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Report: Voting Rights Discrimination Alive and Well Nationwide

by Zenitha Prince

Forty-nine years after the signing of the Voting Rights Actand one year after the Supreme Court's Shelby County v. Holder decision gutted a vital protection of that act, a new report from the National Commission on Voting Rights found frequent and ongoing voting rights discrimination.

The high court's decision in Shelby invalidated Sections 4 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act, or VRA, sections which required federal approval of election law changes in certain jurisdictions with a history of discrimination. That decision does not reflect the reality at the ballot box, voting advocates said.

"It (the report) challenges the Supreme Court's rationale in the Shelby case that improvements in minority citizens' rate of voting and registration and the success of minority candidates indicated that the coverage formula for protecting minority voters was unconstitutionally outdated," Barbara Arnwine, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the lead organization supporting the commission, said during a press call Aug. 6.

The report, "Protecting Minority Voters: Our Work Is Not Done" examined the record of voting rights enforcement and elections laws in the U.S. since 1995.

In that time, the report found:

There were at least 332 successful voting rights lawsuits and denials of Section 5 preclearance by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and another 10 non-litigation settlements from 1995 through 2013.

Discriminatory redistricting plans and at-large elections were the most common forms of discrimination, prompting the most successful lawsuits under Section 2 of the VRA. However, there were also 48 successful lawsuits and 10 non-litigation settlements relating to language translation and assistance.

States in the South and Southwest that were previously covered under Section 5 had the worst records of blocking free access to the ballot box, with Texas, Louisiana, South Carolina and Georgia ranking as the most frequent and egregious offenders. In fact, 72 percent of successful Section 2 claims were in jurisdictions previously covered by Section 5, Arnwine said.

The Commission was formed in 2013 in response to the Supreme Court's ruling in Shelby, just as previous iterations of the Commission were pulled together to amass a -

Continued on page 3

ILA Awards More than $22K in Scholarships

Last week, the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA Local 1408), awarded more than $28,000 in scholarships to 21 area high school seniors and college students during a ceremony at JAXPORT.

Scholarship applicants were required to submit a two to three page essay discussing how increased business from the Jacksonville Harbor Deepening project would positively impact Northeast Florida's economy.

One of the winners, Katelynd Todd, a Jacksonville native currently attending the University of Florida, plans to use the money to become the first person in her family to graduate college. Her essay states, in part, "If the harbors are deepened, we could potentially increase distribution activity and create lucrative and stable jobs for citizens in need of work. My father has been unemployed most of my life so I understand how an opportunity such as this could completely change things for a family."

Shown (L-R) is former Florida Senator Tony Hill, Federal Policy Director, Jacksonville Mayor's Office, scholarship winner Tierra Johnson and Charles Spencer, Founding ILA Board Chairman, presented each student with their ILA Scholarships.

"So many of the things we use come off a ship and that creates local jobs," Todd said. "As the port gets bigger, it's great to imagine that my dad could get a job or my fiancé could get a better job contributing to something that impacts our community."

To be considered for the scholarship, in addition to the essays, students were also required to have a minimum 2.75 GPA and complete community service activities. Students can reapply each year as long as they meet the criteria. Many students are repeat applicants that have received a scholarship all 4 years towards their Bachelor's degree.

ILA Local 1408 helps connect more than 1,200 longshoremen and dock workers with jobs at JAXPORT. Opportunities for these members continue to grow along with the port.

'Aunt Jemima's' Heirs Sue Product Makers for $2 Billion

The great-grandsons of the woman who was the face of "Aunt Jemima" are suing for $2 billion. The two men are going after Quaker Oats, its parent company PepsiCo (PEP) and Pinnacle Foods.

Quaker Oats is the maker of Aunt Jemima pancake mixes and syrup. Pinnacle Foods (PF) currently makes Aunt Jemima frozen pancakes, waffles and French toast.

In their suit, D.W. Hunter and Larnell Evans say Quaker Oats representatives discovered their great-grandmother, Anna S. Harrington, making pancakes at the New York State Fair in 1935.

Harrington portrayed the character in commercials and other public appearances for 15 years.

The suit says Quaker Oats used Harrington's pancake recipes and trademarked her likeness as the character "Aunt Jemima" in 1937.

