

African-American Voice

December 2000 PMB 145, 2920 S. Grand Blvd. Spokane WA 99203-2530 (509) 455-8274 rlloyd@cet.com Volume 5 Number 7



PUBLISHERS TAKE SABBATICAL
to complete dome.
See you at some later date.
Seasons Greetings
We thank you for
your support
See editorial page 6

Comes to Spokane

"This show is about the triumph of the human spirit in three different American families. What a great country this would be if we could all recognize that we share that spirit." said Lawrence Hamilton, lead actor in the musical Ragtime, in a phone interview with the Voice.

from Tuesday December 5 through Sunday December 10, is a colorful panorama of turn-of-the-century America taken from the acclaimed novel by E. L. Doctorow. It follows the intertwined lives of an upper-middle class

Ragtime, which will be at the Spokane Opera House



(above) Company of The Four-Time Tony Awards Winning Musical Ragtime
(left) Lawrence Hamilton as Coalhouse Walker, Jr. and Lovena Fox as Sarah

Photo Credit: Carol Rosegg



The Voice asked Hamilton if he saw any parallels to the story in his personal life, especially in the theater.

time in New Jersey when a white woman said her purse had been stolen and a policeman put a gun to his head and treated him like a criminal. When it was all over he asked why he had been treated like that and was answered that it was her word against his. He felt as if

the word of a black man didn't mean anything.

"So I feel many parallels in my life to Coalhouse (his character in Ragtime)," said Hamilton.

Lawrence Hamilton is a native of Foreman, Arkansas. He dedicates his performance to his father. **Continued on page 15**

white Anglo-Saxon Protestant family, a socialist immigrant Jewish family, and a Harlem black family.

Winner of numerous awards, including four Tonys, the show is interwoven with pivotal historical events and characters.

"If there's one thing I want to impress upon you, it's to get the kids there," said Hamilton. "If I can change one person's attitude about racism I've done my job."

good theater roles written for black actors, and when I come upon other roles that I think I am right for it is hard to get them. It shouldn't be about the color of a person's skin, it should be about who is right for the job," he replied. He has also had the experience while performing on Broadway of coming out of the theater, putting up a hand for a cab and not being able to get one.

And then there was the

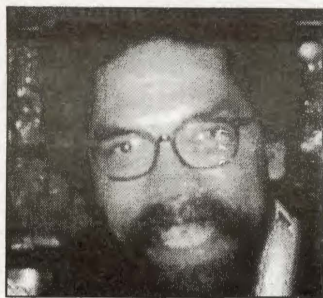
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CONTEST

Leaders we have known and admired



Who is this man?

Ask your parents, ask your teachers, ask a librarian, ask your community leaders.

At the end of a year's issues, will you know the name of each leader?

Youth who write a short article for the history page earn \$25 if accepted for publication.

Leaders we have known and admired December Winner

BY JAMAL ANGELL,
 7 YEARS OLD
 BALBOA MONTESSORI



The woman's picture in the newspaper is Halle Tanner Dillon Johnson. She had to take a difficult test. It took 10 days. People said she wouldn't pass the test. But she did! She was the first woman to be a doctor in Alabama. The year was 1891. She died at 36.

Publisher's note: Jamal mailed us this story written in his own cursive handwriting. His check is in the mail!

NEW FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS

We wish to thank:

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Valerie Compton,
 Spokane AIDS Network

Cheryl Rathbun

Dollie Speight,
 All About Travel of
 Newport WA

He's a winner

Thomas Speight, co-owner with Dollie Speight of All About Travel, Newport WA, won second place for Travel Agent of the Year. He is the first African American to win the award, which is given by Travel Trade Magazine to the agents receiving the most votes from

other agents.

In addition to his All About Travel agency, Speight also developed Travel Agent Digest, a listserv and website for travel agents. He definitely hit a need - membership is now over 1600. The address of the website is www.travel-hacker.com.

Speight will be leaving for the Travel Trades Cruisathon in Fort Lauderdale where he will receive his award - a Tahiti cruise for two.

A footnote: the third place winner jokingly emailed him for a recount - from Florida!

Chase Youth Awards

Nominations open-catch ordinary teens doing extraordinary things

Are there teens out there doing incredible acts of kindness? Do you know teens who give their time because they truly care? Show them our community cares about its youth by nominating those special teens and youth for a Chase Youth Award.

Nominations for the 2001 Chase Youth Awards are now open. "It's not about being good enough to win." comments Wendy Acosta, Youth Involvement Coordinator for the City/County Youth Department.

"It's about recognizing every youth and teen who is making good choices in their life despite the circumstances life may have handed them, or recognizing the positive contributions youth are making to our community."

The Chase Youth Awards recognizes youth contributions in the categories of citizenship, courage, community service, creativity, diversity, leadership, and personal achievement.

Parents, teachers, friends and family may nominate.

All nominees will be honored at the ceremony on March 21, 2001 at the Spokane Opera House at 7:00 p.m. Individual category winners will receive a medallion and a scholarship.

The nomination forms are available at your local library, school, community center or State Farm Agent. Go to <http://www.youth-linkspokane.org> to nominate on-line. For more information call 625-6440.

Nomination Deadline is January 29, 2001.

A A Voice Drop Points

Churches:

- Bethel
- Calvary
- Full Gospel
- Holy Temple Mt. Zion
- Morning Star
- Mt. Olive
- New Hope
- Refreshing Spring
- Salvation Inn
- Solid Rock
- St. Matthew's

Zion Temple

Other Drop Sites

- Art By Yourself
- Casey Family Partners
- CCS Institute for Extended Learning
- Central Washington Univ.
- Chicken N More
- Children's NETT
- Crosswalk
- Department of Children and

Family Services

- Global Folk Art
- All Public Library branches
- East Central Comm.Center
- East Central Comm. SDA
- Eastern State Hospital
- Volunteer Services
- EWU African American Education Program
- Excell Stores
- Fairchild Air Force Base
- African American Club

Gonzaga Univ. Unity House

- Group Health(Lidgerwood)
- Hampton Institute
- Jantz High School
- Jose Vigil Imagemakers
- Juvenile Court
- Larry's Barber and Styling
- MLK Center
- North East Community Center
- North Idaho College
- Moon Shadow
- Salon East
- SCAN
- SCC Multicultural
- SCC Single Parent Program
- SFCC Multicultural
- The Shop
- Spokane City Hall
- Spokane Mental Health
- TASC
- University of Idaho Multicultural
- University of Washington
- Washington State University Multicultural
- West Central Comm.Center
- Western Washington Univ. Multicultural
- Whitworth Multicultural
- Yokes (Sprague & Sullivan)

The Spokane, Pullman African-American Voice

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Colleges communicating on common ground

Eastern Washington University and North Idaho College are joining forces with more than 30 colleges and community groups from across the nation to form Communicating Common Ground (CCG), the first national service-learning initiative to unite college students, faculty and community groups to provide multicultural education to students from pre-school through high school.

The EWU/NIC partnership was selected as a pilot site for the project, which is a cooperative effort developed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, National Communication Association, Campus Compact and the American Association for Higher Education.

The Communication Departments at EWU and NIC, along with many of

their students, will be working this winter with younger students from Lewis & Clark High School in Spokane and the high schools in Idaho's Coeur d'Alene and Kellogg School Districts to be diversity trainers for young people in the Inland Northwest.

"The 'train the trainer' model is very powerful," said David Cornelius, project director at Eastern. "Young people learn how to train other young people in diversity, who can then pass that training on to others."

The 30 schools and community groups chosen for the first year of the partnerships will focus on learning activities that advance multicultural education, appreciation of diversity and the creation of communities in which hate, hate speech and hate crimes are not tolerated, Cornelius said.

Life after Spokane

Dr. James Williams, former president of Spokane Community College and currently President of Arapahoe Community College in Colorado, was recently the feature article in the Fall 2000 issue of the Black American business journal *In the Black*.

The article chronicles how the son of an unwed mother raised in Virginia by grandparents came to become a dean at California State Polytechnic in Pomona, president of Spokane Community College and then president of Arapahoe Community College.

Arapahoe is a college of 7,500 students, 1,800 full time. It is currently undergoing a major remodeling that will bring "our use of technology up to speed," Williams says in the article.

In the Black is published

in Denver four times a year and is distributed in grocery stores and Wal-Marts in 46 states in addition to its regular subscribers. Their website <www.intheblack.com> "brings you real-time news and information on African-American and minority businesses, while offering our advertising partners the most effective vehicle available to reach these markets", according to the magazine.

The journal features black businesses, business leaders and professionals, as well as articles on economic, business, and technological trends. The Fall 2000 issue in addition to a special focus on education highlights top black doctors in Denver and health care issues. Columns on the arts, literature and travel are also included.

Angry black witnesses

No paranoia by Black voters over Florida vote

EARL OFARI HUTCHINSON

The polls in Florida had barely closed last week when black leaders immediately screamed foul. They charged that blacks were harassed and intimidated by police in some counties, and were turned away by registrars from who claimed a shortage of ballots in other counties. Then there is the weird butterfly ballot that turned up in some precincts in the heavily black and Jewish, precincts of West Palm Beach. This has ignited the greatest furor. Jesse Jackson has virtually led round the clock protest demonstrations over alleged voting violations.

NAACP president Kweisi Mfume produced a parade of angry black witnesses who swore that they were harassed by registrars or denied ballots. Mfume promptly demanded that Attorney General Janet Reno investigate the charges.

Republicans dismiss black accusations of vote irregularities as another self-serving ruse by the Democrats to tip the vote back to Gore. They are right and wrong. Jackson and Mfume are fervent Gore supporters, and so are the overwhelming majority of black voters in Florida. They voted nearly 10 to one for him. They are in stark terror that Bush is the barbarian at the gate who will obliterate civil rights protections and further torpedo social programs. They've made it a feverish life and death struggle to insure that Florida and the presidency go to Gore.

But for the Republicans to derisively wave off black

fears that they were bamboozled at the voting booths and call it paranoia ignores the terrible history of the South's century long effort to disenfranchise black voters.

In the decade after the Civil War blacks voted in far greater numbers in the South than whites. But that quickly changed. With the withdrawal of federal troops and the collapse of Reconstruction the white South unleashed a naked reign of terror to drive blacks from the polls. Southern states attempted to finish the job with a wave of literacy tests, poll taxes, informal voting codes, and whites-only primaries. By 1900, blacks had virtually disappeared from the voting rolls in the South for the next half century.

