty. What about America? We ask in Annan's words: "Can the state, which represents the whole of society and has the duty of protecting society, fulfill that duty by lowering itself to the level of the murderer and treating him (or her) as he (or her) treated others?" In a society such as ours, in a world that seeks to find itself, the only answer must be no. The forfeiture of life is too absolute, too irreversible for one human being to inflict it on another, especially when backed by a legal process that is many times found wanting in its justice, fairness and thoroughness.

Now, here's how we do it in the United States...

You may not recognize the name William Pouverol. For openers, he is the designer of the Votomatic, the machine that counts votes and creates something called "chads," the subject of much continuing debate in the State of Florida following the Nov. 7 election. Mr. Pouverol, reportedly in his 80s, said the machine has been around for 35 years, an outgrowth of the old IBM punchcard system. He has told "Good Morning America" that he actually anticipated problems with putting names on both sides of the ballots or cards used in this method of counting. He also said going to manual or hand-recounting is the logical result after machine failure. It would seem that the "experts" might have checked with Pouverol somewhere along the way. Scrabble lovers leaped for joy upon discovering that while Chad, the north central African nation, cannot be used in the word game, those little "buggers" causing migraine headaches in Florida, have introduced a new acceptable word for Scrabble enthusiasts. Meanwhile, some observers wondered aloud about how the United States is coming across to others around the world, especially in those so-called "Third World" countries, where Uncle Sam has stepped forward to advise on conducting what might be called a referendum on how to hold democratic elections. Call it Voting 101. Most pundits will readily agree that the chaos in Florida was brought on by at least two colliding developments — a historic statistical tie in the vote and an antiquated method of tabulating the results. While pointing fingers at Florida, it should be noted that the punch-card system is used in many other states. The one positive thing that stands out lies in the fact there was no violence reported in the aftermath of the election. What followed was lots of rhetoric — as she said, she said, and evidence of partisan politics all over the place. There was seemingly enough blame to go around. The event will obviously make the history books of tomorrow. But let's hope some fundamental lessons have been learned. If there is a second plus, it's the field day that the talk show hosts were having with the whole seemingly pathetic scene. Someone has said that if we smile or even laugh out loud when things go awry, then we can say: "This, too, will pass..." or "smiling beats crying any day." Finally, those weary Floridians, Democrats and Republicans, who were called upon to untangle this major mishap by recounting should not be criticized or ridiculed for doing what good citizens had to do when called upon in a crisis. Pouverol also told GMA that he has a solution to the punch-card machine problem but he could not reveal it because a patent is involved.

Hail! possibly new hope for drug abusers

One of the most devastating scourges to humanity—drug addiction—may be just about to literally meet its maker—if a new scientific method being developed by scientists comes to fruition. An anti-drug vaccine currently being developed offers new hope to lost souls who are chained to compulsive substances such as cocaine, PCP and methamphetamine addiction—at a relatively small cost. The amount spent in research by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. One "anti-cocaine vaccine," as it is called, would prevent people who snort coke from even getting high unless they did ridiculous amounts—and results look promising for the eradication of other harmful substance abuse, too, including nicotine. Scientists have discovered that genetic factors are responsible for so-called abnormal behavior concerning illegal drugs, compulsive gambling, attention-

deficit disorder and depression. The vaccines would release an army of drug-busting antibodies to do battle. However, they would have to be combined with therapy and psychiatric medicine to obtain the desired effect—getting and staying clean. Science, with its many wonders, won the war against the likes of polio and smallpox with vaccines. Why not the war on drugs? "Everyone attempting to quit cocaine can use the catalytic antibody," says Dr. Donald Landry, study researcher and associate professor of medicine at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. Substance abuse counselors have correctly said that a vaccine alone won't totally solve the problem of drug use. One day at a time, it is solely up to the people affected by it. But, to relieve the pain of addiction and all the personal and family misery attached to it, it is worth a shot by the NIDA.