The great-grandsons say Quaker Oats exploited Harrington with the intent of not paying royalties toward her estate after her death in 1955. They claim the companies conspired not to acknowledge Harrington's status as an employee of Quaker Oats by saying they could not find any employment records or images of her. But they say, Quaker Oats had her image deposited with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Harrington's family, filed the suit after it was able to obtain a death certificate that listed Quaker Oats as Harrington's employer.

Barneys to Pay $525K in NY Shopper-Profiling Probe

NEW YORK — The upscale retailer Barneys has agreed to pay $525,000 to settle allegations of racial profiling at its flagship New York City department store.

State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced the agreement Monday. It comes after several customers complained last year that they were singled out as suspected shoplifters because they were minorities.

Schneiderman says Barney's also will hire an "anti-profiling consultant" for two years, update its detention policy and improve training of security and sales personnel.

CEO Mark Lee tells the Daily News that Barneys is pleased with the settlement. The newspaper first reported the agreement.

Lee says Barneys prides itself on providing unparalleled service for all customers and doesn't tolerate discrimination.

In December, Barney's and several other major retailers agreed to create and publicize a customer bill of rights.

Arizona Charter School Under Fire For Teaching 'Benefits Of Slavery

A charter school has come under heavy criticism for using books that feature questionable religious teachings.

The Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a nonprofit organization filed a complaint to the state's school board against Mesa-based Heritage Academy for using books that teach debunked "Christian nation" history and have "sexist, racist and anti-Semitic messages."

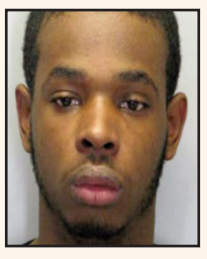
"The 5,000 Year Leap" and "The Making of America", by Cleon Skousen, are reading requirements for 12th graders at the school.

Garrett Epps, law professor at the University of Baltimore, spoke to The Arizona Republic against the use of Skousen's books in the classroom.

"Parts of his major textbook, 'The Making of America,' present a systematically racist view of the Civil War. … A long description of slavery in the book claims that the state (of slavery) was beneficial to African Americans and that Southern racism was caused by the 'intrusion' of northern abolitionists and advocates of equality for the freed slaves," Epps said.

Epps said he believes that "any student taught from these materials in a public institution is being subjected to religious indoctrination" and "is also being crippled educationally and will be ill-prepared to take part in any serious program of instruction of American government and law."

Man Sues Restaurant for Beating Him Up After Trying to Rob Them



Back in 2010, Nigel Sykes tried to rob Seasons Pizza restaurant in Newport, Delaware, but employees tackled him, took his gun, and beat him up. Now he is suing the restaurant for his injuries, and he's doing it from jail. Now 23-years old, Sykes has just filed a federal civil complaint claiming that the rough treatment was "unnecessary". He also says that because of his incurred injuries during the attempted robbery, he wants to be compensated. He also claims in his suit that after employees subdued him, two local police officers improperly used their stun guns on him and denied him access to medical attention.

In his written complaint, Sykes admits committing the robbery and "displaying" a handgun. He then goes on to explain: "All the employees participated in punching, kicking and pouring hot soup over my body. I was unarmed and defenseless and had to suffer a brutal beating by all of the employees of Seasons Pizza."

Sykes filed his lawsuit from prison where he is serving a 15-year sentence for both robbery and attempted robbery.

He wants to be compensated more than $260,000. He is demanding $20,000 from each of the six restaurant employees, $20,000 from each of the two arresting officers and $100,000 from the restaurant itself.

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Hob Nob Kicks Off Local Political Season

Shown above is Velma Rounsville and Evangeline Watson.

The Duval County Democratic Black Caucus (DCDBC) members were "in the house" representing the Black Caucus and community at the annual political Hob Nob Event at the Hyatt Hotel. While heavy political advertising has been bombarding the media, the HobNob unofficially kicks off the city's campaign season. It serves as an opportunity to meet, greet, mingle and cast votes for one's preferred candidates for public office in Duval County and around the State.

African Americans in Duval County represent just over half the registered Democrats or approximately 130,000 of the 232,000 registered Democrats.