As late as 1948 a Gallop Poll survey found that 8 million blacks eligible to vote in the South were unregistered. The Supreme Court's outlawing of the all-white Democratic Texas primary in 1944, and the strong recommendation by president Harry Truman in 1947 that Congress increase black voter protections only marginally increased the black registration in the South. The Eisenhower administration's 1957 and 1960 civil rights bills contained tepid provisions that permitted the Justice Department to sue districts that denied blacks to vote. But the White House feared a ferocious Southern backlash to the law and authorized only 4 lawsuits under the provisions of the act in the entire South.

The first real breakthrough on black voting came in 1965. President Lyndon Johnson stoked national anger and revulsion over the bloody rampage by Alabama state troopers against civil rights marchers at Selma to prod Congress to take action

on his long stalled voting rights bill. But even with sentiment in favor of the bill's passage getting the bill passed was not a slam dunk. The major opponents to the bill weren't rabid racist Southern Democrats but Northern Republicans. House Republicans, led by then minority leader Gerald Ford, proposed four horrible provisions aimed at gutting the bill. Their provisions would not outlaw the poll tax, and literacy tests, authorized the Attorney General to bring suit only after a set number of complaints of voting violations had been received, and eliminated the provision requiring the federal courts to approve all voting laws passed by recalcitrant Southern states. Congress did the right and sensible thing, promptly dumped the Republican provisions, and passed the bill with full enforcement provisions intact.

But this did not end the battle to strengthen black voting rights. White Southern Democrats and Republicans launched a major counter campaign to bolster white voter registration. The Republicans, long moribund in the South, sniffed a huge opportunity to exploit white fears over black political domination and turn the South into a GOP bastion. Republican presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush Sr. carefully crafted and fine tuned the Republican's

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Arts and Culture



Explosive Truth for South African People's Poet

By DOROTHY FLYNN

South African musician and "People's Poet" Mzwakhe Mbuli -- jailed on trumped up charges of armed robbery -- attended a hearing of the Amnesty Commission of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Pretoria on September 18. The TRC was considering an amnesty application by police officer Kobus Klopper for planting grenades in Mbuli's Soweto home as the musician was about to leave on a world tour in 1988.

Klopper claimed not to remember details, but he acknowledged receiving direct orders from superiors at Vlakplaas, the farm where the apartheid security forces' death squads were based. Mbuli opposed Klopper's application, stating he did not believe that Klopper had told the whole truth.

Because of the apartheid regime's harassment, Mbuli was forced to cancel his tour and was detained for a total of two years -- including six months in solitary confine-

ment -- after which he was released without charge.

The 1988 planting of evidence by the security forces bears a striking similarity to the events surrounding Mbuli's arrest in October 1997, allegedly for armed robbery and possession of a hand grenade. He was convicted in March 1999 on circumstantial evidence after a bizarre trial and is now serving a 13-year sentence at Leeuwkop Maximum Security Prison. Mbuli and his supporters maintain that he is innocent. An appeal is scheduled for November 9-10.

It is suspected that Klopper is connected to one of Mbuli's arresting officers, Fabby Fabricious (another arresting officer committed suicide on the eve of Mbuli's trial). Klopper was present in court when a "missing" police file related to an investigation on an attempt to murder Mbuli suddenly resurfaced during the trial. (Prior to Mbuli's arrest in 1997, he had complained about police failure to make progress with the

investigation into a 1996 attempt on his life, when nine bullets were sprayed into his car.)

At the time of the 1997 arrest, Mbuli was also accused of other unsolved crimes, perhaps to ensure that he would be denied bail. Some of the charges -- including robbery of a liquor store -- fell by the wayside. Mbuli was acquitted of the remaining charges of robbing and shooting a businessman in May.

Many supporters believe the police charged Mbuli with possession of a grenade in 1997 hoping the public would associate Mbuli with grenades from the past. The recent TRC hearing, which proved that police planted grenades on Mbuli once before, calls into question the motives of those accusing Mbuli.

The poet, who was once a favorite son of the African National Congress but who did not stop speaking out against corruption after the transition to democracy, has been treated like a menace to

society. Before his trial, he was detained for a year in harsh conditions more befitting apartheid than democracy.

His treatment has seemed incredible for a widely loved public figure and an inspiring opponent of apartheid. When Mbuli was arrested, the ANC government indicated that he would not receive "special treatment". However, others have fared far better than he. Even the racist terrorist leader Eugene Terreblanche was released after serving three months of a one-year sentence.

Recently implemented prison restrictions include denying inmates photographs of loved ones and access to normally allowed items of personal clothing. There have even been rumors that access to the daily papers will be removed. Mbuli was the first to report black suspects being routinely brought to prison with dog bites, which the government denied but

which BBC news later documented.

When taken to court, Mbuli has been transported in a cage, and on one occasion a hearing was canceled because wardens refused to remove shackles during court proceedings. Supporters have thronged to all events where he has been seen, and it has been clear that their faith in him has remained unshaken. Known widely for his courage and unbreakable spirit as well as for his poetry and music, Mbuli remains undaunted and expresses confidence that the truth will ultimately set him free.

Free Mzwakhe Mbuli web site: www.mzwakhe.org. PO Box 390058, Cambridge, MA, USA 02139. Email to Mbuli: mzwakhe@mzwakhe.org. Mail: Mzwakhe Mbuli, Leeuwkop Maximum Security Prison, Private Mail Bag x2, Bryanston, South Africa 2021.

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EVENTS

NOTE: Events may change between the time we receive the information and we go to press. You may want to call accompanying phone numbers for confirmation.

African American Graduation Planning meeting will be 1/11/01, 5:30 pm at Bethel AME Church. Call 924-3490 for information.

Blacks in Government Call 924-3490 for information on December activity.

Kwanzaa Celebration Planning Mondays through 12/18/00, 5:30 pm at Bethel AME Church. Call 299-3511 (box 3) for information.

Parenting African American Caucasian Bi-Racial Children Class

Dec. 6 - Feb 21 Wed 12:30 - 2:30 Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery. For information call 535-3155

Kwanzaa Celebration
Dec 27 Wed 5 pm East Central Community Center 500 S. Stone. Contact Cecilia Carothers at 299-3511 (box 3).

Celebrate Kwanzaa

The Umoja Steering Committee, a group comprised of Black organizations, businesses and churches in the Spokane community, will host the 2000 Kwanzaa (first fruits of the harvest) Celebration on Wednesday, December 27, 2000, at the East Central Community Center. The program will begin at 5:00 pm followed immediately by a karamu (feast). This year's program will feature children as they present the Nguzo Saba (seven principles), poetry readings and other forms of entertainment.

The Umoja Steering Committee is also sponsoring an essay contest with the theme, "What Kwanzaa Means To Me." Winners will be selected in three categories: 4-6th grade (100 words); 7-9th grade (250 words); and 10-12th grade (400 words). Prizes will be awarded in each category as follows: first prize, \$25 gift certificate; second prize, \$15 gift certificate; and third prize, \$10 gift certificate. Entries must be mailed to:

Kwanzaa Essay Contest
Box 5
Spokane WA 99210
It must be postmarked no

later than December 15, 2000. All entries must include name, address and phone number. Winners will be announced at the Kwanzaa Celebration.

Admission to the 2000 Kwanzaa Celebration is free; however, donations are accepted. Monetary donations may be made to Umoja Steering Committee/Kwanzaa Celebration and mailed to the above address.

For more information and food donations, please contact Cecilia Carothers at 299-3511 (box 3).

Spokane Public Schools Calendar of Events

Visit our website: sd81.k12.wa.us. Click on "Community Relations," then click on "district news."

11/28 thru 12/14, 3-4:30 p.m.
"IT'S A DOG'S LIFE" FORENSIC CAMP, Tuesdays and Thursdays @ Grant Elementary, sponsored by WSU Spokane City Lab Science Camp. Contact: John Keller, 354-2823. Address: 1300 E. 9th.

12/4 Monday, 4-7 p.m.
LIBBY CENTER'S ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE. View some of the most interesting displays of student work and learning. This is the time when students shine, when they show their Tesser, Odyssey (gifted programs), and Special Education projects, and where they demonstrate their considerable multi-media and technology skills. See the Drill Team performance @ 5:30 p.m. in the gym, the musical talent performances @ 5:45 p.m. on the second floor, a book fair, and a display of workshop student-made products. Contact: Deborah Johnson, 354-7509. Address: 2900 E. First.

12/6-12/8
ANNUAL FERRIS HIGH SCHOOL CHARITY CAMP OUT. The Ferris High School food drive begins 12/4, but the afternoon of the 6th ASB officers will be camping out, collecting food, clothing articles, and blankets for charities such as the 2nd Harvest Food Bank, Homeless Shelters, etc. Contact: Nancy Hough, 354-6000. Address: 3020 E.37th.

12/13 Wednesday, 7 p.m.
THE MAKING OF SPOKANE BY HUTTON'S 3RD GRADERS. The 3rd grade social studies students' curriculum includes an extensive study of the history of our city and surrounding area. This program was developed to give an added dimension to students' learning experience. Some of the songs include, "Indian Stick Game, I've Been Working on the Railroad, Drill Ye Terriers, Drill, Spokane's All Right," and many more. Contact: Val Chadwick, 354-3030. Address: Spokane Community College auditorium.

12/6-12/23
Museum of Arts and Culture

WALL OF CELEBRATION is a collaboration between the Museum of Arts & Culture and Spokane Schools and is scheduled to begin 11/29 at the Museum. The art creations of 23 Roosevelt and Wilson Elementary 5th & 6th graders will be installed in a massive outdoor art display in the Browne's Addition representing the museum's 3 major disciplines: visual art, regional history, and American Indian and other cultures. The project is designed to give students an opportunity to create original art for public display. When completed, the art panels will be installed along security fences at the museum expansion site, and can be viewed between 12/6-23. Contact: Nancy Zupan, 354-5973.

Christmas festival concert to feature Whitworth choir

The 2000 Whitworth College Christmas Festival Concert, "Wondrous Night," will feature the award-winning Whitworth Choir as well as performances by the Whitworth Chamber Singers, Women's Choir, brass quintet and harp ensemble. The concert will include congregational hymns, scripture and liturgical readings, and a repertoire of music spanning the Baroque period to the twentieth century.

Concerts will be held at the First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar on Friday, Dec. 8, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 9, at 3 p.m., and at 7 p.m.


Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased through G&B Select-A-Seat at (509) 325-SEAT, through the Whitworth Music Office at (509) 777-3280, or through Dick Barney at (509) 467-9397.

