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VOLUME 36 NUMBER 14

December 11 - 17, 2003

25¢

A Christmas Wish Come True



Tatishka Thomas and her children pose in front of their new Christmas Tree.

by Tracie Reddick
Challenger Correspondent
CLEARWATER — On the second day of December, Warrick Dunn gave a mother of three one furnished house with a pantry full of gourmet food.

"I'm at a loss for words," said Tatishka Thomas, who only expected the former Buccaneer to pay for her closing costs through his foundation titled, "Homes for the Holy



Aaron Stecker (left), RB for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, participated in the ribbon cutting with Thomas.

days."

Created in 1997, the program has helped 42 single mothers in Tampa, Atlanta, Ga., and Baton Rouge, La., fulfill their dreams of becoming first-time homeowners by providing them with the downpayment on a new home.

While Dunn's monetary gift made it possible for Thomas to obtain the keys to her house, the generosity did not end there.

Thanks to an array of



Isay Gulley, President/CEO for the Clearwater Housing Services, addressed the attendees at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

photos provided by Clearwater Housing Services

community groups playing

Christmas continued on pg. 5

African-American Publishing Industry Suffers Loss

• Increased revenue not enough to save Vanguard Media



Keith Clinkscales

by Candace K. Clarke
Challenger Assistant Editor

Although Vanguard's three publications earned more than \$30 million in revenue this year and surged with an increase in readership, it was not enough. Vanguard Media, the company that brought

us African-American lifestyle magazines such as Honey, Savoy, and Heart and Soul, has become another business casualty. Unable to secure enough financial backing to keep the company running, Vanguard Media's president and CEO, Keith Clinkscales, announced on Nov. 25 that the company would file for bankruptcy.

The Chapter 11 filing comes at a strange time in the economy, just as reports hit the news with optimistic predictions for the American market. As the New-York based operation closes the doors of its Park Avenue office, it will

leave many talented editors, writers and photographers unemployed, along with disappointed readers across the country. With a regular staff of around 80 employees, the company was the nation's fourth largest black-owned publishing firm.

Founded in 1999 by Clinkscales, Vanguard was truly a labor of love. Clinkscales, former president and CEO of the hip-hop flavored Vibe magazine, sought to establish a new mecca of African American publishing influence. The founder, a Florida A&M University graduate, was determined

to reach the urban market, featuring coverage of everything from international and social issues to beauty and health tips. Each magazine held its own identity: while Savoy was geared towards both the male and female professional, Heart and Soul spoke to African-American women in the same way that Essence did, featuring relationship articles, fashion help, and entertainment news as well. Honey was the magazine for the younger generation of women, a perfect blend of hip-hop news, fashion, and

Publishing continued on pg. 5

If You Can Dream It, You Can Achieve It



Evelyn Gardner, Program Coordinator

by Linda Young

Challenger Correspondent

Getting a job is no problem for members of the largest class of students to graduate as practical nurses from Pinellas Technical Education Center (PTEC) in a ceremony

held Dec. 2 at Boca Ciega High School.

That's because the need for nurses still exceeds the supply.

The procession of 45 nursing students in dress whites marched past 300 of their excited friends and



Latoya Flournoy receives her pin.

photos by Rassi

family members, many of whom held fragrant bouquets of flowers or bobbing bouquets of balloons. The graduates quietly mounted the stage to participate in a traditional solemn pinning and rose ceremony to mark graduation from the 13 month long program.

Seated facing the audience, the women in dresses and caps and the bareheaded men in pants each held a red or pink carnation, instead of a rose. Later they placed their flowers into one of three glass vases that rested on a blue clothed table with symbols

and the words "If you can dream it. You can achieve it." PTEC site administrator Dorothy Bailey told the graduates they held the "key of service to humanity" and would meet people from all walks of life and assist them in meeting their needs.

Run by the Pinellas County public school system the PTEC program has relatively low tuition of \$1.65 per credit hour, or \$2,227.50, excluding books and uniforms for the 1,350-hour course. Once

Achieve continued on pg. 5

Authorities Looking at All Possibilities in Prosecutor's Slaying



Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Luna was stabbed 36 times

by Brian Witte

BALTIMORE (AP) — Authorities haven't ruled anything out as they try to determine what led to the brutal killing of a federal prosecutor who was repeatedly stabbed and found face down in a Pennsylvania creek, an FBI spokesman said Saturday.

Investigators have been interviewing people connected with cases Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Luna prosecuted, as well as friends and associates, to determine if his death was related to work or something more personal.

"Everything is on the

table," FBI spokesman Larry Foust said. "We've drawn no conclusion either way."

Lancaster County, Pa., District Attorney Donald R. Totaro wouldn't comment on whether investigators had specific theories or suspects in mind. He denied reports that investigators had determined the attack on Luna was the result of a personal dispute.

"There are many avenues that need to be explored, so I think it would be very premature to suggest that this case or the course of this investigation has been narrowed to that extent," Totaro said.

However, a federal law enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press on Saturday that investigators had found nothing to indicate the crime was connected to Luna's work and were looking at his personal life.

The motive is significant.

Slaying continued on pg. 14

Sharpton vs. The City of New York Suit Settled



Al Sharpton

by William Farrington

NEW YORK — The Rev. Al Sharpton agreed to a settlement with the City of New York over an incident in which a knife-wielding attacker stabbed the Reverend in his chest during a civil rights protest.

The suit charged that the city was reckless, careless and negligent when it failed to protect him in that incident, 13 years ago.

The City agreed to pay the Reverend 200,000 dollars.

Sharpton continued on pg. 14

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There's A Reason To Read *The Weekly Challenger!*

OPINIONS

The Weekly Challenger

Cleveland Johnson, Publisher
(1967 - 2001)

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The Gantt Report

by **Lucius Gantt**

There will be no peace until there is justice! Cincinnati, Ohio police officers recently beat a Black man to death and said they were justified because the Black man resisted arrest.

When is it justified for a Black man to beat a white police officer to death? What if you are a victim of false arrest? What if you are the victim of a hate crime or a racial slur by a law enforcement officer? What if you are the victim of police brutality?

Is it anytime in America when you can defend yourself against police misconduct?

I think not!

If you fight the law, the law will always win!

I can write a column like this because the last time I was arrested I was jailed for felony assault on

a law enforcement officer. Just like Ohio policemen said the Black man beaten to death attacked the officers, a Florida policeman lied and said I beat him so bad he had to have neurosurgery.

If I had been on a lonesome road rather than on a busy Tallahassee street, maybe I would have been beaten to death also.

If beating suspects is normal procedure, why don't you have cases where gangs of Black officers beat up white people? Where are the examples of Hispanic officers beating up Jews?

You only hear about this kind of violence when whites kill or maim Blacks.

My significant other sells non-lethal weapons to law enforcement officers and police departments. I, again, don't know all of the

In pursuit of the American dream, *The Weekly Challenger* newspaper was founded over 37 years ago with a desire to reach the African-American community, covering news relevant to that sector. In 1967, Mr. Cleveland Johnson took on the role of *The Challenger's* Publisher, working to make his dream a reality - and he did it.

Maintaining that "Dreams Do Come True," Mr. Johnson recognized a void, knowing the necessity for a new direction. Short on cash but long on determination and hard work, the foundation was laid for one of the most successful

black enterprises in the Tampa Bay area. Mr. Johnson's motto was, "Black people must sell as well as buy, else remain a beggar race."

"Be in control of your own destiny"—that was Mr. Johnson's philosophy. In order to reach that level of freedom, Mr. Johnson stressed that one must sell, and even more importantly, sell what belongs to them, in order to be successful. "or else become a beggar race." Anything less seemed to only serve an endless cycle of subjugation, not only financially, but emotionally as well. In order for our community to

prevail, black-owned businesses are the key.

Economic freedom can be realized, as it was in the past, as it has grown to be witnessed now. At the height of the Civil Rights Era, blacks owned and operated businesses such as restaurants, hospitals, schools, trade services, markets, and more. That surge has continued as we cross over into a new era, although there is more to be done.

The National Urban League has reported that during the 90s, "African-American buying power increased almost 73 percent." In a 1997 U.S. Cen-

sus Bureau report, statistics showed that blacks spent from .5 - 15% more money, on average, than all American consumers for goods such as food, clothing, utilities and appliances. A study by the National Tour Association showed that the black family earning \$30,000 a year spends as much as a white family earning \$50,000.

With so much spending power, our community must capitalize. Economic freedom must be achieved.

The Challenger has emerged from that dream, emerging in the African-American community as the preferred provider for

advertising among various interest groups. With a circulation base of about 25,000 around the Bay Area and Central Florida, it has become one of the fastest growing weekly tabloids in the southeast region. Loyal employees, dedication, and devotion to maintaining high standards of excellence in journalism are forces that keep us in touch with our community.

The Cleveland Johnson vision is one that still lives on. His goal: to impact the lives of those throughout the African-American community in a positive way; to dispel the disparaging images unfairly cast, to cel-

brate the power of a hard-working people. For "Cleve," as he was known, *The Challenger* became a symbol of triumph in the face of adversity.

The Weekly Challenger has survived the good and bad, starting from the bottom, reaching the top. Based in the tradition of a strong philosophy, Mr. Johnson's dream has been preserved, and now serves as an example of what can be accomplished by reaching for that goal of freedom. "There is a reason to read *The Weekly Challenger*."

Demanding Health Care for All

by **Bernice Powell Jackson**

I think it's a train wreck waiting to happen. Yet our elected officials and candidates for office seem to be putting it on the back burner. It impacts every single American, whether we know it or not. It's costing our nation, our families and our businesses a fortune. It's an ethical and moral catastrophe. I'm talking about our health care dilemma. A train wreck about to happen.

Look at the warning signs. In the past year alone, 2.4 million more Americans are without health care coverage B the largest increase in a decade, partly due to increasing unemployment. But it was partly due to the fact that the costs for most health care plans rose 14 percent in one year. Indeed, Americans today are paying 50 percent more for

their health care coverage than we did three years ago, so even if our wages are rising many of us are taking home less pay. Businesses, especially small businesses - our nation's employment backbone - find themselves having to choose between cutting health care coverage for employees or eliminating positions. Employees find themselves reluctant to change jobs because of health care concerns.

Meanwhile, smaller hospitals are being forced to close. Doctors find it impossible to get affordable malpractice insurance and in some states it is difficult to find an Obstetrician or other medical specialist. In California, tens of thousands of grocery store workers have been on strike for the past few weeks as their employers try to re-negotiate con-

tracts with lower medical benefits - a bellwether for other union workers across the nation. Almost all states are facing budget crises and, therefore, looking to cut Medicaid costs which they pay for poor Americans.

At the same time, Congress is debating whether to include prescription drug plans in Medicare costs for our senior citizens, many of whom find themselves paying thousands of dollars each month for expensive medications which they could buy for much lower costs in Mexico and Canada. The latest version of the Medicare bill gives private health insurance companies an enormous new role in the provision of health care to seniors as a means of supposedly containing costs. And critics are saying that this new bill may ultimately result in

lower benefits for our seniors on medicare.

There are some 44 million Americans without health care coverage altogether, including millions of American children. Many of these Americans are the working poor whose employers have opted out of providing health care. Thus, employers like Wal-Mart (the nation's largest employer) are passing along to their employees and the rest of us the cost of their employees' emergency room and other medical care. But more and more full-time, lower middle class workers are finding that they have no health care coverage.

We now spend an estimated \$1.4 trillion every year on health care, with the government already paying nearly half of that. Some of that money is mis-spent. For instance, as we

looked at employees in our church, we realized that there were individuals who have three different health care coverage: Medicare, our coverage and their spouse's plan. That's madness and wasted money in a system where millions have no coverage at all.

Why, in the richest nation ever in the history of the world, are there people who cannot go to the doctor if they are sick? Health care is a right due to every one of the world's citizens, so why is our health care tied to our employment? Why don't we really do something to really create jobs by taking health care costs away from employers?

The answer is simply, we could change this system if we wanted to. We could change this system so that every American is automatically covered from birth until death. We could

change this system and still have a cheaper, more efficient and effective health care system. We could change this system if every single one of us insisted - no demanded - of every candidate for every office in the U.S. be they Democrat or Republican that we change this insane health care system and change it now. We could change this dysfunctional health care system if we wanted.

We can demand change, or we can just sit back and wait for the train wreck.

Bernice Powell Jackson is the executive minister of the Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ and serves as one of the five officers of the denomination. She has been an activist on behalf of civil rights, women's rights and human rights issues around the world for more than a quarter of a century.

Hunger in a Season of Plenty

by **Marian Wright Edelman**

The holidays are here, and for many Americans, one of the highlights of this season is sharing special meals with friends and family. Many of us are still recovering from eating too much turkey and pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving, or already pulling out our special recipes to begin the next round of holiday baking and cooking.

Americans are already known for being surrounded by an overabundance of food, and the holidays just seem to take our usual excessive super-sized eating patterns and stretch them even further. But for millions of Americans - including millions of children - the holidays don't mean full tables or full stomachs. As the rest of us

sit down at our family feasts, these families are feeling something many Americans never even think about happening here: hunger.

More than thirteen million American children live in households that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) considers "food insecure." This means their families don't always have enough food for "an active, healthy life for all household members" and that children are considered to be at high risk of hunger. In many homes struggling to put food on the table, children are fed first. But while that sacrifice may spare the children from hunger, the whole family suffers from the strain and insecurity of not knowing where the next meal is coming from. The

13.1 million children in food insecure households are spread out through 6.4 million homes. In 265,000 of those families, one or more children went hungry last year. In another 1.2 million homes, a parent or other adult went hungry. And 4.9 million households with children were "food insecure without hunger." This means they teetered on the edge of hunger, occasionally being forced to skip meals or cut back on buying healthy food.

Compared with childless households, households with children suffer double the chances of food insecurity (16.5 percent compared with 8.1 percent), according to the USDA. And families at risk of hunger have few options. Charitable help is stretched

thin by rising demand, while government food assistance rarely lasts through the month. The average food stamp allotment is about 90 cents per person per meal, which isn't enough to purchase healthy and balanced meals. As recent stories have pointed out, soup kitchens that once served mainly homeless adult men are now buying high chairs and booster seats.

The holiday season is a time when many Americans reach out to help families in need. As a nation we have much to be thankful for, but many American families are suffering this holiday from joblessness and poverty, many are homeless, and, again, millions are hungry. We are not a selfish people,

but the nation's policy priorities this past year should give us pause. Decisions made by our leaders in Washington to enact lavish tax cuts of \$93,500 per millionaire while budget-strapped states slash funding for schools, child care, and emergency cash assistance counteract the generous giving of individual Americans.

Of course this doesn't mean we should stop helping each other in the ways we always have. Please give to a food drive, volunteer at a soup kitchen or shelter, support effective organizations that help needy families, and do whatever else you and your family can do to give thanks for what you have by helping families who have less - especially fami-

lies who behind closed doors are quietly going hungry. And as we all do what we can in our own communities, we can also work together to help our nation learn the same lesson many of us are trying to teach our own children: to whom much is given, much is required.

Marian Wright Edelman is President and Founder of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council whose mission is to Leave No Child Behind and to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

cers can too.

If they don't operate in a non-lethal manner, what's good for the goose to do, will be done by the gander!

Lucius Gantt can be contacted at lbgant@aol.com. His book, "I Talked About The Beast," is now available.