Shown above are party hosts Sharon porter-Thompson, honoree Rometa Porter, Tanzy Howard and Syleste Porter at the celebration

Rometa Grahama Porter Rings 74th Birthday with A "Happy New Year"

Daughters, Sharon Porter-Thompson, Tanzy E. Howard and Syleste R. Porter threw their mother a party to remember complete with exquisite decorations and framed portraits of special memories. A bevy of food was enjoyed by the guests, while the DJ played the hits of eras gone by and today's top 40. Now retired, Ms. Romerta Porter was employed as a nurse for over 40 years before devoting her time as a community advocate. The savvy senior is an active member of Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority, Eta Phi Beta Sorority, NAACP and the Bold City Chapter Links. The three tier Rose birthday cake was devoured early and was layered with chocolate raspberries, pineapple crush and vanilla. When asked, why a Happy New year Birthday celebration? Ms. Porter smiled, "I wanted this to be a Happy New Year Celebration. I feel happy and want to look and be happy for the rest of my life. No more numbers just happiness." Also overheard on the dance floor, a guest said, "We better hope we look this good when we get 74."

Blacks in the South and Midwest Hurt Most by Jobless Cuts

By Freddie Allen

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – When cash-strapped states in the South and Midwest slashed unemployment benefits after the Great Recession, claiming it was an effort to save money and boost the economy, they only succeeded in disproportionately hurting Black families already struggling to make ends meet.

In a recent analysis of the impact of state cuts to jobless benefits, the Economic Policy Institute reported that Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina and South Carolina decreased the total number of weeks that the unemployed could receive benefits to below 26 weeks, even though no other state had dipped below that mark in more than decade.

When Congress approved the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program in 2008, the overall employment rate was 5.6 percent and the long-term unemployment rate was 1percent. But when Congress let the program expire in 2013, the jobless rate and the long-term unemployment rate were much higher; 6.7 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively.

The unemployment rate for Blacks was nearly 12 percent (11.9 percent) in December 2013, nearly twice the national average.

The eight states, primarily in the South and Midwest, moved ahead of Congress and cut the number of weeks that people could receive unemployment benefits citing the need to "shore up insolvent state accounts in the federal Unemployment Trust Fund (UTF)," according to the report.

Not only were UTFs in 27 other states also insolvent, the states that made the cuts experienced little to no benefits in their economy or labor force rates.

"The fact that you don't see any significant effects of the cuts, positive or negative, was surprising to me," said Valerie Wilson, an economist and director of the Economic Policy Institute's Program on Race, Ethnicity, and the Economy (PREE) at the Economic Policy Institute.

Americans in Debt

Shocking report declares 77 million U.S. citizens in debt

by Ashley Montgomery

It is no secret that Americans have some serious issues when it comes to debt. A recent report released by the Urban Institute titled, "Delinquent Debt in America," examined non-mortgage debt with help from the Consumer Credit Research Institute. What is that you may ask? "It is any debt in collections that involves a non-mortgage bill — such as a credit card balance, medical or utility bill, child support payments and even parking tickets — that are more than 180 days past due and have been placed in collections," according to the report.

And it doesn't stop there, 35 percent of adults with a credit file are reported to be behind in some sort and it is hurting the nation as a whole. Geographically, there's no location in the nation that is unscathed.

Both debt in collections and debt past due are concentrated in the South. The South was reported to have the highest percentage of people in debt.

Of all, Nevada had the highest percentage of residents with debt in collection with 47 percent. The "Battle Born" state also has accrued the highest average amount owed — $7,198.

In Florida, debt collection rates exceeded 41 percent. According to the institute's report, the average Floridian in debt owes $47,000.

