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VOLUME 8, NO. 7 April 1-15, 1999



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**Can the
Dallas
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Action
Committee
be Saved?**

**Should
It?**

**"Ethnic Cleansing" Is
A Tragedy—In Africa
Or In Europe**

**Texas Senate Focuses
On Educational Issues In
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**Soul Rep Theatre Gets
\$5,000 Grant From
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11. Business Financial Information from prior fiscal year ended January 31, 1998:

12. Gross Revenue: \$1,000,000

13. Net Income: \$100,000

14. Accounts Receivable: \$50,000

15. Inventory: \$25,000

16. Fixed Assets: \$75,000

17. Total Liabilities: \$125,000

18. Total Assets: \$125,000

19. Percent Owner Since: _____

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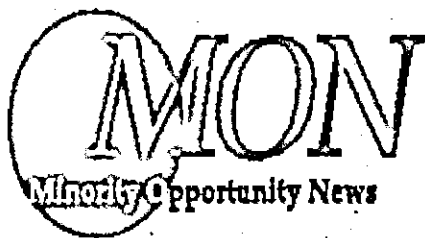


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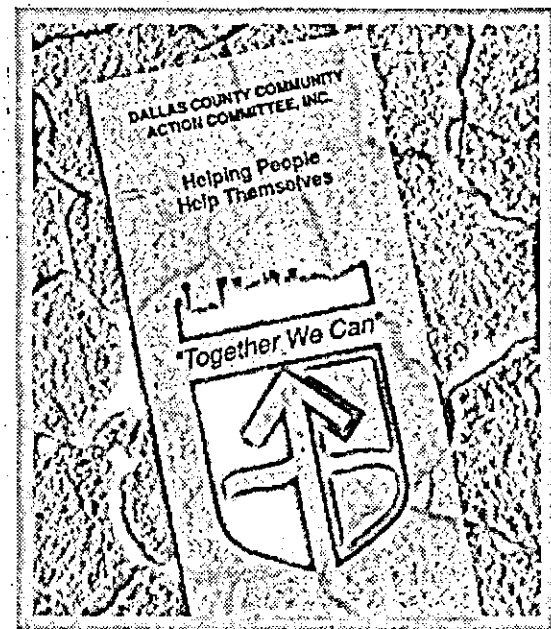
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C P V S



**From
The Editor**
Chris Pryer

Editorial

Does tragedy in Yugoslavia expose double standard?

Just when we thought we had gotten out from under the pall of a news story that seemed to go on forever, threatening to suffocate us all by its very ubiquity, wham! We get hit with another one. But while the Clinton-Jones-Lewinsky-Starr saga (and a strong supporting cast) titillated the public's collective prurient tendencies, this latest media feeding frenzy has shocked our sensibilities and pitched us into a human tragedy that supersedes even America's legendary parochialism.

What started off as a small, annoying boil on the backside of international geo-politics has developed into an ugly, puss-filled sore. Seems that the differences among the Bosnian Serbs, the Croats and the Muslims that culminated in a somewhat satisfying divvying up of Yugoslavian landscape was only a part of the ethnic unrest that continues to plague that country. The issue of Kosovo and its independence, or non-independence, has apparently been a bone of contention that had heretofore gone unscrutinized.

Many in this country are shocked by the Serbs' ferocious attack on the denizens of Kosovo. Never mind that the ethnic Albanians have been there for centuries and made up 90 percent of the population. The Serbs consider the region almost sacred ground and, incited by the malevolent Slobodan Milosevic, are willing to do whatever it takes to cleanse Kosovo of the ethnic Albanians.

Of course "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" have been mentioned. And there is great "moral" concern about the fate of the ethnic Albanians, as well as how, and to what extent, NATO should immerse itself into this domestic conflict. Indeed, the whole world is transfixed on the wholesale slaughter of innocent men, women and children—whether by Serbian-committed atrocities or NATO bombs. Funny, though, how I don't remember this kind of concern when the Hutus were committing wholesale genocide—or was it "ethnic cleansing"—against the Tutsis in Africa. The "moral" outrage didn't seem to be quite as high, nor was it nearly as widespread.

Normally, beneath the guise of so-called humanity, you can discern some type of economic agenda tied to Western concern. Wasn't any in Rwanda. I can't readily see any in Yugoslavia. Why, then, is there so much more outrage, so much more airtime?

Hmmmm.

Dallas Morning News needs lesson in objectivity

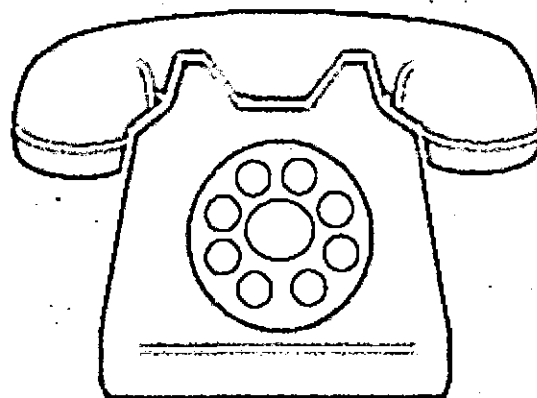
It is not often that one of our fellow publishing enterprises takes a position worthy of direct review on our part. In fact, it is tacitly understood that the editorial position of any newspaper is truly their sovereign right and, therefore, not open to public rebuke. It is, then, reflective of our great concern that we must share our concerns regarding recent actions and positions taken by *The Dallas Morning News*.

From the outset, we must admit that slapping the hand of the only daily newspaper in our city is very much of a David-versus-Goliath-type experience. The unfortunate demise of *The Dallas Times Herald* has left Dallas in the position of having only one major daily. Prior to its closing, if for no other reason than its very presence, *The Dallas Times Herald* helped push *The Dallas Morning News* towards greater integrity in both the scope and take of the issues and news it reported. When you add its size and soleness to the reality that their parent company also owns the largest television operation (in terms of marketshare), in North Texas, the challenge of taking *The Dallas Morning News* to task is even more formidable. Regardless, as the Bible says, "To whom much is given, much is also expected." In this sense, *The Dallas Morning News* continues to have a particularly unique responsibility to the citizens of our state to report the news in an accurate, timely and forthright fashion.

Recent positions taken by *The Dallas Morning News* give significant indications of a strategic attempt to lead the public down a very slippery slope concerning the deregulation of the utilities industry. First, we acknowledge that, to many, the whole matter of the regulation of the utility industry is not very sensational, or fascinating, reading. Nonetheless, few matters currently before the Texas legislature will have more impact on the citizens of our state than the outcome of the deregulation debate. Essentially, as it relates to the telephone industry, measures are being proposed to extend the protected and capped utility fee structure to further allow for growth and enhanced competitiveness of the nearly 250 telephone companies in Texas. The fundamental rationale behind this position is that these new enterprises will force competition, enhance services, and, hopefully, lower rates. *The Dallas Morning News* supposedly supports the approach of

these proposed laws because this enhanced competitiveness will better serve the citizens of our state. Simple, isn't it? However, before you race to a quick assumption, let us examine how *The Dallas Morning News* might have been influenced to arrive at this very magnanimous position.

When all else seems unclear and the



answers to unravel a mystery seems evasive, a very wise man once suggested that you "Follow the money." It should surprise no one that the real fight on the utility deregulation matter is being waged with big dollars. All of the ads—print, radio and television—come from the very deep pockets of those with a vested interest in the outcome of the legislative review. The casually-dressed professional woman invading our households via the airwaves to warn us to be concerned with the competitive interests of Southwestern Bell is, in fact, paid for by their major foe, AT&T. The sudden appearance of "citizen groups" and "watchdog organizations" are, directly or otherwise, supported by those with huge financial interests in the end results. The lure of financial gain, while very enticing, must always be balanced, especially in the journalistic community, with an overriding desire to present a fair and accurate review of the facts. It is therefore with great concern that we must challenge the covert preference for one side of this issue that *The Dallas Morning News* has taken.

We had the occasion to note a somewhat innocuous advertisement in the Sunday, March 21 edition of *The Dallas Morning News* that urged readers to visit the www.dallasnews.com web page for "complete coverage of the 76th Texas Legislature, sponsored by the Partnership for a Competitive Texas." The logical assumption is that the site would provide detailed information regarding the cur-

rent legislative session. When we actually went to the site, we were amazed to find that, in fact, the page is the home page of *The Dallas Morning News* and that it provides direct links to nearly 30 home pages advocating passage of the currently proposed legislation. The Partnership for a Competitive Texas calls itself "an organization dedicated to promoting competition in the telephone industry."

Its push for competitiveness frequently comes at the expense of an unbiased reporting of the facts and an overt agenda of blurring the position of its target, namely Southwestern Bell. We find fault with *The Dallas Morning News* because it has opted to promote, with undoubtedly significant financial gain for itself, the position of this organization. As a March 27th editorial endorsement suggests:

"... both bills move Texas a step closer to ending subsidies hidden in an artificially high access rate the long distance companies now pay to connect with local networks. Both bills reduce access rates, and urge companies such as AT&T to pass the savings to Texas customers."

While the factual matters of this position are open for significant questioning, it is important to note that it is all too consistent with what appears to be paid advocacy. The dominating presence of only one side of the deregulation story begs consideration for objectivity by *The Dallas Morning News*. We believe that it is ironic that the paper would suggest ending hidden subsidies when it hides the major dollars spent to shape its editorial position.

When the end of this year arrives and we reflect on the major successes and failures of our generation, Dallas must consider the closing of *The Dallas Times Herald* as one of its darkest days. The wake of this event has left us in a position where many of our citizens rely on *The Dallas Morning News* for their primary source of information. In our local case, we have to be mindful of the fact that much of the "news" actually comes from the same source. The deregulation debate clearly shows that everything that seems to be fact may not be, and that those who care should look further than the print or technological façade that frequently obscures the truth.

MON



Community Pulse

Thomas Muhammad

The issues are all too familiar. Test scores are down. Not enough pay for teachers. Principals have low morale. Should schools use corporal punishment? No pass, no play. Keep Joe Camel out of students' lunch boxes. Oops, that last one slipped in, but you get the point.) There are so many issues at the DISD that the real issues seemed to have gotten lost in the mix.

The reason I think is because of White, Black and Brown misfits who, for the most part, couldn't give a hoot whether children in the schools learn or not! These opportunistic sellouts are more concerned about getting their names and voices in newspapers, radios and television interviews than they are about finding a just solution at DISD. What else would account for all the political jockeying we're witnessing these days? Listening to these misfits, one would think that it was the lack of the school board's abilities to find a credible superintendent. However, upon close examination, we find that nothing could be farther from the truth!

Case in point. The in-fighting between the community and the board over a superintendent was never an issue until Yvonne Gonzalez-Lyle drove into town. But she's long since left the scene and that should have been the end of that (at least for me as well as many community activists). But the misfits don't seem to want to let this one go.

Gonzalez made the superintendency an issue by playing Black and Brown people against each other in the hopes of prolonging her tenure. White racist liked her because they could recover the district contracts they had lost to minorities because of affirmative action programs instituted under former superintendent Dr. Marvin Edwards and Matthew Harden's administration.

Former longtime school board trustee Kathlyn Gilliam was always a prime target for removal. It wasn't until they found this half-(Ron) Price sell-out Negro that they were finally successful. But he wasn't the first. Before him, one of the Brown misfits was planning Mrs. Gilliam's political demise with legislation. Domingo Garcia, who beat out the "real Chicano" elected official Roberto Alonzo, attempted to try and get a bill passed that would have created term limits for school board members. Many of you probably remember the numerous *Dallas Morning News* editorials calling for term limits for board members as well. *The News* long had been obsessed with trying to get Mrs. Gilliam off the board.