The Spokane AIDS Network
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Editorial

We've come to the end of another year, and we at the African American Voice would like to thank our many supporters and volunteers: Ayofemi Oseye for diligently seeing that the paper was distributed; our regular writers Anthony Bradley, Robert Williamson and Bea Lackaff; and our most faithful contributor, Marlin Clark.

We also want to thank all of our advertisers, especially Bob Hemphill of Chicken-N-More, Nate & Roberta Greene of Empire Ford and Quick Lane, Jeff Winicoff of Behavioral Health Northwest, Janette Andrews of WomanHealth, Isabel Green of Hospice, Judy Hamel of the Children's Corner Bookshop, Unity Church, Larry's Barbershop, Tomlinson & Black Coeur d'Alene Office, Volt Services, Sayre & Sayre Attns., Ronald Kappelman Attn., Mary Ellen Myrhene, Inland Northwest Health Services, and Val Smith.

Also at this time of the year we begin thinking and planning for the next year. For the last two years we have been taking it a year at a time but making a commitment for another year.

We have decided to take a year's sabbatical. We need to put our time and energy into the Diversity Dome. The paper has never had the budget for a publisher, editor, or layout person, so we cannot hire sabbatical replacements. However, if there are organizations or individuals that would like to step forward and make a year's commitment to the management and production of the paper we would be glad to be of assistance. Anyone interested should send a letter describing your philosophy and how you would continue the mission of the paper. If an organization would like to step forward to provide salaries for a managing editor and layout artist we would love to sit down with you and discuss it.

The paper has reached a stage where it has to move from a volunteer operation to having paid staff. Just like public broadcasting we must determine whether we have enough financial support to pay salaries and printing and mailing expenses. Advertising only pays for printing and mailing and the pool of advertisers grows slowly.

We are not asking anyone to make contributions, we are asking for specific pledges of support. From the pledges we receive we can decide whether we have enough of a foundation to continue the paper during the sabbatical year.

This paper is important - as poet and philosopher Juan Latino Stoakley, who passed away this month, would say "Ignorance is worse than cancer." We believe that this paper has been providing a lot of chemotherapy.

We have enjoyed the last four and a half years of putting out the paper and are looking forward to the new challenges of building the Diversity Dome.

Robert J. Lloyd, Publisher

*We have seen a turn of seasons,
From a time that years have made reasons.
Of dreams caught in the color of leaves,
An explosion of sun on trees.
Autumn has come,
But you, a walking Black Springtime.*

*Inflaming the heart,
Powering the embrace.
A vision of sapphires and rubies
From the soul and eyes.
Spring and Summer never left.
You Are Here!*

Juan Latino Stoakley
May 6, 1940 - November 2, 2000
We loved him madly.

Opinions

The Trouble with Tolerance

BY TIM WISE

They came in the mail again, even though I never ordered them: those "personal address labels," that say "Teach Tolerance" -- sent out by the Southern Poverty Law Center: America's favorite civil rights organization. The one run by Morris Dees: America's favorite crusader for, well, "tolerance." You know, "tolerance": America's favorite word because it commits us to nothing and means nothing, or at least so little that virtually all can rally under its banner. "Tolerance": something to be taught, and apparently, bought, via donations to a certain organization, with their big security-conscious building, and their multi-million dollar lawsuits against Klansmen and skinheads, and their endowment - did I mention their endowment? -- now worth approximately \$100 million dollars. That's right: \$100 million, in the bank, collecting more interest in a month than most American families will make in the next decade. Think about that the next time they send you a mailing asking for a C-note so they can "continue their important work;" and

HURRY! Didn't you hear? Tom Metzger has threatened to kill Dees. And they need your donation so they can hire one of those police officers they've trained to be "tolerant" to guard their physical plant from the Michigan Militia or something.

And people wonder why I laugh whenever I'm asked whether I actually know St. Morris of Montgomery. Yeah, I know him. I know him as the guy who sent out a fundraising appeal in 1990 implying he was going to crusade against David Duke in Louisiana, and proceeded to spend zero dollars and even less time actually doing it. I know him as the head of an organization that refuses to take environmental racism cases against corporations in their own backyard, or cases involving job discrimination, or virtually any poverty law cases at all -- as one might foolishly infer from their name -- because they're so busy chasing high-profile bigots. And even the cases they take usually amount to little but headlines: witness the Center's \$12.5 million dollar judgment against White Aryan Resistance, which

judgment has -- some eight years later -- been largely uncollected, and has yet to put WAR out of business. But then, perhaps putting them out of business would be "intolerant," and we couldn't have that.

So what is "tolerance," anyway? As I see it, "tolerance" means I don't burn your church down, or tie you to a fence and leave you to die, or drag you down a dirt road behind my pickup. It means I tolerate your existence and little else. I let you live and breathe for another day. But it doesn't mean I'm expected to fight loan discrimination against people of color by bank officials (unless it turns out they burn crosses on their lunch hour, of course); and it doesn't mean I'm expected to speak out against police brutality, or unequal health care, or the racialized spiral of incarceration, or tracking in the schools, or unequal funding between poor districts teaching students of color and suburban districts serving mostly white kids. And if I'm the parent of one of those white kids, it doesn't mean I have to

Continued on page 7

The African American Voice

Doesn't speak for you. It is a place where you can speak. We respect a diversity of opinions. Affected classes are encouraged to write. And don't forget to let us know about your successes, joys, and meaningful events in your lives.

Continued from page 6

Tolerance

think about my own role in someone else's oppression. I just need to put an "erase the hate" bumper sticker on my Volvo, next to the one that reads "Practice Random Acts of Kindness and Senseless Beauty," and everything will be O.K.—even as my comfortable existence comes at the direct expense of the persons of color who are kept in neighborhoods and schools far from me and mine. Emphasizing "tolerance" will focus one's attention on overt hostility, perhaps, but do nothing to address the institutional forms of racism which kill people every day, just as perniciously as any member of the Aryan Nations.

As with race, so too with religion: "Tolerance" might well preclude me from criticizing churches for their "love the sinner, hate the sin" mantra vis-a-vis gays and lesbians. After all, isn't that mantra the very essence of tolerance? Just because these folks think and teach their children that gays and lesbians are going to hell, doesn't mean they're implicated in gay-bashing! To even imply such a thing would demon-

strate one's "intolerance" of fundamentalists; as would, I suppose, mentioning that evangelical Christianity is, by definition, intolerant, as per its desire to convert all non-Christians so as to "win the world for Christ" — an act of spiritual genocide against other faiths or the faithless to be sure. Yet, to even say this makes one "intolerant," in which case, perhaps we need a little less tolerance, and a lot more truth.

As a Jew, let me make clear: what I need is not tolerance, 'cause all that means is that you'll smile and insist you love me as you tell me my soul is in jeopardy. But see, I don't want your love: I want you off my ass, and I want you to check your arrogance, and no, I don't think you have a right to teach that shit to your kids—or at least, not an exclusive right—seeing as how me and a lot of my non-Gentile and queer friends are gonna have to deal with your kids out here in the real world someday.

Likewise, people of color don't want tolerance, they want justice. And sometimes getting the latter requires sacrificing the former, since, if one's watchword is tolerance, it could become far too easy to begin tolerating injustice.

Too easy to resist raising one's voice against the prevailing mentality of white superiority which pervades our culture, because, after all, one must be "understanding," and less "judgmental," and "tolerate differences" — perhaps even those which destroy lives.

To "teach tolerance," risks inculcating the mentality that every idea is equally worthy of attention, and that's bullshit: The Bell Curve is not worthwhile, and it deserves to be ridiculed, not "tolerated" as just another contribution to the marketplace of ideas. Folks who say the Holocaust never happened, merit derision, not ad space in college newspapers. Those who insist slavery in the US "wasn't racist," (D'Souza), or that blacks suffer from a "civilizational gap," (also D'Souza), or that Jim Crow laws were only meant to "protect blacks," (guess who?), deserve to be treated with contempt, or at least criticized by genuine antiracists. And yet, on these points, there is no response from SPLC, or its Klanwatch program — which, by definition is too busy watching the boys in the sheets, to keep their eyes on the boys in the suites.

Tolerance often precludes

anger, and anger is usually a necessary predicate to social change. Martin Luther King Jr., despite his commitment to love his enemies was decidedly intolerant of American apartheid. By confronting white southerners with their attachment to the system of racial subordination, King was, thankfully, making clear his intolerance for many folks' 'way of life,' as quite a few of his targets were quick to point out. King and his contemporaries were not attacking 'intolerance,' nor pushing for 'diversity' — that other buzzword of the well-intended. They were challenging racism: a word that many don't even like to mention because it's seen as divisive. "Let's focus on what brings us together," they insist, "rather than on what divides us," which is to say, let's not talk about oppression, because that, after all, is a pretty big downer.

But neither a plunger shoved up Abner Louima's ass nor the 41 shots fired at Amadou Diallo by a bunch of New York's finest are about hate. Both are about power. Both are about the implied prerogatives of whiteness within the justice system: prerogatives which devalue by

their very existence the rights and lives of black and brown people. And the culture of racism that pervades law enforcement won't be affected by 'tolerance' training. Racial profiling doesn't happen because cops hate people of color, but rather, because they — like too many others — believe danger has a black or brown face, and so "who cares if we 'inconvenience' these folks 'a little bit'?" After all, it's for the greater (read, white) good.

Aida Hurtado says it best: "It doesn't matter how good you are, as a person, if the institutions of the society provide privilege to you based on their group oppression of others. Individuals belonging to dominant groups can be infinitely good, because they are never required to be personally bad. "None of which is to say that I wish groups like the SPL Center would cease to operate. Despite the fact that they'll never get — because unlike others they don't need — my money, on balance, I guess I'd say I'm glad they're around; that it's better that they exist than if they didn't. But since that's the same way I feel about brussels sprouts, that's probably not saying too much.

Letters to editor

The editor welcomes letters. You can respond to articles or write about any topic that concerns you. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for language, content and space. Write to: The editor, The African-American Voice, PMB 145, 2920 S. Grand, Spokane, WA 99203. You can also email us at rlloyd@cet.com. Please include your name and daytime telephone number for verification.

sitive of Mr. Wise to refer to Mr. Lieberman, our Vice Presidential nominee as "patriotic blather". Mr. Wise needs to be informed that goals in life are accomplished by hard work and at times, lots of suffering. The Jewish People have endured both.

I am amazed that your newspaper allowed such an editorial to be published. Mr. Wise' comments could have done more damage to the relationship between Jewish People and the African-American community than he can ever imagine.

I would like to know who is Mr. Wise employed by — could it be Louis Farrakhan?