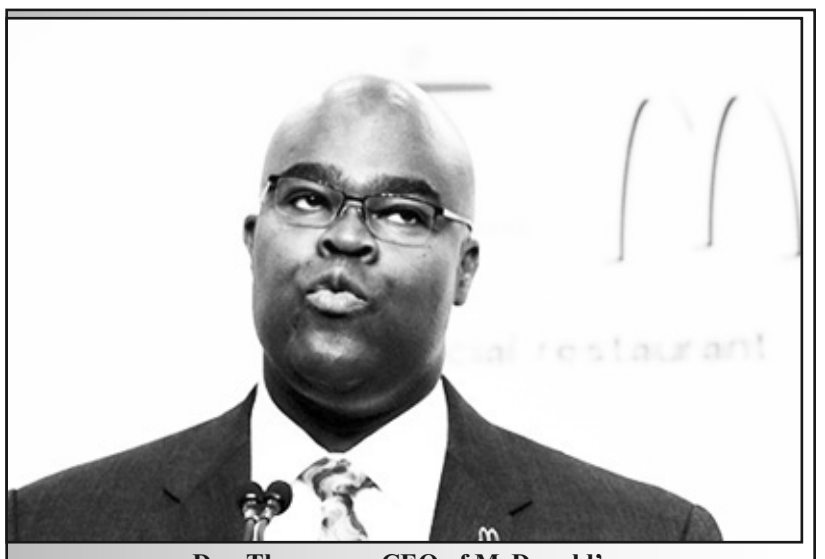
BLACKS IN DEBT

As it relates to Blacks, many financial progressions have been made but there still seems to be some challenges that must be overcome.

According to Prudential, Blacks are significantly more likely to have some type of debt (94 percent) compared with the general population (82 percent). Credit card debt, student loan debt and personal loans are all significantly higher in the Black community.

College-educated Blacks report student loan debt at a ratio of nearly 2 to 1 side-by-side with all college-educated Americans. In turn, it has been reported that one in four Blacks has felt anxiety or depression due to debt.

"[Debt] can harm credit scores, which can tip employers' hiring decisions, restrict access to mortgages, and even increase insurance costs," said Caroline Ratcliffe, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute.



Don Thompson, CEO of McDonald's

McDonald's CEO Reveals Their Four Biggest Problems

No, it's not a mistake. Many people don't know this , but the CEO of McDonald's is Black and his name is Don Thompson. Thompson recently had a conference call with investors and analysts where he revealed the four biggest issues facing the brand, and how he plans to address these issues. But he also forgot to mention some other very important issues that affect Black and Hispanic communities!

Here are the flaws he mentioned:

#1 – Not Offering the Best Value – First, Thompson mentioned that McDonald's does not offer the best value like it once did. He said the company has spent several years experimenting with high-end items like Angus beef burgers and Chicken Selects, and that they will focus more on low-priced items such as the Jalapeno McDouble and the Buffalo Ranch McChicken.

#2 – Bad Customer Service – Next, Thompson mentioned how McDonald's drive-thru wait times have gotten slower over the years partly because of an increasingly complex menu. He plans to add more workers, assign new tasks to existing ones, and remodel the kitchens.

#3 – Bad Public Relations – Thompson then addressed the bad public image that McDonald's has, and how many people view the food as just unhealthy junk food. To fix this, he says he will make major changes in the marketing department and launch new marketing/ public relations campaigns.

#4 – Complicated Menu – Finally, Thompson admitted that McDonald's menu has grown 70% since 2007, and that it's just way too complicated. He says they will be going back to the basics, and simplifying the menu like it was the way before.

But here are some other problems that he forgot to mention:

#5 – Targeting Minorities – McDonald's and other fast food restaurants are notorious for targeting low-income Blacks and Hispanics in both their marketing campaigns and their choice of locations. Sadly, both Blacks and Hispanics also tend to have the highest rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. Thompson needs to stop targeting minorities with such unhealthy foods full of all kinds of chemicals, GMOs, pesticides, etc.

#6 – Low Wages – McDonald's is a highly profitable publicly-owned corporation, but they choose to pay most of their employees a minimum-wage salary with no benefits. Unfortunately, in big cities like New York, Chicago or Los Angeles, minimum wage is not enough for families to get by. Even in smaller cities, it's just not sufficient. Thompson needs to consider compensating his workers better. Without them, there is no McDonald's.

Public Hearings Continue for JTA's Route Optimization Initiative

Pictured with JTA Route Planner Ivan Mitchell, JTA Rosa Parks Station Manager Herman Rothwell and JTA Community Engagement Manager Cheryl Riddick

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) is changing the way Jacksonville's public transportation is being routed throughout the city. is continuing their neighborhood public hearings to seek feedback regarding proposed changes to the bus system under the Route Optimization Initiative (ROI).