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SARASOTA / MANATEE AREA NEWS

Five Guys Named Moe Opens First Season For Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe

by Evelyn Klopp

Challenger Correspondent
SARASOTA — The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe kicked off their premiere season last weekend with song, dance, laughter and great audience enthusiasm at Gompertz Theatre (formerly Theatre Works). Their performance of *Five Guys Named Moe* brought 1930's sounds and styles to the stage. The show featured a small cast with loads of energy performing songs by jazz legend Louis Jordan.

Written by Clarke Peters, *Five Guys Named Moe* centers around heart-broken Nomax (played by Michael Kinsey) who finds comfort in the songs and dances of five crazy guys: Little Moe (Nate Jacobs), Eat Moe (Halbert Jones), Four-Eyed Moe (Charles Lattimore), Big Moe (Leon Pitts) and No Moe (Dean Wilson). With a little help from the audience, the five guys named Moe help Nomax find his way back to love. At one point the audience is asked to sing and dance with the Moes to help lift Nomax's spirits.

"We're just having a funky-good time," said Charles Lattimore, who is spending his first year with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. "This is a hysterical play, full of music and energy. It teaches life



Cast of "5 Guys Named Moe"

L-R: Charles Lattimore, Halbert Jones, Dean Wilson, Nate Jacobs (Artistic Director), and Michael Kinsey

lessons about love and how to cope with different problems."

Director Nate Jacobs picked this play because of its creative script and lively songs.

"This man [Clarke Peters] writes so much life and humor in his music," Jacobs said. "Expect a good time, a lot of laughter and good music."

Jacobs is also the founder and artistic director for the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. The group will also perform *Black Nativity* (Dec. 18-28), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Jan. 8-18) and *Spunk* (April 8-18) this season.

"I want our company to be known for bringing a unique edge and new faces to the scene," Jacobs said. "I hope to add another element to our arts communi-

ty."

Jacobs also hopes to own a theatre someday, a place where he can teach classes and give artistic children a place to discover their talents. This desire comes from his own experience. Jacobs didn't realize his own passion for theater until he took a class in college.

"Especially being African American, I know a lot of parents don't know quite what to do with their artistic children," Jacobs said. "I know there is a desperate need in Bradenton, Sarasota and St. Petersburg for that kind of outreach that needs to be provided. The artists of tomorrow can't be overlooked."

It is the mission of the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe "to promote, foster and celebrate the African-

American experience by presenting meaningful, entertaining and thought-provoking theatre."

Five Guys named Moe exemplified this purpose, showcasing the enormous talents of the small cast and crew. Audience members gave them a standing ovation and cheered them on their opening night.

"Working with Westcoast, it's really a family affair," Lattimore said. "Everyone is so close. And the professionalism and how the company runs—it's star treatment all the way around."

Tickets to *Five Guys Named Moe* are \$21. For more information, call the box office at (941) 954-4651.



Elizabeth Stebbins
VENICE — The Sara-

44-Year-Old Woman Found Dead In Venice Jail

sota County Sheriff's Office is releasing the name of the inmate found dead by Corrections deputies this past weekend at the South County Jail, 1350 Ridgewood Avenue, in Venice. The inmate has

been identified as Elizabeth Stebbins, also known as Elizabeth Herrera, a white female born March 22, 1959, of 621 Apalachicola Road, Venice.

Stebbins was arrested by the Venice Police Department at 10:55 p.m. on Dec. 6 and charged with Aggravated Battery. Stebbins was found hanging in

her jail cell, with a piece of jail clothing, at approximately 5:47 a.m. on Dec. 7 by Sarasota County Corrections deputies. Deputies tried to resuscitate Stebbins but had negative results. The incident is still under investigation by the Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Bureau.

Aspiring Rapper Gets Eight Years For Squirt Gun Carjacking

BRADENTON — An aspiring rap musician from Michigan has been sentenced to eight years in prison for trying to carjack a retired schoolteacher with a squirt gun last year.

Raymond S. Wank, 21, pleaded no contest to attempted carjacking, burglary and defrauding an innkeeper.

Senior Judge Thomas Gallen handed down the sentence, which will run at the same time as a nine-year prison sentence Wank received earlier this year for carjacking a Suwannee County woman.

Authorities said Wank and his cohort, Gregory A. Bell, 19, went on a crime spree during a trip to Miami where they were going to break into the music industry. Assistant State Attorney Scott Rieth said his theory was that the pair decided to steal cars after they were cited in the Panhandle for hitchhiking. The Kalamazoo, Mich., men were arrested

Nov. 25, 2002, after they kidnapped Cynda Futch, a 48-year-old Wal-Mart worker in Live Oak and forced her to drive them to the Bradenton area.

Futch drove to Manatee County while the men pointed a black squirt gun they had bought at the store. They released Futch when her car was almost out of gas, apologized and wished her a nice Thanksgiving.

The men sneaked into an empty room at a Ramada Inn and left the next morning without paying.

They then tried to carjack Nancy Rizzo in the parking lot of an Ellenton Publix supermarket. The retired teacher grabbed her keys and her cell phone, and ran inside the store yelling for someone to call 911.

Deputies arrested Bell at a nearby McDonald's restaurant. Wank ran into a boggy retention pond, and concealed himself so well that deputies almost walk-

Disaster Assistance for Farmers and Ranchers

Manatee County has been included in the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Disaster declaration. This declaration was as a result of severe storms and flooding that occurred June 13, 2003 and continuing. Emergency loan assistance is now available for farmers and ranchers that suffered damages as a result of this event.

Eligible family farmers and ranchers may file

written applications for economic injury assistance as a result of this disaster the FSA office. The address is: 316 North 7th Avenue, Wauchula, Florida. The deadline for emergency loan applications is March 29, 2004.

If you have any questions, please call Ms. Marcia Chiricos, Planning Manager at (850) 413-9957.

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women and men in need of these items.

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For more information, call Ken Flint, (727) 421-3745.

Carolers Sing for the 17th Year to Show There is 'Still No Room at the Inn'

ST. PETERSBURG — For the 17th year, workers, supporters and shelter residents of ASAP Homeless Services will carol through the streets of St. Petersburg. They will stop at homeless shelters, the Yacht Club and the Ronald McDonald House to remind residents that over 2,000 years after the first Christmas, there is, "Still No Room at the Inn," for America's homeless citizens.

The carolers will leave from the ASAP Drop-In Center, 423 - 11th Ave. S., at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 12, caroling through St. Petersburg to Straub Park.

"This walk is a Christmas tradition for many people in the Tampa Bay area," said walk organizer John Stewart. "We typically have over 100 carolers, including people of all ages, professions, economic conditions and religious beliefs. We have retirees, babies in strollers, shelter

residents and high school students. What unites us is our belief that everyone should have a home.

"At Christmas we remember the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, who was born a homeless refugee. For homeless people in the U.S. two millennia later, as it was for Jesus, there is still no room at the inn. We walk and sing to remember that fact."

The caroling will end at the manger scene in Straub Park, where carolers will enjoy cookies and hot chocolate. Rides back to cars from Straub Park will be provided.

ASAP is a grassroots organization that operates a shelter for homeless women, children and families, and a drop-in center with food, showers and clean clothes for homeless men and women.

For more information, call ASAP Homeless Services at (727) 823-5665.

Adults and Teens Collaborate to Throw a Holiday Party

LARGO — Lighthouse Credit Foundation (LCF) and the Pinellas County Boys & Girls Clubs 61C Teen Centers team up again for an old-fashioned Winter Wonderland Party. The second annual event takes place on Thursday, Dec. 18, from 6:30-9 p.m. at Pinellas Park Boys & Girls Club located at 7790 - 61st St. N., Pinellas Park, and is only open to the teenagers of Pinellas Park and Northside Boys & Girls Clubs.

The colorful celebration gives teenagers an opportunity to work closely with adults in planning an event. LCF employees and teenagers from the 61C Teen Centers have been researching and planning the Winter Wonderland for the last two months as part of LCF's "adoption" of the Boys & Girls Club.

LCF volunteers will be cooking the main course and side dishes, while the teenagers are responsible for the desserts. Also, during the party, pre-selected teenagers will share with their peers a favorite holiday memory, tradition or song. A teenager will act as the evening's DJ so that everyone at the party can

enjoy music and fun together, and for those who dare, a karaoke machine will also be available!

Raffle tickets will be given out as teenagers arrive at the party, and giveaways will happen throughout the night, making the evening full of fun and entertainment for all present.

The unique collaboration between LCF employees and 61C Teen Center teenagers is part of a larger program designed by employees at LCF to reach out into their community to extend not just funding but time, financial expertise and mentoring. The commitment on behalf of the LCF management and staff and Boys & Girls

Clubs of Pinellas County will continue through 2003 and 2004.

61C Teen Center is a youth-empowered teen center run for teens by teens. The objective of 61C Teen Center is to establish a safe and positive environment, and the club welcomes all teenagers. The club is designed to allow the active and hands-on exploration of abilities, to develop confidence by goal-setting and accomplishment and to promote the idea of dreams.

"We want to show the world that young people should be looked upon as problem solvers, not problems," says Mary Melcer, president of LCF.

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Tommy Simpson, Jr.
A.A. graduate,
SPC class of '03

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TAMPA BAY AREA NEWS



RECOLLECTIONS

by Frances Pinckney

Looking for Good

I usually take a favorable view of things even in the worst of situations, and I usually expect a good outcome. I, who look for the "good" in everything, am running mighty low in Pollyanna spirit.

I am trying to figure out the good, the soundness like sound of mind and accuracy and logic of the recent *St. Petersburg Times/Miami Herald* poll which was conducted Dec. 1 by the Washington, D.C., polling firms, Schroth and Associates, whose clients are Democrats, and The Polling Company, whose clients are Republicans, according to the article, "Bush Holds Florida Edge but Still Has Work to Do," written by Adam C. Smith, *Times* political editor. The poll was conducted for findings of approval ratings of President George W. Bush.

Out of approximately 557,000 registered voters as of Oct. 31, 2003, (information provided by library reference) in the state of Florida, a state-wide survey of 800 voters was conducted. "Polls suggest the President would win the state over any Democrat, but voters are divided over some of his policies," the *St. Petersburg Times* stated. Well, now many of us registered voters are still not convinced that Mr. Bush won the state of Florida over Al Gore in the 2000 election.

The Election Day debacle, hanging chads, uncounted votes and God knows what else does not indicate a fair win. The article further stated, "The President still continues to struggle making inroads among African Americans." And rightly so.

As I recall, there were allegations that numbers of African Americans were denied their rights to vote in some areas. I am sure it has been a struggle for them to accept being left out of the election, whether by accident or design.

SPC Has New Site in Downtown St. Pete

ST. PETERSBURG — St. Petersburg College's new downtown site is in the heart of activity near BayWalk and the Museum of Fine Art. Classes begin there Jan. 12.

The new college headquarters is at 201 Fourth Street North. It is a two-story, 6,294-square-foot building owned by First United Methodist Church. The college will lease the building from the church for three years with options for an additional five years. The building will house science and computer labs along with class-

The article also states that African Americans are especially skeptical of the war - the war was not worth it. Eighty percent disapprove of the President's handling of the war. Nobody asked me, but I, too, disapprove. I saw right through the President's political ploy of visiting the troops in Iraq and helping to serve Thanksgiving dinner.

And, what about that disaster in May when our president, all decked out in flight gear standing below a banner, "Mission accomplished," declared the end of "combat operations" in Iraq? Arrogance run amuck is what that was. Too bad that he didn't make good his declaration of the end of the war. His strategy of war was a rushed deal and his post-war plans not in place. Not good!

Yet another *St. Petersburg Times/Miami Herald* poll of findings for approval rating was of the President's brother, Governor of Florida, Jeb Bush. According to the article in the *St. Petersburg Times* Dec. 7, "Jeb Bush's approval rating slipped lower than it was in May...52 percent of the voters approve of the job Bush is doing as Governor."

I am among the 41 percent who disapprove. I, a retired State worker and many other State workers, especially union members, never approved of him or the job that he's doing.

State workers know first-hand about the messed up job he did in privatization, especially in the children's program. He managed to eradicate the fairly good operation of the program and just went on from bad to worse. And, of course, the aging and adult program in which I worked was not untouched by his clueless mission of change. I didn't find much good in the change.

Now, closer to home. I have no Pollyanna spirit, no good feelings about the protests held by the Uhu-

rus at Baywalk, and I don't see any good in the leaflets they leave in my door with beratings of the local NAACP president and journalist Bill Maxwell. Now, they should know by now that it does no good for them to verbally attack and slander Maxwell, for they know good and well that he can "pencil whip" them and tear their weak outdated agendas apart with truth and candor.

A very recent incident has impacted by already low Pollyanna spirit even lower. A parent of three, with other children in her charge ages 6-10, allegedly allowed them to play football unsupervised near a lake while she visited a friend in a nearby apartment. One eight-year-old boy was pushed into the water by another boy about the same age. Thank God the boy could swim, and the water was shallow. I would like personally to give her a good tongue lashing and outright denounce her gross negligence. No, I have no favorable view of this no good situation - absolutely none. But, thank God the outcome was favorable.

As I sit here on this Sunday before "full moon" Monday watching the start of the Bucs and New Orleans game, I shake my head in disbelief as quarterback Shaun King draws a penalty for going on the field to talk to a teammate. My companion, an avid Bucs fan, yelled out a "not so good" message at him, "You haven't played more than a few minutes during the whole season, so what have you got so important to tell the other player?"

We like King. He has a good reputation and good manners and all of that, but not good judgment in this instance. Still, there was a good outcome. The Bucs won, and, "Finding good was easy in Sapp and Simeon Rice!"

Devil Rays Team With City, Lowe's to Repair Belmont Heights Little League Fields—



Youngsters from the Belmont Heights Little League fields are surrounded by Ed Johnson from the City of Tampa, Stephen Keener, President & CEO, Little League Baseball International; Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio; Ann Jenkins, President of the Belmont Heights Little League and Devil Rays Managing General Partner Vincent J. Naimoli.

TAMPA BAY — The Tampa Bay Devil Rays and the City of Tampa announced a plan to partner with the City of Tampa, Lowe's Home Centers, Inc. and Little League Baseball International to renovate and repair the Belmont Heights Little League baseball fields in Tampa.

The Devil Rays have offered their grounds crew staff and expertise to donate time and resources along with a cash donation of \$10,000 through their Rays of Hope Foundation.

The City of Tampa Parks and Recreation Department is already working on irrigation systems for the site and will be instrumental in surveying the facility and installing the new sod. The city's portion of the repairs and improvements total

\$40,000.

Through their Urban Initiative Program, Little League International has committed \$20,000 to renovate the Belmont Heights Little League fields. This money is being made available through a grant Little League Baseball, Inc. received from Major League Baseball. They will also provide assistance in the areas of new baseball equipment acquisition, and training and education.

Lowe's Home Centers, Inc. has also stepped up to the plate by recruiting several contractors, their suppliers and staff to offer \$20,000 in materials and manpower to renovate the concession stands and upstairs offices.

Our aim," said Devil Rays Managing General Partner and Chief Execu-

tive Officer Vincent J. Naimoli, "is to restore these fields to the gem that they once were. To the days in 1973, 1975, 1980 and 1981 when the Belmont Heights Little League teams went on to the Little League World Series in Williamsport. These kids need a place to play. It is simply the right thing to do."

Among those on hand to announce the project at a news conference on December 1 at the Belmont Heights fields were Naimoli, Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio; Stephen Keener, President and CEO, Little League Baseball International; Mike Hofler, Zone Manager of Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.; and Ann Jenkins, President of the Belmont Heights Little League.