The problem at DISD: Too many darn opportunists

Garcia, trying to win brownie points with Whitey, drafted state-wide term-limit legislation but got no support. (There are hundreds of rural school districts, like Lucking Back, Mule Shoe, and Do Drop In Texas, which had members who have

by *The Dallas Morning News*. Seems they have become very concerned about trustees appointing the next superintendent by a bare majority of its members. Their editorials have been constantly cautioning the board not to jump to hasty conclusions in its pick. They claim loudly from their pages, "Dallas Schools: Divided superintendent vote isn't the answer." They go on to exclaim, "It would not be fair to bring someone in on a 5-4 vote. Even a 6-3 decision would not provide a necessary endorsement for the difficult assignment that awaits the next superintendent." One other *News* editorial exclaimed "Dallas Schools: Take time to get right superintendent." This editorial came as the trustees were about to visit the likely choice's (finalist Dr. James Williams) home district of Dayton, Ohio. The editorial said,

"There is also concern about the vast differences in the size of the two districts." Dr. Williams' district has about 20,000 students while the DISD has about 160,000. *The News* was worried that someone coming from such a small district may not be able to handle such a large district as Dallas. The editorial even called for the trustees to consider the White superintendent, Jerry Weast of Guilford County, N.C., who had dropped out after *The News* exposed him and the other four finalists in a front-page article. The attacks even came from their usual columnist, henchman Henry Tatum, as he wrote, "Dallas Superintendent: Finalist provides no easy choice for school board."

Oh yea! They pulled out all the stops. But let's take a closer look and examine for ourselves whether or not they have been consistent. First, let's look at this notion of a vote by a split board. Funny we didn't hear from the *News* when for-

mer superintendent Linus Wright was chosen nearly 15 years ago by a 6-3 vote to head the district! Or how about Yvonne Gonzalez-Lyles, who was picked by a 6-3! Did you hear from *The News*? As for the question of Dr. Williams being able to manage a large district vs. a larger one. Where was *The News* when Gonzalez was picked after leading a district of a little over 16,000 (in Santa Fe) vs. ours of 160,000? And as for Tatum's claim of non-qualification, Dr. Williams is more than qualified. The only issues a few Brown misfits had with him was his lack of experience with bilingual education. But even that's a smoke screen because many Hispanic leaders (who were not in front of the cameras) believe bilingual education issue is being used by these misfits to keep themselves in front of the news cameras.

The bottom line is the issues at DISD are small, but it's the have-nothing-else-to-do, want-to-be-somebody opportunists who seem intent on milking this cow for all they can.

After sitting on the sidelines for so long many of us who were real about the issues have decided to again join the fray. Look to see the Warriors, The New Black Panther Party, The Black Coalition to Maximize Education, The African American Pastors Coalition and yours truly to begin attending school board meetings. (Governor son-of-a-Bush did call for activists to get involved with the school district, didn't he?) Meanwhile, the next time you hear some White racist, or some sell-out Black or Brown misfits, talking about a takeover of the DISD, or you happen to hear them saying no selection of a superintendent is valid unless it has the support of each and every board member, shout out loud, get their attention. Then turn around, drop your pants and drawers, bend over, and shoot them a big Black moon. OK, for those of you who feel you should be a little more civilized, just tell them to get a life.

Until then, the struggle continues...

MON

False

(Editor's Note: The opinions expressed in Mr. Muhammad's commentary are not necessarily those of the Minority Opportunity News.)

served longer than Mrs. Gilliam in Dallas, and they liked things just fine the way they were, thank you very much.) So Losing Garcia struck out again.

For a brief moment he and half-price Uncle Ron (Price) seemed to be on the same page about the school board problems. The news recently ran a story entitled "State legislator urges TEA to take over Dallas district." In the story, Losing Garcia was quoted as saying that "the situation has gotten increasingly desperate" in his takeover urging. Meanwhile half-price (he's not a whole price of anything) Uncle Ron's quote was "I've pleaded with the governor and commissioner for he... That's how serious I am about educating children." This after the reporter described Half-Price as "At least one school board member... [who] said he'd welcome the assistance of a monitor, a TEA appointee who can advise and, in some cases, overrule trustees." Clearly this Negro was advocating a takeover of the school district, so I'm quite sure Losing Garcia was highly shocked when he drew opposition from Half-Price after introducing a bill that would, in fact, force a takeover of the district.

As usual, Half-Price did his thing—you know, say one thing to get his name in news lights and then changing his story after the news event if over. But Losing Garcia shouldn't be too shocked; after all it's the same game he's played for as long as anyone can remember. In fact, the most dangerous place on God's planet is that precious little spot of earth that lies between Half-Price, Losing Garcia and news reporters!

The other sideshow at the school district is the one that's being led primarily

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Texas Senate Focuses on Key Education Issues

Free College Tuition Passes, Private School Vouchers Poised for Senate Debate

The future of education in Texas continues to be a key issue. Two Senate bills, if enacted, will significantly change how students gain access to a better education. One proposes public funding of private education; the other would remove many



Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston

of the financial barriers to higher education.

Senate Bill 37 creates the Texas HOPE Grant Program, offering \$100 million in scholarships over the next two years. This legislation recently passed in the Senate and is now set for deliberation in the House. According to its author, Senator Rodney Ellis (D-Houston), this legislation has the potential to be as sweeping an educational reform as that evidenced in post World War II. "On the doorstep of the 21st Century", said Sen. Ellis, "the importance of a college education has never been greater. The Texas HOPE

Scholarship could be the GI Bill of the 21st Century, offering a generation of hard working Texas students an opportunity to get the education they need to succeed."

Ellis' bill offers tuition and fees to high school students who have completed college preparatory courses with a minimum 2.5 grade point average (GPA). Total funding and grants would be tied to available revenue. SB 37 is modeled on a similar and successful program in Georgia. The Peach State's program provides scholarships to students with a "B" or better GPA.

Reportedly, 137,000 Georgia students benefited in the last fiscal year from scholarships totaling \$173 million. From 1993 to 1998, over 300,000 Georgia students received scholarships valued at \$580 million. Moreover, five other states - Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland and South Carolina - have now begun scholarship programs similar to those in Georgia.

Texas ranks 48th in the nation in percent of high school students earning a college degree. That ranking is troublesome to Sen. Ellis. "If we do not begin to produce more highly-educated workers, the high tech boom of the 90s will become a high tech bust next century", he said. "Now is the time for Texas to make a down payment on our children's future by offering them a real shot at a college education."

While Ellis' bill received overwhelming bi-partisan support in its chamber passage, another Education Committee bill appears to be poised for a hot floor debate.

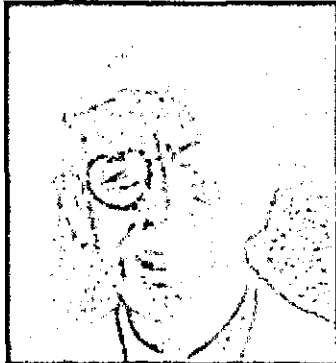
Senate Bill 10, authored by Senate Education Committee Chair Teel Bivins (R-Amarillo), would publicly fund private education vouchers for qualifying students in Texas' six largest counties - Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar, El Paso, Harris and Travis - in a pilot five-year program. If enacted some 144,000

students could be affected statewide.

In a press release issued by his office, Sen. Bivins said, "My record as a senator is clear evidence of my support of public education. Yet I believe we owe it to the school children of Texas to continue to try new

approaches to education. Senate Bill 10, which establishes a limited voucher program, will allow us to effectively compare a variety of approaches."

Each voucher would have an average value of \$4,000. That amount is roughly eighty percent of average per pupil funding.



Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, Senate Education Committee chair and sponsor of voucher bill.

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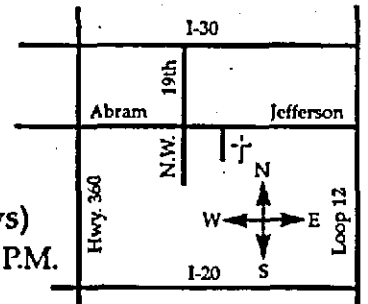
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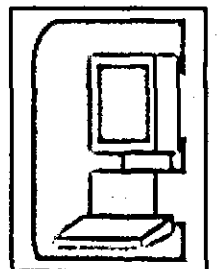
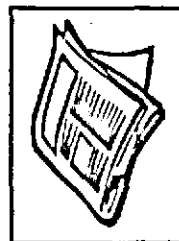
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Sen. Gregory Luna, D-San Antonio, Senate Education Committee vice-chair.

Vouchers could be used only at accredited private or religious schools. Legislatively, the intent would be to determine whether low-achieving public school students could realize improved performance in private institutions.

Eligibility would be limited to students from low-income families. Additionally, all students must have failing scores on the reading, math, or writing sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test. Once in the program, students would take the TAAS annually. In

turn, the participating private schools would be rated based on a series of objective measures, including test scores.

No more than five percent of any district's students could obtain the vouchers for private enrollment. Locally, this limitation translates into less than 8,000 Dallas Independent School District students. As with public schools, free transportation would be offered.

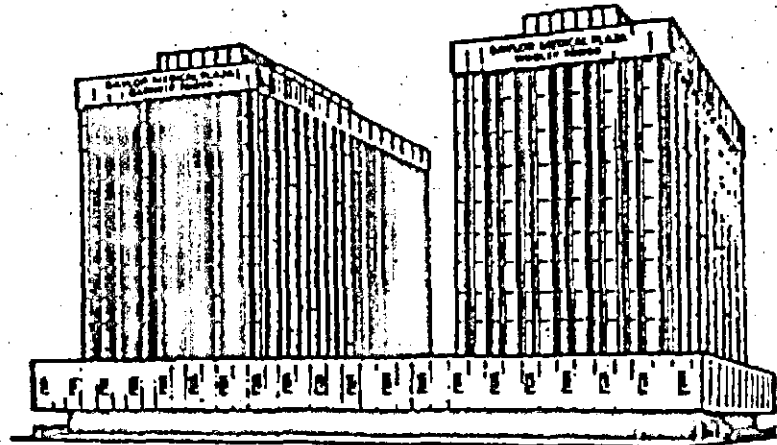
Passed out of committee on a 5-4 party-line vote, the measure now goes to the Senate floor for further action. Sen. Bivins' bill has garnered the support of both Gov. George Bush and Lt. Gov. Rick Perry. Mr. Perry, who briefly sat with Education Committee members during the bill's hearing has publicly predicted full Senate passage.

The Education Committee vice-chair, however, strongly disagrees. In a statement issued by telephone to the *Minority Opportunity News*, Sen. Gregory Luna (D-San Antonio) said, "Those results are only a preliminary to the real fight on the Senate floor. But we are confident we will prevail."

One vocal opponent of private school vouchers is Mr. Jose Sanchez, of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. According to Mr. Sanchez, "This is a Trojan horse that would destroy public education in Texas".

Other opponents include the Texas PTA, and various civil rights groups.

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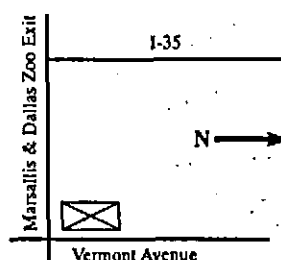
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Abstract Concepts, Inc. launches DallasBlack.Com

Abstracts Concepts, Inc. announces Dallasblack.com, your internet connection to the community. Abstract Concepts is a local team of African American technical and marketing professionals who joined forces to provide local African American internet users a means to remain abreast of local issues and events. Launched February 1, 1999, the site highlights local African American businesses, news events, church information, employment opportunities, sports highlights and events, upcoming concerts, community events, scholarships, an open mic featuring local poets, a classified ad section and an open forum so users can express themselves.

Lavida Samuel, and Abstract Concepts, Inc. partner says, "We developed Dallasblack.com because we feel the number of African American internet users is more than many people think. Statistics show more than 5 million African American internet users, and that number increases daily. Most people we know use the internet and/or have email, but there was not one professional and organized site that the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex internet users could go to find local information that related to us. We also wanted to provide African American businesses a means of taking advantage of the unlimited potential that lies in the online technology known as the internet.



(l-r) Lavida Samuel, Technical Consultant; Corey Akins, Technical Consultant; Froswa Booker-Drew, Editorialist

Black businesses must move into the 21st century. The internet is here to stay and too many of our businesses are being left behind. The internet is international and accessible 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. There are articles written daily about the internet and its impact. It has become a way of life and we need to come aboard. Although we focus on African American businesses, we work with all businesses looking to cater to blacks, such as companies looking to hire minorities."

Dallasblack.com plans to publish a quarterly email newsletter highlighting events and information. It will provide a summary of the past quarter's issues featured on the site, as well as upcoming events for the next 3 months. To join the emailing list, email us at join@Dallas-black.com.