COMMENTS

Free Rev. Al Sharpton from the Democrat Party

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

My good friend, the Rev. Al Sharpton, is in jail again. There are two places I've tried to keep him out of over the years — prison and the Democrat Party. Obviously, I'm not doing too well on the first goal. What about the second? Convicted of trespassing for his protest of Navy bombings at the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, Sharpton was transferred to federal prison in Brooklyn last week, keeping his profile and his spirits high. Sharpton, who has gone everywhere for every important social justice cause, knows full well that Vieques has become a means to court Puerto Rican voters in New York City where he wants to set himself up as the center of a Black-Latino coalition — a sought-after commodity in the racialized world of "Big Apple" politics. This is vintage Sharpton — genuine political vision with a hard-ball lining. Of course, he never got himself arrested for Vieques while Bill Clinton, Democrat, was Commander in Chief. It took having a Republican in the White House to make it politically correct for him to protest. Democrat Jimmy Carter was President when the outcry first started, led by Puerto Rican independents like Gilberto Gerena-Valentin, the first New York chairman of the New Alliance Party (NAP). I later ran for President twice on the NAP line calling for — among other things — the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Puerto Rico and full voting rights for its people. And while we're on the subject of running for the presidency, let's get on to Sharpton's own potential run. I know Rev. well. I'm the person who got him into electoral politics in the first place (even though I've been trying to get him out of the Democrat Party ever since). Here's how I read his presidential musings, which included remarks about considering a third party. I think Rev. is looking around his cell thinking, "I'm not only in jail, I'm in a box." Sharpton has built a significant base among

African Americans, but he knows that if that's all he's got, he's limited to power-broking within Democrat Party circles. He's always vulnerable to being marginalized by demographics and by the racism of the Democrat hierarchs, who respect him when they need to and mistreat him when they need to. They believe that he will never leave because "Black—Democrat," end of story. You'll not see Daschle/Sharpton in '04 or any other year. I don't care how many headlines he gets on Vieques or any other racial justice issue. Rev.'s in a bind. And I think he's mulling the presidential picture to see if it offers a way out. Sharpton says he'd consider a run in 2004, in part to commemorate the Rev. Jesse Jackson's first run 20 years ago. In 1984, Jackson polled 3 1/2 million votes and got a prime time speaking slot at the Democratic Convention in San Francisco, where he was forced to apologize for controversial remarks made during his campaign. A lot of the Jackson delegates wanted to walk out and run a third party candidacy that night, but the effort fizzled. Several months later the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan conducted a poll, which showed that 56 percent of Blacks would have voted for Jackson as an independent candidate. If he'd done that, the Black community would have been at the helm of the independent political movement. We might have had a Perot/Jackson ticket in 1992, and we might have started up a multi-racial independent populist party competing toe-to-toe in elections with Democrats and Republicans all over the country today. That didn't happen. Sharpton should take some time, while he's behind bars, reflecting on that. When the next presidential race comes around, we don't need a symbolic celebration of what was and might have been. Black America needs a way forward. And Sharpton needs a way out of his political incarceration. The only way out is to go independent. Anyone for Ventura/Sharpton in '04? (Fulani chairs the Committee for a Unified Independent Party, the country's leading think-tank for independent politics.)

Inequities should force an end to the death penalty

by Hugh B. Price

That Timothy McVeigh was a despicable human being, a deluded, self-indulgent coward, a traitor and a murderer is beyond dispute. That he deserved to die is beyond dispute. That he should not have been put to death, because the death penalty itself is a barbaric punishment not worthy of a civilized society, is also beyond dispute. Despite what some death-penalty advocates claimed before and after McVeigh's June 11 execution by the federal government, his death does not diminish the growing movement to end the death penalty. It underscores why the death penalty should be abolished. There's no question that McVeigh appeared the "easy" case for the death penalty: a mass murderer, who, repugnantly, described the men, women and children he killed as "collateral damage." (Nor is there any question that Juan Garza, the convicted drug-trafficker and murderer executed Tuesday, was also not fit to ever again be free.) In his last days McVeigh claimed to be "sorry" that all those people had to die in order for him to make his point. But of course he was not sorry at all. He wanted them to die. He blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City in the daytime, not in the middle of the night. He blew it up when it was occupied: when workers were arriving at their desks, coffee cups and donuts in hand; when the building's daycare center was bustling with tots parents had just kissed good-bye moments before. Mass murder was the point of his dastardly crime — the linchpin of his crackpot view of himself as a "warrior" waging war against the U.S. government. No, Timothy McVeigh did not deserve to live. But American society does not deserve the stain of his death. The death penalty is inherently unjust, inherently unfairly applied. For what reason was Timothy McVeigh executed? For killing 168 people? Then why isn't Thomas E. Blanton facing execution, too? Blanton, 62, was convicted last month of one of the most heinous racial crimes in the Civil Rights