African American Graduates of 1975, Inc. Upcoming Activities

ST. PETERSBURG — The public and all classmates are invited to participate in the upcoming events sponsored by the African American Graduates of 1975, Inc. (AAG75). The next quarterly worship service will

be Dec. 14 at 10:45a.m., at Galilee M.B. Church, located at 505 35th St. So. The AAG75 Class Unity Program is scheduled for Dec. 28 at 4 p.m., at Trinity United Presbyterian Church, 2830 22nd Avenue South.

The class is preparing for the remaining community service activities for the year such as the Christmas Holiday Cheer Baskets and the Christmas Toy Drive. The items for the Toy Drive will be collected through Dec. 20 at the Maxi Mall, 4301 34th St. South (Wednesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.) and Angelia's Hair Safari, 2423 Central Avenue (Tuesday - Saturday, Noon - 8 p.m.). Class tee shirts and CDs will be available at all events.

For additional information about the activities of the African American Graduates of 1975, Inc., please visit our website at www.aagraduatesof1975.homestead.com/AA3.html.

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THIS & THAT

(823-6092)

by Mabel Cooper

HI FOLKS!

It's time to get serious. As I pen this, Christmas is 19 days away. Have you been good? Ole Santa is on his way, so you'd better watch out.

Some clubs and civic organizations are getting the jump on others with early Christmas parties. Invites are coming my way, which is very nice - gives me a chance to write about them. I hope you, my readers, will do the same.

We attended and enjoyed two beautiful affairs this past weekend. The first one was a post-b'date celebration. Let me tell you about it.



Luthrell H. Church, Sr.

A Memoriam Birthdate Celebration for the Late Luthrell Harrison Church, Sr.

Hosting the celebration were his wife, Marion Church, and their family members. On Saturday, Dec. 6, 2003, beginning at 4 p.m., Luthrell's family members, friends and devoted patrons of his local long-time south end Neighborhood Tavern turned out in full force to sip, eat, enjoy and reminisce in remembrance of Luthrell's 70th natal day and him especially.

The master title and building contractor passed away Feb. 6, 2003, at age 69. As we all know, Luthrell was a kind-hearted sweet person with a multitude of friends. We all love him and miss him very much. The memoriam b'date celebration was well attended.

While there enjoying, we saw and said hello to several guests doing the same. To name a few: Clifford James, LaVetra "Vee" Flourney, Henry L. Boger, Albert "Lee" McCloud, Mary Holmes, Solomon "Sargent" Thomas and James Russ. Also, Ella Brown, Lewis Stephens, Elivira Hayward, Develine Seide, Melvetta McClendon, Sharon Long and James Stephens.

Others were: Joan Webb, Tahysha Church, DeAngelo Dean, Hattie Ruth Johnson, George Cromarte, Billy Singleton, John Walker, Tory Golsen, Larry and Faith Walker, Angelo Church, Vito Golsen, Mr. "Slick" and Dwayne Vinson. Others kept coming after we left, I was informed.

At 7 p.m.

We left this wonderful

celebration and motored way over yonder to Pinellas Point to a Christmas party at 63rd Avenue and 12th Street South already in full swing. The St. Petersburg metropolitan chapter of the National Council of Negro Women's first annual Christmas was the place to be at that time. The president, Diane Speights, and members rolled out the red holiday carpet for their invited guests. I can understand the friendly hospitality of the members after being told by the hostess of the beautiful well-kept home that the club promotes sisterhood among African American women, and one of their main focuses is empowering women, thereby strengthening families.

Members and guests socialized in a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere courtesy of club member Wyvonna McGee. Her home was decorated with a Christmas setting, complete with a lovely decorated tree and candles. The glow of the candlelight added to the evening. There was an elephant gift exchange during the festivities, which was a first for me.

The food served was beyond reproach. Everyone ate until they were satisfied. We were served fried chicken, buffalo wings, smoked turkey, shrimp pasta, shrimp and crab spaghetti salad, chip and dip, deviled eggs and tri-pasta salad. Also, there were: a melon fruit tray, watergate salad, vegetable tray and seafood spread and crackers. For dessert we had, among others, a mile-high coconut cake and lemon pound cake. There was special egg nog and tropical tea to drink.

Members and guests enjoying all of this and putting on some holiday pounds, in addition to the hostess, were: Janie Wells, Dorothy Lee, Rev. G. and Deanie Victor, Kredelle P. Dendy, Lynn Johnson, Evelyn Fletcher, Elder Martin and JoAnn Rainey and Robert and Barbara Anders. Others partaking were: James and Barbara Bolden, James E. Lecas, Barbara Simmon, Carol Dukes, Cheryl Holiday, Diane Speights, Juan K. Leonard, Dorothy Milton, Barbara Norris, Betty Smith and yours truly.

Conspicuously absent were vice president, Signora Ferris, and Bev Campbell. They were attending the National NCNW convention in Washington, D.C. They phoned in their regrets.

I've got to end this somewhere, and right here is it. So, until next write around -

STAY LOOSE!

State Convention Welcomes Tampa Residents

LAKE BUENA VISTA - Thousands of Democrats gathered at Disney World this weekend for a state party convention. Among the participants were Tampa Bay residents such as State Rep. Frank Peterman and Senator Les Miller. Seen as an informational gathering, the convention was an opportunity to see what the democratic candidates had to offer. Saturday's speakers included presidential hopefuls former army General Wesley Clark, U.S. Rep. Richard Gephardt, and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean. Carol Mosely Braun and the Rev. Al Sharpton were unable to attend.



State Democratic Chairs await the next speaker



St. Petersburg resident Ernest Fillyau was in attendance at the convention, along with Sen. Les Miller



State Rep. Frank Peterman and St. Petersburg delegate Joyce McCarty

photos by Ernest Fillyau

Elementary School Artists Display Work at Florida International Museum

ST. PETERSBURG - Antwan Horsley rounded a corner inside Florida International Museum, his eyes eagerly scanning the freshly framed artwork on the newly painted walls. "Here's yours, Jarred," Horsley said, pointing to his classmate's creation. "That is awesome," Jarred Daniel chimed in. Horsley, 11, and Daniel, 10, are fifth grade students at Perkins Elementary School in St. Petersburg, who crafted images of their hometown for an exhibit at Florida International Museum. For the first time, the students saw their work displayed with artwork from students in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Horsley and Daniel are two of the 23 elementary school students to have their very own artwork on display, just down the hall from 800 year old Russian

artifacts. As part of the groundbreaking exhibit "Russian Odyssey: Riches of the State Russian Museum," Florida International Museum (FIM) presents "Children 2 Children" through April 4, 2004. This unique project provides an opportunity for school children from both cities to compare and contrast their homelands to learn more about each other. "Children in each St. Petersburg not only created artwork for exchange, but will begin a dialog as well," says Kathy Oathout, executive director of FIM. "We feel this is an outstanding opportunity for students to learn about a different culture."

"Children 2 Children" is an outstanding educational opportunity, according to Perkins Elementary art instructor Michelle

Crosby. "Whenever a child gets recognition, as with this show, it boosts their self-esteem," Crosby said, beaming as her students soaked in the moment. "It's a building block for the rest of their lives." And the students' work will be displayed internationally.

At the close of the exhibit, the artwork will be crated along with the Russian children's works and sent to St. Petersburg, Russia for display there. In this way, the two cities' children can gain a better understanding of each other and the way they perceive their respective cities.

Horsley created "A Day Walk of the Blues," a mural of blue doors across the city. Daniel captured one of our area's most beautiful daily occurrences, "St. Pete Sunset."

In addition, their classmates at Perkins and 30 other students from seven different schools have created wonderful representations of St. Petersburg which are now on display. There will be a reception at Florida International Museum on January 9, 2004 in recognition of the artists of the "Children 2 Children" exhibition, their parents and their teachers.

Both Horsley and Daniel are relishing the moment. "It's awesome that my picture is here," said Daniel. "Their St. Petersburg looks beautiful. I hope they like ours," Horsley added.

For more information, please call (727) 822-3693 or visit the Florida International Museum website at www.floridamuseum.org.

Christmas from front page

Thomas's house was fully furnished - down to the pots and pans, bed linens, bath towels, phones and answering machines.

There were even cleaning supplies and food in the refrigerator and fully-stocked cupboards to ensure that Thomas would not have any extra burdens to worry about upon moving into her new place.

The only thing missing was Thomas and her two children - Armoni Clarit and Keanan Musgrove.

And it didn't take them long to settle in after Bucs running back Aaron Stecker showcased the house, room by room. Stecker was filling in for Dunn - now a member of the Atlanta Falcons - who was unable to attend Thomas's home debut due to a pending foot surgery.

A similar ceremony was held the same day in Tampa as Karen Jolly and



A Proud Generation of Women: (L-R) Tatishka's grandmother, mother, Tatishka and her daughter.



Tatishka's children are all smiles in their new furnished rooms.

her two children were able to move into a new home this holiday season, thanks to Dunn's program.

Like Thomas, Jolly was overjoyed once she discovered her house was

furnished with all the extra trimmings.

Both Thomas and Jolly were grateful for the outpouring of community support, but were especially thankful to the man who

literally made it a "Dunn deal" for them to fulfill the American dream of homeownership.

"This is a day I thought would never come true," Thomas concluded.

'When Duty Calls'

T-Shirt, designed by St. Pete Resident, pays tribute to U.S. soldiers

ST. PETERSBURG - St. Petersburg writer and entrepreneur Corbin Johnson has found a novel way to show his support for the troops serving in and outside of America.

Johnson decided to design a custom printed T-shirt, titled "When Duty Calls," "this shirt reflected my feeling," he said.

"Memories usually begin with something unforgettable," Johnson notes. "When America launched the war on terrorism, as well as the war on Iraq, I was motivated. I felt I had to do something. This is what I did."

"Regardless of what you think or how you felt about the current administration, most people volun-



A Show of Support: (L-R) Designer Corbin Johnson, Mayor Rick Baker, Councilman Ernest Williams, and State Rep. Charlie Justice

teer to serve in the U.S. military and when duty calls they go," adds Johnson. "Being that I have family and friends in the military, I want them to know that I support them 100%, and my support will never waiver. Yes, I know

some Americans did not support the idea of going to war with Iraq (of which I am one). That's beside the point. I will always support the troops who have to go in harm's way, so we can enjoy the liberty and freedoms afforded us by the

U.S. Constitution," Johnson said.

The custom printed T-shirt has artwork on one side and a poem cover on the other. To order, call (727) 895-0416.

Achieve from front page

they become certified as nursing assistants (CNA) and are very employable, said Bill Swales, PTEC South assistant site administrator. Most of them work along the way, especially if they have family. When they graduate and pass the state board test to become licensed practical nurses (LPN), they earn \$36,000 to \$38,000 a year.

One student who worked her way through is Chenita D. Lovett who has worked at Palm Pasadena hospital for 16 years. "I started out as a CNA then unit secretary then activities director and now I'm going to be an LPN."

The good job market for nurses means many students get jobs as CNA's while they are still in school. But certainly, they have jobs once they complete the program. Predictions are that the existing shortage of nurses will be a critical shortfall by 2006. Shortages usually occur when hospitals can't fill their vacancies. However, nurses work in places other than hospitals, including doctor's offices, stand-alone clinics, industrial nursing and home health nursing, Gardener said.

"The sacrifices that

many of these students have made are extreme." Many have children and some in the audience have helped by baby-sitting, said Evelyn Gardner, department chair of the nursing program

The ceremony became emotional as the audience erupted in cheers each time a graduate's name was called. Many graduates had their family or friends participate in the ceremony by coming onto the stage to place the nursing pin on their uniform. Kisses were occasionally passionate and audible. One graduate squatted as her young son in a red plaid shirt and blue jeans knelt to place the pin on his mom's uniform.

"It's a cheap education and it's a sure chance for a career for the rest of their life" with the flexibility to advance and many students climb the career ladder in nursing, Gardner said. "We always tell them it's a springboard to the ASN (Associate of Science and Nursing degree), and on up to the RN (registered nurse) and to the bachelors degree."

One student who plans to continue is Maya Wall a 24 year old mother of three. Wall had family help along with a scholarship from Pasadena Manor Nursing Home where she works as a CNA.

"It's an interesting field. There is always going to be a job there and it will better my kid's life and mine too. I'm not going to just stop at LPN. I'm going to go on to the RN program," Wall said. She plans to take the state board exam for LPN next January. Then sign up to transfer to St. Petersburg College for the transitional program for RN.

With the LPN in hand there is usually no waiting for admission to a RN program, which can be completed in a year to 18 months, excluding the core courses needed for the ASN degree. Options increase if they pursue a Bachelors of Science and Nursing, which gives flexibility to hold leadership positions or pursue a master's degree or a Ph.D., and get into research. Plus they work their way through all

of this at career level pay, Gardener said.

In the audience to cheer Wall on were family members including her sister. "I look up to her very much. She's my hero she gave me the encouragement to further my career. She's my role model," said Nathaly Williams who plans to become a nurse too.

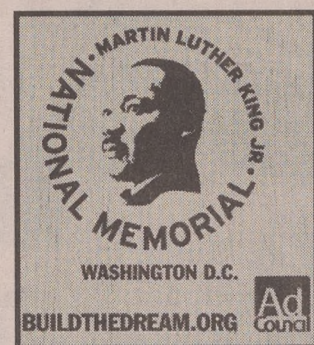
Maya Wall said. "It wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for my mom and my kids grandmother and I'm very grateful." Sharon Milbry mom and Barbara Watson kids grandma. "They kept the kids and took two nights a week they had them fed and bathed so when I got home I just did what I needed to do. So, it was a real big help for me."

The class included students from Bosnia, Columbia South America,

Haiti, Nigeria, Cuba and Peru. "We have a very diverse group of students," Gardner said.

Before they marched out the nurses participated in a candle lighting ceremony to symbolize passing the mantle of nursing from generation to generation. They then recited a prayer to dedicate themselves to touch each patient with a "healing hand."

"We're always happy to see them come and we're always happy to see them go because they've been successful," Swales said.



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EDUCATION

Minority Outreach Program Celebrates 10th Year With Students' Visit



Left to Right: Ava Washington, ExxonMobil; Shaynell Vanterpool, Howard Bishop Middle School Student; Truman Bell, ExxonMobil; Dr. Jonathan Earle, University of Florida. Howard Bishop Middle School student takes part in learning about math and science as part of the Gator Engineering Outreach Program, sponsored by ExxonMobil.

photo by David Blankenship - UF

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Of the 68,000 U.S. students who earn bachelor's degrees in engineering annually, only about 8,000 - 11 percent - are black, Hispanic or other minorities.

Considering that the minority population is growing far more quickly than that of whites, those figures raise the troubling prospect of a decline in engineering graduates in an era when engineers are increasingly crucial to the nation's technology-dependent economy. That could put the U.S. behind other nations with growing technology economies such as China, Korea and Japan.

The University of Florida (UF) and ExxonMobil marked the 10th year of a unique collaborative effort that has demonstrated success in addressing the problem. The Gator Engineering Outreach Program - the only such ExxonMobil-university collaboration in the country - brings hundreds of minority and low-income middle and high school students from all over Florida each year to visit and tour the UF engineering college. Apart of events that included a luncheon and check presentation, over 130 students from Gainesville's Howard Bishop Middle School visited the UF campus and discussed engineering with UF and ExxonMobil officials and toured the engineering college.