Respectfully,
J. C. Hertzberg

Publisher's Note:

Biography of Tim Wise: Tim Wise is one of the nation's leading young social critics and one of the most popular speakers on the lecture circuit today. An anti-racist activist since age 14, Wise has spoken to over 30,000

people in forty states: defending affirmative action; responding to right-wing assaults on the poor and people of color; and explaining why whites have a moral and practical obligation to support racial equity. From 1990-1992, Wise served as Assistant Director of the Louisiana Coalition Against Racism and Nazism, the group credited with derailing former Klansman David Duke's political aspirations. Currently Wise is the Director of the Nashville-based Racial Unity and Awareness Center. He is the author of Little White Lies: The Truth About Affirmative Action and "Reverse Discrimination," a highly-praised defense of anti-discrimination efforts which is being taught in dozens of college classrooms across the country. Wise has appeared on hundreds of radio and television programs to debate today's most pressing issues. Tim Wise is a speaker for Speak-Out, the country's only national not-for-profit artists and speakers agency. The roster includes some 200 women and men who repre-

sent the breadth of movements for social justice. For a full listing write Speak Out PO Box 99096 Emeryville, CA 94662. Phone: (510) 601-0182 Fax: (510) 601-0182.

Email: speakout@igc.apc.org Web: <http://www.vida.com/speak-out>

*See Tim Wise's article "The Trouble with Tolerance" in this issue on the **Opinions** page 6. We greatly appreciate his contributions to this paper — they're just the kind of wake-up call Spokane needs.*

Angry

Editor:

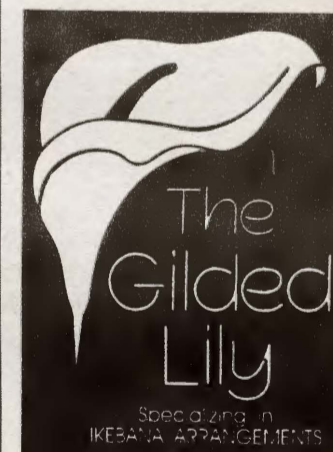
I am angry because when I went out my front door this morning there was a big sign, hanging on my front door knob, reading "Vote Democrat" with additional instructions following that.

Aside from the obvious grammatical error, it was offensive to me.

In any case, the day I vote for "Big Al" will be the day I sing a solo in Carnegie Hall.

Frances Smith

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Ten Ways to Fight Hate

From *Ten Ways to Fight Hate, 2nd edition*, by Jim Carrier. Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000.

#8 Look Long Range

Create a "bias response" team. Hold annual events, such as a parade or culture fair, to celebrate your community's diversity and harmony. Build something the community needs. Create a web site.

The best barrier to hate is a tolerant community. After a hate crisis, we recommend turning a crisis team into a long-term tolerance committee. A small group of committed people can build a moral barrier to hate or at least create an atmosphere in which hate outbreaks are rare. As Chris Boucher of Yukon, Pennsylvania, put it after a handful of people ran the Klan out of town: "A united coalition is like Teflon. Hate can't stick there."

Experts say the first step in changing hearts is to change behavior. By acting tolerant, people begin to respect one another. Begin with positive statements and symbolic gestures. make tolerance a habit, an activity as normal as your kids' soccer practice.

Vigils, Dreams and Good Food

- Hold candlelight vigils, religious services and other activities to bring people of different races, religions and ethnic groups together. In Boise, Idaho, Martin Luther King's birthday has become an 11-day Human Rights Celebration.

- Create a local "I Have a Dream" contest, in which people imagine and describe an ideal community. In North Berkshire, Massachusetts, winning essays by children are reproduced and rolled onto highway billboards donated by the Callahan Outdoor Advertising Company.

- Use any excuse to celebrate diversity. In Selma, Alabama, a major weekend street fair is held on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, when voting-rights activists attempting to walk across a bridge to Montgomery were beaten back by police. In Denver, Cinco de Mayo has become a major celebration of Mexican culture.

- Break bread together. The Friendly Supper Club in Montgomery, Alabama, has no agenda, no speakers and only one rule at its monthly meeting; bring a person of another race or culture with you for "honest interaction."

- Move from prayer to action: In California's San Fernando Valley, an interfaith council has formed "home dialogues" with men and women from different faiths and cultures who meet together in their homes. In

Covington, Kentucky, churchwomen conducted a letter-writing campaign to support hate crime legislation. They later promoted teach training in race relations.

- Begin a community conversation on race. Discussion groups, book clubs, Internet chat rooms and library gatherings can bring people together. One of the most effective sessions allows individuals to tell their stories, their immigration history, their daily encounters with discrimination, their fear about revealing sexual orientation.

- Consider building something the community needs, from Habitat for Humanity housing to a new park.

- Create a tolerance web site. Coloradans United Against Hate is a web-based, "paperless organization" with a virtual billboard that posts stories and comments on local hate issues.

Tolerance Networks

Many regions have created networks of human rights coalitions. They share information on hate groups and individual hate mongers and can mobilize a large anti-hate team when needed.

The Michigan Ecumenical Forum, for example, organized a web of churches in Muskegon County after the Oklahoma City bombing revealed a connection to the Michigan militia movement. Taking stock, the Forum's mainstream churches realized that "a lot of good church folks" had become estranged from government, making them susceptible to militia recruitment, said Steven Johns Boehme, who heads the Forum.

The Forum sponsored a major conference on the militia. At its conclusion, participants created Community United for Peace, a county-wide clearing house for prejudice, race and hate issues and a bridge between villages and groups, between black and white churches. The coalition also acts as a nerve center, picking up news of white supremacist events throughout rural Michigan. The coalition has won accolades from the National Council of Churches. "You have to stop thinking of the militia as wackos on the fringe," said Boehme. "They are there because the ground in the area is receptive for it. If you drop the seeds of prejudice in soil that is not receptive, they won't take root."

- The Pennsylvania Network of Unity coalitions connects many groups that are fighting the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacists throughout the state. The state publishes a "Klanwatch" list of activities. As hate groups test the waters of new

communities with speeches and rallies, local leaders can call on the coalition's members for practical advice. Each new Klan rally tends to create a new local unity coalition, adding to the tolerance web.

- The Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment (now the Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity) linked grassroots groups in the hate hotbed of Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. "No individual stands alone," said former Director Bill Wassmuth, who believes local coalitions are the best single weapon against hate crimes. "You can create an atmosphere in which a bigot cannot thrive."

#9 Teach Tolerance

Bias is learned early, usually at home. But children from different cultures can be influenced by school programs and curricula. Sponsor an "I have a dream" contest. Target youths who may be tempted by skinheads or other hate groups.

Bias is learned in childhood. By the age of three, children are aware of racial differences and may have the perception that "white" is desirable. By the age of 12, they hold stereotypes about numerous ethnic, racial and religious groups, according to the Leadership Conference Education Fund. Because stereotypes underlie hate, and half of all hate crimes are committed by young men under 20, tolerance education is critical.

About 10% of hate crimes occur in schools and colleges, but schools can be an ideal environment to counter bias. Schools mix youths of different backgrounds, place them on equal footings and allow one-on-one interaction. Children are also naturally curious about people who are different.

Teaching Tolerance, a program of the Southern Poverty Law Center, believes that diversity education should begin in preschool and continue through college.

Classroom Activities for Promoting Tolerance

- Acknowledge differences among students and celebrate the uniqueness of every one. In Debra Goldsbury's first-grade class in Seattle, children paint self-portraits, mixing colors to match their skin tone. They then name their colors, which have included "gingerbread," "melon" and "terra cotta." They learn that everyone has a color, that no one is actually "white."

- Establish a "You can't say you can't play" policy. Created by teacher

Vivian Paley in Chicago, the rule prohibits the kind of hurtful rejection children dish out and suffer. "We must start in kindergarten," she says. "Justice must become an intuitive law."

- Promote inclusion and fairness, but allow discussions of all feelings, including bias learned at home and the street. Establish a "peace table" where children learn to "fight fair," perhaps with hand puppets in which conflict is acted out.

- Use sports to bridge racial gaps. Flames, a nonprofit Brooklyn, New York, interracial basketball program, enrolls 1,000 students, ages 8-20, every year.

- Promote diversity by letting children tell stories about their families, however different they may be. Diversity embraces not just race, but age, religion, marital status and personal ability. Remember that charting "family trees" can be a challenge to some children, such as those who are adopted or living with single parents.

- Teach older children to look critically at stereotypes portrayed by the media. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine a lawyer, doctor, rap musician, gang member, bank president, hair stylist or criminal. What did they "see" and why? Confronted with their own stereotypes, children begin to question how they've been shaped by the media.

- Teach mediation skills to kids. Some 300,000 high school students are physically attacked every month, according to the National Institute of Education. One survey of 130 New York City teachers found that after student mediators went to work, incidents of violence and name calling declined dramatically, while cooperation and communication among students increased significantly.

Responding to Hate at School

The massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, demonstrated that, left unchecked, hatred can lead to an apocalypse. While most schools have plans in place to deal with fire, bad weather and medical emergencies, few are prepared for bias incidents. Here is an excerpt from *Responding to Hate at School*, published by Teaching Tolerance:

- Create an unwelcome environment for hate speech and symbols. Left unchecked, epithets, physical intimidation and hate graffiti create a toxic environment. Take a stand against hate literature, music, web sites and E-mail. Designate one staff member to monitor hate web sites.

- Speak up when bigotry comes from colleagues. We all harbor stereo-

Continued from page 8

Fight Hate

types, but, left unchallenged, teachers can easily transmit theirs to students and be insensitive to bias in school.

- If a hate emergency occurs, focus on safety first. Take rumors of violence and bias incidents seriously. Set up a police liaison ahead of time. Set up a tip line or e-mail box for hate events and rumors.

- Support victims of harassment. Surround them with an atmosphere of protection and, if they wish, help from fellow students. Identify teachers or counselors as "safe contacts" for every type of bias event. Declare schools "hate-free zones."

Ivory Towers

As small communities in themselves, college campuses should adopt the recommendations in this guide for their use. Racial tensions should be aired, victims supported and hate crimes denounced by administrators. By practicing and teaching diversity, colleges influence attitudes and behavior in the leaders of the future.

One possible approach is the program adopted by Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. The President's Council of Intercultural

Concerns created a "Not on Our Campus" project which surveyed campus racial attitudes, encouraged reporting of bigotry, and organized both a bigotry response team and a long-range program of diversity, awareness and sensitivity workshops.

Four Steps for Parents

1. Ask your schools whether curriculums and textbooks are equitable and multicultural.

2. Encourage teachers and administrators to adopt diversity training and tolerance curricula, Teaching Tolerance magazine and other diversity education materials.