years: the 1963 bombing of Sixteenth Baptist Church, in Birmingham, Ala., in which four adolescent girls were killed. Blanton and his Ku Klux Klan partners deliberately sought to kill as many children as possible. He was sentenced to life in prison. Where were the death-penalty advocates in that case? Do they feel the lives of those four girls are not "worth" the execution of those who murdered them? Or, is it just a matter of numbers: the mass murderer of 168 deserves the death penalty, but the murderer of four does not? This comparative question looms over every case involving murder — including that of the alleged spy, ex-F.B.I. agent Robert P. Hanssen—in every jurisdiction in which the death penalty is on the books. What also looms is the great irony that McVeigh, having had the opportunity to say his last good-byes, went to his death swiftly and painlessly — "a quiet end for the man who sent 168 people to their deaths in screams, flames and crushing concrete." The accumulating evidence of recent years tells us that mistakes — and institutional and individual racial and ethnic biases—have put some murderers on death row, while other murderers have been spared the death penalty. And we know that some on Death Row clearly did not receive a fair trial—and that others were innocent of the crime altogether. That is why popular support for the death penalty is at a 20-year low. That is why 14 states have now banned the execution of the mentally retarded, including Texas this month. The Texas Legislature also enacted broad changes in its criminal-justice system in response to growing criticism of the quality of legal assistance available to defendants who are of color or are poor. In the year since Illinois Gov. George Ryan declared a moratorium on the death penalty—after more than a dozen men on the state's death row were found through DNA testing to be innocent—bills seeking death-penalty moratoria have been filed in 21 of the 38 death-penalty states. All these and other developments are, in fact, pointing to one conclusion: The death penalty must be abolished, for all our sakes. (Price is president of the National Urban League.)

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Do MLGW officials care about ratepayers?

Dear Editor, After reading in the local newspapers about risk-taking, over-billing problems and lack of management credibility at MLGW, it seems that none of the utilities problems will be fixed by focusing on MLGW and its management alone. The cause of MLGW's chronic problems is our mayor and city council. The public and the press seem to be up to speed on the problems. The question is, why aren't the mayor and city council? The mayor made a mistake when he appointed Herman Morris as president of the utility. A hiring mistake is forgivable (and correctable). The mistake of leaving Morris as president of the utility and his administration intact is not. If the mayor considers neither a mistake, then he, W.W. Herenton is the problem. The MLGW president serves at the will and pleasure of the mayor. This means that W.W. Herenton is pleased with the Morris Administration's over-charging and cutting off poor people, while risking public money to make rich people richer. The city council has to be aware of the over-billing of Memphis-area residents and businesses this past December and January. The city council is required by Charter and state law to act as the rate-making authority overseeing MLGW. It has taken no action to correct the December and January over-billing and is failing in its obligation under state law to make sure Memphis-area residents and businesses are charged cost-of-service-based rates by a non-profit division of the city government, MLGW. Brent Taylor, chairman of the Memphis City Council Utilities Committee, and E.C. Jones, council chairman, are in the positions to put MLGW back on course, but continue to fail to do so. Why aren't these two council chairmen investigating the over-billing and Charter violations? Has MLGW, Memphis Network, Angel Group Investors, or prospective NBA owners made or promised contributions to further either of these gentleman's future political aspirations? Why hasn't someone filed suit against these two personally to make them face their responsibility? If we don't get this corrected immediately, what will happen to Memphians next winter? I hope the press will take their scrutiny and investigation and the public will focus its outrage on why Herenton, Taylor, Jones and the other council members don't seem to care what happens to the taxpayers, ratepayers and voters they represent. I hope that Memphis voters will vote out all current incumbents who told them before the last election that they would represent the poor, the taxpayer and the working family and then spent their term making a few rich people richer. Name With held by Request, Memphis