Jonathan Earle, associate dean for student affairs for the engineering college, said the outreach program is aimed at students 12 to 18 who have ability in science and math, but lack motivation or exposure to careers in technical or scientific fields.

Students have visited from as far away as Miami and as near as Gainesville. For some, the visits are more than just a first look at a university, he said.

"For many of these students who visited the campus from inner-city schools in particular, the first time

they leave their communities is when they come out on these tours to visit this campus. They will tell you that," he said.

ExxonMobil, which provides \$30,000 annually to cover the costs of the program, has contributed \$300,000 so far. "ExxonMobil is proud to partner with the University of Florida to attract the brightest minds to math, science and engineering," said Truman Bell, education pro-

gram officer at the ExxonMobil Foundation. "By partnering with the University of Florida, ExxonMobil and the Gator Outreach Program can help prepare a diverse range of students for fulfilling and successful careers, particularly in the field of engineering."

Earle also said that more progress is needed at UF and all other universities. Today, he said, Japan graduates over 100,000, India over 150,000 and

China over 200,000 engineers annually. To remain competitive on a global scale, the United States needs to try to keep up with these numbers - and the scarcity of minority students in among U.S. engineering graduates represents a missed opportunity. "We have this tremendously underdeveloped resource in this country that we have to begin tapping into," he said.

Registration Deadline for Next ACT Test is Jan. 2

The next national test date for the ACT Assessment is Feb. 7, 2004. College-bound students should register by the Jan. 2 postmark deadline. Late registration postmark deadline is Jan. 16 (an additional fee is required for late registration). Students can register online at www.act.org or they can get a registration packet from their high school guidance counselor and register by mail. The website also has sample test questions and a link to a free financial aid calculator.

ACT scores are accepted by virtually all colleges and universities in the nation. The test fee is \$26 (\$29 in Florida). Colleges use ACT scores, along with a student's high school GPA and other information to help determine admissions and the appropriate course placement for new students.

The ACT Assessment is curriculum-based, designed to measure a student's academic achievement. There are four sections to the exam: English, reading, math and science.

Students who have already taken the ACT can retake and try for a higher score.

KIDS KORNER

Immigrants' Case

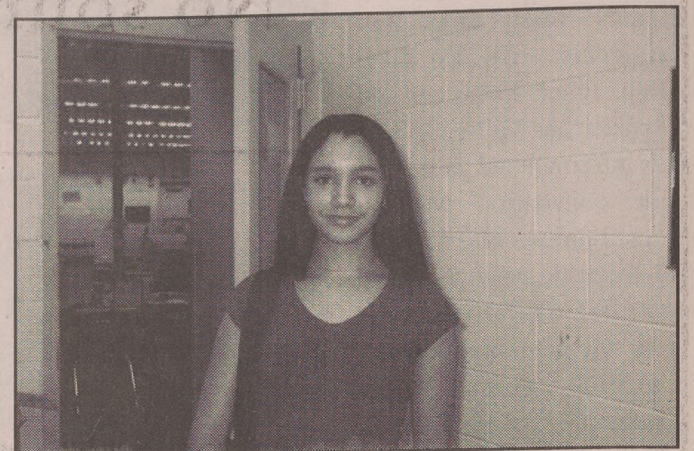
by Sarah Rhaloui

Since everybody knows that Lakewood High School contains many immigrant students, it is interesting to see how they found their new home, U.S.A., and to hear what they have to say about their experiences.

Yury is a 16-year-old senior from Colombia and her first language is Spanish. She moved in to America three years ago. She says it has been easy for her to learn how to speak English and to adapt herself to American life. She likes the school, the climate and the great opportunity of making new friends.

She dislikes the fast food that she eats each day at the cafeteria. It is understandable to see that Yury doesn't like fast food since food is a very important in her custom. She was a little bit surprised when she saw that people don't really take the time to eat well.

Finally, her idea about American society is pretty good. However, Yury does not like the growing environment for kids, which is really different from her country. She thinks it is based on materialism (get-



Sarah Rhaloui of Lakewood High

ting new toys), on pressure (school achievement) and finally bad influences.

Overall, Yury really loves her experiences in this country. She is now very attached to her new friends. If she would have one or two words to say to Lakewood High School immigrants it would be: "ESOL Rules!!!!!!" (English as a Second Language). Well! We all hope she'll enjoy being here!

To conclude, below are results from a survey of ESOL students:

- 94% of the immigrants say they would go back to their country if they had the opportunity to do so.

- 75% say it was difficult for them to learn English.

- 90% still have some members of their family

living in their native country.

- 98% think their life in Florida and especially in Lakewood High School is very fun.

- 100% (!) of them like or would like to be in the ESOL program because there are great opportunities of making true friends and learning more about other countries and languages.

- 80% of them like hip hop and R&B.

Don't you forget - diversity of culture is important and very interesting. We can all learn from immigrants, and they certainly learn from us. Things such as language, skin color or religion should never stop friendship.



What the new prescription drug benefit will do for you.

No sound bites. No spin. No politics. Just the facts.

Congress has just voted to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. While the benefit isn't perfect, it's an important step forward that we can build on in the future. Here are some important ways that older Americans and their families will be helped by this benefit:

1. It protects traditional Medicare:

Nothing in the legislation undermines traditional fee-for-service Medicare. And anyone can stay in it if they choose.

2. All Medicare beneficiaries will have access to drug coverage:

This is a guaranteed drug plan for all beneficiaries, regardless of where they live.

3. This new drug benefit is voluntary:

People can elect to keep any existing coverage they have, and no one will be forced to enroll in the new program.

4. It helps those who need it most:

The new benefit provides for comprehensive drug coverage for people with low incomes, at minimal cost to them.

5. It protects those with the highest drug costs:

After a beneficiary reaches the

\$3,600 out-of-pocket limit, the federal government will pay for 95% of prescription drug costs.

6. It protects retiree coverage:

The legislation provides financial incentives for employers (both public and private) so that people who already have good private coverage will not lose it.

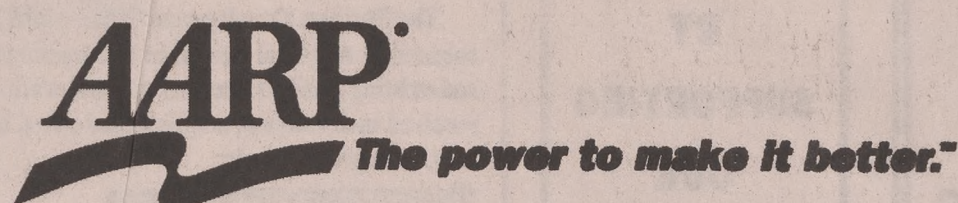
7. It provides new preventive services:

The legislation provides for new coordinated chronic disease management, preventive screening for heart disease and an introductory physical exam.

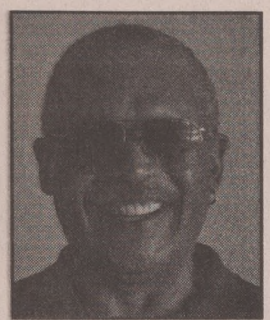
8. Discount card:

Beneficiaries can choose a Medicare discount card that will provide some immediate help with drug costs. In addition, many low-income beneficiaries will receive a \$600 subsidy on their card.

And we promise to keep fighting to make your prescription drugs more affordable.



ENTERTAINMENT



Rick Gee's
**JAZZ
JAMM**

Looking For Jazz?

Listen up! As you know, this column is written for lovers of jazz and those who are curious enough to read and learn more about America's only original cultural asset ... "JAZZ". During the very short time I've lived in the city of St. Petersburg, I've listened to too many complaints about there not being enough jazz music or jazz clubs available for folks to be entertained. It's been said that in order to hear any decent jazz, you have to go to Tampa, Clearwater or travel as far as Sarasota. Balderdash! Pure nonsense! Allow me to clue you into some great happenings right here in our beloved City of St. Petersburg.

In the early afternoon, a week ago Sunday, I along with Dr. and Mrs. Ted Pinkney, visiting friends from Newark, New Jersey had the opportunity to attend the Billy Pillucere Jazz Quartet Concert. It was hosted by the Al Downing Tampa Bay Jazz Association and the City of St. Petersburg. Club Excalibur located right here in the City of St. Petersburg at 1919 Central Avenue was the venue. Although the club is known to usually host hip-hop events, management has decided to introduce jazz into its musical menu.

The quartet was composed of Billy Pillucere on bass, Tom Carabasi, drums, David Moss, tenor saxophone and the outstanding and very popular jazz pianist Kenny Drew, Jr. on keyboards. Playing familiar and favorite tunes, the group covered charts written by composers like Bill Evans, Paul Chambers, Jobin and St. Petersburg's own Manfredo Fest.

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the musical selections, which was demonstrated by their loud applause. I spoke with several members of the audience before and after the concert and discovered that many had come from as far as Sarasota, Tampa, New Port Richie and Lutz. They all indicated that they were anxious to return to St. Petersburg for more great jazz and looked forward to the next concert or jam session.

The concert ended at about 5:30 p.m. and then,

my friends and I traveled a short distance down the street to The Hampton House of Jazz at 1113 Central Avenue. Much to our delight, the Valerie Gillespie Jazz Quartet was playing. Gillespie's group is one of the finest jazz groups in the Tampa Bay area. With Rick Steuart kicking it on drums, Andrew Lack, walking his electric bass and Valerie swinging on tenor, alto, and soprano saxophones, including flute and vocals, this is a group to be to be heard.

After their first musical set, several musicians in the audience sat in with the group. What started out as a great jazz concert had suddenly turned into a fantastic jam session. There was Andy Foertsch on trombone, Mike Gibilisco on tenor saxophone, Greg Johnson, trumpet, and "The Man" himself, Marcus Hampton playing flugelhorn. Wow! What a jam they created. The group brought the "House" down with their renditions of "Watermelon Man" and "Four". It blew our minds. Hopefully, we'll be seeing more of Foertsch, Gibilisco and Johnson.

The Hampton House of Jazz also provides a tasteful dinner menu. I enjoyed fried grouper, rice mixed with various cheeses, collard greens, and a basketful of hot hush puppies. The helpings were so generous that I had to pass up the hot peach cobbler. An added economical delight was the dinner prices were quite affordable.

We left the Hampton House in the middle of the second set which was just about 8:30 p.m. Early enough for those who must "meet the man" in the morning to obtain their rest.

So, for you jazz fans living, working, socializing and looking for great jazz music in the City of St. Petersburg, you don't have to travel very far to find it. It's right here in our own fabulous city. This week, I've only noted two clubs that feature great jazz, however, there are several others and I plan on making note of them in the coming weeks.

Now hear this ... JAZZ JAMM hereby issues its

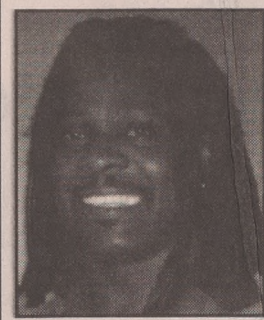
first JAZZ FAN MANDATE. As dedicated jazz fans, our mission is to get out and support our jazz clubs ... and other inner city businesses. Plan to visit the clubs I mention in the Jazz Jamm column. Take along a friend or friends. They'll be glad you did. Do it within the next week and continue to do so. Those of you, who belong to sorority, fraternal and other service or social associations, why don't you host your next affair, big or small, at the Club Excalibur or The Hampton House of Jazz. What better place to have your holiday dance, dinner or association meeting. If we lose our jazz clubs or other businesses by the wayside, WE'LL ONLY HAVE OURSELVES TO BLAME. It's our responsibility, and now our official JAZZ JAMM MANDATE to support our jazz clubs and to continue "KEEPING JAZZ ALIVE."

Did You Know? Jazz Musician Pseudonyms - (Excerpt from ejazzlines.com)

"The reason behind the deception appears to be relatively simple. When an artist is under exclusive contract with a particular label, but wishes to record a session for another label either as a leader or as a sideman, he must first be granted a release from the label for which he is under contract. There may be other reasons as well, such as an artist may simply wish to remain anonymous for personal reasons." Here are a few: Cannonball Adderley - Buckshot La Funke, Art Farmer - Kunst Bauer, Jackie McLean - Ferris Bender, Stan Kenton - Ken Stanton, Shelly Mann - Manny Shell, Phil Woods - Phil Forest, Jon Fadis - Gabriel Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie - John Birks, Nat King Cole - Lord Calvert, Charlie Parker - Charlie Chan.

UPCOMING JAZZ EVENTS: Happenings in St. Petersburg: Fri., Dec. 12, The Stan Hunter Jazz Trio at Peninsula Inn & Spa, Gulfport - 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 14, Ashwood's Live Jam Session at Club Excalibur - 7 p.m.

Happenings in Sarasota: Sponsor: The Jazz Club of Sarasota - (Bayfront Community Center) Fri., Dec. 12, Jazz at Two: Len Wyatt Jazz Group - 2 p.m., Sat., Dec. 13, Jazz Jam w/Bob Howland Jazz Quartet - 2 p.m., Fri., Dec. 19, Jazz at Two: Lenny Wilson Trio - 2 p.m. Sun., Dec. 21, Eric Darius & Belinda Womack at The Sarasota Opera House - 8 p.m. For info on all Sarasota Happenings: (941) 366-1552.



The
Grapevine
by
"Daddy V"
William Vaughn

"The Chocolate Nutcracker"

I find it mystical and appropriate at the same time that St. Petersburg is the host of the Chocolate Nutcracker - so full of culture, diversity and magic. This show made me feel proud to watch the young people of Tampa Bay complement an American tradition, "The Nutcracker."

The Chocolate Nutcracker had everything a ballet should on a professional level. Most of the cast consisted of St. Petersburg residents, our youth (yes! African Americans).

From months of auditions, transportation problems, carpools, mothers hustling from job to rehearsal, taking part this year with the children and a little praying, too, on opening night, they were ready. Great job, and we at *The Weekly Challenger* salute you all. The bottom line is that, no matter what, it was a success. Hats off to all!

Over 250 years ago in the Saxony region of Germany, the history of wooden nutcrackers appears in Bohemian and Polish folk tales. Most dictionaries reference the word "nutcracker" as two species of a bird in the crow family.

The tale, "The Nutcracker," has been revised over the centuries, even by a famous Russian, Ivan Alexandrovitch Vsevolozhsky (remember St. Petersburg, Russia). The story of the "Nutcracker" ballet, written by Deborah Hautzig, has again been revised with an ethnic flavor. "The Chocolate Nutcracker" started in Washington, D.C. (a.k.a. chocolate city). It is now in major cities - New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and St. Petersburg.

This ballet is on the rise, and it is rumored that a national tour may be in the works. I really would like to suggest that each city develop their city's own show. It would do a lot of good in every community, with the parents being involved with the children - team work (outside of the sports forum), which is a

little over-rated in our hood anyway!

"The Chocolate Nutcracker" opened Friday, Dec. 5, and will run through Dec. 8.

Act one opened with a scene from the 1950s Harlem, N.Y. Young Claire Stevens and her family welcome beloved friends and relatives into their home for their annual Christmas party. Uncle Earnest, her favorite, presents her with a special gift - a chocolate nutcracker.

Claire goes to sleep that night only to dream. Her journey is beckoned by the Dream Princess to travel the world with her on starlight. Terrified, Claire drops the chocolate nutcracker into a sea of serpents.