3. Encourage your children to become tolerance activists. They can form harmony clubs, build multicultural peace gardens, sponsor "walk in my shoes" activities and join study circles to interact with children of other cultures.

4. Watch where your children are surfing on the Internet. Discuss the problem of hate sites openly, as you would the dangers of sex and drugs.

#10 Dig Deeper

Look into issues that divide us: economic inequali-

ty, immigration, homosexuality. Work against discrimination in housing, employment, education. Look inside yourself for prejudices and stereotypes.

Sooner or later, any tolerance effort bumps up against issues that will take more than a neighborhood to solve. Peeling away the face of hate reveals a country with deep, systemic and unresolved prejudice, discrimination and intergroup tension. These issues cry out for answers and people to take them on. As former white supremacist Floyd Cochran put it: "It is not enough to hold hands and sing Kumbaya." One of the leading civil rights clearinghouses, the Leadership Conference Education Fund in Washington, warns that failure to tackle the root causes of intolerance will leave the heroic efforts described in this guide looking "like small points of light in a sea of overwhelming darkness."

In any city and state there are dozens of problems to address; hunger, affordable housing, elderly isolation, domestic violence, school dropouts, etc. A caring group of people, having coalesced to deal with hate, could remain together to tackle any number of community chores and societal problems.

Continued from page 3

Angry black witnesses

Southern strategy. It was simple: say and do as little as possible about black rights, while actively courting white voters. The Southern strategy has worked so magnificently that the strategy has become the big gun in the GOP's political arsenal. It certainly paid big dividends for Bush Jr. who swept nearly all old Confederacy. And if he makes the sweep complete by bagging Florida it will likely put him in the White

House. Black voters can't and dare not forget this sordid history of voting betrayal and neglect. And this is why they passionately believe that they were once again victimized at the voting booth in Florida.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the President of the National Alliance for Positive Action. email: ehutchinson@nataliance.org website www.nataliance.org.

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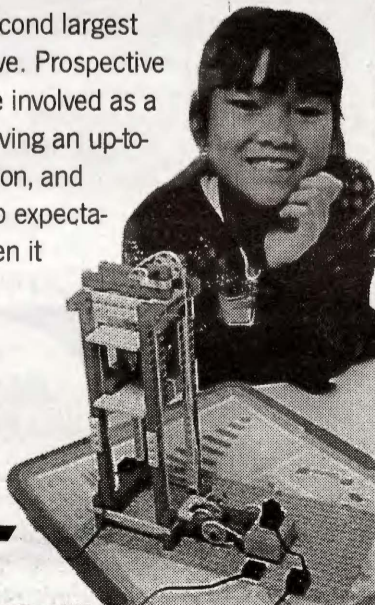
Working for Children

The public school system in Spokane has been called a "lighthouse," a "state model," and "the best run district in the state." It's also a great place to work, with competitive salaries, good benefits, and an excellent reputation.

Because Spokane Public Schools is the second largest employer in the county, hiring is competitive. Prospective employees are encouraged to first become involved as a volunteer in schools or on committees. Having an up-to-date, sharp resume, letters of recommendation, and knowledge of the district's web site and job expectations can also make a huge difference when it comes time to apply. We welcome your application.

For more information, please call
(509) 354-7262.

Spokane Public Schools 



AHANA Business & Professional Association

Today and Tomorrow

• The AHANA Business Directory is still available to its members and the general business community. We are currently working on publishing AHANA's 2001 Directory. To be in the directory and/or to advertise in the directory, please contact AHANA'S office immediately.

• AHANA has finally established its own office at 104 W Fifth Ave. Suite 122, Spokane, WA 99201 with the support of Sacred Heart Medical Center. AHANA is now accepting in-kind support to help furnish the office. Come and visit our new office.

• AHANA has a professionally designed logo contributed by John Robideaux. Visit our website.

• AHANA Website (www.ahanabusiness.org) is

now in operation. It will help bring the AHANA businesses closer to each other, to other businesses and available resources. The website will communicate pertinent information and opportunities to the business. To link your business with AHANA's soon to be very popular website, email your intentions to ahana@usa.com or contact Phan Micro Computer at 624-2232, or phanmicro@mail.com.

• AHANA was the recipient of the Year 2000 Community Leadership Award from the Institute for Neighborhood Leadership.

• In developing a statewide influence and impact, AHANA partners with the statewide Northwest Minority Business Council. We are also working closely with state government, in particular Mr. Chuck Von Hall of the Government



Administration OMWBE, to establish a training program to enhance our ability to bid on contracts with the State of Washington and other governmental entities.

• AHANA participates actively in suppliers and procurement conferences and trade shows. AHANA recently participated successfully at the Tech and Computer Fair at Spokane's Convention Center this summer of 2000.

• KREM 2 currently shows a public service announcement in support of

minority businesses. This PSA is sponsored by Empire Health Services. AHANA continues to seek other corporate sponsors for more TV spots.

• AHANA is currently in partnership and working closely with the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Council, SCORE, Business Information Center, Metropolitan Mortgage, Whitworth College, Empire Health Services, Washington Trust Bank, Sacred Heart Medical Center and Northwest Business Development Association. We are actively seeking to expand this list of partners.

• AHANA Business and Professional Association is now represented on the Board of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council. We are now a voice

in the business community.

• One by one, we are scheduling meetings with the CEO's and purchasing departments of the Spokane business community. We are confident that these meetings will result in a favorable business environment for AHANA businesses.

However, for AHANA to build on these small victories and become a major player in the economic development of Spokane and the Inland Northwest, this project must become a community project and not just a minority project.

Spokane needs AHANA to better position itself in this very competitive global economy.

For more information:

Call Ben Cabildo 325-5057,
Paul Smith 922-9089,
Ced Barela 326-5510, Tony
Shiuen 939-3806.

An Open Letter to Spokane's Business Community

AHANA's Offer of Partnership

We all share the same vision for Spokane: economic, political, social and cultural growth for Spokane shared by everyone. Like everyone else, we, the businesses of color are also investors in the future of Spokane. We live, shop and work here, pay our taxes and raise our children and grandchildren. Like you, Spokane provides us with our livelihood.

Despite these commonalities, Spokane's businesses of color have not been included in the planning and the implementation of policies in the pursuit of our common goals and thus have not benefited from business opportunities enjoyed by others.

This major awareness of our shared responsibility and

lack of opportunities have brought us to this juncture of establishing AHANA (African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American Business and Professional Association).

We feel that in order for AHANA businesses to become effective partners in pursuing our common vision, it is necessary to unify ourselves and develop a common voice for our community.

In March of 1999, AHANA businesses came together and forged a support system to nurture our businesses and our community. AHANA Business and Professional Association was born.

AHANA's goals and objectives are as follows:

• To empower AHANA businesses through training,

creating networks, and collaboration with other businesses.

• To foster cooperation and communication among AHANA businesses and other businesses, government and trade associations.

• To improve business conditions for AHANA professionals, businesses and organizations through advocacy for inclusion in the public and private markets for goods and services.

Based on these goals and objectives, partnership and collaboration is the life-blood of our success. Likewise, business partnership and collaboration is the key in Spokane's growth and development.

AHANA businesses play a vital part in this partnership. AHANA brings not only its united energy and

commitment but also brings its progressive ideas forged through unique multicultural experience.

AHANA businesses expand Spokane's pool of diverse suppliers and vendors, bringing quality products and services to the marketplace.

AHANA business injects dollars into the Spokane market through investments and purchase.

With AHANA businesses' national and global connections, AHANA can play a major role as Spokane's global link to position all businesses in tapping into the growing multicultural and global market.

In this fast-changing world, partnership with AHANA is of vital importance to the economic development of Spokane.

As AHANA businesses, we are asking you to partner with us in the real sense of the word partnership, as you partner amongst yourselves, where you nurture and support one another, share your resources and patronize each other.

We are confident that our offer of partnership will be supported by all businesses who are seriously committed to the growth and development of Spokane.

Commitment to Partnership

1. Join AHANA Business and Professional Association as corporate members.

2. Commitment to work with AHANA businesses to diversity your vendors and suppliers.

3. Support AHANA's projects financially and in-kind.

4. Work for the inclusion of diversity initiatives in all plans and policies of private and governmental bodies.

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What race am I ?

BY DIANE SPANO

I recently heard a story that a 5 year old asked her Mom "What race am I, Mom?" That disturbs me. Our society tries to simplify human beings down to a single characteristic - race. What race am I? I am from the human race. I have a nationality. I have cultural characteristics. I do not have the blond blue-eyed appearance of white America. I look as if I could be Native American, Armenian, from India. Inside, I am a human being. That's how I see myself, that's how I was raised.

The people who have moved here from other states and countries have changed Spokane, for the better. For many years I felt I was standing totally alone, and as long as I suppressed my differences I would get along just fine. Eventually those differences come out. I've got a problem in the job market, I've had a problem in higher education, because those differences come out. I know what it feels like to be Native American because that is how people have viewed my appearance. If a Native American asks me if I am a Native American, that is a compliment. If a white person asks me, they are asking me with bigotry in mind.

My coping mechanism in Spokane has been to view them as having sheltered lives that create ignorance and feel sorry for them. From where I view the world, because of the many environment I have experienced, I have a huge window that I look out of. Most people that I encounter are looking through a little peephole to see what the world is like and what people are like. Their narrow minded viewpoint always boggles my mind.

For example take the buzz word diversity. Diversity should have to do with what is inside people, it should have nothing to do with outward appearance. I sit between two worlds in Spokane, the white community and the black community. I hear both sides. Similarities exist between these two peoples. They don't know that. I

do. I sit most of the time suppressing who I am. I know that they are many generational Americans and their values and viewpoints are very similar. My viewpoints are not acceptable. I would be understood within my family where nationalities range from Asian to Yugoslavian. That is normal to me, to have the rainbow of people, cultures, and differences. To me it is not normal to be surrounded by mirror images of myself. How boring.

It is all these documents that come from governmental agencies asking what race I am that I find so disturbing. And what about my grandchildren? My granddaughter is Coeur d'Alene Indian, Mexican, Italian, Spaniard. She will have some of my genetic traits, my son's genetic traits, her Coeur d'Alene mother's genetic traits. My son's father, coming from Mexico, is Spaniard and French. But our society has now reduced this complexity, rather than recognizing that these clumps of traits of French and Spaniard exist.