The new initiative is attempting to improve the customer experience by providing reliable on-time service, increasing bus service frequency, creating more direct routes, renaming routes, extending hours of operation, implementing a new signage program and offering real-time passenger information. The meeting was held Thursday August 7th at the FSCJ Downtown Campus on State St. "I'm glad they're having these meetings. This was my first Route Optimization meeting. The changes look good on paper, but executing them during the early mornings and the 15 minutes for most routes will be a big task. Excluding the shuttles, which have been eliminated on the Northside are my biggest concerns. In the end, overall JTA will provide better transformation and transportation as far as getting from one side of town to the other," said Jacksonville resident Ricky Paschal.

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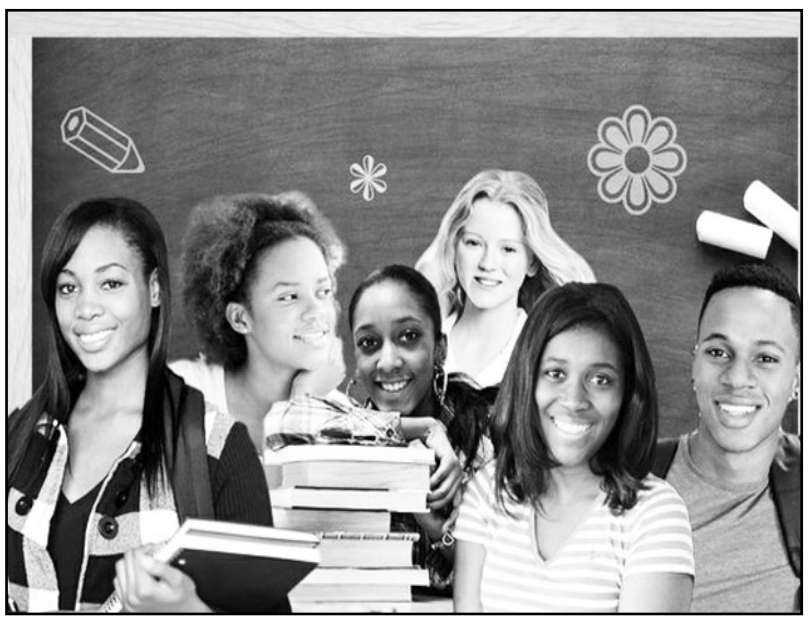
Miami Setting the Standard for Educating Minorities



by Chloe Herring
Special from The Miami Times

When Black students around the nation return to school this fall, they may find their experience different from that of their parents or even older siblings because what they will likely see is more of kids who look like them.

According to projections from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), this school year may represent the first time minority students will outnumber their white counterparts in classrooms across the U.S.

The revelation of increasing student diversity follows a national trend mostly led by a growing number of births in the Hispanic community. The report predicts that this year white students will make up 49.7 percent of all public school enrollments compared to the 50.3 percent of students of other races. That margin, although small, is expected to widen year after year. It is a recent growing trend in the nation that is familiar to the state of Florida, which has maintained what is being called "minority-majority" school enrollment for more than a decade.

A large number of Hispanic and Black students puts the state at the forefront of education since it could serve as a model for implementing the national Common Core Standards to address minorities' academic needs.

"While some states across the country still look at diversity as a challenge, we celebrate it," said Alberto Carvalho, school superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools where Black and Hispanic students outman their white classmates and make up 90.5 percent of student populations.

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) wants to see improvement in academic performances across racial groups by 2018, according to a controversial 2012 plan that is in line with Common Core. The plan was retorted for using race as a primary factor in creating different goals for children, but much of the criticism neglected to acknowledge expectations to increase Black students' performance in math by 95 percent and by 85 percent in reading in the upcoming years.

The success of the plan is crucial for minority students who fail to graduate at rates almost two to three times higher than white kids.

Cheryl Etters of FDOE said the answer to improving minority performance in school is found in the classroom.

"That's where teachers come in," she said. "They have things in place to deal specifically with challenges [minorities] have."

But when the challenge for minority students is needing an educator to whom they can relate, Florida may have dropped the ball. Studies show that Black students perform better in subjects taught by Black instructors — a phenomenon coined the "role model effect." In Florida many student populations are designated "minority-majority," meaning the classrooms contain more kids of color. But teacher-student ratio for demographics do not match up. Only about 13.2 percent of nearly 123,000 teachers in Florida are Black while one in five students is Black.