Suddenly, the chocolate nutcracker reappears and is transformed into a handsome prince. The three travel to third world countries - Africa, Egypt, Cuba and Brazil - through the second act as the many beautiful dance scenes - ballet, jazz, break dancing and hip-hop - unfold.

Excitement, colors, lights and mystery take you to a place of happiness and joy. I encourage the arts in our community. This ballet only happens once a year. It is a Christmas story you hope to see next year.

We need more positive events like this for the enrichment in theater for our own entertainment. I was once told that ballets, plays and entertainment are only mirrors of how we view ourselves in real life. This ballet says a lot about the things that the urban community in Tampa Bay has to offer.

We thank you, Ms. A (the organizer) for putting this event together and being a part of our hood. You heard it!

At right: Photographs of the exquisite event taken by Rassi.



Need help starting or managing a business?

Let the St. Petersburg Business Development Center assist you!

The Business Development Center offers free business counseling, technical assistance, and training to evolving and existing small businesses, and non-profit organizations involved in developing neighborhood-based businesses.

Our services include:

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- Business planning and loan counseling
- Entrepreneurial training
- Business loan resources
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Visit us at 1045 16th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL, or www.stpete.org; or call 727-893-7146 for an appointment or more information.



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- Ebony Harvey
Tampa, Florida

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RELIGIOUS NEWS

Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church

Hark the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn king!

The Mt. Zion Church family cordially invites all to fellowship with us as we embrace this special yuletide season. Let us hold fast to the truth of Christmas. That is, "Jesus is the reason for the season." Your presence would enrich our worship service, and our doors are always open to any of our weekly services.

Our early morning service begins at 7:30 a.m. with the Praise Team setting the tone for worship. The Inspirational Chorus will render song service throughout the day.

Church School commences at 9:30 a.m. Join us as we grow in the Word together.

A second service is held at 11 a.m. The power of the Holy Spirit will take us to new heights of worship. Pastor Williams will proclaim the Word of God with power. If you're seeking a church home, we welcome you to our church where the love of God is present.

Other weekly ministries include:

Monday - Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Wednesday - Early morning prayer, 6:30 a.m.; Vintage Bible Study, 11 a.m.; Men's Bible Study, 6 p.m.; Hour of Power, 7 p.m. If you're in need of a mid-week lift, join us for a power-packed hour. Your heart will be encouraged and your spirit

revived.

Upcoming events:

- The Drama Dept. is in full gear preparing for this year's Christmas play. Come out and enjoy great talent of all ages as the stars shine. The play will be held at Katherine Hickman Theatre, Gulfport, located at 5501 - 27th Ave. S., at 2 p.m. Bring the family out for an unforgettable afternoon.

- Make plans to join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Dec. 24 at 6 p.m. Join us as we prepare for "Jesus's birth." The best present for Christmas is His presence!

- Watch Night Service on Dec. 31 at 10 p.m. As we draw near to the end of a year, we want to give thanks for all God has done. Let's come together and bring the new year in praising the most high God, for He's worth of all our praise!

We'd love to have you at anytime.

Thought for the week: "Little sin can add up to big trouble."

Be blessed, and have a Jesus-filled week!

PRAYER HELPS

Zion Hill Mortuary, Inc.

The management and staff of Zion Hill Mortuary cordially invite the St. Petersburg and Bay area communities to share in our 6th Annual Candlelight Memorial Service and reception. This service is held in honor of the memory of your deceased loved ones.

Emmanuel

The Lord is yet blessing us in his word at Emmanuel. We invite each of you to worship with us at 3501 - 37th St. South, you are always welcome, and we are yet in prayer for the great things that are yet to come in Christ Jesus. Our prayers are with Minister Rebecca Evans,

This service will take place Sunday, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m. at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 13207 - 128th St. N., Largo, where Rev. Willie McDaniels is pastor.

If you have questions, please call Zion Hill Mortuary at (727) 328-0466.

for a speedy recovery, Sis Gloria Daniels. We are yet accepting your donations toward our building fund. You may mail them to: P.O. Box 15993, St. Pete. FL 33733

Remember Jesus is soon to come. Let's Be Ready!!!

Forget not the Lord and His many blessings!

The Lord looks down from heaven, He sees all the sons of men. - Psalm 33

Mt. Zion Progressive

Cub Scout Parent Breakfast and Registration, 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. on Dec. 20. Anyone wanting to volunteer and have fun, come out to MZPMBC. Please meet with us in the fellowship hall.

Lakewood Junior Spartan Awards Night, Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m. Awards will be given to cheerleaders and football players in our community.

Mt. Zion will be having its annual Christmas Program Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. All are cordially invited to come worship with us. Bring the family and a friend.

Calling all experienced Drummers!!! We need you for two big performances: Sunday, Jan. 18 and Monday, Jan. 19. Please call Everard Harris at (727) 866-1034 for details.

Mt. Zion's Youth Ministry needs volunteers for Wednesday Nights, please call Bro. Troy Gidron at (727) 864-3550 for further details.

Calling all RN's, CNA's and LPN's. The Wellness Ministry is organizing the component of the Nurses Guild to their Ministry. Please contact Sister Carolyn Swanson at (727) 825-6692 or fill out a form located in the Church foyer.

Mt. Zion Before & After School Care Program for ages 5-13 is also accepting applications. We offer pick up & drop

off to school each morning & afternoon, early pick up on half days, and all day care most school holidays. For before and aftercare rates, call Jan Smith, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at (727) 894-4311, ext. 402.

The Reading Enhancement Program - applications for children/students that are interested in the program are being accepted. Teachers and volunteers are needed to assist in areas such as monitoring, preparing for FCAT one-on-one teaching, picking up supplies and kitchen help. Classes meet every Tuesday and Thursday for ages 8-13 from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. in the Kings Kids Building.

Updated Pickup Info: The church van will be happy to give you a ride. We pick up Sunday through Thursday. Please try to notify us one day in advance. For regular pick up please leave a message with the church office at (727) 894-4311 ext. 801. For emergency pick up ONLY, call Coa-Coa Rivers at (727) 550-0396, or Brother Peter Smith at (727) 895-9261. WE ARE IN NEED OF VAN DRIVERS.

In observance of the Christmas Holidays, the administrative offices will be closed Dec. 24 - Jan. 2.

Bethel A.M.E. Church Celebrates the Holiday Season

Historical Bethel A.M.E. Church, located at 912 Third Ave. N., under the leadership of the Rev. Roosevelt Hardy, is preparing to celebrate its holiday season. Since Nov. 30 during morning worship service, the Christian Education department has presented the Advent Story to the congregation. Members of the internal church departments participate by lighting the respective Advent candle as well as the corresponding scripture.

In addition to the Advent service, the Music Department, under the direction of Maurice Jackson, Minister of Music, will host a Christmas Holiday Musical entitled: "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord." This event will be held on Sunday, Dec. 14, beginning at 5 p.m. The holiday musical will feature visiting musicians, vocalists, hymns, and songs celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please plan to attend this magnificent holiday extravaganza.

On Sunday, Dec. 21 at 9 a.m., during Church School hour, the Youth Church Ministry will present their annual Christmas program, entitled "If I Had Been There." This Christmas program will feature recitations, songs and scriptural readings, as well as, a special presentation by the Liturgical Dance Group under the direction of

Jackie Jackson.

Members of Bethel have carved a motto stating that, "We are busy as bees and sweet as honey." In keeping with our theme, we invite you to attend the following ministries on a weekly and monthly basis:

- 8 a.m. each Sunday morning - Feeding Ministry and Bible Study
- 9 a.m. - Church School
- 10:30 a.m. - Morning Worship Service
- 5:30-7 p.m. - Monday & Wednesday - Youth Church Ministry
- 7 p.m. - Tuesday evening - Bible Study
- 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. - Wednesday Music Ministry
- Transportation and Homeless Ministries

For additional information on the ministries and church activities, please contact the Church Secretary at (727) 822-2089, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

"God is good, His goodness endureth throughout all generations..."

Bethel A.M.E. Church, Young People's Division of the Mary Anne Jones Women's Missionary Society, invites you to attend "Night of Praise Celebration."

Join us in an evening of Liturgical praise on Dec. 18 at 6 p.m.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Greater Light AME Zion Church

1400 9th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33705
(727) 823-3611

TuesdayBible Study 7 p.m.
FridayEvangelistic Service 7 p.m.

Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship - 11 a.m.

Pastor Dr. Henry Jones

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Except God build the house they labor in vain that build it. Ps. 127:1

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Morning Worship 10:30
Evening Worship 6:30
Wed. - Pray 7:00
Bible Study 7:30

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Church: 867-4144

Pastor: Elder Franklin Evans

Co-Pastor: Sis. Rebecca L. Evans
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:15 a.m.
Bible Study (Monday) 7:00 p.m.
Youth Bible Study (Tuesday) 6:30 p.m.
Prayer (Wednesday) 6:30 p.m.
Prayer (Tues. & Thurs.) 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Prayer (Sat.) 6:00 a.m.

"All Are Welcome" • "Bring A Friend"



Moore's Chapel AME Church

Rev. James T. Blount - Pastor

Sunday Worship - 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School (all ages) - 9:30 a.m.

Noon Day Prayer/Bible Study - Wednesday - 12:00 p.m.

Bible Study - Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.

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(727) 321-3545

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The members would like to invite you and your family to worship with us. Our services are:
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Weds.-Family Worship 7:00pm
Sunday School 10:00am
Sunday Morning Worship 11:15am
Sunday Evening Worship 7:00pm

Pastor: Elder B.O. Walker



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1732 9th Avenue South
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(727) 896-4356

Elder A.P. Conage, Pastor

8:00 A.M. - Sunday Service
9:30 A.M. - Sunday School
11:00 A.M. - Morning Service

9:00 A.M. - Tuesday Prayer
7:00 P.M. - Tuesday Bible Study
7:30 P.M. - Thursday Pastoral Teaching

YPWW First and Third Sunday of Each Month after Morning Service

New Covenant Baptist Church

3850 Pompano Drive SE,
Coquina Key
St. Petersburg, FL 33705
Ph: 865-9636

Pastor,
Joseph Bobby Reid

Prayer/Praise Service
7:30 p.m. Wednesday
Bible Study
8:00 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday School
9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.

Good Samaritan Baptist Church

1820 - 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33712
Ph: (727) 821-3265



The Rev. Larry Williams,
Pastor

The congregation would like to invite you and your family to worship with us. Come as you are!

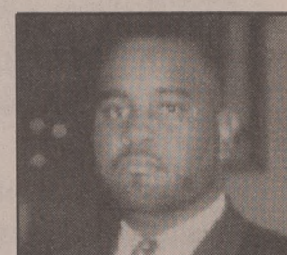
Sunday Service8:45 A.M.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

"The Church of Love, Healing and Restoration"

ST. MARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

1301 - 37th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL

Schedule of Services
Church School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Baptist Training Union 5 p.m.
Evening Worship 6:30 p.m.
Prayer Meeting
Thursday 7 p.m.



Rev. Brian K. Brown

"One week from church makes one weak."

Moore's Chapel A.M.E

We are into the Advent Season. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent.

Pastor James T. Blount, Officers and Members of Moore's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church cordially invite you to worship with us during this Advent Season. Our doors always swing wide on the hinges of "Christian Love and Fellowship."

Our worship services begin at 7:45 a.m. & 11 a.m. Church School is 9:15 a.m. We continue to encourage our members to participate in the various ministries of the church.

The spirit was very high and members and visitors were given the word from the Lord by Pastor Blount at both services. The Inspirational

Choir, under the direction of Minister of Music - Michael Melvin, provided the musical stimulus, which enhanced the worship services. Holy Communion was served at both services.

The Men's Day Committee, Edgar White, Sr. Chair, along with Thomas Grant, Mallory Williams, Lucius Bryant & Issac Grant, had a beautiful Prayer Breakfast-Saturday, Dec. 6 at the James T. Sanderlin Center. It was the Kick-Off to the beginning of the Men's Day Activities for the Celebration, which will culminate-Feb. 22.

The attendance was very good and the menu was likewise. Prayers were offered by Sister Teresa Hall- For our Families, Sister Phyllis Dorsey- Mount Zion A.M.E.- Four our Community and Sister Maggie Jordan- Queeb Street C.O.G.I.C.- For our Armed Forces.

Other program partici-

Travelers' Rest Missionary Baptist Church

Welcome to Travelers' Rest, the church where Christ is the center of attraction and the Word of God is preached.

"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28 NIV)

Order of worship services are: 8 a.m. Contemporary; 9:30 a.m. Sunday School where classes are available for all ages and 11 a.m. Traditional Worship.

Church family and all ministry leaders are requested to donate poinsettia to adorn the pulpit for the holidays. Members are also asked to support our Fellowship, Food and Family Fun on Sunday, Dec. 21.

Sunday School teachers

are reminded of teacher's meeting on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. Interested persons are welcomed and encouraged to study the lessons together.

Weekly Activities:

Thur., Dec. 11: 11 a.m. Mid-Day Bible Ministry (In-depth study of the Scriptures and Nursing Home Visitation)

7 p.m. Konsonant Choir Rehearsal with Mrs. Barbara Davis, musician

Fri., Dec. 12: 6 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal

Sat., Dec. 13: 10 a.m. Sunday School Teachers' Meeting

Mon., Dec. 15: 5:30 p.m. Youth Department Choir Rehearsal and Bible Study

Wed., Dec. 17: 7-7:30

p.m. Prayer of Intercessory (all Ministry Leaders)

7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Bible Study. (Teacher, Pastor D. F. Browne)

We extend an invitation to all to fellowship with us. If you are new to the area and looking for a church home we invite you to joyfully fellowship and become a part of God's family.

Needing transportation and information concerning worship services, please contact us at (727) 822-4869.

Have a blessed week in the LORD!

Christmas is Brighter Because My Stewardship Is Enlightened

The Lay Department "Touch Group" of Stewart-Isom Memorial C.M.E. Church, 1820 Walton Street South presents an Epiphany "Christmas is Brighter Because My Stewardship is Enlightened" to be held on Saturday Dec. 13 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. This day will be a day of enjoyment for children, young adults and adults. No age will be left out of this exciting activity.

Breakfast will be served at 9:30 a.m. and from there join the round table covering such subjects as: Young and In Christ, Winning People to Christ, Persistent and Consistent, Tithing-Giving-Pledging. The moderator for the round table is Pastor A. Anthony Robinson. Lunch will be served.

Trinity Presbyterian Church Gives Back

The Women's Organization of Trinity and its congregation in conjunction with First Presbyterian Church purchased 42 Angel Tree gifts. The gifts were purchased by individual families and committees of the churches.

The churches are networking with Angel Tree Ministries who ask for spon-

sors who will provide Christmas gifts for children of prisoners.

Gifts will be delivered from Dec. 21 through Dec. 23 by members of Trinity's Men's Organization.

Coordinators for the Angel Tree Ministries are Barbara Jefferson and Gladys Cummings. Betty Simpson is the coordinator for First

Presbyterian Church. The president of the Women's Organization is Jacqueline Ward-Williams.

The president of the Men's Organization is Michael Clarke. The Rev. Myron Miller is the interim Pastor at Trinity. Trinity is located at 2830 - 22nd Avenue So.


Dear Father, You Have Given So Much; Give One Thing More - A Grateful Heart.

WHEN LIFE KNOCKS YOU TO YOUR KNEES, YOU'RE IN THE PERFECT POSITION TO PRAY!