My other grandchild - how would you describe his race? How would describe the American race? It is of many nations and ethnicities. My grandson is Mexican, which is again Spaniard and French. He is Italian, and African American, and whatever his heritage is from the blond blue-eyed grandmother. Her daughter, the mother of this child, appears predominantly African American and those traits are there. But my grandson looks just like my son, who looks just like me. So how do these two children fill out a form when you are asking what is your race? They are a mixture of many different ethnicities that make up who they are, and when it comes to culture they are exposed to many different worlds.

So this is why I am disturbed when people ask what race I am. I am an American. I am of many cultures from being exposed to other unique Americans. When I come to a group I bring a whole different viewpoint because of what I have been exposed to - diversity - and

that means differences. For Spokane it is not acceptable to have those differences. Many people born and raised here are accustomed to a very small viewpoint of the world.

The African American Voice newspaper has opened up doors for me by exposing all the horrible things that have gone on in this community with African Americans, and has made it a better place for me. I'm not standing there all by myself saying Spokane has a problem and screaming "It's racist, they're discriminating" and being beat up by it. What Spokane has been denying is now visible and the economic effects are being felt. The corporations are finally looking at the problem most people didn't see and realizing they have to change the image. But what diversity needs to change is within people, not the image.

It is mind boggling to me

that it is the African American community that has embraced me, that has given me opportunities that nobody else would give me, to grow as a person, to make it possible to develop skills so that I could survive here. Onyx Theatre Troupe gave me opportunities, Blacks In Government gave me opportunities, the African American Voice has given me opportunities that no one else had ever given me. They say that if you are going to make change you have to get out in the community, expose yourself, get involved, bring your way of looking at the world when you come to the table.

You should be uncomfortable, I am uncomfortable in a group where everyone is the same. If the mixture of people is not there it is not normal to me - it is abnormal. This is America and it is abnormal to be so separated from one another. I don't understand the separatism that exists. We don't want anybody else to come in. We are comfortable with likeness.

How boring. You don't grow and you don't develop any programs that are creative because you are all alike. And why are you all alike? Because you stay within your own little group of people and you don't grow. You are not going to bring anything new and different to that.

In order to be accepted, I have developed some survival skills. I can walk like you and talk like you. Even though I don't look like you, you will think we are very similar until I until I really express myself and then we are from different planets. I understand who you are, and accept it, but that acceptance is not returned to me.

Here are some differences in my family. My cousin, who is fourth generation Japanese-American received \$20,000 in reparations for what the United States did to his family during the Second World War, so we're cheering. I know many of the people in Spokane don't understand

Continued on page 15



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Something You Can Do If You Will

To Citizens of Wyandotte County, Kansas

This is a message that was sent to us by a reader of our paper who lives in Kansas informing us about activities in their area that we might find inspiring. We found it much in keeping with the spirit of the paper.

One of the most beautiful parts of life is that we have the ability to choose, but whether we do or not is left up to us, some of us have different life styles, objectives and ideas to choose from and making the right choices are hard at times.

In our society, we separate and organize just about every aspect of our lives. We put things into pigeonholes, groups and categories. One of those categories has to do with time, from minutes to hours, to weeks and months and then years. Whenever we come to a significant place in time we usually review the past.

We are again at a "significant place in time", the beginning of a new millennium.

We have also seen a tremendous increase in violent crime, drastic changes in our economy, changes in the traditional family structure, affirmative action battles, a housing shortage, and a new class of citizen called "the homeless". Every day the struggle to be a good person gets harder. We look for answers that won't require a change of lifestyle or comfort. At this point complicated reasoning replaces wisdom and selfishness grows like a weed.

There have been drastic changes from one extreme to another. The one thing that has been constant over the years has been change and one way or another, those changes have affected our lives as Black Americans.

I challenge you to help initiate change in the year 2000 that will make our voter registration and political participation more meaningful. We empower ourselves politically by exercising our right to vote, then holding politicians accountable. Voting is the key! Your vote does

count, but the most important move we can make is to keep faith.

Let us begin to set the changes that will serve to better the quality of our lives, and set the pace for changes for the better for our children and our grandchildren.

It's time to reject the politics of surrender on the installment plan, and to join us in raising up a new standard in offering Wyandotte County, Kansas citizens a "vision of victory", not another decade of despair, depression and defeat. Our lack of courage and a host of daily pressures and misinformation pit us against one another.

We let racial and cultural differences cloud our vision and distract us from our real work for social justice and wholeness that God created and equipped us to be. We must work to break entrenched habits of fear and criticism; they weaken our faith. If we don't stand strong for ourselves we won't be strong for one another. The problems and solutions are with us. The choices we make every day make a powerful difference.

The church and the family are the glue that hold our society together. They are our hope for the future because from those two cultural institutions will come the leadership that will provide the foundation for the next century to insure that we Black Americans will continue to be in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I envision a future in Wyandotte County, Kansas where we have reliable, accountable and imaginative leaders to provide our community, children and elders with the resources we need. But it won't come easy, we all must work and pray together.

I'm calling on concerned citizens, community leaders, public officials, political theorists and grassroots activists for support. We must control the politics and politicians of our community. They must no longer take orders from outside forces.

Liberty Inc.

FACT SHEET

Liberty, Inc. is committed to:

Independent intellectual inquiry in the search for progress and positive solutions for racial justice from contributions of blacks themselves who use their knowledge and skills in economics, in social policy, in public administration, education, values and traditions and in political theory and practice as weapons to chart a course that will advance the struggle for social justice for all.

Identify urgent concerns for the black community, critical thinking about ourselves as a people and the course we have charted or failed to chart.

Identify and help resolve major social, economic and political problems in our life, and to bring timely, cogent, and often over looked policy perspectives to the national consensus-building process.

This organization will be responsible for the following functions:

- (A) *Initiate, foster, coordinate and mentor voter registration programs while being capable of mobilizing blacks votes.*
- (B) *Establish a powerful, political network which will seek to have an impact on educating the public by generating letters or telegrams or phone calls to citizens and office holders.*
- (C) *Have the means to yield political leverage to impact influence in government policy making.*
- (D) *Acquire the knowledge necessary to be planners, schedulers and organizers along with being able to raise money, hold political rallies and have telephone banks.*
- (E) *Command the clout needed to attract the media's attention and thus provide avenue to develop public awareness over its key issues and concerns.*
- (F) *Create a strong membership base, establish on-going committees to implement organizational goals and objectives.*
- (G) *Hold candidates' forums, conduct press conferences, issue press releases and place articles in newspapers.*
- (H) *Acquire the political campaign technology necessary to win elections while being able to motivate a significant block of voters and thus deliver or deny the winning margin of victory to a candidate.*

Objectives

- (1) *Knowledge of the local government structure and its purpose.*
- (2) *Encourage and seek qualified candidates to run for public office.*
- (3) *Devise creative tactics and strategies appropriate for bringing about economic change for blacks and other minorities.*
- (4) *Develop the ability to establish and maintain effective relations with citizens, civic groups, religious institutions, organizations and the private sector.*
- (5) *Identify and interpret the problems of Wyandotte County, Kansas, determine suitable solutions to the root causes of problems and plan for effective solutions.*
- (6) *Hold mid-year conferences annually creating an information sharing mechanism to assist our members in areas of politics, community issues, businesses and employment support and espouse the principles of Liberty Inc.*
- (7) *Hold annual conventions of Blacks and Black Leaders to develop a United Black Political Front for empowerment, show of force, access to important information and agreed upon objectives.*
- (8) *Develop a method of public approach by arousing the hidden and dormant qualities that are buried in the inner recess of the mind of the timid and fearful.*
- (9) *Attempt to create the highest standard of love and true brotherhood thus destroying the paralyzing principles of hate, racial prejudice and discriminations.*
- (10) *Establish Black Political Power by securing strategic information from others, "Empowerment"!*

Let us go forth with our strength renewed and our courage reinforced, offering hope that our children and we as well, may once again live in a virtuous nation, blessed by God, striving humbly to serve His purposes and rejoining in His abun-

dant blessing.

My agenda offers a positive vision for the future that can be embraced with great enthusiasm by the people and policy makers at all levels because it will spring from their thoughts, their hopes and their dreams for the

future.

When you join Liberty, Inc., you're part of the solution and not part of the problem.

To That End, We Need Your Support!

Adolph Howard

Volunteer opportunities

The Volunteer Opportunities column is published weekly by the Volunteer Center, a service of United Way of Spokane County. For more information on these and other volunteer activities, please contact 509-624-2279 or marym@unitedwayspokane.org.

YWCA NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

YWCA - Alternatives to Domestic Violence & Women's Resources: Volunteers needed to help with fundraising and functions that directly support the YWCA Shelter, daily and long-term needs. Seeking experienced community volunteers. Volunteer Advocates are also needed to answer phones, assist with intake paperwork and provide emotional support. Also to assist with supervision of children as needed. People to help sort and distribute clothing are also needed. For more information, please call Barbara Ackerman at 326-1190.

FRIEND TO FRIEND

Spokane Council of Ecumenical Ministries - Friend to Friend: This is a program which fosters one-to-one friendships with elderly persons experiencing loneliness and isolation in long term and assisted living facilities. Training is available in three easy steps: 1) Interview, 2) Orientation, 3) Coordinate a match with

Activity Director for facility you will be placed at. Must be at least 16 years of age unless volunteering with a family. Please call Jan for more information at 483-1600.

NEED READING TUTORS

Ridgeview Elementary HOSTS Program: Is looking for reading mentors for half hour sessions from 9:05 AM to 3:00 PM, lunchtime sessions are available. Help One Student To Succeed. Training is provided. For more information, please call Dorothy Patchin at 354-3965.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY NEEDS YOUR HELP

Habitat for Humanity - Spokane Builders Surplus Store: Needs volunteers to stock shelves, pick up donated building materials, work cash register, and help customers. Please call Kathy Brown for additional information at 535-9517.

MENTORING, CHILD CARE, TUTORING & MORE

Catholic Charities -

SpokaneWorks: Various volunteer opportunities are available, including mentoring, transportation, child care, tutoring and helping with budgets. Our goal is to provide families with a team of volunteers who build supportive relationships for those transitioning from welfare to work. Training begins in November. For more information, please contact Marybeth Rickel at 325-7674.

MOTHER MENTORS NEEDED

Catholic Charities CAPA Doula Project: Looking for parent volunteers (Doulas), of at least 26 years of age, to mentor young, single, pregnant women. One-year commitment, 2 hours/week. Training begins in the Fall. Applications are now being accepted. Please contact Karen Parsons at 325-7669 for more information.

BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

Women & Children's Free Restaurant: Looking for

Board Members and continued volunteers to help serve food to women, men, children and entire families. Please call Lorene Christianson at 926-2222.