Blessings to all of Tri-State staff

Dear Editor, Virginia Porter, M.J. Branch and the entire staff of The Tri-State Defender newspaper, let me take this opportunity to say how delighted I was to read the article in the May 26, issue, regarding the 1966 Lincoln used by Dr. King and my Letter to The Editor. As you can imagine, I have read articles about myself and the Protest on many occasions and have often wondered where on earth the information came from, as it bore little resemblance to the truth. It is so refreshing to read an accurate article about the Protest. I am so pleased that you chose to publish details about this interesting event. I am sure your readers found it of interest as it focused on change for the better and hope for the future, which may have helped to counteract so many newspaper reports of misfortunes and hopelessness. Keep up the good work! Jacqueline Smith, Memphis

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19 Black lawmakers are at risk in redistricting

The 2000 Census has resulted in some Black senators and House members losing more than 10,000 people in their respective district populations.

BY CASH MICHAELS
OF THE WILMINGTON JOURNAL

Republicans aren't the only ones anxious for the state budget battle to end, and the war over redistricting to begin. At least 19 Black Democratic state lawmakers are at risk of having the power base in their respective voting districts seriously eroded in order to save white Democratic and Republican colleagues. And though certainly not likely, some could conceivably lose their districts altogether. They have the 2000 U.S. Census to thank.

According to researchers in the North Carolina General Assembly Legislative Services Office, while the state's total population grew an impressive 21.4 percent—thus spawning a 13th congressional district lawmakers still have to determine—some parts grew faster than others, while other parts didn't grow at all. "That shift has gone from the eastern [rural] part of the state to the Piedmont, Triangle and Triad [urban] areas," Rep. H. M. "Mickey" Michaux [D-Durham], a member of the House Redistricting Committee said.

Population in several predominately Black legislative districts has actually decreased since 1990, though the state's total Black population has basically remained the same. "Something happened. Black people moved somewhere," says William Gilkeson, staff attorney with the General Assembly Legislative Services Office's Research Division. As a result, some Black senators and House members have lost more than 10,000



Senators Ballance, Dannelly, Jordan, Martin, and Shaw

Reps. Adams, Bell, Bonner, Boyd-McIntyre, and Cunningham

Fitch, Hall, Hunter, Lucas, and McAllister

Oldham, Wainwright, Womble and Wright

people in their respective district populations.

"Those districts are going to have to get more population from somewhere," Gilkeson says.

That is not good news for state lawmakers charged with the responsibility of redrawing congressional, state Senate and House districts that will, if approved by the U.S. Justice Department, legally stand for the next ten years.

With both House and Senate redistricting committees currently crunching numbers, holding statewide hearings, and developing several revised versions on specialized computers, observers say don't be surprised if all 170 lawmakers end up with 120 different maps in the House, and 50 in the Senate.

They all want to protect their respective district. The

question is how can it be done fairly, logically and legally.

By federal law, each district must be drawn to be as close to equal in population as possible, reinforcing the "equal protection clause" of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing "one person, one vote."

That means, theoretically, if a state has a population of 100, ten congressional districts, 20 state senate districts and 50 state House districts, the congressional districts would each have ten people, the Senate districts five each, and the House districts two citizens each.

As the state's total population grows, so grows those districts with the numbers evenly dispersed. Because of population shifts, some formerly larger districts will redrawn smaller, while districts absorbing the new growth will be drawn bigger.

In the real world, however, while the congressional districts are federally mandated to be as equal in number as possible, the state Senate and House districts can legally vary in population by plus or minus 5 percent.

Some Black lawmakers are negatively well beyond that.

According to "Redistricting 2001: The Legislator's Guide to North Carolina Legislative and

Congressional Redistricting (third edition)," the "ideal" population number for all of the state's single-member districts, based of the 2000 U.S. Census figures, is 67,078.

And yet, 14 of 18 Black House members are considerably short of that goal now.

"Our preliminary figures indicate that we could lose 14 of those House members," Rep. Michaux, who isn't one of them, says.

"That's why we're going to

have to be extremely careful when we do our redistricting."

District 5's Rep. Howard Hunter, Jr. of Northhampton County, for instance, is 10,160 persons, or 15.15 percent shy of the required 67,078. So is Rep. John D. Hall of nearby Halifax County.