GOD BLESS AMERICA

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Christ Gospel Church
2512 22nd Ave. S.
St. Pete, FL 33712
327-0997
Rev. P.D.H. Leonard
Pastor



SUNDAY
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY
Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY
Evangelical Service 7:30 p.m.

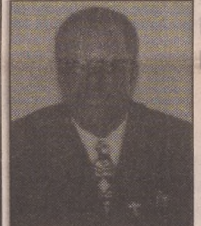
PRAYER TIMES
Tuesdays, Fridays & Sundays - half an hour before service.
Mondays & Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.
Friday nights at midnight.
RADIO BROADCAST
Sundays 7:45 a.m.

If you would like to come to church and do not have a way, call 327-0997.

The Church Where Everyone Is Welcome

Greater St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church
532 33rd Street S. • St. Petersburg, FL

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship ... 6 p.m.
Baptist Training Union 5 p.m.


Rev. Clyde Williams

Tuesday Night
General Bible Study
Thursday Night Prayer
Meeting & Teachers Meeting

We welcome you at all times.


Friendship Missionary Baptist

3300 - 31st Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 906-8300


Pastor John A. Evans

Sunday 7:45 AM and 11 AM Worship
Sunday School 9:30 AM
Tuesday 7 PM Youth Church Enrichment
Wednesday Noonday Bible Study and Bread of Life
7 PM Prayer and Bible Study

20th Street Church Of Christ
820 20th Street South
St. Pete, FL
Home: 896-8006


Bro. Robert Smith

Sunday Morning Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday 7:00 p.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Lake Maggiore Baptist Church

4100 Dr. Martin Luther King Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33705
727-894-5315 • Fax: 727-894-5315
Email: www.lakemaggiore_c@yahoo.com
John A. Evans
Minister In Training


Pastor Ronald Fluker and wife, Shana


Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Night Disciple Training 6:00 p.m.
Sunday Night Worship 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer/Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

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Pastor

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New Member Class 9:00 A.M.
Morning Worship 10:30 A.M.
Prayer / Bible Study Tuesday 7:00 P.M.
Youth Bible Study Thursday 6:00 P.M.

Pentecostal Temple Church of God in Christ
2230 - 22nd Street S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 894-6764 • (727) 550-0388
Elder William E. Anderson, Pastor



Morning Glory Sunday 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:30 a.m.
Community Bible Study Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
Prayer & Bible Study Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer Saturday 5:45 a.m.

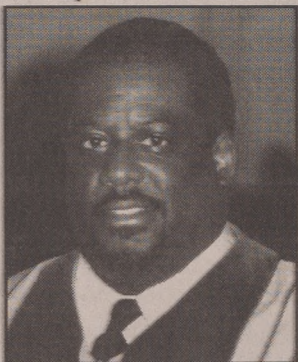
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ST. PETERSBURG, FL
PHONE: 323-7518

REV. WAYNE G. THOMPSON, PASTOR

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MORNING WORSHIP - 11:00 A.M.

COME WORSHIP WITH THE FIRST BAPTIST FAMILY





Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church

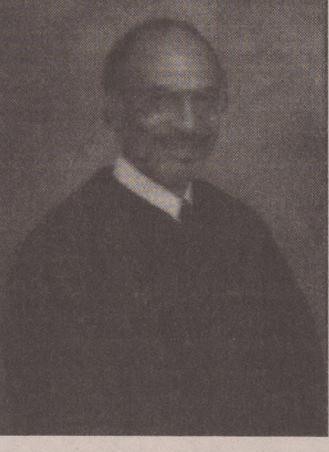
3455 26th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33711

Telephone (727) 327-0554 • Fax (727) 327-0240
E-mail: bchurch5@tampabay.rr.com

Morning Worship: 8:00 and 11:00 A.M.
Sunday School - 9:30 A.M.
Wednesday: Prayer Meeting/Bible Study/ AWANA - 7:00 P.M.

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St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Church Phone: 822-4869
Residence: 824-6021


Rev. Donald F. Browne


Mid-Morning Worship Service . 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Prayer/Praise Service (Wed.)

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955 - 20th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Phone: 894-4311
www.mzprogressive.org
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service: 8:00 a.m. • 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, Prayer Meeting: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Bible Study: 8:00-9:00 p.m. (Adult and Youth)


Pastor Louis M. Murphy, Sr.

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Tampa, FL 33603

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.;
Wednesday evening at 6:30
p.m. for Prayer Service, and 7
p.m. for Bible study. The # 2
Ushers, Youth and Angelic
Choirs will serve.

The Missionary Society of Bethel will observe their "Evening in White" on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. The Reverend Frank Peterman Jr., Pastor of Rock of Jesus Missionary Baptist Church will bring the message. We extend to you an invitation to share with us in this reverent service of praise.

Bethel Metropolitan is a friendly family in Christ striving to give a positive Christian witness for 100 years. Our doors are always open to those who desire to be travelers of this Christian journey.

Metropolitan

Reverend Frank Peterman Jr.
Pastor of Rock of Jesus
Missionary Baptist Church
will bring the message. We
extend to you an invitation to
share with us in this reverent
service of praise.

Forget not the Lord and
His many blessings!

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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broken body...repair a
severed relationship...or
restore a joy that has
been lost**

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Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.

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Communion is observed quarterly the first Sunday after every 5th Sunday.
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International Headquarters, Anderson, Indiana

Rev. Johnnie Lee Williams, Pastor

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Church School.....9:30 a.m. | Wednesday Youth |
| Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m. | Rehearsal.....5:30 p.m. |
| B.T.U.....5:00 p.m. | Thursday Prayer & Church |
| Evening Worship..... 6:00 p.m. | School Study.....7:30 p.m. |
| Tuesday Evening | 1st & 2nd Saturdays SR. |
| Bible Class.....7:30 p.m. | Choir Rehearsal.....11:00 a.m. |

Rev. Earnest Jones,
Pastor

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Sunday Service | 8:00 a.m. |
| Sunday School | 9:30 a.m. |
| Morning Worship | 11:00 a.m. |
| Baptist Training Union | 5:00 p.m. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Deacon Ministry | Deacon Edward Nesbitt |
| Finance Ministry | James Robinson |
| Children & Youth Ministry | Joyce Robinson |
| Clerk Ministry | Wyvonna McGee |

Pete, FL
Elder Clarence Welch, Pastor
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Service 11:30 a.m.
YPWW 5:30 p.m. Sunday
Church Service 6:30 p.m. Sunday
Night Services 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday Services 7:30 p.m.

Bible Study: Thursday 7:00 p.m.

Phillipians 3:14 "I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"

STATE NEWS

Orange County Votes to Restore Black Cemetery

ORLANDO (AP) — A long-neglected cemetery for blacks will be restored over the objections of environmentalists who say the work will destroy rare native plants that cover some of the forgotten graves.

Orange County commissioners voted 6-1 last Tuesday to upgrade Garden of Rest cemetery. The county bought the cemetery in 1961, during times of segregation, to serve Orange's black community. Some 363 people were buried there, the most recent in 1987.

"We have much to be proud of for the work we've done for the environment...but we have to put respect for the dead as the higher priority," County Chairman Rich Crotty said.

Gravestones that once marked resting places inexplicably disappeared over the years and county officials now have no idea who lies where.

An assortment of rare native plants and shrubs have flourished on the land. Stands of rosemary, scrub morning glory, shiny blueberry, scrub holly, pinweed and palaflox now cover

much of the cemetery, along with invasive weeds and vines.

The plan involves covering the gravesite areas with 6 inches of fill dirt after the shrubs, wildflowers and ground mosses are removed; installing an irrigation system and sod; and building an access road.

The plan will destroy the habitat, conservationists said.

"We aren't saying one is better than another, we're saying there's a way the two can coexist," said Eugene Stoccardo of the Florida Native Plant Society.

ciety.

Environmentalists proposed a compromise that would have restored half the site and preserved the other half.

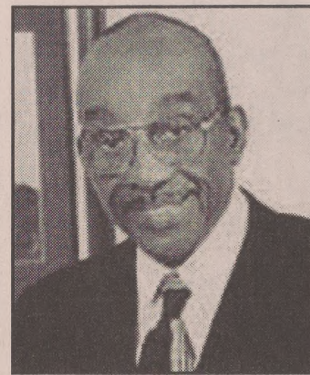
The restoration will cost \$208,000, but will include opening up another 1,900 burial plots for future use, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported.

The county also will spend \$16,000 to perform tests to determine if there are other, unknown bodies buried at the cemetery.

B-CC Receives Federal Assistance for Student Union Center/Community Service Center

DAYTONA BEACH — Enabling an expansion of its community outreach service programs, Bethune-Cookman College (B-CC) has been scheduled to receive \$497,040 in federal assistance through a spending measure filed in the United States Congress. The funds will go toward the College's efforts to develop a Community Services Center and new Student Union Center.

The college has a long history of providing volunteer services to the Daytona Beach Community. A recent economic impact study conducted by economist Mark Soskin notes that the college contributes in excess of 500,000 hours to community organizations and agencies through the volunteer efforts of its



Dr. Oswald P. Bronson

students, staff and faculty.

"Investing in the leaders and workforce of our next generation is one of the most important contributions Congress can make to the future well-being of the United States," said Congressman Mica in a release issued by his Washington, D.C., office.

In late 2002 the college purchased the former Gary Yeomans Ford building on

International Speedway Blvd. with the intent to retrofit the property into a community services center and student union center, which is estimated to cost \$15 million. The building is located adjacent to public housing units, which are slated to undergo major renovation under the Hope VI project.

The College's community services activities are presently housed on a space available basis around the 70-acre campus. The present Student Union Building, built in 1966 to accommodate a student population of 900, has outlived its usefulness for a student body that today numbers a record 2,794.

"With the completion of the Center, activities can be consolidated to improve

accessibility, efficiency and increase the number of individuals served by the College," said Dr. Oswald P. Bronson, Sr, B-CC president. "Bethune-Cookman College is extremely grateful to Congressman Mica and those who worked with him to secure these funds to enable us to increase our contributions to the community."

The Student Union Center/Community Service Center will allow the College to further its health volunteer service programs and better aid local residents seeking satisfactory health care assistance.

For more information, contact the school's website www.bethune.cookman.edu

Florida Regulators Set to Consider Record Phone Rate Hike

by David Royce

Associated Press Writer

TALLAHASSEE (AP) — Who's your local phone company? It's a familiar question in a world where local phone service is generally a regulated monopoly.

But perhaps more than anytime since Alexander Graham Bell unveiled his "electric speech machine" the phone industry is changing. For cell phone customers and Internet users, that's been obvious for some time. But the change may be about to come to Florida's local phone market.

In the first test of what that change will mean for everyday consumers, the state's three largest local phone companies are asking regulators to let them increase basic rates by up to nearly \$7 a month - the largest increase ever.

In what began last Wednesday, the Public Service Commission is involved in a three-day session of hearings to decide whether BellSouth, Sprint and Verizon should be granted the rate hike. The proposal is part of a broader plan to move phone service into a whole different realm - one where companies compete for customers like they do in the cell phone market, instead of having geographical monopolies.

The companies want that because, ultimately, it would mean they could make more money if they're good at what they do, because they could go into other areas and pick off customers. BellSouth, for example, could creep into Verizon's territory and try and lure residents away.

Consumer advocates - including the AARP, the behemoth lobby for senior citizens - oppose the change and argue that cheap local phone service has long been essentially a basic right. After all, it's the link to the police and fire departments.

But the phone companies counter that the change will open up the local phone market and the competition will quickly drive down prices.

"We think a free market always benefits consumers more than a regulated market," said Bob Elek, a spokesman for Verizon, which currently is the local phone company serving the Tampa Bay area.

The companies also say the proposed increase would be offset by lower long distance rates. The Legislature passed a law this year allowing the companies to ask the PSC for higher local rates, but only if they eliminate a fee they collect from long distance providers for using local lines. The long distance companies would be expected to pass that savings on to their customers.

But consumer advocates question whether long distance companies will pass on savings to residential customers, saying they instead might give the savings to business customers.

"There isn't any evidence in the whole stinking case... to show that there's going to be any net savings or even breaking-even for the residential customer," said Mike Twomey, a consumer lawyer representing AARP.

Florida's new Public

Counsel, the lawyer appointed by the Legislature to be consumers' chief advocate before the PSC, is also fighting the rate increase.

"The companies have not shown that their proposed local rate increases will be offset by corresponding long distance rate reductions benefiting residential customers," said Harold McLean, who announced last week he was joining the case.

Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist is also opposed to allowing higher rates - for the same reason.

Several commissioners have suggested they won't approve any rate hike without assurance from the long distance companies that any savings they see would be passed on to consumers in local rates.

The long distance companies have filed testimony with the PSC they say outlines the basics of their proposal to lower rates - but their plans are sealed for competitive reasons.

Phone companies want a deregulated marketplace for a variety of reasons. In addition to the prospect of finding more customers, any time big companies can win less regulation they generally will. They're also being pushed by a federal law generally requiring more competition.

And the companies argue the chief barrier to competition is the low rates they're forced to charge local customers. They say it actually costs them much more to provide the service than they make.

Charles Rehwinkel, state vice president for Sprint, said statewide the

average cost to provide local service is about \$30. But the average charge is about \$16.50. That discrepancy closes the door for would-be competitors.

"AT&T wants to get in the local market," said Rehwinkel. "They can't go in and enter the market and meet that cost. Moving these price points up means it improves the business case for them."

Consumer advocates such as Twomey argue that there's plenty of money to be made for new companies that want to provide local service - by selling services like caller ID or call-waiting.

The local phone companies counter that not everyone buys those features.

At any rate, all the reasons why may be technical and, for now, the only thing consumers may see is whether their local bill goes up. Some phone companies acknowledge the explanation may not appease people if they don't quickly see some sort of benefit.

There is a Reason to Read *The Weekly Challenger*



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NATIONAL NEWS

Recent In-Kind Donations Benefit Work at Hale House



The toddlers in residence at the Hale House are dressed in their recently-donated famous duds, thanks to the HBO series, "Sex and the City."

photo by Lori Moon

HARLEM, N.Y. — Hale House, a non-profit organization that cares for babies whose parents struggle with addiction, illness, incarceration or homelessness, recently received several generous in-kind gifts including children's shoes, books, games and toys from a variety of non-profit and corporate organizations across the country.

Dr. Lawrence F. Davenport, executive director and CEO of Hale House, accepted the donations on behalf of the Harlem-based charity, saying, "We greatly appreciate these new supplies, books, clothing

and games. They fill a need for the children for whom we care and we are so grateful to our supporters and advocates. With their continued help, we can further Mother Hale's important vision."

Donations to Hale House included:

- Three bags full of donated overalls, jeans, shirts, hats and sneakers from Silvercup Studios, which produces the HBO series "Sex and the City." The clothes were used by Cynthia Nixon's on-screen baby Brady Hobbes and then donated - all in triplicate - after a producer read about Hale House's turn-

ate books, three floor puzzles/games from Gina Scauzillo & Handprint Books of Brooklyn, N.Y.;

- Handmade knit and fleece hats, new clothes, socks and toys from Vershell Hayes at Us Helping Some, located in Baltimore, Md.; and

- Sixteen pairs of women's shoes used in a photo shoot to be given to the mothers of Hale House children from African-American fashion designer Stephen Burrows, who was inducted into the Fashion Hall of Fame in 2002.

Today, Hale House - with its new leadership team headed by Dr. Lawrence Davenport - continues to be an important part of the Harlem community, and is currently expanding its programs to include developmental childcare programs at two new learning centers.