Still, with 15 million U.S. children in urban school districts, the state deserves special attention particularly in Miami-Dade County where Carvalho is churning out results by consistently challenging the status quo. Carvalho said he understands the importance of school faculty who represent the community they serve.

"We recruit and hire on the basis of talent, finding not only those who are the best of their class but who also happen to be demographically representative," he said. "That's something that we take huge pride in and these schools are producing wonderful results."

County-wide efforts put Miami-Dade in the national spotlight after the school district was awarded the Broad Prize in 2012 for closing the achievement gap in education. In 2008 when Carvalho was appointed superintendent, the school system was failing its students. Since then Black students in Miami are 70 percent more successful across all subjects when compared to kids in other states and graduation rates have improved.

Shown above is Ted Carter, Executive Director of the city's Office of Economic Development. Carter was one of over 50 city employees helping to clean up Durkeeville

City Employees Clean Up Durkeeville

Mayor Alvin Brown was joined by more than 50 representatives from various City of Jacksonville departments for a community cleanup day and Party in the Park for residents in the Durkeevilleneighborhood last week.

As part of Operation Urban Blight, the city workers removed trash and other debris from the area, including J.P. Small Park. The beautification efforts also included landscaping, and city right-of-ways throughout the Myrtle Avenue Corridor were mowed.

In addition to the litter removal efforts, city contractor Darnell Evans of J&D Maintenance and Services of North Florida was recognized for his community-minded efforts. Evans independently hired seven students ages 15-17 from around the city to assist with mowing and landscaping through the mowing season.

Following the cleanup, a free neighborhood block party was held at J.P. Small Park that included bounce houses, concessions and music.

Voting Rights Discrimination

continued from front

record on voting rights that helped Congress in its reauthorizations of the VRA.

The commission, comprised of The Lawyers' Committee and more than a dozen other partners, conducted 25 regional and state-based hearings between June 2013 and May. Almost 500 witnesses testified at the hearings on matters related to racial voting discrimination and election administration issues.

The report highlights those testimonies, analyses restrictive state voting laws and practices that make it harder for minorities to vote and even assesses the impact Shelby has had on protecting voting rights.

For example, the report notes, due to Shelby, the Justice Department is no longer deploying federal observers to monitor elections in formerly covered states. The federal observer program provided an important deterrence against voter discrimination with 10,702 observers deployed from 1995 to 2012.

National Commission on Voting Rights members hoped their report will inform legislative and other actions to restore the VRA.

Why are 40 Percent of Black Females Dropping Out?

By Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu

Why has America and the Black community been silent about this epidemic? We hear so much about the 47 percent dropout rate among Black males, but a 40 percent dropout rate among Black females is just as unacceptable. Black males may be on life support, but Black females are in critical condition.

What are the factors causing so many Black girls to leave school? Could one factor be that only 18 percent of Black girls by eighth grade are proficient in reading? How about only 13 percent are proficient in math by eighth grade?

What about the fact that 21 percent of Black girls are retained at least once? How does retention affect the psyche of Black girls? What effect does Black girls' suspension rate have on their dropout rate?

Black girls' pregnancy rate had been considered a factor in their dropout rate. But then in-school and alternative school programs emerged. Are these programs succeeding at helping young mothers join the ranks of college students?

Black females are crying out for help. So much attention is being given to our males while our girls are being overlooked. Black girls need more Black female teachers. They need all teachers to give them higher expectations. They need schools to treat them fairly.

Their suspension and dropout rates are four times greater than those of white girls. Black girls need Black female mentors. They need to be taught the beauty of their history. They need an education that embraces all determined efforts to keep Black girls in school, including: mediation, schools that feature alternative learning styles and STEM careers, all-girl schools that demonstrate high success rates of graduation and college entrance, and a change in school culture. Black females need to be encouraged not to drop out.

City Chronicles

Diatribes on life in the African-American Diaspora by Rep. Reggie Fullwood

Why Good Charter Schools Can Coexist with Public Schools

One of the things I like about School Superintendent Vitti is his attitude about competition. Whether it's on the basketball court or in the classroom – he wants to win andworks extremely hard to succeed.