Deputy Chief Edgar McMillan honored

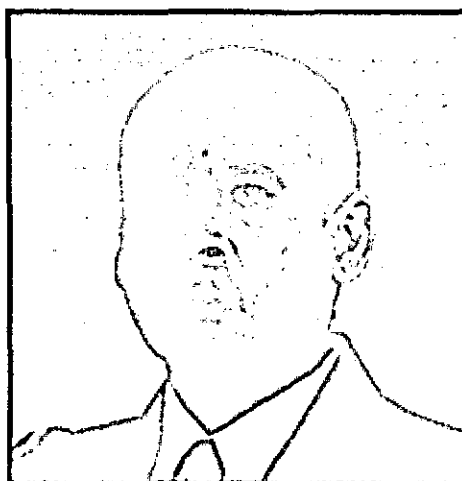
Dallas Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Edgar McMillan was recently honored with the Outstanding Texas Award from the Legislative Black Caucus.

Chief McMillan, a 27-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, was nominated for the award by Dallas State Representative Terri Hodge. The chief was honored at a black tie gala last month in Austin.

In her letter of nomination to Chief McMillan, Rep. Hodge said that Chief McMillan and others selected for the honor by members of the Black Caucus are being recognized for "making a difference in the African American community."

Chief McMillan commands the Sheriff's Department's Office of Detention-Technical Services and is a former Patrol Officer of the Year. He earned the Department's Civic Achievement bar, holds Certificates of Merit, two Commendation bars, a Safe Driving Award and has won Expert Marksman honors.

He has been recognized by the Lincoln High School Class of 1966, the City of Dallas, Dallas Transit System, Greater



Edgar McMillan

Dallas Community Relations Commission and the Latino Peace Officers Association.

Eastfield College, local church form partnership

Eastfield College was recently awarded almost \$200,000 to conduct a Welfare to Work program with Pleasant Mound United Methodist Church, located in the Pleasant Grove. Through the program, the partners hope to provide services designed to assist former recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) as a means of maintaining employment and expanding options in the workforce.

To be effective, Welfare to Work provides basic reading, writing, math and/or English as a second language (ESL) skills and on-the-job coping skills for future vocational growth. To remove potential barriers to participants with children who are in kindergarten through sixth grade, Eastfield will schedule and staff on-site tutoring services for children whose parents are involved in program training.

In addition, through the project year, all participants will have an opportunity

to attend five specialized workshops addressing the following work-related issues: "How to Deal With Difficult People," "Climbing the Vocational Ladder," "Ethics in the Work Place," "Substance Abuse...Intervention and Prevention" and "Accessing Financial Aid for Technical/Vocational Training."

The program intends to target eligible residents living in the 75217 and 75227 zip codes of the Pleasant Grove area in Dallas because this area's population represents one of the most diverse and high need communities in Dallas County.

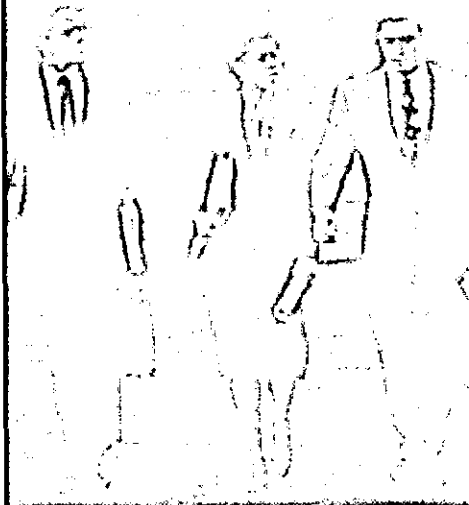
As a result, the training component of the program will be housed in Pleasant Mound United Methodist Church because of its convenient location in the heart of Pleasant Grove. Pleasant Mound is also conveniently serviced by the

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) system. Dr. Thomas Waitschies, pastor of Pleasant Mound has, demonstrated a commitment to partnering with Eastfield in support of the program by authorizing use of three classrooms, two evenings per week for up to two years.




Dr. Thomas Waitschies

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Minority Opportunity News • page 8 • April 15, 1999

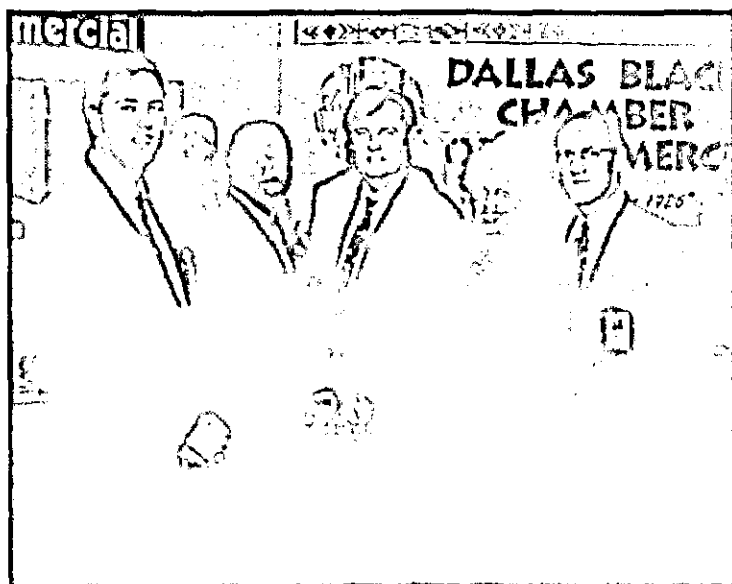
More In The News . . .

The administrative component of the program will be housed on the Eastfield College campus. Such an arrangement allows for maximum access for participants and maximum access to a myriad of administrative and student support services for the project.

The Welfare to Work program is grant funded through the Dallas County Local Workforce Development Board, also known as WorkSource for Dallas County. For more information about the Welfare to Work program, please contact Debbie Durden, public information coordinator for Eastfield College at 972-860-7180. To contact Pleasant Mound United Methodist Church, call 214-381-2131.

THR encourages networking with Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce

Texas Health Resources (THR) teamed up with the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce (DBCC) and Austin Commercial to host a business opportunity mixer at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas. The mixer was part of the ongoing efforts to increase awareness of THR's Minority and women-Owned Business Enterprises



(L-R) David Graham, senior project manager, Austin Commercial; Reginald Gates, president, Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce; Ron Bourland, executive vice president, Texas Health Resources; Wynntress Ware, president/CEO, Ware & Associates, Inc.; and Mark Merrill, executive director, Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas.

(MWBE)/Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) program, and to assist companies that would like to do more business with THR.

"This is part of a larger diversity program that includes internal and external efforts," said Cheri Lee from Work/Life & Wellness Resources. "This program begins at the top, works its way down and ranges from diversity education to community outreach."

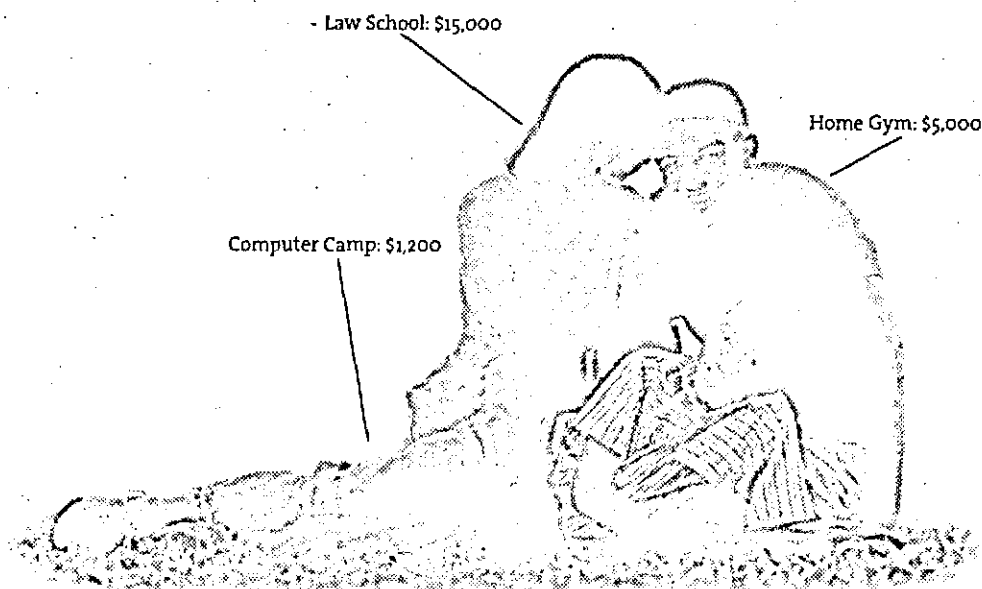
The mixer got off to a good start with 22 representatives from THR in attendance and over 35 vendors. Mark Merrill, executive vice president and chief financial officer of THR, gave an overview of how the program works.

THR administrators from Logistics, Construction and Property Management departments were on hand to meet potential vendors and answer any questions. THR watches were given out as door prizes, and refreshments were provided by The Dining Table.

Reginald Gates, president of DBCC said, "Business is done with those people that you know. We value our partnerships with companies like THR, who participate in our communities and gives us opportunities like these mixers."

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Ray Charles: An icon in American music

By Russell D. Shockley, BS.Ed.

Ray Charles, internationally renowned vocalist and pianist, was born Ray Charles Robinson in Albany, Ga., on September 23, 1930, during the height of the great American depression.

During Ray's formative years, the Robinson family, like so many other black families, traveled throughout the South in search of employment. The family eventually found stable work in St Augustine, Fla. Ray's eyesight had begun to deteriorate at age four and by age seven, he was totally blind. He attended a special school, where he studied music and math. At age 16 Ray left school in search of a career in entertainment, playing wherever he could just to survive.

Fed up with his lack of opportunities in Florida, Ray decided to leave, eventually settling in Seattle, Wash. There he became an instant local success. Inspired by Nat King Cole, he formed a own trio with two other local musicians, Goosaday McGee and Milt Garrett. By the late 1940s, they were known as the McSon Trio.

This was all happening during the boxing reign of the legendary "Sugar" Ray Robinson so Ray, not wanting in any way to be confused with the boxing great, shortened his name to Ray Charles. Under his new moniker, he continued to perform throughout the U.S.

Ray's first minor hit, "Baby, Let Me Hold Your Hand," was released in 1951. The following year, he signed with Atlantic Records. While there Ray produced and released, "I Gotta Woman" (1955), the first of his many major hits.

Over the next few years, Ray Charles began to build a national following with his soulful voice and keyboard prowess. Charles frequently collaborated with other established musicians on numerous hits, among them the incomparable Quincy Jones.

During the civil rights era, Ray became deeply associated with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement, personally participating in many of its demonstrations and marches.

It was while on the road during the 1950s that Ray and his troupe of traveling musicians got a first-hand taste of segregation. A promoter insisted that a concert

date Ray and his group was playing be segregated: all of the Blacks in the audience would sit in the upper balcony area and all of the White patrons would sit in the floor seats. Said Ray of the incident: "I don't mind segregation, except that he, the promoter, had it backwards. After all, I was Black, and it only made sense to have the Black folk close to me." The promoter successfully sued Ray for not playing the date.

This propelled Ray into an active role in the quest to stop racial injustice. This development of a social consciousness led him to develop a friendship with the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ray said, "Early on, I figured that if I was going to shoot craps on anyone's philosophy, I was putting my money on Martin Luther King Jr. I figured that if I was going to pick up my cross and follow someone, it could only be Martin."

Despite his deep commitment to King and the cause of Black Americans, Ray came to the logical conclusion that there was no place for him on the front lines. "First, I wouldn't have known when to duck when they started throwing broken bottles at my head. And I told that to Martin personally... When Martin intentionally broke the law, he was hauled off to jail. You need money for lawyers, for legal research, for court fees, and money for food for the marchers. I saw that as my function; I helped raise



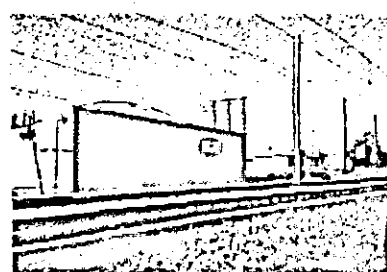
Ray Charles

money."

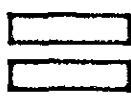
After his signing with A.B.C. Records in 1959, the already progressive career of Ray Charles really took off. He became one of the top Pop and R&B performers in North America, with the production and release of a series of number one hits such as "Born To Lose" and the enormously loved classic, "Georgia (On My Mind)."