JOIN THE NAMI VOLUNTEER REFERRAL TEA

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI): Learn about the services for mentally ill persons and their families that are available in the Spokane Community. A sensitivity to persons with mental illness is required along with personable skills, a pleasant telephone voice and basic computer skills. Min. age 18. Training is provided. Hours are 10:00am to 3:00pm. For more information, please call 838-5515.

CROSSWALK SHELTER FOR TEEN NEEDS

Volunteers of America - Crosswalk: Looking for volunteers to come and help provide support and supervision for homeless and at-risk teens in the evenings. Your evening will consist of dinner, conversation and recreational activities. You are needed one day a week from 5-9 PM. Must be 21 or older to apply. Please contact Pam Hammer at 624-2378, ext. 103.

DRIVERS NEEDED

DCFS Volunteer Office: Drivers needed to transport foster children. Must provide own car with basic insurance. Requires responsibility, flexibility, punctuality, and safety. Compensation for mileage provided. Please contact Morton Alexander at 363-3552.

Continued on page 18

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Over three hundred thousand in Washington with diabetes

Early detection is the key to stabilizing diabetic eye disease.

Because diabetic retinopathy often shows no early warning signs, members of the Inland Optometric Society urge those with diabetes not to overlook the importance of a yearly dilated eye exam.

Approximately 16 million people in America (308,000 in Washington State) have diabetes, and one third don't even know it. Of those cases that are diagnosed, between 40 and 45 percent have some degree of diabetic retinopa-

thy, a potentially blinding eye disease that is a complication of diabetes.

"Early diabetic retinopathy often has no corresponding symptoms. Therefore, a patient may not notice visual changes until the disease has significantly progressed," says Dale Schnibbe, O.D., of the Inland Optometric Society.

"With early detection, routine monitoring, and timely treatment with laser surgery, vision can be saved in more than 90 percent of those who would otherwise become blind from the disease. That's why it's impor-

tant for people with diabetes to have a dilated eye exam at least once a year."

Dr. Schnibbe reports that people with diabetes can slow the onset and progression of diabetic retinopathy and reduce the likelihood of vision loss through better

"We encourage people with diabetes to plan their annual appointment every November, during American Diabetes Month." If you haven't done it - you're late! Do it now.

control of blood sugar levels. "A medically supervised program of diet and exercise is a

great way to help control blood sugar levels," continues Dr. Schnibbe. "Ask your health care provider how this program can work for you. I urge people with diabetes to take the initiative--call your eye care professional and make an appointment for a dilated eye exam. If you have a friend or loved one who has diabetes, encourage them to do the same. We encourage people with diabetes to simply plan their annual appointment every November, during American Diabetes Month."

Diabetic retinopathy is one of a group of eye prob-

lems, including cataracts and glaucoma, that may develop as a complication of diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy causes fragile, abnormal blood vessels in the retina to swell and leak fluid, leading to blurred vision. The longer you have diabetes, the greater the chance that you will develop diabetic retinopathy. If you have diabetes, you are 25 times more likely to lose vision than someone who does not have it.

To learn more about diabetic eye disease, or for a referral to the optometric physician nearest you, please call the Washington Association of Optometric Physicians at 1-800-562-1487.

Hospice care is not just a privilege for white people

By GREGORY C. TOWNSEND

Death is a natural part of our earthly human existence. The challenge for African-Americans is to learn how to celebrate this transition in ways that are meaningful and uplifting.

Many African-Americans have provided quality end-of-life care to family members, neighbors and friend in our community for years. When death occurs in the community, we mobilize as a unit to meet the family's

needs.

I remember attending wakes with my grandmother as a young man growing up in North Carolina. At the wake, many would sit up all night in the home of the deceased eating, drinking, fellowshiping and remembering times past, both good and bad. The most frightening thought I had about the wake was that the dead body was often resting in the room behind the closed door.

Words such as "end-of-life care," "hospice" and "pal-

liative care" are new to us, but providing quality bereavement services is not.

We are a strong people, proud and powerful; a people who endured 400 years of the inhumane conditions of slavery and then more than 135 years of segregation. In an article titled "The African-American Experience: Breaking the Barriers to Hospice," author Faye Burrs states: "Brought from Africa was a strong spiritual belief that God is in control of all; that no good thing will be withheld.

Throughout our enslavement, we continued to trust God. We carry on the strength of our ancestors to fight for equality and justice in this land. We helped build with our backs, our blood and our might. Fight we must and demand we did. Despite beatings and dogs (bites), we began marching to register to vote and make our voices heard. We marched to make known our stand that our freedom and equality was worth dying for - and some did. With Black Power, Black Panthers and Black Pride, we began to reclaim the pride of our heritage. We began to fight the system, through education, law, politics, religion and family."

Because of recent changes in the family dynamics of many African-American households and communities, there is an increasing need to renew the spirit of our ancestors and demand that health-care institutions assist us in caring for our dying and the family members they leave behind. Hospice care is just one of many health-care

options underutilized in our community.

According to the National Hospice Foundation, 80 percent of Americans said they wish to die at home. Of the 2.4 million Americans who die each year, less than 25 percent actually do at home. Hospices around the United States served more than 700,000 patients in 1999 with 75 percent of the patients dying at home. NHF research also shows that more than 83 percent of the population doesn't know about hospice care.

The numbers are even greater in the African-American community. Of the 700,000 patients receiving hospice care in 1999, less than 10 percent were African-American.

There are many speculations as to why African-Americans under-utilize hospice services. A few of the barriers include lack of trust, fear, hopelessness, lack of knowledge and inability to identify with providers. The lack of health insurance coverage clearly plays an important role in the African-American's ability to access the health-care system.

Many African-Americans are more likely to postpone doctor visits until the thought of death or dying presents itself. With the increasing incidence of obesity, breast cancer, cervical or prostate cancer and complications caused by diabetes and hypertension, it becomes extremely important that we make regular preventive visits to a physician.

We overcame slavery and segregation. We can overcome these barriers too. We

can accomplish this by working together as a community.

We can allow hospice providers and other health-care agencies to hold community forums in our churches and provide educational programs to our community organizations. We can provide assistance to our sick and dying by building community support teams and creating a pool of needed hospice volunteers to relieve stressed caregivers.

There is no reason why your loved one has to die at home in pain or in a hospital surrounded by machines and faceless people. The hospice Medicare benefit is a viable alternative.

Access to care for all Americans must rise to the top of our political agendas. Hospice care and insurance coverage are not just a privilege for white Americans. It's a right for all Americans, and if America works to inform and raise community awareness, we will lessen the lasting effects of unnecessary suffering caused by terminal illnesses and loss.

Gregory C. Townsend is the administrator for the Birmingham Area Hospice at the Jefferson County Department of Health. The hospice's partnership with Cooper Green Hospital's Balm of Gilead Center was created to address the end-of-life care needs of the medically underserved terminally ill in the county.

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HOSPICE
OF SPOKANE

Continued from page 1

"Ragtime" comes to Spokane

mances to the memory of his late father Oscar, his mother, Mrs. Mae Dell Hamilton, and his 103 year old grandmother Mrs. Mary Russell.

Hamilton came to the touring company directly from the Broadway run of Ragtime. Other Broadway credits include Play On, Jelly's Last Jam, and the Wiz, among others. He has appeared in concert with Lena Horne, performed at the White House and the Vatican, and served as musical director for opera star Jessye Norman's AIDS benefit concert.

Describing Onyx Theatre and black theater in Spokane, the Voice asked Hamilton what encouragement and advice he could give to young people interested in the theater.

"Learn as much as you can about everything you can and perform as much as you can," he said. He suggested taking advantage of every opportunity possible in Spokane and maybe even Seattle, including amateur theater.

"There are ways to learn in every situation. Go to see other actors work. Learn to listen to silence. Dream as much as you can," he said, stressing the importance of looking for the positive experiences around you.

Asked about backstage opportunities, Hamilton said we have some great set and costume designers but there isn't much opportunity. "But hopefully that will change," Hamilton said.

When asked if he would be interested in visiting with

some minority students Hamilton's response was just pick him in a warm car and he'd be more than glad to. The Voice has asked Diane Jackson at the East Central Community Center and Fred Buckles at the Martin Luther King Center to make arrangements to meet with him.

Meanwhile, follow Lawrence Hamilton's suggestion and get tickets for you and your kids to see Ragtime. Tickets range from only \$15 to \$65. The weeknight and Saturday and Sunday matinees are less expensive than weekend nights. Tickets are available from the Opera House ticket office and from Select-A-Seat 325-SEAT or 1-800-325-SEAT. Tickets may also be purchased on line at www.ticketwest.com. Orders for groups of 20 or more may be placed by calling 509-777-6253.

Continued from page 11

What race?

that Japanese-Americans are owed that money for losses they suffered when they had to give up their homes and property and be interned. But they should be aware of the privileges that they were given as a birthright that are being denied to others. I believe that we are all born equal and that we should all be at the same place at the starting line. Unfortunately, many people are being kept back so that's why they are always finishing last. The white community has a hard time giving up the privileged position they gained simply by being born white.

Take for example the politicians who are trying to put legislation through to deny sovereignty to Native Americans. I am outraged. How dare you try to close down Indian governments. You do not have that right.. How dare you -after what you have done to these people throughout history. It is white people taking Native American birthrights and privileges.

Along with the African American Voice, some other organizations have opened up some doors, for example the AHANA association. There is diversity there, to a certain degree. But where are

the gypsies? To me Jimmy Marks is a hero. I love to hear him publicly speak and I'm glad he still does even though because of the close-mindedness in Spokane difference is ridiculed. We can't continue to separate and exclude. Perhaps it starts with admiring someone like Jimmy Marks and all that he has done. Every time he came out and spoke he was speaking for me. No one knows that because I couldn't expose myself to the ridicule. With all his cultural flavor and mannerisms he is speaking for all the different people and the way they live and speak and view the world - that is diversity. He helps me by being out there. He is my hero for doing so.

Another community leader, Ben Cabildo, is also a hero because he is changing things for all of us with all he does. But the bottom line is with the African American Voice and voicing and exposing and reminding and edu-

cating the majority population that I exist and my family exists. The paper gave me hope about changing the world here in Spokane by changing more people's minds. Once they are exposed to something different they are different. Not that they would change right away, but the more they are exposed the more they change and in that way the paper has been a tool. You and the paper and all the people involved with it for all these years have been a real force in opening up people's little peepholes and reminding them that people like me exist.