The District 7 Democrat is 11,269, or 16.80 percent short of goal.

The worst single-district Black House member is Rep. Larry Bell of Sampson County's District 97. Bell is 21.78 percent short.

The worst double-member district for Black House members belongs to Marvin Lucas and Mary McAllister of the 17th. The Cumberland County lawmakers registered just 97,770 in 2000 U.S. Census population, 36,385 short of the 134,155 they need.

As a result, the pair is a whopping 27.12 percent short, and of the four districts mentioned, District 17 is the only one less than 50 percent Black.

Conceivably, the 17th could be redrawn as a single-member district, meaning that either Lucas or McAllister might be at peril.

In New Hanover County's District 98, Rep. Thomas Wright is only 7.07 percent off

of the 67,078 he should have. Redrawing the lines to make up the difference shouldn't be difficult, even though his area has become increasing white (45 percent versus 50 percent Black) and Republican (22 percent registered).

One the flip side, the only Black House member who has seen good population growth is Rep. Dan Blue of Wake's District 21 (57 percent Black) with plus 4.84 percent.

Over at the state Senate, with the ideal census population being 160,986, five of the seven Black Democratic senators come up very short.

Frank Ballance of Warren County's District 2 (59 percent Black) is minus 29,041, or

18.04 percent. Bill Martin of Guilford County's District 31 (53 percent Black) is 23,570 shy, or 14.64 short.

Sen. Charles Dannelly of Mecklenburg County's District 33 (53 percent Black) is 21.27 percent minus, as is his colleague from Cumberland County, Larry Shaw, whose 41st District (45 percent Black) is 16.59 percent off.

The worst population slide on the Senate side of all 42 districts/50 senators belongs to N.C. Legislative Black Caucus Chairman Luther Jordan. The District 7 New Hanover County Democrat needs to make up 45,430, or 28.22 percent.

His district is 51 percent white, 41 percent Black.

By all accounts, Jordan, according to Rep. Michaux, is "in deep, deep trouble."

"He's got to find those 45,000 votes from somewhere. The other senator from there is a Republican. How are you going to balance that out to keep [Jordan] in office?" asked Michaux.

Many Black House members face that similar challenge.

"Who are you going to save, and how are you going to save them?" Michaux asks.

In North Carolina's 12 current congressional districts and the still undrawn 13th, the ideal population based on the 2000 U.S. Census is 619,178.

The majority Black District 1 (50.46 percent), represented by Democrat Eva Clayton, an African American, is short 31,348, or 5.06 percent. She may get what she needs from Rep. Bobby Etheridge's 2nd Congressional District (26.94 percent Black), which has 111,088 overpopulation, a significant plus 17.94 percent.

David Price in District 4 (19.91 percent Black) is also in good shape with a 146,698 population overflow, 23.69 percent.

In the 7th Congressional District (23.04 percent Black),

Rep. Mike McIntyre enjoys a 70,876 bulge in his numbers, or 11.45 percent. And in the controversial 12th District (44.56 percent Black), which has been the focus of constant U.S. Supreme Court litigation ever since it was established in 1992, Congressman Mel Watt, an African American, has had good growth, giving him a 7.69 percent population profit.

How, and where the 13th Congressional District is ultimately drawn will determine how much the 12 current districts change. Because they lead both the state House and Senate, Democrats will make sure it favors them, meaning that Black population from other areas will be incorporated.

The General Assembly has to complete its work, and submit it to the U.S. Justice Department before the May 2002 primaries. Because North Carolina is governed by the 1965 U.S. Voting Right Act due to past voting irregularities, the final redistricting map will receive special scrutiny to insure that there is no illegal packing or dilution of the Black vote.

And even after it's all done, there is nothing to prevent someone from going to federal court, and challenging North Carolina's 2001 redistricting plan.

Green concluded, "It is up to the Swazi people to determine their own destiny and design a system that includes a healthcare plan, cultural plan, behaviors and attitudes to deal with HIV/AIDS. By faith all things are possible."