In 1961, Ray formed his first big band and later went on to establish his own recording company, R.P.M. Records. Ray seemed to flow effortlessly

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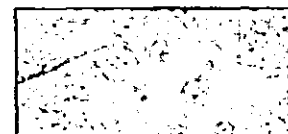
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^{1,2,3} International Data Corporation

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between R&B, Jazz and Country music, demonstrating his versatility while continuing to establish new fans.

Today, despite his advancing age, Ray Charles' talent remains seemingly undiminished and he continues to churn out hit recordings and accompaniments.

Ray Charles and his music continue to be as popular as ever, and he continues to perform before huge audiences of all colors, dialects, ages and diversities all over the world.

Highlights of Ray Charles' career

The awards and commemorations of Mr. Ray Charles are numerous. Here are a few of the awards that Mr. Charles has received over the many years of his musical career.

1963 — starred in his first feature film, *Ballad in Blue*.

1968 — inducted into the *Playboy* magazine Musical Hall of Fame.

1975 — presented with the first "Man of Distinction Award" from the National Association for Sickle Cell. Charles had also been the Honorary Chairman for the Sickle Cell Foundation's Los Angeles chapter in 1962.

1976 — voted *Playboy* magazine's Best Jazz Male Vocalist

1978 — autobiography, *Brother Ray* was published by Dial Press. It became a national best seller as well as a Book of the Month Club Selection. It is currently available in paperback.

1979 — inducted into the state of Georgia's Music Hall of Fame, one of the first Performers to be so honored.

1979 — his rendition of "Georgia (On My Mind)" was approved as the "official song of the state of Georgia." Ray was invited to be present on the floor of the Georgia State Capitol to sing its first performance there.

1980 — a featured star in the film *The Blues Brothers*.

1981 — profiled on ABC's 20/20. This profile would be the winner of two Emmy Awards.

1981 — received a star on Hollywood Boulevard's "Walk of Fame" in recognition of his artistic and humanitarian achievements.

1983 — presented with the N.A.A.C.P.'s Image Award. He was also recognized by the N.A.A.C.P. at their televised ceremonies (1983) for best R&B male vocalist

1986 — became one of the original inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

1986 — honored by the French Government when he was made a "Commander of Fine Arts and Letters." This was the second time Ray had

been selected for this honor by the Republic of France.

(Ray Charles was also one of the participants in the historic "We Are The World" recording to benefit "USA for Africa." This endeavor helped to raise several million dollars for African relief.)

1988 — became the voice-over for "Raisin Ray," the first celebrity raisin in the California Raisin Advisory Board's trendy series of raisin commercials.

1988 — appeared for the first time with the New York City Ballet. The Ballet choreographed dances to several of Charles' classics.

1990 — winner of the Clio Award for best male performer.

1990 — receive an "Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts" from the University of Southern Florida in Tampa.

1991 — his "Diet Pepsi" commercials voted

most popular.

1991 — Fox Television aired, 50 Years of Music Making: A Tribute to Ray Charles.

1992 — inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame. Charles' name was placed alongside other notable inductees such as writer Ernest Hemingway and playwright Tennessee Williams.

1992 — honored by the County Board of Supervisors as the 1992 Black History Month honoree. As such, Charles was presented with the "Distinguished Service Medal" for his outstanding contributions.

1993 — presented the National Medal of Arts by the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, in Washington, D.C.

1994 — given the Lifetime Achievement Award on the Black Achievement Awards television program that was sponsored by Johnson Publications.

1994 — receive the Hellen Keller Personal Achievement Award from the American Foundation for the Blind.

1994 — received his 12th Grammy Award for the best R&B vocal by a male performer ("A Song for You and My World").

1995 — received the Governors Performing Award.

1996 — the recipient of an honorary Doctorate degree from Occidental College.

Ray Charles Robinson is still "kickin" out the hits and will hopefully continue to kick out the hits well into the next millenium.

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Russell D. Shockley is the director of Ethnic Notes. For lecture or presentation information, call or write Ethnic Notes, c/o MON.

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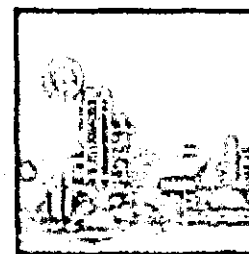
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Calendar of Events (April)



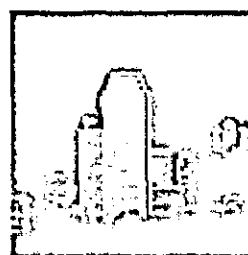
Wednesday

Comedy Night...8pm-10pm
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Miguel Washington
Live Band...10pm-12midnight



Thursday

Ladies Night
• Mr. Body Contset
• Margarita Specials
• \$5 cover after 9pm



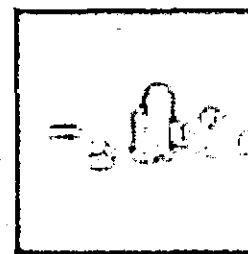
Friday

Business Network
"Happy Hour"...5pm-9pm
• Free Fried Catfish
• \$5 cover after 9pm
Live Band...9pm-12midnight
• Paul Rodgers...4/2/99
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Saturday

Soul Mix
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Sunday

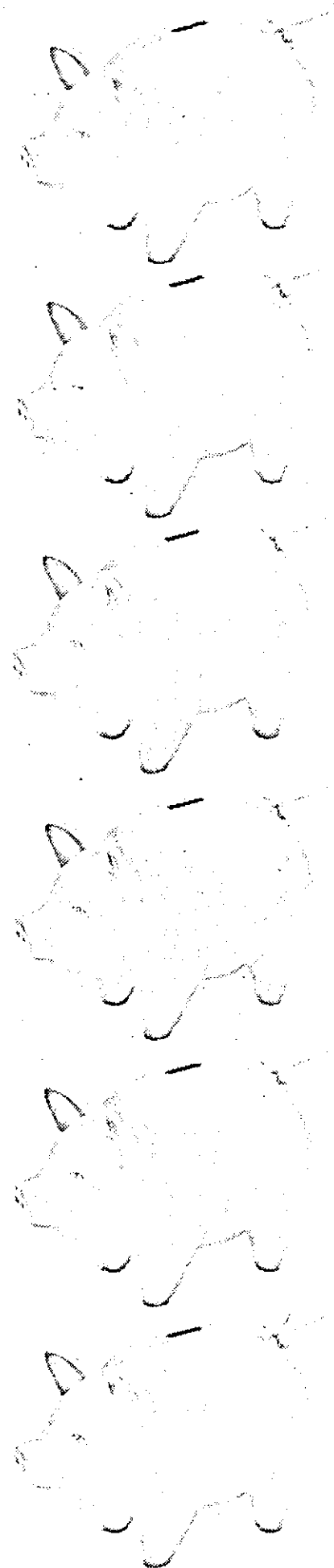
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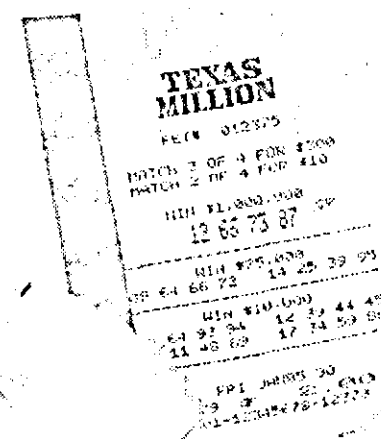
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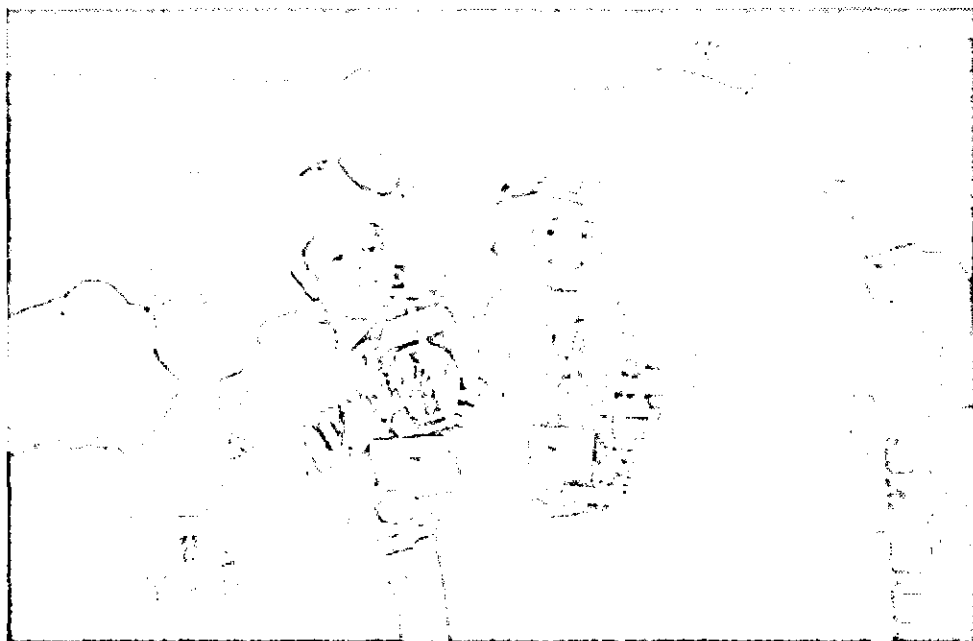
To play Texas Million, just pick 4 numbers or Quick Pick (QP) for the \$1,000,000 cash prize, and you automatically get 6 more sets of random numbers for more ways to win. In fact, Texas Million offers a \$10 cash prize for matching just 2 numbers within any of the seven sets and \$300 for matching 3. What more could you ask for?

7 Chances To Cash In.



Brothers win AT&T Super-Bone Domino Tournament

Photo by Maria Gonzalez



Brad Davis (left) and Dhia Davis of the West Dallas Community Center Drug Education and Prevention Program proudly pose with their trophies in front of Mayor Ron Kirk (left) and State Sen. Royce West at the AT&T SuperBone Domino Tournament held on March 13. The brothers won first place in the junior division. The tournament raised \$13,000 for the Visiting Nurse Association Meals on Wheels program, which feeds hundreds of Dallas County senior citizens. Tournament sponsors were AT&T, Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Southwest Center Mall, 7-Eleven Stores, KKDA Soul 73, KRNB 105.7 and K104-FM.



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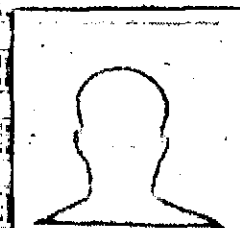
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Iota Phi Lambda adds Legacy Line



Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., Psi Chapter, announced the initiation of 11 new members to its ranks recently. This unique line of initiates are the daughters of current members. Standing (l-r) are line members D'Andrea Wesson, Marquesa Pettway, Shamondra Berry, Carmen Crittenden, Dawnette Brown, Jennifer Scott, Michelle Clark, Wendy Jaques, Carmen Brown, Jennifer Hudson, Cheryl Dawes; Seated chapter officers (l-r): Dorethea N. Hornbuckle, past national president; Rita H. Powell, membership chair; Brenda Johnson, region director; Charlotte Berry, chapter president; Juanda Wallace, asst. region director; Dwala Brown, past region director

**In-depth political coverage in
MON's April 15th issue.
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April 3

The Moorland Family YMCA, 907 E. Ledbetter Drive, Dallas, is sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt at 11:00 a.m. Call 214-375-2583 for more information.

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Help keep your neighborhood clean. The 16th Annual Spring Cleanup Campaign 1999, a unique beautification and litter abatement event sponsored by Clean South Dallas/Fair Park, Inc., 2809 Birmingham Street, Dallas, will be held April 3 and April 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. To volunteer or to donate supplies and equipment, call 214-421-1662.

....

The students of Pearl C. Anderson will present a photographic exhibition documenting their community. The exhibit is entitled, "CITY KIDS II: South Dallas Chronicles" in the Augusta Savage Youth Gallery and is coordinated by art teacher Susan White. "CITY KIDS II" will show through May 1. South Dallas Cultural Arts Center, 3400 South Fitzhugh. For more information, call 214-939-ARTS.

April 4

A memorial service marking the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held at Camp Wisdom United Methodist Church, 1300 W. Camp Wisdom Rd., at 7 p.m. The Dallas chapter of the Souther Christian Leadership Conference, which is sponsoring the memorial, will also launch its Stop the Violence, Stop the Killing campaign. Call 972-224-4556 for more information.