He said publicly that he's not afraid of competing against charter schools for students because his goal is for Duval's public schools to "dominate."

Often times, us public school advocates are not charter school supporters. The assumption that good public schools and good charter schools can't coexist is certainly false. I am a major supporter of public education, and have always been somewhat leery about charters until recently.

The reality is simple – if we improve our public schools parents will send their children to the neighborhoodschools. So, hearing the superintendent say that our traditional public schools welcome the competition and will dominate is the right attitude to have.

And I am not saying support every charter application that comes in the door; because when it comes to charter schools in Jacksonville and around the state we have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Schools districts have to be very careful and have the right to be cautious; but schools and sponsors that have a great track record and innovative ideas should be supported.

Jacksonville's Valor Academy is one of those new charter school concepts that will take a not so innovative approach to education, but utilize proven policies and strategies, and focus their efforts on addressing the black male dilemmathis city and country are facing.

This all-male school will be lead by folks with strong educational backgrounds and most importantly, a passion for education and community. I said that they are using not so innovative approaches because students will be required to wear uniforms that consist of blazers and ties. The curriculum will be heavily technology based, and the facility will be innovative as well.

I have often talked about the importance of fixing the public school system in Duval County and in Florida.When you truly analyze public education, most large cities are dealing with the same issues.

Most school systems both state and local have turned to a mixture of programs aimed at providing "choice" and specialized education options for students and parents. One of the main strategies being used around the country arecharter schools.

Charter schools are publicly funded institutions that must meet state and federal educational standards. However, the biggest difference is the flexibility that the schools have,versus traditional public schools.

Also, it is important to acknowledge that charters do have some administrative and operational advantages that traditional neighborhood schools don't have.

Charters typically don't allow their teachers to be in unions, and principals have the authority to hire and fire teachers.

These school hours tend to be longer, and their curriculumsmore regimented and focused. They also don't have to deal with the bureaucracy and levels of accountability that traditional public schools have to deal with.

So in many ways the flexibility is both a blessing and curse. Because for every high performing charter, there are four or five very low performing charter schools. Even proven national charter brands like KIPP struggled out of the gates here in Jacksonville; but they are finally on track and doing well.

Some of the struggles are to be expected because many charter schools focus on students who are behind or failing at their local school. And that's the most attractive aspect of many charter schools – their smaller size andability to focus resources and specialize curriculums on struggling students; this is why they are so popular.

Charter schools continue to grow in popularity. Last year in the U.S., there were almost 5,500 charter schools in the country, representing more than five percent of all public schools.

Take Washington, D.C. for example; nearly 40 percent of all public school students there attend charters.

But much like Frankenstein's monster, many things created for good can be misused or overused.

Many of these charters are run by for-profit organizations that look at these schools as profitable business lines. In fact, many of them do not have local boards, and very little accountability.

While some see charters as saviors, many others see them as the tools being used to dismantle public education. In fact, the charter school dilemma is not unique to Florida – the National NAACP recently decided to sue the state of New York to prevent them from closing some 22 underperforming public schools and turning them over to charter organizations.

The NAACP suit basically questions if charter schools are the best solution for struggling public schools.

I believe that good charters have a place, but we should notbe willing to trade off neighborhood public schools for charters schools. Strong quality neighborhood schools and charters can coexist. In fact, I think that we need to start using the best practices of good charter and private schools to help make our public schools better.

Signing off from Valor Academy,
Reggie Fullwood

Everyone Needs to Vote

By James Clingman

This is a call for all eligible Black folks to register and vote in every election from now until eternity, so we can stop the rallies, marches, and demonstrations related to voting. Despite being the most party-loyal voters in history, and receiving the least for that loyalty (No quo for our quid), we continue to deal with voting-related issues. If everyone would vote we could move on to the "weightier" matter of building our own communities again. So please, all Black folks who are eligible, get registered and vote! Let's make quid pro quo a reality for Black voters.