I thank the African American Voice for making it possible to view Spokane with hope that discriminatory behavior will not always be directed at me because of my genetic diversity, my diversity of ideas and way of life. The African American Voice has made Spokane a better place.

Mark your calendars and pull out your check books

Cornel West, professor of African-American studies at Harvard University, is to be the keynote speaker at Spokane's Fourth Community Congress on Race Relations on April 26, 2001 at Gonzaga University.

This year's Congress is a collaborative effort of the NAACP, Gonzaga University, the City of Spokane, and the Spokane Task Force on Race Relations. Approximately 1,000 participants are expected, and financial support is needed to provide speakers, workshops, and youth activities. Past year's events have succeeded because of generous financial and in-kind support from businesses, organizations, and individuals. Send your checks, made payable to Task Force on Race Relations, to PO Box 222, Spokane WA 99210-0222.

For more information, contact Vince Lemus, City of Spokane, Vice Chair of the Task Force at 509-625-6260, or Co-Chair Father Robert Spitzer, President, Gonzaga University.

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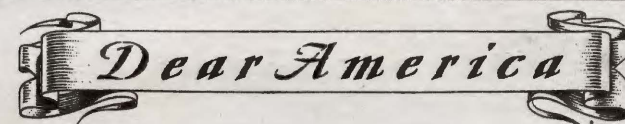
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Little River Baptist Church

BY ALICIA MONTGOMERY

Powerless at the polls Black voters complain about their treatment at Florida polls.

For days after the presidential race, reports about Florida's alleged voting problems focused on the confusing butterfly ballot layout in Palm Beach County that may have resulted in the discard of thousands of votes. But on the margins, there were darker charges of missing ballot boxes and voter intimidation around the state.

In a surprise visit to an NAACP meeting convened here, Miami police officer Diego Ochoa confirmed that there was a ballot box discovered at a downtown Sheraton Hotel, which had been picked up only Friday. Detective Delrish Moss, acting as spokesman for the Miami police, went even further, saying that another untouched ballot box had been discovered at Miami's Good News Little River Baptist Church.

Moss said police would not open either box, and couldn't confirm the contents, but would turn them over to election authorities as soon as possible. Florida state and

Miami-Dade County election officials have been hard to locate, Moss said, because of the Veterans Day weekend.

The confirmation of the orphan ballot box story, which just days ago seemed to be an urban legend, may lend credence to a raft of other complaints registered by several black Florida voters, including the concerns raised at the NAACP meeting. These are the same charges that led civil rights activist Jesse Jackson to hop on a plane from Nashville to Florida the day following the election.

Saturday afternoon, with NAACP president Kweisi Mfume presiding, about a dozen witnesses recounted tales of voting woe that ranged from incompetence to hostility to borderline illegality before a crowd of several hundred, mostly black, Floridians at a Miami community center.

One of the most compelling stories came from Stacy Powers, a news director at Tampa's WTMP, who discussed her Election Day experiences rallying voters for the radio station. She told the audience that she drove

around a predominantly black Tampa neighborhood in the station's van on Election Day and encour-

whom she met at another polling precinct near Tampa. He had told Powers that it was his first time voting, and

proudly pointed out the "I Voted" sticker on his collar. Just as Powers was about to leave, a police car approached the man. "They pulled up on the grass, two deputies stepped out and they started asking the man, 'What are you doing in this area? What exactly are you doing?'" Powers said. "He pointed to his collar and said, 'I just voted.' And they said, 'We want to see I.D. and we want to see it now!'" At this point in her testimony,

Powers paused for a moment and started to cry. "Then [the police officer] turned to me and said, 'What are you sitting here for?'" She then sped off in fear, she said.

Lawyer Donnise DeSouza went to her normal polling place on Election Day only to be told by poll workers that she had to vote at another location. When she arrived at the new polling place at 6

p.m. EST, police were directing a traffic jam of voters into a tiny parking lot, only one hour before the polls closed. After a 30-minute wait for parking, and a 20-minute wait in line, DeSouza said, "They told me they didn't have my name." She was then ushered into a line with 15 others with the same problem. But when closing time arrived at 7 p.m., she said, poll workers told everyone in line that they wouldn't be able to vote. "They just said they couldn't do anything for us."

Other tales were less sensational. Two students from Florida A&M University said they were told that their voter registration applications didn't get processed. Another woman said she never received her absentee ballot, but badgered the polling place officials until they let her vote.

Fumiko Robinson, who had worked with the local "Arrive with Five" voting drive, said that several elderly Fort Lauderdale area voters, whom she had shuttled around to polling places, had similar problems. By

Continued on page 17

Publisher's note:

Did I miss it? Have you heard about any of this except a little on National Public Radio and the NAACP hearings broadcast on C-Span? Was it in your local press?

Sometimes racism manifests itself in a tone of voice, a dig, a little smile in response to serious concerns, in a belittling or ignoring of concerns. Sometimes it's heard in the way they say they're tired of this or that. Attitudes like this are more insidious than their partisan politics.

tered voters who had been turned away from the polls because they lacked a photo I.D. After Powers challenged the poll manager to justify the decision to keep them from voting, "She told me not to get snippy with her."

Powers said she was eventually kicked out of the polling place.

She also shared the story of an elderly black man

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Information Provided By: Sisterlocks Home
Office Phone 858-569-6922. Sisterlocks.com

Continued from page 16

NAACP in Florida takes testimony

Robinson's own estimate, 10 percent of the 100-plus people she personally shuttled to vote were turned away for not being on the proper list at the polling site. Poll workers asked a number of Robinson's elderly charges whether they'd moved or been convicted of a felony in the last year, both circumstances that would have affected their voting status. Robinson and her passengers were mortified. "I felt like I took them to the polls to be embarrassed," she said.

But things got worse

for Robinson when her own mother, a Japanese-American woman, was refused access to the voting booth. Though Mitsu Robinson had been living in her neighborhood for decades, and had voted in the same location for many years, she was turned away from the polls because the middle initial on her registration card didn't match her driver's license. Only after Robinson's father got involved in a discussion did the poll workers budge and allow her to vote. "He was very ... outspoken," Robinson said.

And there were many other tales, all stories that when taken individually seemed like small incidents, but when taken together painted a picture of gross incompetence, borderline racism and blatant cultural insensitivity. A polling place demolished without notice. Creole speaking Haitian-Americans mocked for requesting help with their ballots. People standing in line at poll closing time who still weren't allowed to vote.

As for charges that the complaints have been motivated by morning-after angst about Al Gore's loss, Mfume and representatives

of other voting rights organizations insist that they were fielding complaints long before the polls closed. On Election Day, the NAACP dispatched 200 extra volunteers to keep up with all the problems. It's Mfume's hope that the collective record will be enough to persuade America's top cop, Janet Reno, to send in the feds.

How the sacred vote was allowed to be tarnished by such incidents will surely be a question on the minds of the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Jewish leaders when they join forces with other demonstrators in Miami on Monday.

9% of Florida's black voters disenfranchised

139,000 black ex-felons, 9% of Florida's blacks of voting-age, can never vote because Florida has a lifetime denial of the vote to ex-felons, according to Nancy J. Northup in a recent Chicago Tribune article. This disproportionately affects blacks - 9% compared to 5% of all Florida's voting age population. And in this very close presidential election that 9% represents 525,000 voters, more than enough to affect the outcome of the election.

"Florida's ban on voting by ex-felons means that a citizen who wrote a bad

check 30 years ago can be permanently denied the vote. Prominent politicians have admitted using illegal drugs and drunk driving, and may stand as examples that you can progress beyond your 'youthful indiscretions'. But youthful indiscretions are enough to disenfranchise people for life in Florida," says Northup.

Perhaps the civil rights lawsuit against Florida recently filed by ex-felons will bring about a change - but not in time for this critical election.

Diversity Dome Report

The Voice had a meeting with seven realty agents, managers, and owners who assured us that it was not a matter of race, but that Spokane has a very conservative approach to architecture. We decided not to fight

the issue and to seek a site elsewhere. A site has been offered. We are presently investigating infrastructure details and cost.

We will be able to move forward more quickly now with our sabbatical time available!

An African American mason who does brick and all kinds of masonry has been brought to our attention.

This article is part of a series on the dome that diversity is building.

The A A Voice is trying to compile a list of diverse contractors, suppliers, building trade workers, artists and craftspersons, landscapers, interior designers, suppliers of furnishings, and anyone else who thinks they have something to offer to this project. If this includes you or someone you know write the AAV at PMB 145 2920 S. Grand Blvd., Spokane WA 99203.



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Continued from page 13

Volunteers

READING TUTORS NEEDED FOR SCHOOLS

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP): The Reading Corp. Literacy program needs tutors to tutor children on a one on one basis. Woodridge, Broadway, Chase, Chester and Pasadena Elementary Schools have asked for additional volunteers. Volunteers most often are matched with the school of their choice. For more information, please contact Susan Bordges at 344-7787 ext. 134.

LOOKING FOR OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI): Looking for several office volunteers to answer phones, provide

referral services and mail brochures. You are needed any day of the week, M-F, 10-3pm. Training is provided. Must be at least 18 years old. For more information, please call Jeri Gray at 838-5515. Please call right away. Volunteers are urgently needed.

DELIVER MEALS TO ELDERLY/HOMEBOUND

Mid-City Concerns - Meals on Wheels: Need volunteers to deliver meals to the elderly and homebound in the downtown, south side and north side areas. Do you have 2 hours that you can give to provide a hot nutritious meal to those who no longer are able to shop or cook? Hot meals are delivered Monday through Friday starting at 10:15 am. In addition to driving, volunteers

can work in the office and assist with fund raising activities. Please call Peggy at 456-6597.

YWCA NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

YWCA: Volunteers needed to help with fundraising and functions that directly support the YWCA Shelter; daily and long-term needs. People to help sort clothing are also needed. Call Barb Ackerman at 326-1190 ext. 137.

SPOKANE AIDS NETWORK NEEDS HELP

Spokane AIDS Network: Agency needs a variety of volunteer help which includes: distribute and deliver food, clerical and office help, transport clients to appointments and shopping. Call Sherry at 455-8993.

BLACK FACT OF THE DAY for Thursday, November 02, 2000

In 1875, Democrats suppressed Black vote by fraud and violence and carried Mississippi election. "The Mississippi Plan" staged riots, political assassinations, massacres and social and economic intimidation was used later to overthrow Reconstruction governments in South Carolina and Louisiana.

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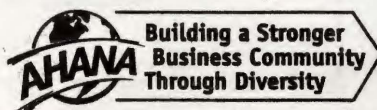
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