April 6

The Women's Resource Center of the YWC is hosting "Wake-Up," a breakfast networking event to enhance professional women in their workplace performance and pursuit of excellence from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the Melrose Hotel in Dallas. For more information, call the Women's Resource Center at 214-821-9595.

April 7

New Image Business Associates invites the public to its small business luncheon every Wednesday at the Bill J. Priest Institute of Economic Development, 1402 Corinth, room 202 A&B, in Dallas, from noon to 1 p.m. Lunch is \$5 per person. For more information, call 214-350-9590.

....

The YWCA of Metropolitan Dallas Women's Resource Center is sponsoring "The Breakfast Networking Series," from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The session "Small Talk in Big Groups" looks at the art of making "small talk" in groups of strangers. The cost is \$20. For more information, call 214-821-9595.

April 10

The International Museum of Cultures present Bimoba, A West African Chiefdom at 1:30 p.m., 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd. For more information, please contact Gary Eastty at (972) 708-7406.

April 21

3Heads, Inc. presents Open "MIC" Poetry & Live Jazz at The Q Club in Deep Ellum (Elm St. between Malcolm X Blvd. and Crowds). Doors open 8:00 p.m. Music by "Network," host poetess is Twanna B. Cost is \$7, (\$5 before 9 p.m.). For more info, call 972-470-9394 or 214-741-7665.

April 22

Quad C Theatre at Collin County Community College, 2800 E. Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, presents The Three Sisters, a brilliant and imaginative drama about love and longing in Russia written by Anton Chekhov. Performances are April 22-24, 28-30 and May 1 at 8:00 p.m. with matinees April 25, May 1 and May 2 at 2:15 p.m. For tickets and other information, call the Quad C Theatre box office at 972-881-5009.

April 23

The Cheshire Guild Scholarship Show and Fundraiser will run April 23 - May 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the Creative Arts Theatre & School (CATS), 1100 W. Randol Mill Road, Arlington. Special appearances will be made by Randy Galloway, Gil Lebreton and Dave Lieber and Jim Reeves, Fort Worth Star Telegram columnists. For more information, call 817-861-CATS or metro 817-265-8512.

April 24

"Imagine the Arts! Then, Now and Tomorrow," the Kennedy Center Imagination Celebration will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Annette Strauss Artist Square in downtown Dallas. The event, which showcases local arts organizations and features hands-on creative experiences for school age children and their families, is free and open to the public. For more information, call the Partnership for Arts, Culture and Education at 214-823-7601.

April 27

The YWCA of Metropolitan Dallas Women's Resource Center will wrap up its "Breakfast Networking Series," with a two-day workshop, April 27-28 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The workshop, presented by nationally-recognized author of The Eve Factor and trainer Judith Ausnell, will focus on how to maximize the powerful communication skills inherent in all women. The cost for the two-day workshop is \$300. For more information, call 214-821-9595.

ATTENTION:

If you're interested in placing your event in our events calendar, send it to us by mail or fax no later than the 21st of the month preceding publication to:

Minority Opportunity News
2730 Stemmons Frwy
Suite 1202
Dallas, TX 75207
(214) 905-0949 Fax

Community Calendar Sponsored by Southwestern Bell Telephone

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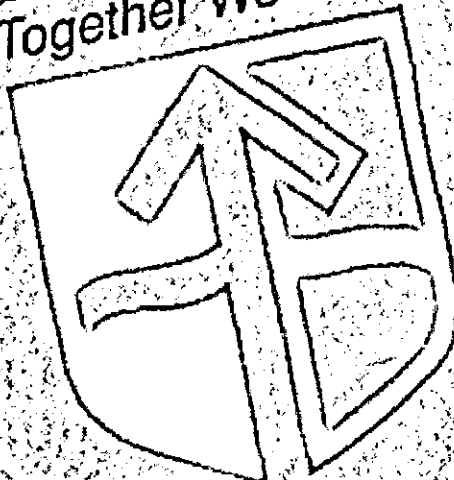
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Committee
be Saved?**

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**Should
It Be?**

By Allen Gray

This past summer, when sun-scorched Dallas was willing under record triple-digit temperatures, again it was the Dallas County Community Action Committee that stepped in with thousands of donated fans and air conditioners to cool down the downtrodden—the city's low-income citizens.

February of this year found 16 families out of a home after a fire raged its way through the Southwind Apartments complex in Oak Cliff. Again, that's when DCCAC stepped in like an angel from heaven. With assistance from two area radio stations, the nonprofit organization provided money, clothing and furniture to get those displaced individuals off to a new start. That's what the DCCAC was designed and established to do...that's its job.

So, how can an agency created with only the very best of intentions—to assist the poor and poverty stricken—wind up burning on the hotseat itself?

The DCCAC has been plagued by allegations of corruption, mismanagement, fiscal carelessness, betrayal, infighting, witch hunts and attempts at hostile takeovers throughout its 35 years of operation. The agency has fought hard to fulfill its mission as a social services provider but now it is in the midst of its toughest battle yet.

Throughout the DCCAC's most recent trials, its executive director, Cleo Sims, and chairman of the board, Anthony Bond, have complained repeatedly that they have not been allowed to tell their side of the story. Sims and Bond feel that if the whole truth was known, DCCAC would be exonerated from its torment.

Dawn of a new era

DCCAC was created in 1965 to (as its motto states) "help the poor help themselves." Funding for the agency like for the 51 others across the state of Texas, is provided by a federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and funneled through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. The state, which receives five percent of those annual allotments, then disburses grants to the 52 community action agencies located in Texas. The DCCAC receives an annual grant of \$1.6 million, second only to Houston's allotment. At one time the DCCAC had an annual budget of over \$10 million; that was when it also administered Dallas County's Head Start Program.

Though DCCAC had more or less provided services and relief to Dallas County's needy over the years, repetitive fiscal mismanagement plunged it into receivership by 1990, signaling that new

leadership was needed. That is when Cleo Sims assumed the responsibility of executive director. At the time, DCCAC was comprised of an administrative office, itself in deplorable condition, and two community centers. One was located in the West Dallas Housing Project; the other in a building that Sims describes as "falling down around our ears."

"When I took this job, we had nothing," Sims recalls.

In the following nine years of her tenure, Sims innovative approach to management of the beleaguered agency led to the establishment of eight centers, the ownership of two thrift stores, a West Dallas restaurant, a commercial strip center on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., and three apartment complexes.

But what Sims feels is much more important than real estate and business growth (or those incidences of benevolence mentioned above) is the daily activities performed by DCCAC to assist the poor and disfranchised.

For instance, DCCAC provides basic training in the use of computers in any one of its three computer training centers—and then goes a step further to ensure that those graduates of the program are employed by building relationships with local businesses. (Recently, NationsBank hired three of the computer center trainees.) The doors of the restaurant are opened on a daily basis to West Dallas youth, providing after-school meals.

However, neither Sims or Bond could have predicted the debacle that took place at DCCAC's annual board meeting and banquet on an eventful night in February 1997.

Attempted coup d'etat

The DCCAC holds an annual banquet where graduates of its educational programs and recipients of its other services are honored before family and friends, a custom started by Sims. The banquet is combination fundraising affair and business meeting for the board. But Sims and the board were not ready for what transpired that night.

According to Bond, four men—Kenneth Green, Teddy Hawkins, Kalif Hassan and a fourth man—stormed into the banquet hall and announced that the current DCCAC board should resign and that they were "taking over." The men were armed with letters of recommendation from a well-known Dallas politician. This, they claimed, gave them the authority necessary to make their demand.

"They really went after us with a vengeance," Sims says of the strong-arm mission. "It was politically inspired and I had the nerve to get in the way. So they said, 'Okay then we'll just go after her.' And they did."

Sims says the quartet "clowned" so

badly that they eventually had to be escorted out by armed guards.

Sims says that one White Board member from Seagoville was so distraught over what he had witnessed that he resigned and never returned.

Says Sims: "Their intent was to run everyone off."

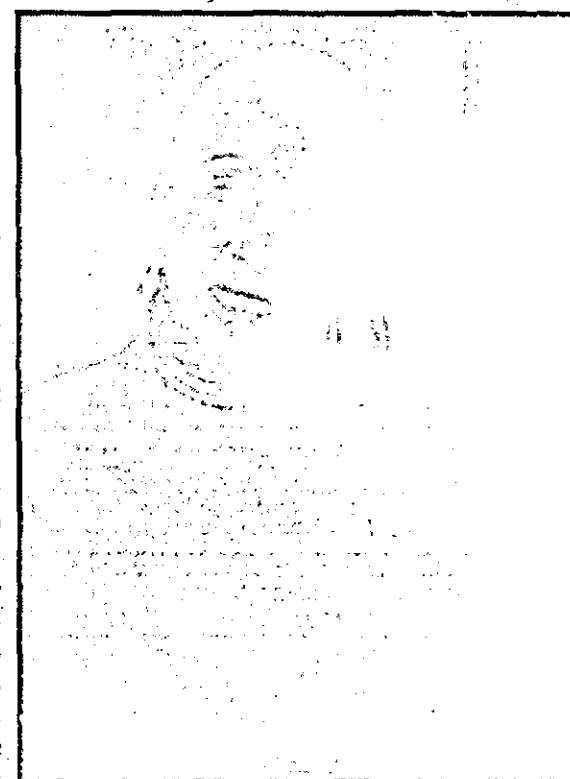
Now the heat was on.

That same month the quartet sent a letter to the governor with a detailed list of charges against DCCAC. Bond claims that it was a "falsified" letter. Even so, as a result of the letter, in March the state sent in a team of monitors to investigate DCCAC.

"[The state] normally monitor[s] anyway," Bond explains, "but the way these people came, they didn't come here to monitor, they came here as a direct order . . . of the governor's office and the (then) manager of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs."

Bond calls the former manager of the TDHCA "one of the most bigoted rednecks I've ever experienced in my life."

"[DCCAC] is not the only agency that has been under siege by the state of Texas," Sims points out. "There is a systematic effort on the part of the state to terminate the designation of 'cap' agencies and nonprofits, and to put those programs into the hands of city and county



Cleo Sims, executive director of DCCAC since 1990, calls the states investigation "a witch hunt from the very beginning."

nity agencies closed and those contracts be awarded to municipal and county governments.

Sims essentially shares Bond's assessment: "It was a witch hunt from the very beginning."

The Bond appointment

By June of 1997, it was realized that DCCAC they should have never hired their former financial officer, who, Bond admitted, was "very weak."

Realizing that all of DCCAC's troubles revolved around its questionable financial practices, Bond's first move after becoming board chair was to hire a new financial officer. Bond instructed him to go over DCCAC's record with a fine-toothed comb in an effort to uncover any improper expenditures. But that in itself was not enough to fend off the investigation.

The investigation of DCCAC was, in Bond's view, unethical, improper, and outright disrespectful to Sims. The purpose for monitoring any community action agency should be done for the purpose of assisting, and not harming, that agency, Bond believes.

The normal course of an investigation, says Bond, is to first conduct an entrance interview with the executive director and staff, then a random records search is held, and finally, an exit interview should have been conducted, wherein the findings of



DCCAC board chair Anthony Bond thinks disgruntled employees influenced how the state investigated the agency's handling of grant money.

governments."

Bond further states that the same former manager of TDHCA publicly has said that he would like to see all commu-

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

the investigators are reviewed and summarized. Bond says that was hardly the case with the DCCAC.

Bond says as the monitoring process of the DCCAC was getting underway, agents of the state met with disgruntled employees. Then when the agents approached the DCCAC, the normal process was bypassed and the agents went straight for the evidence that was supplied to the state by their chief witnesses—the same four individuals who had disrupted the banquet.

"That's very unethical," Bond laments. "That's not to say that when [the agents] came they didn't find things that were wrong, because they did. Two wrongs don't make a right."