Americans and Swazi Health care Workers

By KAIA NIAMBI SHIVERS
Sentinel Staff Writer

MANSINI, Swaziland—Maurice Green stood in front of a group of nurses and counselors during an HIV/AIDS in-service training session at Raleigh Fitzkin Memorial Hospital and shared with them that he has been living with HIV for 18 years.

Silently they gasped in amazement. In Swaziland to be infected with HIV/AIDS means a certified death certificate.

However, Green along with nurses, doctors and a support staff from the group Project Africa were there to bring more hope, information and knowledge to empower a people crippled by a virus

that is being stabilized in America.

They are not bringing a finite cure for HIV/AIDS, but are visiting various clinics, hospitals and health facilities so that the small southern African country can remove itself from the HIV/AIDS crisis that it is experiencing.

"There must be people that are not afraid to stand up and say that they are infected," said Green. "There can be systems of care in place, but until people are comfortable to go and get tested, these systems will not be effective. The Swazi people must understand that communities have to come together and address this issue and stop leaving it as a taboo subject. Somebody has to stand up and not be afraid to face this."

Simple questions to more complex inquiries were given to R.F.M. staff. "They asked everything from medicine combinations to the safety of hugging patients,"



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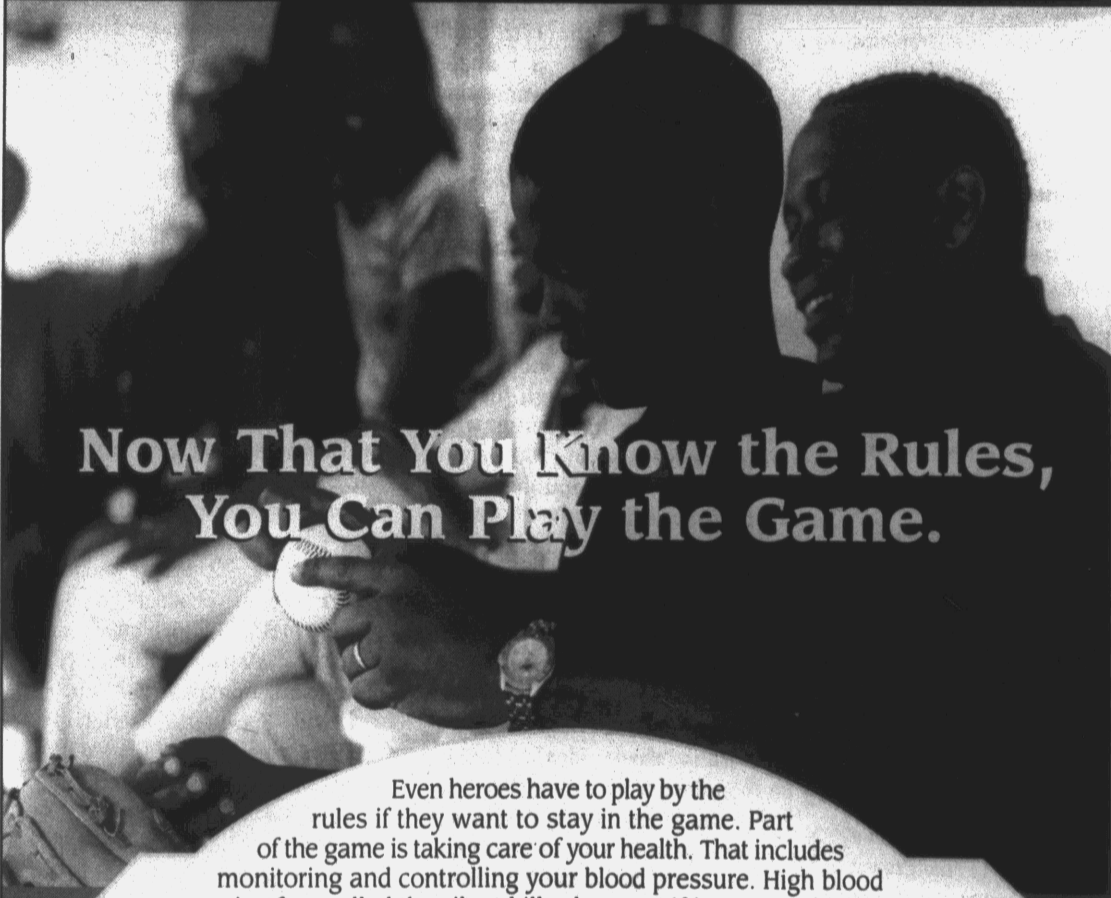
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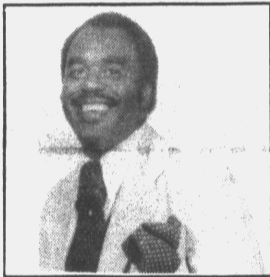
Shown Above is Tammy Edwards of the Edwards Sisters with the late great Willie Neal Johnson. This years Labor Day Gospel Reunion will be in honor of Willie Neal Johnson. Get your ticket today at WOOW Radio Station
photo by Jim Rouse