For more information on Hale House or how to donate, contact by mail at 152 West 122nd Street, New York, NY 10027, by email to info@halehouse.org, by phone at 212-663-0700 x402 or online at www.halehouse.org.

- A box of new Scholastic books from Hello Friend/Ennis William Cosby Foundation for Scholastic's "Classrooms Care" Program;
- Three boxes of books from Child Magazine;
- Thirty-four pairs of shoes, 80 outfits and numerous books decorated with the current cast of Nickelodeon and Nick Jr. cartoon characters from Nickelodeon of New York City;
- Ten handmade quilts and two knit hats from the Zion United Church of Christ of Burlington, Iowa;
- Thirty age-appropri-

Sharpton — from front pg.

the Reverend 200,000 dollars, plus hospital bills totaling \$7,447.76 to settle the suit.

The incident took place on Jan. 12, 1991. The Rev. Sharpton had been in Bensonhurst to protest the killing of Yusuf Hawkins when the attacker plunged a knife into his chest one inch from the heart. The attack took place in an area frozen by the police for protection.

Hawkins was killed by a mob on Aug. 23 during a visit to Bensonhurst with three friends to look at a

used car. He was surrounded and taunted with racial threats by a group of thirty youths armed with bats, pieces of wood and at least one gun. Hawkins, shot solely because he was black, died from two gunshot wounds from a 32 caliber handgun.

The Rev. Sharpton led 20 protests in Bensonhurst from Aug. 27 until the day he was stabbed. Protesters were called niggers and savages, they were spat upon and had watermelons hurled at them. Over this period of time, Rev. Sharpton received threats by phone and mail. Despite a warning by the

District Attorney Charles Hinds of a plot to whack the civil rights leader if he marches, Rev. Sharpton carried through with the protest march but under police protection.

As Sharpton walked from his car within a frozen zone secured by over a hundred police and within feet of police chief Gallagher, Michael Riccardi managed to stab him. Sharpton recalls a figure with a contorted look on his face passing in a blur, then noticed the knife in his chest out of the corner of his eye, and saying "oh my God he stabbed me" before pulling it out and cover-

ing the wound with his hand because blood was pouring from his chest.

The agreement came as jury selection was to begin in Kings County Supreme Court before Judge Leon Ruchelsman. Atty. Sanford Rubenstein pronounced the settlement fair and said "I am pleased that after this long period of time that Reverend Sharpton does not have to relive this nightmare. While we were prepared to go to trial, it is fortunate that a settlement has been reached".

Slaying — from front pg.

The motive is significant and could determine where the case would be prosecuted and at what level.

James Alan Fox, a criminal justice professor at Northeastern University in Massachusetts, described several potential legal scenarios in the case. Lancaster County could end up with it if there is no proof of kidnapping.

The case could come under federal jurisdiction if Luna was brought across state lines involuntarily or if the killing had anything to do with Luna's job, Fox said. Federal authorities could seek the death penalty, if kidnapping led to Luna's murder. There also is a death penalty statute for a fatal carjacking.

Totaro said he would meet Monday with Thomas

DiBiagio, the U.S. attorney in Maryland who was Luna's boss, to discuss strategy in the joint investigation.

Meanwhile, the FBI in Baltimore released a statement Saturday saying federal agents continued to work with the Pennsylvania State Police and numerous other law enforcement agencies in the investigation.

"All I can say is we are putting as many resources as we possibly can in the FBI, along with other supporting agencies, and we are working around the clock, non-stop, and we will continue to do so," Foust said.

Luna, 38, was attacked after leaving his office in Baltimore around midnight last Wednesday.

His body was found Thursday morning with 36 stab wounds. Even though he had been repeatedly stabbed, possibly with a penknife, he died from

drowning, Lancaster County coroner Barry Walp said.

Walp said there were no "defensive" wounds on Luna's hands or arms that typically indicate a struggle. Instead, the attacker inflicted numerous shallow cuts and a few deeper punctures primarily to Luna's chest and neck that "lacerated" major vessels and caused internal hemorrhaging, Walp said.

"I don't think there was any defensive struggle," said Walp, who did an external examination of the body. "He could have been subdued" when the wounds were inflicted.

A federal official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Friday that the wounds were defensive.

X-ray and toxicology reports are still pending and the body will remain in the coroner's office until the

family tells him to whom they would like it released, Walp said.

Luna's car was found nearby Luna's body with blood on the driver's side door and fender, a large pool of blood on the floor, and money and cell phone equipment scattered inside, according to a police search warrant affidavit. The affidavit also said Luna had a "traumatic wound" on the right side of his head.

The day before his death, Luna had worked out plea deals with attorneys for two men accused of running a violent heroin ring from a rap studio. He also had recently prosecuted a man who plotted to burn down a home to force six Mexican men out of a neighborhood and three men involved in a violent crack distribution network. All the defendants entered guilty pleas.

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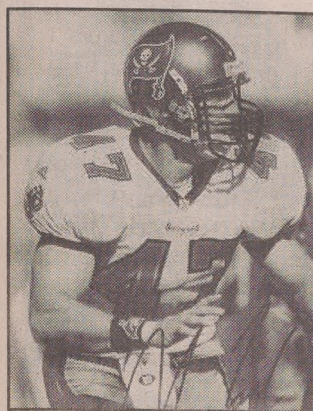


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SPORTS NEWS

Lynch Selected as One of 32 Finalists for 2003 Walter Payton Man of the Year Award



John Lynch

Thirty-two players are vying for the 2003 title of WALTER PAYTON MAN OF THE YEAR, the only league award that recognizes player off-the-field community service as well as playing excellence. This year's finalists — one player from each NFL team — have demonstrated an outstanding balance in their lives between civic and professional responsibilities.

The winner will be announced January 30 during NFL Commissioner PAUL TAGLIABUE's annual news conference prior to Super Bowl

XXXVIII in Houston, Texas.

The prestigious award was renamed in 1999 for the legendary Chicago Bears Pro Football Hall of Fame running back. The Walter Payton Man of the Year Award has been given annually since 1970.

The winner is selected by an elite panel of judges including Commissioner Tagliabue, Sports Illustrated writer PETER KING, CONNIE PAYTON (wife of the late Walter Payton), and former players FRANK GIFFORD, JACK KEMP, JOHN MACKEY, and last year's award winner, Philadelphia Eagles cornerback TROY VINCENT.

The winner will receive \$25,000 to donate to his selected charity. Each finalist will receive a \$1,000 contribution towards a charity of his choice.

2003 WALTER PAYTON MAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

TEAM/PLAYER/POSITION

Arizona Cardinals - LeVar Woods - LB
Atlanta Falcons - Warrick Dunn - RB
Baltimore Ravens - Ray Lewis - LB
Buffalo Bills - Brian Moorman - P
Carolina Panthers - Mike Rucker - DE
Chicago Bears - Phillip Daniels - DE
Cincinnati Bengals - Tony Stewart - TE
Cleveland Browns - Kelly Holcomb - QB
Dallas Cowboys - Darren Woodson - S
Denver Broncos - Ian Gold - LB
Detroit Lions - Robert Porcher - DE
Green Bay Packers - Aaron Kampman - DE
Houston Texans - Jamie Sharper - LB
Indianapolis Colts - David Thornton - LB
Jacksonville Jaguars - Akin Ayodele - LB
Kansas City Chiefs - Will Shields - G
Miami Dolphins -

Shawn Wooden - S
Minnesota Vikings - Matt Birk - C
New England Patriots - Joe Andruzzi - G
New Orleans Saints - Michael Lewis - WR-KR
New York Giants - Amani Toomer - WR
New York Jets - Marvin Jones - LB
Oakland Raiders - Akbar Gbaja-Biamila - DE
Philadelphia Eagles - Donovan McNabb - QB
Pittsburgh Steelers - Dwayne Washington - CB
St. Louis Rams - Grant Wistrom - DE
San Diego Chargers - Donnie Edwards - LB
San Francisco 49ers - Terrell Owens - WR
Seattle Seahawks - Matt Hasselbeck - QB
Tampa Bay Buccaneers - John Lynch - S
Tennessee Titans - Kevin Carter - DE
Washington Redskins - Darnerien McCants - WR

Selecting the Right Hoop

(NAPSI)-Basketball is one of America's hottest sports.

With its growing popularity come more equipment options. Today, you have portable basketball systems, in-grounds and backboard and rim combination units to select from. Which option is right for you and your family? Here's a quick overview:

- **Portables:** Approximately 80 percent of all hoops sold today are portable. Portable systems feature a base filled with water or sand for stability. The portable base rolls on wheels, allowing players to position the basketball system in a desired location. Simply assemble, fill the base and play today.

- **In-Grounds:** An in-ground system is cemented into the ground. Some come with ground sleeves, which allow you to remove the system if you move. Ground sleeves are available as an accessory if your system does not come equipped. In-ground systems tend to be more rigid and take up less space than portables.

- **Backboard & Rim Combos:** A backboard and rim combination unit attaches to your home, garage or an existing basketball pole. A mounting

bracket must be purchased if you're planning to mount the backboard to your home, garage or other structure. It's not necessary if mounting to an existing pole.

Once you've determined which system is best for you, make sure you follow these important safety tips when setting up your hoop:

- Make sure you read and understand all instructions and warnings issued by the manufacturer.

- If digging is required, call the utility company or Diggers Hotline to make sure you don't hit any underground cables or electrical wires.

- Watch for overhead telephone and cable wires. Assume all wires are live.

- If you purchase a portable system, set it up and play in a safe area away from traffic. Never place the system in a street, alley or sidewalk area.

By following these simple steps when selecting and installing your basketball system, you and your family will have years of fun and safe play. For more information, call or visit the Web site of the company who manufactures your basketball system.

Buccaneers Sign Two to Practice Squad

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers announced that they have signed DE Corey Smith and LB Justin Smith to the practice squad and released RB Earnest Graham from the practice roster.

DE Corey Smith played in five games last season with the Buccaneers before being placed on the Injured Reserve list on Nov. 28, 2002. He originally joined the team as an undrafted free agent on April 22, 2002. He was released by Tampa Bay earlier this year on Aug. 31.

LB Justin Smith, who has split time the last two seasons between Tampa Bay's active and practice rosters, has played in two games this season. He was released from the active roster by the Buccaneers on Dec. 6.

Graham, who originally joined the Buccaneers as an undrafted free agent on April 28, 2003, re-signed with the team on the practice squad on Dec. 3. He was earlier released (injury settlement) from the active roster on Aug. 22 after playing in two preseason games in 2003.

See Both SPC Teams in Action This Friday

The season's only doubleheader for St. Petersburg College's basketball teams is Friday (Dec. 12) when the women meet Atlanta's Clark State College followed by a men's game against Broward Community College.

Coach William "Hammer" Smith's squad will take the floor at 5 p.m. against Clark, hoping to improve on a 3-6 record. Coach Earnest Crumley's Titans will be seeking payback at 7:30 p.m. against Broward, which handed them their first loss of the season five weeks earlier.

The twinbill is in the gym on the St.

Petersburg/Gibbs Campus at 6605 Fifth Ave. N. Admission is free.

Crumley's team is 10-2 after defeating Central Florida CC on Saturday, 80-66, to shake off a shocker of a loss the night before. SPC was ahead of Miami-Dade College 35-28 at intermission, but ended up losing 86-72. The Titans defeated Miami-Dade by 15 points, in Miami, earlier in the season.

Smith's team, meanwhile, has enjoyed the boost earned via a 50-point win last week over Clearwater Christian College, 88-38.

National Baseball Hall of Fame Celebration At Florida International Museum

• Public Festivities to Celebrate Outstanding Exhibit

ST. PETERSBURG - Florida International Museum (FIM) will host the public at festivities this fall celebrating the opening of an outstanding exhibit. The National Baseball Hall of Fame's "Baseball As America" is coming to FIM later this year. "We are pleased to present to this outstanding exhibits," says Kathy Oathout, FIM Executive Director. "Baseball As America" is the first time that exhibit has left Cooperstown."

To celebrate the opening of the National Baseball Hall of Fame's "Baseball As America" traveling exhibition, FIM will be transformed into a ballpark and the public is

invited to come out and play. On Friday, Dec. 12, the museum will host a casual fun-filled Baseball Celebration beginning at 6:30 p.m. This event includes a preview tour of the exhibit, which features more than 500 treasures from the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. FIM is delighted to be one of only ten sites chosen to host this exhibition.

The national tour of "Baseball As America" is sponsored by Ernst & Young.

For tickets to this outstanding event or for more information, please contact Kathy Oathout, Executive Director, at (727) 822-3693.

O'Leary to Be Named Central Florida's Football Coach



George O'Leary

ORLANDO (AP) - Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator George O'Leary, forced to leave Notre Dame two years ago because he falsified his resume, has been hired as head coach at the University of Central Florida.

O'Leary came to the Vikings after a successful tenure at Georgia Tech, where he had a 52-33 record from 1994 to 2001. He was named National

Coach of the Year in 2000 and was named the Atlantic Coast Conference's top coach in 1998 and 2000.

UCF athletic director Steve Orsini was Georgia Tech's senior associate athletic director during O'Leary's tenure there.

O'Leary accepted the coaching job at Notre Dame in 2001 but resigned under pressure two weeks later after acknowledging he had falsified parts of his resume.

He was a coach at Syracuse between 1980 and 1986, with the San Diego Chargers from 1992 to 1993 and with the Minnesota Vikings since last year. He was hired in Minnesota by head coach Mike Tice, who played high school football for O'Leary in New York.

It wasn't known

whether O'Leary would finish the season with Minnesota or depart immediately for UCF.

O'Leary is a taking over a UCF program battered by losses on the field and discipline problems off.

Although the Golden Knights were expected to contend in the Mid-American Conference's East Division, their record of 3-9 was their worst since 1984. Coincidentally, that was the last year the program lost a coach in mid-season.

Coach Mike Kruczek was fired and replaced by interim coach Alan Gooch on Nov. 10.

In addition, the Knights had eight players, including four starters, suspended this season for various infractions.

Two published reports said O'Leary's five-year contract was worth about \$700,000 annually.

That financial package would be far more than what UCF has paid in the past to its football coach. Kruczek was making \$185,000 a year.

Marini said he did not know the details of O'Leary's contract.

UCF has been competing at the Division I-A level for eight years, and the 2002 season was its first as a member of a conference after 23 as an independent.

The Knights will join Conference USA in 2005.

On the Net:

UCF Football:
http://www.ucfathletics.com/sport_front.asp?spordid=15.

Meltdown at New England Leaves Dolphins Behind in Wild-Card Playoff



Jay Fiedler gets hit hard by New England Patriots linebacker Mike Vrabel

by Stevie Wine

DAVIE, Fla. (AP) - Clearly out of their element, the Miami Dolphins fled from the New England blizzard via charter jet and awoke at home Monday morning to temperatures in the 60s.

For the Dolphins, the last month of the year might again be the last month of the season. New England clinched the AFC East title Sunday with a snowy 12-0 win over the Dolphins, who must now scramble for a wild-card

berth.

Miami (8-5) could miss the playoffs even with wins in the final three games. The Denver Broncos (8-5) hold the tiebreaker advantage for the sixth and final postseason spot, and Tennessee (9-4) also is ahead of the Dolphins in the wild-card race.

Making the outlook even gloomier for the Dolphins is the uncertain status of quarterback Jay Fiedler, who was sacked five times by the Patriots

and aggravated a knee injury that sidelined him for four games in October and November.