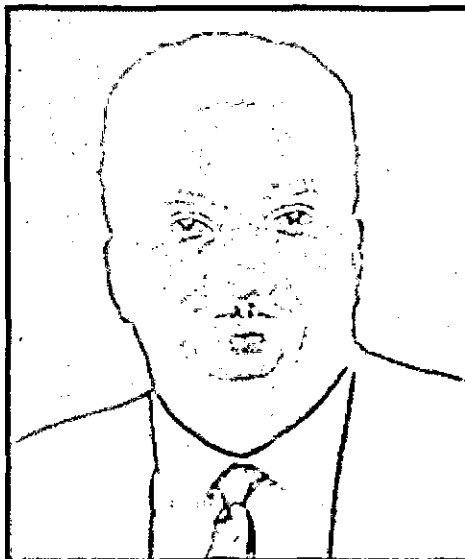
Bond readily admits that Sims and the board were lax—maybe even negligent—in their failure to tighten the reins on the former financial officer. (The findings of the state's agents confirm his assessment.) And the zealousness of the investigation may even be, on second glance, understandable. After all, inappropriate behavior on the part of past DCCAC administrators had been discovered before.

In 1973 an audit by the U.S. Labor Department sharply criticized DCCAC for a lack of accounting controls, citing that a project director and a bookkeeper had been overpaid. Two years later, outside auditors hired by the Labor Department became frustrated and gave up on an audit, claiming the agency's accounting practices were too shoddy to even trace. In 1977, an audit revealed stolen checks, missing employee records, overdrafts and missing time sheets. Two years later, it was a case of misapplication of funds and falsification of records. In 1982 and 1983, DCCAC was cited for improper expenditures and a case of embezzling by two former employees. A case of fraud was uncovered in 1987, and the DCCAC was nearly closed for good in 1989.

Certainly DCCAC had been forced to close neighborhood centers in 1985 and had endured a threat from the county commissioners in 1989 of having its own doors slammed shut for good, but none of these was as serious as what happened in 1997.

Down for the 3rd time

The winds of the tempest began to rage full gust in 1997. Over three decades of financial trickery had stripped DCCAC of its credibility. In 1998, the TDHCA announced plans to cancel DCCAC's contract for the annual \$1.6 million CSBG grant—an action the agency immediately set out to stymie. This past January DCCAC was placed on cost reimbursement by the state, which means they now have to pay for their expenses up front and then justify them before being reim-



State Sen. Royce West (above), according to Bond, had the power to bail DCCAC out but "didn't want to."

bursed by the state.

In a more devastating development, senior administrative law judge Michael J. O'Malley upheld the state's decision to terminate DCCAC's contract.

Cleo Sims vehemently refutes the judge's ruling. She thinks Judge O'Malley based his ruling on the evidence he received from the state (which relied solely on the word of the group of men who had disrupted the agency's banquet) and refused to consider evidence submitted by DCCAC. Says Sims of the evidence O'Malley relied on: "The numbers just didn't add up."

Bond says that while the state lists funds to be repaid at approximately \$66,000, DCCAC's calculations only show about \$14,000 owed.

Judge O'Malley found that DCCAC charged unauthorized expenses to the state contract, including accepting collect telephone calls from Sims' son (currently serving time in prison). Sims' claims she did not know that it was improper for her to accept collect calls from her son (as well as other inmates), and that she has repaid the CSBG account.

The judge found that DCCAC's fundraising banquets were overly lavish, and that bank fines and personal purchases at Sam's Club and Home Depot were charged to the CSBG account. He also stated that DCCAC failed to get competitive bids on contracts, including some that appeared to be awarded due to nepotism.

Sims admits she hired another of her sons as a maintenance worker for some apartments owned by the DCCAC, but maintains that was not a contract situation and "had nothing to do with public monies."

To the charges of nepotism, Sims claims, "Relatives have worked for this agency for as long as I've been here, and [the state] has known about it for as long as I've been here." She cites a case of a mother and daughter who work for the DCCAC but that they work in two com-

pletely different buildings.

"Nepotism is when a relative reports to you in a subservient way," explains Sims.

Sims says DCCAC has sent evidence to disclaim the charges to its attorney in Washington, D.C. It will be used during the appeals hearing.

In a written review of the DCCAC case, O'Malley stated, "This repeated behavior demonstrates DCCAC's total lack of stewardship of federal funds. . . . The fact that these items were charged to the CSBG contract in the first place shows a disregard for federal grant money. Furthermore, it was only after the department discovered the unallowable charges that DCCAC began to reimburse the CSBG account. None of these expenses have anything to do with serving the low-income people of Dallas County."

The walls crumble

By April of 1998, DCCAC's financial bind had begun to really hamper its ability to serve the community. That month, its board decided to close five of its nine centers. Four days after the centers were officially closed, Bond says he received a telephone call from state agents telling him they wanted to assist in reopening the centers; however, they would require more records from DCCAC. Bond responded by calling his attorney, who advised him not to hand over any more records; the state had all they needed. Dialogue between Bond and the state agents ended abruptly.

The state agents were not about to return to Austin empty-handed. "They made a bee-line straight to State Senator Royce West's office," Bond maintains.

Bond says that the very next morning Senator West called his office and asked that he bring the information the state requested, and for Bond to meet him at his office for a meeting that was to begin in thirty minutes. Bond says that he did not attend that meeting.

A short time later, Bond says that his attorney instructed him to hand the information over to the state agents. Bond complied. After reviewing the records thoroughly, the agents informed Bond that a total of \$77,000 would be required to reopen the five centers. Of the state agents Bond says, "We haven't heard from them since." DCCAC received no additional funds and the five centers did not reopen.

That incident reinforced Bonds negative feelings about the state and left him with a bad taste in his mouth for Senator West.

With a hint of venom in his voice, Bond says, "I believe Royce West is one of those Black politicians who plays both sides against the middle." Bond further states that West had the power to bail DCCAC out but did not because "he did-

n't want to." Bond acknowledges that West met with state officials on DCCAC's behalf but "didn't do us any good."

Senator West was not available for comment.

In December 1998, apartment buildings that were owned by DCCAC had to be sold to pay for legal fees, and to cover the expenses of the cost reimbursement arrangement with the State.

On March 1, 1999, DCCAC, in a last-ditch effort to save its contract, filed an appeal with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Congresswoman repends

Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, whose district encompasses DCCAC, was eager to shed light on the DCCAC affair. During a telephone interview, Congresswoman Johnson opined that Anthony Bond is "bright" and "sincere" in the execution of his duties as DCCAC board chair. Commenting on Cleo Sims' leadership, Johnson said, "I have no doubt in my mind about her ability to come up with creative ideas, and she has implemented a number of creative and helpful programs, but because that . . . doesn't mean [Sims] can do everything else (improperly) and [we] ignore it. . . ."

Johnson said that, indeed, the \$1.6 million CSBG grant appropriated to DCCAC was for administrative purposes, but unexplained expenditures such as excessive cellular phone charge "the state felt was the misappropriate use of those tax dollars. I can't differ with the state on that." Accountability for the use (or misuse) of tax dollars, Johnson said, is a must.

"DCCAC has done a lot of good work, but they have also made some mistakes," Johnson explained. "They have chosen not to correct some of them and they went into litigation. Once something goes into litigation, my involvement with it is moot."

During DCCAC's dilemma, Johnson said she attempted desperately to save the troubled agency. In so doing, she requested that the agency follow through on the appeals process—the state level first, and then the federal level if need be.

Johnson said she personally addressed the state by telephone, in writing and in person on DCCAC's behalf on numerous occasions, as well as conferred with Senator Royce West on the matter. Yet, Johnson said, DCCAC failed to produce some of the material requested by the state and, to her knowledge, has not taken reparative actions on the state's findings.

Ignoring Johnson's advice on the appeals procedure, DCCAC bypassed the state proceedings and went directly to the federal level. That move, in effect, knocked both Congresswoman Johnson and Senator West out of the loop.

Over a year ago, when Johnson last spoke with West about the DCCAC matter, West informed her of the failed meeting with Bond and state representatives in his office. Johnson said that West told her that he felt that he could have done an adequate job of defending DCCAC, but with no one from the agency appearing in its own defense, his hands were tied.

According to Johnson, DCCAC's failings are due to "buddy spending"—family members, family friends, boyfriends and girlfriends being hired in a number of capacities. "That created a problem that no one could do anything about except the ones who were guilty of doing it."

Speaking of Sims tenure at DCCAC, Johnson said: "Very innovative things have occurred, but the same person who brought forth those innovative ideas and started those innovative programs is the same one who abused a lot of money."

About the coup



U.S. Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson: "DCCAC has done a lot of good work, but they have also made some mistakes. They have chosen not to correct some of them and they went into litigation. Once something goes into litigation, my involvement with it is moot."

For their part, Bond and Sims think DCCAC would not be under heavy scrutiny if it had not been for that eventful night in February 1997, when the quartet of men attempted to strong-arm the board at the agency's annual banquet.

"A lot of what they say (about the takeover attempt) is accurate," said Johnson, "but it does not fill the gap of them not paying that money back."

Johnson affirmed that there was interference into DCCAC affairs from outsiders. Interference, she said, that would have the banquet gate-crashers wrestle control of the agency away from the current board members and the executive director.

"It was clear that there was antagonists on the side," Johnson acknowledged, "and they made it clear that it was their goal to get rid of (Cleo Sims)."

Sims says that at one point during the agency investigation, an unnamed source told her attorney, "If you just get rid of Cleo (Sims) this whole thing will go away."

Johnson said that she has learned of a longtime vendetta that has existed between Sims and the group of gate-crashers. Allegedly, at some point during DCCAC's recent history, Teddy Hawkins' mother worked at one of DCCAC's facilities. After alleged misuse of funds and improper distribution of goods, Hawkins' mother was released. Afterwards, Hawkins and Green supposedly decided they were going to take control of the DCCAC.

"There was some evidence that that

could have been the truth," Johnson asserted. "I was even told by Mr. Hawkins to step back because he was going to go full-blast to destroy everybody associated with the agency."

During the entire investigation of DCCAC, Congresswoman Johnson has chosen to maintain an objective view of the plight of the threatened agency. However, she has observed that, "Out of all the things that I've seen, I have not seen the appropriate corrective actions take place—in my opinion."

Sims claims innocence (by ignorance of the law), maintaining that DCCAC administrators have complied with all state requests, and that full financial restitution had been made.

Bond on the other hand, is sporting a more optimistic view. "I believe that we will come out of this a much stronger, a more together, a more focused organization, because we need to be."

Congresswoman Johnson simply seems simply to want the matter resolved as quickly and peacefully as possible. "... there are enough areas that [the state] can point to to justify closing it under its present management. At the same time, I can also say that if they wish to save it, there is enough good going on that they could."

MON

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11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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200 W. Camp Wisdom

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Book Review

Angela
Washington-Blair,
Ph.D.

Finding a Place Called Home: A Guide to African-American Genealogy and Historical Identity

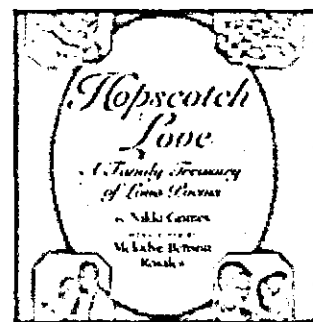
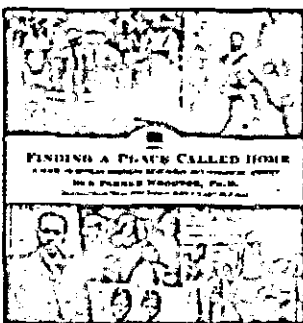
By Dee Parmer Woodtor, Ph.D.
(Random House, \$25.00)

This newly-released book by a university instructor of genealogy is important for all Black families searching for their roots. Black families all over the nation are embracing their past and looking for their history more than ever before. In *Finding A Place Called Home*, the author teaches her readers how to sort out their racial and cultural identities, and how to begin the step-by-step process of searching for their African roots. Advising readers on ways to sidestep the roadblocks that often hinder Black genealogy, Woodtor explains how to use census reports, slave schedules, courthouse records, the Internet, cemetery records and headstones, and other sources to trace a family tree. She also shares personal stories of families who have gone through the experience. The book includes a special section on tracing

Caribbean ancestry and is a must for all Black families wanting a link to their past.

Inner City Blues: A Charlotte Justice Mystery
By Paula L. Woods
(W.W. Norton, \$23.95)

First-time novelist Paula L. Woods has penned a gritty, explicit, almost true-to-life exposé of the inner workings of the Los Angeles Police Department. Homicide detective Charlotte Justice, a thirteen-year veteran of the LAPD, is the story's protagonist. She's tough, smart, brave, and funny. Woods seemingly attempts to show the dilemmas of female police officers or detectives who want to be taken seriously in their craft, but who also want to be feminine without fear of sexual harassment. She also explores what motivates a Black officer to perform his or her duty when members of his or her own community are "cop-haters." (The story begins unfolds against the backdrop of L.A. as it reels from the riots following the Rodney King trial. *Inner City Blues* will take readers from the hard-core world of



L.A.'s seamy underbelly to the seldom-seen world of the upwardly mobile Black elite.