N.A.A.C.P. AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Pitt County branch of the N.A.A.C.P. recently awarded scholarships to a number of high school seniors. Scholarships were awarded according to a student's grade point average, S.A.T. score, interview performance, school and community involvement. Former recipients of the N.A.A.C.P. scholarship have attended numerous colleges and universities. Including North Carolina Central University, A and T, Wake Forest, U.N.C.G., Fayetteville State, E.C.U., North Carolina State, University of North Carolina and Pitt Community College. Gaston Monk serves as president of the Pitt County branch of the N.A.A.C.P. An organization geared toward promoting unity, equality and the enforcement of the rights and privileges of all people. Students receiving 2001 scholarships are pictured above, along with executive committee members.
photo by Faith May

Spiritual Reflections



George Hawkins

How Do Curses Go Into Effect?

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

If you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, then I will send the CURSE on you and I will CURSE your blessings; indeed I have already CURSED them, because you did not lay it to heart." (Malachi 2:2)

SIN PUTS CURSED INTO EFFECT!! - Just as with Adam and Eve

"You rebuke the arrogant, who are CURSED and who stray from your commands." (Malachi 3:8-9)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a CURSE - the whole nation of you -- because you are robbing me." (Malachi 3:8-9)

"This is what the Lord says: "CURSED is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord, but blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him." (Jeremiah 17:5,70)

"With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable: they are experts in greed -- an ACCURSED brood!" (2 Peter 2:14)

The practice of sin can expose even the believer to curses. So many believers are experiencing their own lives and their families falling apart. They do not recognize the sin in their lives being related to their deteriorating circumstances. God allows curses to take affect and hopefully get their attention so they will recognize their sin, deal with it and recommit themselves to Him.

"But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on

the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."-(Luke 6:49)

Some Christians would be appalled to know that they have pronounced curses by wishing themselves dead or others dead. When a person says "damn you" or "damn that..." they are pronouncing curses.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be." (James 3:9-10)

Those who live godly lives do not have to worry about curses coming to rest upon them. God protects the righteous.

"Like the fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest." (Proverbs 26:2)



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1720A	97	Plymouth	Neon	White, 4-dr.
1437A	89	Mercury	Aerostar van	Blue, PB, PS
P2474AA	91	Honda	Accord 4-dr	Teal, PB, PS, AC, PW
1213A	93	Mercury	Grand Marquis	Green, PB, PS, AC
1567A	94	Buick	Century	Blue, PB, PS, AC,

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2398A	97	Dodge	Intrepid	White, PS, PB, PW,
P1652AA	96	Dodge	Intrepid	White, PS, PB, PW, AC
2488AA	97	Mercury	Cougar XR7	Blue, PB, PS, AC, PW
1209A	96	Dodge	Dakota Pickup	Green, PB, PS, AC
P1609A	96	Chrysler	Cirrus	Silver PB, PS, AC, PW
P2510A	94	Lincoln	Town Car	Blue PB, PS, AC, PW
1778AA	93	Geo	Prizm	Blue, PB, PS, AC
1325AAA	94	Dodge	Caravan	White, Grand