With or without Fiedler, sweeping the remainder of the schedule won't be easy. On Monday night, the Dolphins host the Philadelphia Eagles (10-3), who sport the best record in the NFC. Then Miami returns to the snow belt to face Buffalo (6-7) before finishing at home against the New York Jets (5-8).

To compound the no-margin-for-error pressure, there's the likelihood of a major roster shakeup - and perhaps a coaching change - if the Dolphins fail to make the playoffs for the second year in a row. The last time they missed consecutive postseasons was in 1986-89.

"We have to play our games now and wait and see if the rest of the AFC will let us into the playoffs," defensive tackle Larry Chester said.

Coach Dave Wannstedt, ever the optimist, believes 10 wins will get the Dolphins into the postseason. But he

acknowledged the team needs to revise its focus now that the primary goal of winning the division is beyond reach.

The first game was an upset loss at home to Houston, but it's the Dolphins' precarious late-season psyche that's a concern now. They've lost at least two games in December every year since 1992, which not coincidentally is the last time they reached the AFC championship game.

Any turnaround must start with an offense that generated just 134 yards and seven first downs against New England. Matt Turk set a team record by punting 11 times, and the other possessions ended with two interceptions, a fumble and a safety.

Wannstedt acknowledged he's frustrated by the inconsistency of the offense, which scored 40 points at Dallas on Thanksgiving Day. The Patriots harried Fiedler into three turnovers, including an interception returned for the only touchdown.

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WOMAN'S WORLD

Barbara Ross-Lee Named Chairman of the Board of the Association of Academic Health Centers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Barbara Ross-Lee, DO, FACOPF, vice president for health sciences and medical affairs and dean of the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine of the NYIT (New York Institute of Technology), was named chairman of the board of directors of the Association of Academic Health Centers at its annual meeting in Florida.

Before her appointment at NYIT in 2001, Dr. Ross-Lee served for eight years as the dean of the school of medicine and professor in the department of family medicine at Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Dr. Ross-Lee has held leadership positions in numerous federal, philanthropic and professional organizations including the



Barbara Ross-Lee

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine where she served as chair of the Assembly of Presidents and the American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Professional Educators where she chairs the Minority Health Initia-

tive. She has served on the Institute of Medicine's Committee on the Future of Primary Care, the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Health Service

Corps' Associations of Clinicians for the Underserved and the Advisory Committee on Research on Women's Health of the National Institutes of Health. She is also a Fellow of the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians.

Dr. Ross-Lee is the recipient of numerous awards for her distinguished work in the health sciences and public policy including the Patenge Medal of Public Service from Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine; the Women's Health Award presented by the Blackboard African-American Bestsellers, Inc.; and the Magnificent Seven Award presented by Business and Professional Women/USA.

Makeup 4 Sisters Provides Beautiful Options for Women of Color

LOS ANGELES – Makeup 4 Sisters, a minority-owned company, announced that it has begun direct retailing of ethnic makeup lines, including IMAN, Flori Roberts and Interface skin care and cosmetics, as well as Patti LaBelle and Ashanti fragrances nationwide. The company's slogan is, "Adding Color to Your Life" and, according to Ivett Ramos, public relations manager, "Our slogan has special significance for women who have found themselves in photos with makeup two shades too wrong!"

The company, which is an affiliated reseller with Color Me Beautiful, is recruiting prospective independent consultants who want to own their own business. The business opportunity requires an initial

investment of \$180 and offers profit opportunities of 25-61%. Additional product lines available for distribution include Gayle Hayman-Beverly Hills, Color Me Beautiful and Adrian Arpel.

According to Ramos, the vision of the business is to make the most popular and quality-focused ethnic brands, formerly carried by retail department stores such as JC Penney, available to women of color. Ramos further stated, "We are very excited about our venture, because we are truly meeting a need for women of color - Asian, African American, East Indian, Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islanders - who often do not find solutions that are compatible with their skin tones or skin types."

While other national

direct marketing lines and some international makeup retailers sell makeup touted as designed for women of color, Flori Roberts was truly the first line designed for African American women in the sixties. And, IMAN cosmetics, originally developed by the international model of the same name, with rights to the makeup owned by Color Me Beautiful brands, was truly developed for all "women of color." In fact, the original IMAN product catalog was developed with product details in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Makeup 4 Sisters has an extensive inventory for the business, which serves customers toll free, (800) 446-0971. The website, makeup4sisters.com, is under construction and went "live" as of Nov. 28 - just in

time for the holiday season rush.

Makeup 4 Sisters sells through special events such as non-profit civic, sorority and charity fund raisers, as well as select seasonal and convention merchant booths. Sales are nationwide via direct shipments to customers' homes.

Additionally, every Monday, the company also offers a Marvelous Monday Makeup Day for beauty and barber operators and their selected customers, who receive a 10% discount on select purchases.

For more information regarding special events scheduling, Marvelous Monday Makeup Day locations or job opportunities, email sales@makeup4sisters.com.

Mary Pinkett, First Black Woman Elected to City Council, Dies

NEW YORK (AP) – Mary Pinkett, a former union leader who was the first black woman elected to the City Council, died of cancer at the age of 72, according to her nephew, Derrek Glover.

Pinkett served on the council for 28 years in District 35, representing the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, parts of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights and Bedford Stuyvesant.

She retired because of

term limits in 2001.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg called Pinkett "a pioneer in New York City politics."

"She served the people of Brooklyn with compassion, dedication and a fiery sense of purpose for nearly 30 years," he said in a statement issued Thursday.

Pinkett, a former president of Social Service Employees Union Local 371, was elected to the council in November 1973 and served on the Civil

Service and Labor Committee.

"When I went to the City Council, I was the first black woman and one of the only union representatives who had ever been elected," Pinkett told the publication "The Unionist" in January 2002. "There were other women, but they were more traditional."

Pinkett's council seat was filled by James Davis, who was fatally shot by a political rival at City Hall



Mary Pinkett

this summer.

Governor Appoints Dickey First Woman Chief Justice

by James Jefferson

LITTLE ROCK (AP) – After 167 years of statehood, Arkansas' highest court will be headed by a woman, following Gov. Mike Huckabee's appointment of a former prosecutor and state utility regulator to the post.

Huckabee appointed Betty Dickey, his chief legal counsel, to serve as interim chief justice of the state Supreme Court in the place of Chief Justice W.H. "Dub" Arnold, who announced his resignation effective Jan. 1.

Dickey, 63, will serve through next year, but will not be eligible to run for the post in the November 2004 election, when a replacement will be elected to serve the remaining four years of Arnold's term.

Shock and awe "pretty well describe how I felt when the governor called me," said Dickey, who fielded inquiries and recommendations for the position as chief lawyer for the governor's office.

"I am grateful beyond words at his trusting me with this position," she said. "I would hope to carry to that office justice, mercy,

humility and faithfulness."

Huckabee would not disclose how many other people he considered for the post but said he felt Dickey was right for the job.

No woman has ever served as chief justice of Arkansas' highest court.

"I did feel like we needed to break ground in terms of offering this appointment to someone through whom we could make history," Huckabee said in announcing Dickey's appointment at a Capitol news conference.

"It's unfortunate that it's taken 167 years for this position to be filled by a woman," the governor said. "When we have the opportunity to open doors and break the glass ceiling, we should do that."

Huckabee has named women and blacks to high-ranking positions in state government during his tenure, including Lavenski Smith, who is black and now a federal appeals judge, to the state Supreme Court and Public Service Commission, and Sandra Hockstetter as PSC chairman.

Dickey acknowledged

some trepidation in accepting the appointment because of the potential for involvement in proceedings regarding the school funding case in which the Supreme Court declared the existing system unconstitutional.

She said she did not handle education issues for Huckabee and had not discussed the case with the governor.

Outspoken state Court of Appeals Judge Wendell Griffen of Little Rock said that he would run for chief justice. If elected, Griffen would become Arkansas' first black chief justice.

Two weeks ago, the high court overturned an admonition that the state Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission issued to Griffen for publicly criticizing the state of racial diversity at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, his alma mater.

In a 4-3 ruling, the high court concluded that the standard used to punish Griffen "intrudes on legitimate free speech."

House Speaker Herschel Cleveland, D-Paris, also expressed interest in running for chief justice

next year. Cleveland is a lawyer.

Dickey was a teacher at Pine Bluff and Watson Chapel before earning a law degree at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

She was Pine Bluff assistant attorney and Redfield city attorney before serving four years as 11th Judicial District prosecutor.

She was elected as a Democrat but switched parties to run as a Republican for attorney general in 1998, a race she lost to Democrat Mark Pryor.

Huckabee named Dickey to the state Public Service Commission in 1999 and as his chief legal counsel in January.

Dickey grew up at Black Rock and Walnut Ridge. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and her law degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

She is the former wife of former Congressman Jay Dickey.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

OBITUARIES

ST. PETERSBURG RITES

FENNELL, ROSA LEE DDIXON, 86, died November 19, 2003. Survivors include four cousins, Sam Cuyler, Norma Edgerton, Kathleen

Cummings and Denise Coleman, all of Orange, N.J.; one brother-in-law, Robert J. Fennell, Sr., Tallahassee; two sisters-in-law, Winnie Barton, Knoxville, Tenn., and Janie Warren, St. Petersburg; and her caregiver, Richard Thompson, St. Petersburg. McRae Funeral Home, St. Petersburg.

ROBERTS, GWENDOLYN L., 67, died November 30, 2003. Survivors include three daughters, Leslye M. Flores, Ft. Lauderdale, Robin J. Williams and Kimberlee J. Stewart, both of St. Petersburg; one son, Derek S. Roberts, St. Petersburg; 10 grandchildren, Derrico and Jennifer Miller, Lindsay Men-

dez and Joshua Pina, all of Ft. Lauderdale, Desiree and Danielle Roberts, Rashan, Rayna and Anthony Williams and Ciara Stewart, all of St. Petersburg; four great grandchildren, Deja, Amari and Corey and Xavier Mendez; two uncles, Elder Martin (Joanne) Rainey and Elder Walter Rainey, both of St. Petersburg; four devoted friends, Connie Brown, Willena McRay, Evelyn Thompson and Clarice Pennington; and several cousins, other relatives and friends. McRae Funeral Home, St. Petersburg.



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For more info contact Sandra Boyers
@ 727-893-2500 x 1104

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HOTLINE NUMBERS

The Runaway Hotline: 800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

Family Resources Counseling:

(727) 384-8336 or (727) 449-8336

Please E-Mail All Ads to:

smfaith@tampabay.rr.com

NOTICE TO CERTIFIED DM/DWBE CONTRACTORS

Johnson Bros. Corporation is seeking proposal from
Hillsborough County or other State of Florida certified
DM/DWBE Contractors for the Hillsborough County Bid No.:
C-040-04(BW) Lithia Pinecrest Road over Alafia River
Bridge & CR 672 over Hurrah Creek. Proposal are to be
faxed no later than 5:00 PM December 18, 2003 to Johnson
Bros. Corporation; 3300 CR 555, Bartow, FL 33830 Phone:
863-533-0168
Fax: 863-533-0153

Documents can be obtained from Kinko's at 101-A Dale
Mabry Hwy, Tampa, FL 33609 Phone: 813-876-7011 Fax:
813-876-7473.

Documents can be viewed at our Bartow Office and the fol-
lowing locations:

Tampa Builders Exchange
605 South Fremont Avenue Suite 2
Tampa FL 33606

Small Business Information Center
Corporate Square
7402 N 56th ST
Building 400 Suite 425
Tampa FL 33617

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS 6TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Digital Court Reporters (5) – Records court proceedings uti-
lizing digital audio reporting systems and produces transcripts
from recordings. Req HS + 2 yrs previous exper. in court
reporting, transcription or use of audio systems. Salary \$1,170
biwkly + bnfts. Located in mid-Pinellas with some travel to
satellite courts. Overtime may be req.

Program Assistant – Processes juvenile referrals through
Juvenile Court Substance Abuse Program and ensures the sup-
porting administrative areas of assignment are completed in
accordance with laws and procedures. Req HS and 3 yrs. exp.
maintaining administrative records. Req. general knowledge
of substance abuse and treatment programs. Certified media-
tor/arbitrator preferred. Salary \$932 biwkly + bnfts. Position
located in mid-Pinellas City.

Clerical Assistant – Office support work for Teen Court. HS
grad and 2 yrs. clerical exp. Salary \$800 biwkly + bnfts.
Position located in St. Pete.

Court Applications ONLY by Dec. 19.

Available at:
www.jud6.org
Criminal Justice Center, 14250 49th St. N., 2nd flr, H-wing
(HR Dept.), Clwr.
Old Historic Courthouse, 324 So. Ft. Harrison Ave., Room
102, Clwr.
Clearwater Courthouse, 315 Court St., Rm. 401, Clwr.
501 Building, 501 1st Ave. N., Rm. 729 (Alt. Dispute), St.
Pete

West Pasco Judicial Center, 7530 Little Rd., Room 219, New
Port Richey
EOE AA Drug-Free Workplace. Any person with a disability
requiring a special accommodation to participate in the appli-
cation process should call 727-453-7165.

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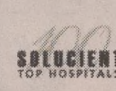


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2003 HOLIDAY EDITION

Edition Date: December 18, 2003

*Are you looking to advertise special holiday rates for your business?
Or send special season's greetings to your loved ones?*

Be a part of The Weekly Challenger's annual Holiday Issue, published for over 21 years and filled with recipes and heart-warming holiday stories. It is a must-read, fully supported by the faith-based and community service organizations in the Tampa Bay area, particularly the African-American market. We are now offering opportunities for both businesses and families alike to be a part of our special issue!

Why Advertise with us?

Why is this market so desirable? Well, for one, according to recent Census data, when it comes to household income, African-Americans right here in Pinellas County had the highest increase (24%) compared to any other ethnicity. African-Americans are also one of the fastest growing population segments in Pinellas County. As this holiday season approaches, take the opportunity to advertise with us!

Send a Greeting to Loved Ones...

Get in the spirit of the season! Take the opportunity to wish your loved ones the best this holiday season, courtesy of The Weekly Challenger. Publish greetings, as well as family and individual photos to let them know how you feel!



Merry Christmas
Mom & Dad



Happy Holiday To
My Husband



Merry Christmas
Grandma



Happy Holidays
Aunt Mary



Merry Christmas Mom



Merry Christmas From
Daddy's Little Girl



Best Wishes To The
Robinson Family

Holiday Issue Specifications (Tabloid Size)

*Copy and ad space deadline: December 14, 2003

** All submissions must be pre-paid

| AD SIZE | COLUMN SIZE | PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS | COST |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------|
| Business Card | 2 x 2 | 3.25" x 2" | \$25 |
| Eighth Page | 3 x 3 | 5" x 2" | \$75 |
| Quarter Page | 3 x 6 | 5" x 6" | \$150 |
| Half Page | 6 x 6 | 10.25" x 6" | \$275 |
| Full Page | 6 x 12 | 10.25" x 12" | \$550 |
| <i>Premium Page Positions</i> | | | |
| Page 3 | 6 x 12 | 10.25" x 12" | \$650 |
| Front Cover or Inside Front Page | 6 x 12 | 10.25" x 12" | \$687.50 |
| Back Page Cover | 6 x 12 | 10.25" x 12" | \$725 |

Color

1 color: \$100, 2 colors: \$125, Process color: \$175

Sign up now! Spaces are limited!