Come On, Rain!
By Karen Hesse; Illustrated by Jon Muth
(Scholastic Press, \$15.95)

This beautifully illustrated children's picture book explores the subject of drought. Tess, the little girl in this story, pleads to the sky for rain. Her city is hot, the plants are hot, and her mamma is hot.

Day after day of endless heat. One nice thing to see in this book is that Tess' friends are a wonderful multicultural bunch. Tess asks her mother one day can she put on her swimsuit. Her mother agrees after Tess' friend comes over in their swimsuits. Then something marvelous happens—it begins to rain! A wonderful, quenching rain on a summer day. You'll delight in the images of the girls and their mothers singing and dancing in the rain.

Hopscotch Love: A Family Treasury of Love Poems
By Nikki Grimes; Illustrated by Melodye Benson Rosales
(Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, \$14.95)

Twenty-two poems celebrate the different faces of love within the African American community. Released this year for Valentine's Day, this book would be wonderful tucked into a gift basket for a wedding, Mother's day, an anniversary, or any other special day. The poems are about parental love, love between friends and relatives, and love between husband and wife. That first at-school crush, that patient love even when your loved one is sick—it's all covered here. If you love poetry as much as I do, you (and your children) will be captivated by the imagery expressed by Grimes.

MON

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MAVS MAN'S MASCOT PARTY!

MAVERICKS vs GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS

Saturday, April 10, 7:00PM

Join the MAVS MAN'S MASCOT PARTY on Saturday, April 10! Get in on the fun! Meet Mavs Man, Guard of the Rockers, Rocky, of the Nuggets, Lucky, of the Celts, and Rowdy, of the Cowboys before the game! The first 3,000 kids (16 and under) get a cool Dr. Pepper. Mavs Man's top-secret trick shot game clinic at 4:30pm (with rockers and rowdy).

MAVERICKS vs SAN ANTONIO SPURS

Tuesday, April 13, 7:30PM

It's a Nelly's Night Out at the Mavericks game on Tuesday, April 13! \$50 gets you over 1000 Mavs seats, two DART light rail passes and a bygone goodie (free West End dinner coupon). The first 3,000 kids (16 and under) get a Mavericks basketball jersey, a Miley Cyrus CD, a \$1000 store gift card and a Nelly's Night Out package call 972-988-DUNK.

To order Mavericks game tickets call Ticketmaster at 214-573-8000 or 972-647-5700 or visit any Ticketmaster or Kroger outlet.

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Electronic Urban Report

Newsbits

Ice Cube and Mack 10 are ordered to give up the cheddar. The Los Angeles Superior Court ordered them to pay around \$568,000 to two men who sued them for allegedly backing out of an agreement to merchandise T-shirts and other items. The Los Angeles Superior Court panel awarded compensatory damages to Chris Word and Charles Palmer, who sued the performers for breach of verbal contract. The men said they were to be equal partners in the business. The jury rejected the plaintiffs' claims for punitive damages.

We spoke to Mack-10 at last night's Sprite Night (pre-Soul Train Awards) Party in LA and he declined to comment except to say that "it's not over."

.....

Michael Jackson has always had a giving heart, and he just keeps on giving. Especially to the country of South Africa. On Tuesday he announced would stage two concerts in June to raise funds for South African President Nel-

son Mandela's children's fund, the Red Cross and UNESCO.

"This is an immense honor for me to announce this project next to a man whose extraordinary courage and dignity have lit up the 20th century," Jackson, seated next to Mandela, told a news conference at the president's residence.

The first concert will be held in the Olympic stadium in Seoul, South Korea on June 25, and will be followed two days later by a performance in the Olympic stadium in Munich, Germany.

.....

"The stereotype in this country is that African-Americans don't do well at things like chess," Maurice Ashley said. "We're understood as physically gifted and great entertainers, but when it comes to something intellectual, that lags behind," continued the Brooklyn native after it was announced that he had become the first African-American to achieve the rank of Grandmaster in Chess.

There are some 470 grandmasters worldwide, 45 of them in the United States. Ashley spent much of his adolescence working on his game in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. He joined the Black Bear



Michael Jackson

School of Chess, a group of people who played hard-fought games in the park for hours on end.

"Maurice almost did it by himself," said Jerald Times, a fellow chess player who met Ashley in the park a decade ago. "He didn't have (the benefit of) a whole Russian chess school."

On March 14, at a tournament at the Manhattan Chess Club, Ashley achieved the rank of grandmaster by completing a rigorous set of requirements at high-level chess tournaments in a set period of time. The U.S. Chess Federation said Ashley is the first black person in the

world to become grandmaster.


.....

Many of you may have received bogus e-mail stating that Tommy Hilfiger supposedly said that his clothing line was not made for black people on the Oprah Show. Some of you may have seen folks wearing T-shirts that bear a facsimile of the Tommy logo with "Tommy Hates N%ggas" splashed across the front. Apparently he knows his image is in need of an overhaul in the black community.

Tommy Hilfiger is responding by putting out a Hip-Hop CD. Rappers have been spitting lyrics about Tommy Gear since '91. Now they will be performing whole tracks about the clothing line.

Hilfiger has tapped Prince Paul, Mobb Deep, Craig Mack, Percy P, Dead Prez, Tash from the Alkaholiks, and Aasim will also turn up on the collection when it arrives in mid-April.

Underground rappers have been chosen to record tracks for an upcoming promotional mix tape/CD to be distributed at Tommy retail outlets. Any vulgar lyrics in the tracks will be edited out with a strategically placed, "Tommy."




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At 12:35
On Channel 11



.....

Michael Jordan's CD? Is it pop, R&B, or rap? C'mon, now. It's a spoken word CD released by AudioWorks. The CD features spoken tributes to Michael by figures such as President Clinton, Scottie Pippen, David Stern, Shaquille O'Neal and many more. Jordan happens to be the first athlete to have his own spoken word CD, and AudioWorks has already estimated that he will outsell CDs from John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.



Lauryn Hill

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Lauryn Hill and Puffy were in the house at the 14th annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony to present awards to The Staple Singers and Curtis Mayfield at New York's Waldorf Astoria. Curtis was unable to attend because of medical problems, but his wife was on hand to accept the award. Be sure to check out the Lauryn Hill and Curtis Mayfield duet on the Mod Squad soundtrack due out March 23. They are awesome together.

song list includes 1) Rob Base, "It Takes Two" 2) Run-D.M.C., "It's Like That" 3) Camp Lo, "Luchini" 4) DJ Quik, "Tonight" 5) Poor Righteous Teachers, "Rock Dis Funky Joint" 6) Special Ed, "I Got It Made" 7) Dana Dane, "Cinderfella" 8) N2DEEP, "Back To The Hotel" 9) 2nd II None, "If U Want It" 10) Nine, "Whutcha Want" 11) Kartoon Krew, "Inspector Gadget" 12) Megamix by Mr. Magic. In addition, the label plans to release a Profile 12" boxset of hard to find or out of print vinyl.

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Arista Records gets a new profile. The company recently acquired Profile Records and plans to drop an album full of Profile's greatest Hip-Hop hits entitled "Profilin': The Hits." The album's

This is a partial reprint of the Electronic Urban Report, free, factual, online infotainment on the hottest celebrities, events and issues in urban/Black entertainment. Visit their website at <http://www.eurweb.com>. Tell them you saw them in MON.

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Soul Rep Theatre Company awarded \$5,000 grant

Soul Rep Theatre Company proudly announces that it has been awarded a \$25,000 operating grant from the Meadows Foundation. The Meadows Foundation is among the most recognized private philanthropies in the country. Since its inception in 1948, it has dispersed over \$400 million in grants and direct charitable expenditures to over 2,000 Texas institutions and agencies. The grant will be used for production expenses over the next two years.

"We're ecstatic," says Guinea Bennett, Soul Rep's artistic director. "This [grant] will help us realize some of the dreams we have for Soul Rep in terms of growth and development."

Founded in the summer of 1996, Soul Rep has garnered a reputation for artistic excellence and the title "Dallas' premiere African American theater company." Currently in its 3rd season of plays, Soul Rep also produces an annual New Play Festival (held at the Dallas Theater Center for the past two years) and an annual Cafe'/Negro Arts Series, co-produced

with the Cara Mia Theater Company. The Cafe'/Negro Arts Series was created in an effort to promote artistic exchange



Soul Rep's artistic director Guinea Bennett (left) reacts to news of grant.

between African American and Latino artists.

"This grant will not only enable Soul Rep to further its vision and mission, but continue its positive work in work the

community," says Jacqueline Hill, president of Soul Rep's board of directors. "Soul Rep has filled a void in the local arts community through its commitment to new/original works and works that explore the experiences of not only African Americans, but women and other people of color."

Having produced plays dealing with such topics as The Freedman's Memorial, racism and the African American oral tra-

dition, Soul Rep has proven itself to be a theatre company dedicated to education as well as entertainment. According to Bruce H. Esterline, vice president for grants, The Meadows Foundation's board of directors "appreciates the opportunity to assist [Soul Rep's] efforts to produce plays reflecting the African American experience." Needless to say, Soul Rep is more than appreciative of their generosity.

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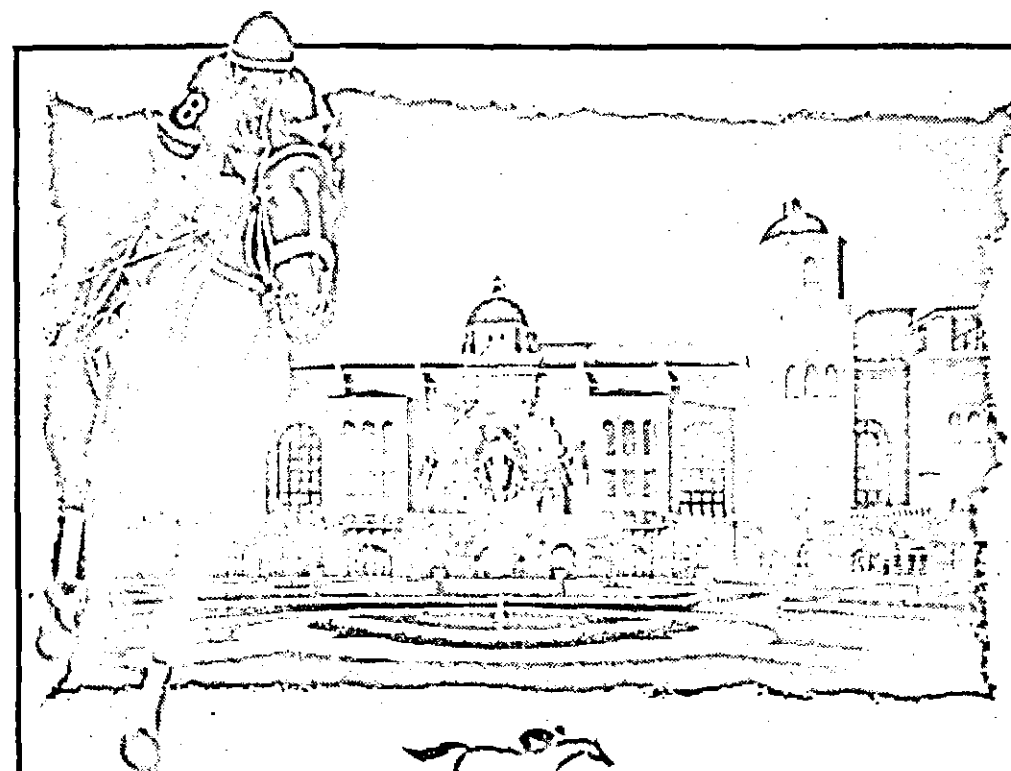


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on the Heineken Stage

SATURDAY, APRIL 17

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Free Pancake Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Free Sunny-Side Up
Morning Workout Show
10:00 a.m. Free Barn Tours
1:35 p.m. First Race

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You and Your Money

John Dudley

retirement income. Investors who open traditional IRAs with the intention of periodically withdrawing money from them before reaching 59-1/2 may not fully appreciate or understand the nature of the IRA concept. Many people have made traditional IRAs an integral part of their retirement planning program. Consult with your financial advisor to determine if it

makes sense for you to contribute to an IRA. Investors should consult their tax advisors before purchasing this type of product.