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P1029AA	96	Mercury	Casida	Burgundy 4-Dr. PB, PS
2445AA	96	Dodge	Dakota Pickup	Red, PB, PS, AC
P2517A	98	Plymouth	Grand Voyager	White, PB, PS, AC
1936AA	97	Saturn	Sedan	Green, 4-Dr. PB, PS
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1635A	98	Dodge	Dakota Pickup	White, PB, PS
2345A	97	Lincoln	Town Car	Green, PB, PS, AC, PW
2638AA	00	Chevrolet	Astro Van	Green, PB, PS, AC
2781A	98	Mercury	Grand Marquis	Green, PB, PS, AC, PW
22109A	99	Dodge	Durango 4x4	Yan, PB, PS, AC, PW
22155A	98	Cadillac	Deville	Burgundy, AC, PB, PS
22227AA	97	Buick	Lesabre	Gray, PB, PS, AC, PW
P1619	00	Jeep	Cherokee	White, PB, PS
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To All Wachovia Shareholders:

On April 16, Wachovia and First Union announced a merger agreement. For the Wachovia shareholder, we believe the new Wachovia created by our merger of equals will provide solid double-digit earnings growth and the prospect of price/earnings multiple expansion. But don't take just our word for it....

Read What The Experts Are Saying About The Wachovia / First Union Merger...

"Why I favor First Union/Wachovia...1) It's friendly...2) First Union/Wachovia would have a better business mix...3) The cost savings potential in a First Union/Wachovia combination is greater than in a SunTrust/Wachovia combination...4) First Union would handle the integration of Wachovia better than SunTrust...5) There is more upside in First Union's stock."

-- Second Curve Capital: Tom Brown (Bankstocks.com), June 4, 2001

"We now believe that the First Union merger with Wachovia ought to prevail...as the premium of SunTrust's offer has declined---the deal becomes less about top-price and more about the currency of the acquirer. To that end, we believe First Union will offer better returns."

"SunTrust/Wachovia—A limited ability to grow...As such, like so many other banking mergers, this combination would revolve around cost savings as a means to drive the bottom line in the short run and as capital builds, share repurchases would then contribute to EPS growth. This is not a scenario that drives significant multiple expansion, in our view..."

-- Deutsche Banc Alex. Brown Inc.: G. Bicher, May 25, 2001

"Wachovia's argument that First Union has superior technology, a wider product breadth, and greater experience in merging institutions is correct. It does seem likely that a Wachovia/First Union combination would generate higher cash flows at a more rapid rate."

-- Raymond James & Associates: Richard X. Bove, May 23, 2001

"At the risk of appearing glib, perhaps the two companies' [Wachovia and SunTrust] opposing views as to whether they got along or not is symptomatic of the issues Wachovia is raising. We would agree that, in looking to combine two companies of some size, management "buy in" of the deal is critical; everyone, at all levels of the organization, needs to be on the same page or the deal will face hurdles out of the starting gate."

-- Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, Inc.: Marni Pont O'Doherty, May 24, 2001

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If you have any questions regarding the merger, you may call our proxy solicitors at the following hotlines 24 hours a day. Representatives will be able to assist you between 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. EDT. Please leave a message if you call after these hours.

MacKenzie Partners: 800-322-2885
Georgeson Shareholder: 800-223-2064

(Permission to use quotes was received)

In connection with the proposed merger of First Union and Wachovia, First Union filed a registration statement on Form S-4 with the Securities and Exchange Commission containing a preliminary joint proxy statement/prospectus. Stockholders are urged to read the definitive joint proxy statement/prospectus with respect to the merger between First Union and Wachovia when it becomes available and any other relevant documents filed with the SEC because they will contain important information. You may obtain a free copy of the registration statement and the joint proxy statement/prospectus, as well as other filings containing information about First Union and Wachovia, at the SEC's Internet site (<http://www.sec.gov>). Copies of these documents can also be obtained, without charge, from First Union, Investor Relations, One First Union Center, Charlotte, North Carolina 28288-0206 (704-374-6782), or Wachovia, Investor Relations, 100 North Main Street, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27150 (888-492-6397). Information about the participants in the proxy solicitation is set forth in First Union's proxy statement on Schedule 14A, as filed with the SEC on March 13, 2001, Wachovia's proxy statement on Schedule 14A, as filed with the SEC on March 19, 2001, and the joint proxy statement/prospectus regarding the proposed merger contained in, and Exhibit 99.8 to, First Union's registration statement on Form S-4. The information presented above may contain forward looking statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in First Union's and Wachovia's public reports filed with the SEC.