MON

John Dudley is a financial advisor with Prudential Securities. He can be contacted at 214-761-5142. Prudential Securities is not a legal or tax advisor.

All about traditional IRAs

Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) have become one of America's most popular ways to accumulate retirement funds. What has made this type of account so popular is that it offers investors two major tax advantages. First, traditional IRA contributions may be deductible from taxable income if certain criteria are met. Second, the investments in the account grow tax-deferred until withdrawn. Changes in federal legislation under the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 have made traditional IRAs more available. Their tax-deferred status makes them a good way to accumulate assets for retirement and the tax-deferred compounding of interest earned can mean solid wealth-building toward your "golden years."

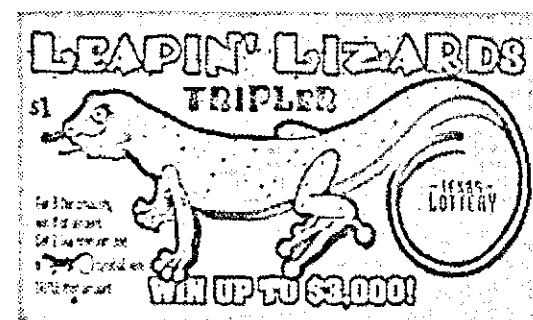
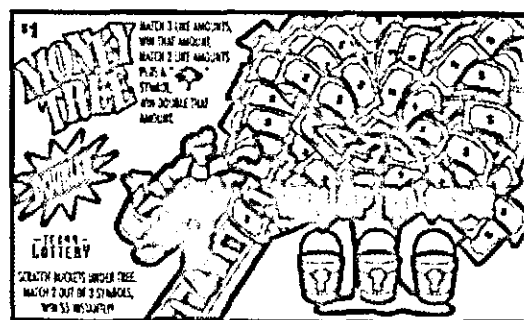
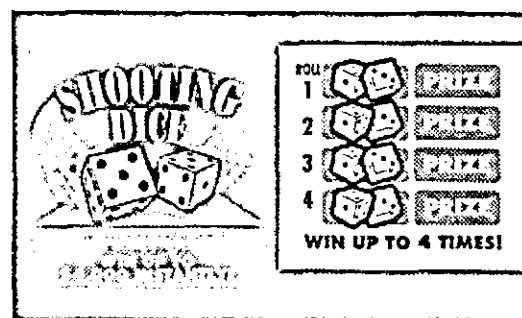
Traditional IRAs are "self directed," which means you control how the money is invested. For example, you may choose from any number of investment vehicles including CDs, stocks, bonds, or mutual funds. The field of investment choices is wide open. However, your investment decisions should depend on several factors: your age, current economic environment, income sources and risk tolerance. Many financial advisors agree that conservative investments should be at the core of your IRA, while part of it should be invested in more aggressive vehicles such as growth stocks, which offer the potential for longer-term capital appreciation. Investors less inclined to actively manage their traditional IRAs often opt for mutual funds as their investment choice. In addition to providing the benefits of diversity and professional management, these "family of funds" enable you to switch easily, for example, from a bond fund to a stock fund.

IRAs can be established with mutual fund companies, banks or through a brokerage firm. Anyone who works can contribute to a traditional IRA until age 7-1/2. You may contribute up to \$2,000 of your earned income. If you and your spouse both work, you can each contribute up to \$2,000. (Even if one of you has less than \$2,000 in earned income or no earned income, you can still contribute \$2,000 each if you file a joint return and have at least \$4,000 of earned income.) The combined contribution may not be more than your total yearly compensation. If neither you nor your spouse are covered by a company retirement plan (as it is for millions of Americans), your maximum total contribution of \$4,000 a year is fully deductible (limited to a maximum of \$2,000 per spouse). On the other hand, if one of you is covered by an employer's plan, a portion of the amount you contribute to a traditional IRA may or may not be tax deductible, depending on your "adjusted gross income" (AGI) or your total income less certain non-itemized deductions. (You should discuss this situation with your personal tax advisor.)

Like every investment option, traditional IRAs have their limitations. For example, if you withdraw money before the age of 59-1/2, withdrawals of deductible assets and all earnings are taxed as ordinary income, and may be subject to a 10 percent federal penalty. There are exceptions to this penalty: payment of certain health costs, qualified higher education expenses and qualified first home purchase expenses (up to \$10,000 in a lifetime).

You should keep in mind that traditional IRAs were created for one principal purpose: to help people accumulate

END OF GAME NOTICE



Three of the Texas Lottery's instant games will close on April 30, 1999: Shooting Dice, Money Tree and Leapin' Lizards. You have until October 27, 1999, to redeem any winning tickets. You can win up to \$4,000 playing Shooting Dice, up to \$500 playing Money Tree and up to \$3,000 playing

Leapin' Lizards. You can claim prizes of up to \$599 at any Texas Lottery retailer. Prizes of \$600 or more are redeemable at one of the 24 Texas Lottery claim centers or by mail. Questions? Just call the Texas Lottery Customer Service Line at 1-800-37-LOTTO (1-800-375-6886).



Overall odds of winning Shooting Dice, 1 in 3.03. Overall odds of winning Money Tree, 1 in 4.79. Overall odds of winning Leapin' Lizards, 1 in 5.07.

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On Real Estate

Curtis Yates

Home equity loans for Texans

Since home equity loans only recently have become available in Texas, tax-advantaged loans may be unfamiliar to many of you. So I'd like to give to tell you how home equity loans work and how they can benefit you.

Let's say that a couple has been living in their home since 1989 and have made several improvements over the years. These improvements, plus the increase in real estate values in their neighborhood, have put their home value at about \$175,000. Since Texas law will allow homeowners to borrow up to 80 percent of their home's value, our hypothetical couple can borrow up to \$140,000 against their property. (This is the maximum total loan amount that would be allowed under the new law, including the balance on their first mortgage.) Subtracting their first mortgage balance of \$112,000, the couple has \$28,000 in available equity.

But rather than opt for a traditional equity loan, the couple prefers to have just one first mortgage. Under the new loan, they will be able to do the following:

\$175,000	Fair Market Value
x .80	Loan to value rate
140,000	LTV amount
-112,000	Loan balance payoff
\$28,000	Cash equity

By refinancing their existing first mortgage at 80 percent of the new home value, the couple can finance \$140,000, pay the \$112,000 balance on their first mortgage, and take the remaining \$28,000 in cash. They end up with a new \$140,000 first mortgage and potential tax benefits on the entire amount. This option is known as a cash out finance.

Borrowing against your hard-earned equity is a basic private property right in every state except Texas. If you are reliable enough to put a down payment on a home, maintain it in good shape and pay taxes and insurance, then you also should be responsible enough to know when you can borrow on its equity and repay a loan.

A home equity borrowing program should be tailored to meet the needs of Texas. Safeguards should be included in any changes made to the law so that homeowners are not unduly pressured to borrow on their home equity.

Ultimately, changing the homestead law would give many Texans access to lower cost loans. Unlike other loans, interest on home equity borrowing is tax deductible from federal income taxes and, on average, the interest rates are lower than on other types of loans.

If home equity borrowing were allowed, Texas consumers and businesses could save an estimated \$382 million annually in interest costs and tax savings according to an April report by the Texas Comptroller's office. For example, annual savings on a four-year loan could be \$230 on a \$30,000 educational loan; \$383 a year on an auto loan and more than \$1,600 a year over financing on credit card debts.

Homeowners who feels that taking out a second mortgage on their home is too risky simply should not borrow against equity.

While consumer protection provisions should be placed in the law, borrowing against a home's equity should be a choice that is up to each individual homeowner.

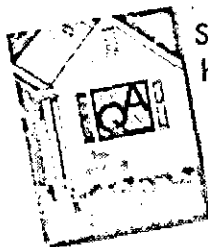
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Curtis Yates is the owner/operator of REAL ESTATE STATUS QUO; 8111 LBJ Frwy, Ste. 787bb, Dallas, TX 75251-1333; Ph. 972-702-0151; Fax, 972-934-2706; E-mail, statusquo7@hotmail.com; Promotion Web Site: <http://www.angelfire.com/biz/statusquo7>.

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You and God

Ron Shaw

An Intense Desire

Matthew 5:6

I've had the opportunity to talk with several men and women concerning drug addiction. I've seen men spend fortunes on the [crack] pipe. I have seen and talked with women who sold their bodies and their dignity for a few minutes of smoke. I have never understood that kind of addiction. What would drive a person to forsake family and friends, loved ones and self, to the point of giving their very lives away? It's an addiction I don't understand. I smoked cigarettes at one time in my life. I was never hooked because I couldn't stand the smell of nicotine in my clothes or on my breath. Fresh breath is very important to anyone who has to talk a lot. I have drunk alcohol before but didn't get hooked on that because of the odor it would emit from the pores of my skin. When you like talking to people like I do, odors can be an asset or a liability.

I remember the times I thought my heart was broken by someone I thought I was in love with. How was I able to bounce back so quickly? Was it because I never did care for the person? Well, the answer lies in a very key issue in our lives. Our level of desire for something determines what we'll do to secure it. Once a young man asked a wise old man what was his secret for success. They happened to near a small body of water do the old man grabbed the young man's head and shoved it under the water, holding it under until the young man was about to drown. Then he pulled it up. "What did you do that for?" the young man sputtered. The old man replied, "Son, when you want to succeed as bad as you just wanted air, then you will."

Many people say they want to succeed in school, at home, in their marriage, in their business. I don't doubt that there is a desire to succeed. Rarely to people set out to fail. However, success alludes the individual who doesn't have an intense desire for it. Jesus says in our text that it is only when there is a hunger and thirst for right-ness with God will we be satisfied. He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness (Ps.107:8) The hotter the desire is, the quicker our faith works and the sooner we realize the manifestation of the thing(s) desired.

Hunger and thirst are expressive of strong desire. God has never denied anyone who possessed such intense desire for Him or His benevolence. The problem with most of us is we have not learned to turn up our desires, to intensify our desire for the right things. We can pray until our knees are sore but nothing happens until our desire intensifies. Then we will do whatever is necessary. I talk with people all the time who say they want to get out of debt; yet they are unwilling to put away their credit cards for a season. They aren't willing to submit their financial lives to a strict budget. Therefore, I must conclude that they don't want to be debt free bad enough to do what it takes. I talk with people who say they want a great marriage but aren't willing to rearrange their schedules in order to work on it. They give every excuse why they can't do what is required. The bottom line is, they don't want it bad enough; their desire is lukewarm at best.

There are things, though, that cause us to kick our desires into high gear. The woman at the well was so tired of her lot in life that she asked Jesus for the living water he possessed. Even at the risk of being stoned, she was willing to lay her life open before Jesus to get it. Dissatisfaction

with our present position in life can oftentimes cause us to get sick and tired of being sick and tired; then we seek any means of relief. God will often make us so uncomfortable that we will desire Him to move in our lives even more. Conversely, many times we become so comfortable with our lives that the desire to improve our relationship with God is low. I believe that Satan targets our desires in order to dilute our faith. At first we start out wanting something. Then, when he offers resistance, we sort of

kind-a want it. Finally, if his assaults on our desire level are not successfully combated, it makes us no difference if we get it at all. According to Jesus, the things we desire in our hearts when we pray have a direct effect on our faith. When we have a white-hot desire for something, we go after it with all our strength. How intense is your desire?

MON

Ron Shaw is the pastor of LightChurch and can be reached at 214-320-5744. His e-mail address is Lightchur@aol.com.

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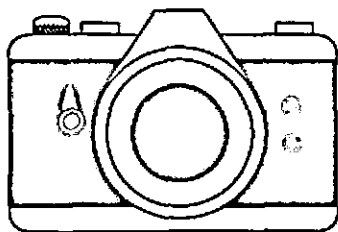
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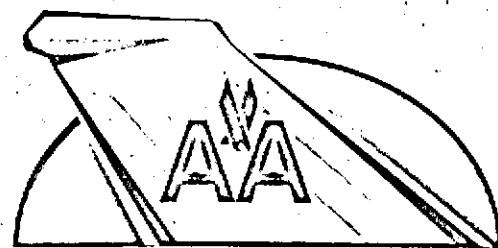
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