In 2012, Black folks turned out in a larger percentage than Whites and other groups for the first time in history. In 2008, Blacks voted 95 percent for Barack Obama. Now, in 2014, we are still rallying folks around "voting" issues, voting rights, and voting procedures. As I said, we vote the most but receive the least. What will change this ridiculous scenario? I say, 100 percent registration and voter turnout; then we can finally stop spending such an inordinate amount of on those subjects.

Booker T. Washington once said, "There are some Negroes who don't want the patient to get well." It is still true today with politics among Black folks. We have leading Blacks whose every move is centered on the political. For their personal economic prosperity, they do very well; but when it comes to a collective solution, you can't find them with a search warrant.

They keep Black folks "fired up and ready to go" to the polls, but not to the marketplace, where the real action and power reside. Booker T. also said, "There are reports that in some sections the Black man has difficulty in voting and having counted the little white ballot he has the privilege of depositing twice a year. But there is a little green ballot he can vote through the teller's window 313 days each year and no one will throw it out or refuse to count it."

Since we don't get it, I strongly suggest that until we achieve full participation in voting. There will always be someone who tries to keep the patient sick, dependent, and drunk on the fantasy that politics will save us. The only thing that does is wear out good shoe leather from marching so much. If you think the ballot is stronger than the dollar, then put the word out for everyone to register and vote.

Black people have embraced the illusion of political power in exchange for a more important possession: economic power. For six decades, we have languished in political purgatory, thinking we would be all right if we could just get some Black people elected to public office. So why don't we just establish a national goal of 100 percent registration and voting? Then we can move beyond this political charade and stop falling for the best head-fake in history.

Our major conferences have become nothing but mini political conventions. We invite politicians to speak and, of course, keep the flock focused on their agendas. Joe Biden spoke at the NAACP convention and gave them all the political red meat they could handle as he concentrated on voting rights. "These moves to limit the 'right to vote' are nothing more than pure politics, masquerading as attempts to combat corruption where there is none," Biden said. "Pure politics"? Really?

Cornell Brooks, the new president of the NAACP, said his plan is to focus on criminal justice issues, fight the rollback of the Voting Rights Act and diversify the NAACP's membership. In his answer to Roland Martin's question, "What is your top priority?" Brooks said, "Well, the top priority would be to listen and engage a membership which reaches hundreds of thousands of members, but certainly in audience and the coalition of inclusion that stretches across the country." Say what!?

(Note: On July 30, 2014, the NAACP announced a partnership with Dunkin' Donuts to increase Black franchises. Kudos to Brother Dedrick Muhammad for that initiative.)

On her radio show, Bev Smith discussed this issue with George E. Curry. They asked why there is less emphasis on economic empowerment than on political empowerment among our major organizations. They called for an Economics Report Card and for the best and brightest among us to devise and execute an economic plan for Black people. Bev Smith lamented, "Where are the voices like those of the past?" Both agreed that we have the "professional expertise to help ourselves" in the economic arena. I concur, but we must first get this voting albatross from around our necks.

In my best James Brown impression, "Please! Please! Please!" All Black people register and vote so we, the "patients," can finally spend our time getting well.

by Charlene Crowell

Overdraft Fees Drain Consumer Dollars

By Charlene Crowell
NNPA Columnist

Consumers who maintain low and no cushions in their checking accounts may have thought that the overdraft "banking service" was a big help against bouncing checks. But as the use of debit cards have replaced most cash purchases, this "service" has become a drain of available cash for consumers and a major source of revenue for banks.

A new research report by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) found that the majority of debit card overdraft fees are incurred on transactions of $24 or less. Further, as the majority of overdrafts are repaid within three days when the bank repays itself from the consumer's next deposit, the median overdraft fee of $34 carries the equivalent of 17,000 percent annual percentage rate (APR).

Earlier research by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) similarly found that consumers using debit cards paid $1.75 for every $1 overdrawn.

"With the advent of debit cards, consumers started using them rather than cash for more and more small or impulse purchases. And, as banks and credit unions covered more and more of the transactions, they have assessed higher fees for doing so," said CFPB Director Richard Cordray. "Today, more than half of consumer checking account income is from overdraft fees."

An overdraft occurs when a consumer does not have enough money in his or her checking account to cover a transaction, but the bank or credit union pays the transaction anyway in exchange for a fee. Consumers can be charged overdraft fees on checks, debit cards, ATM transactions, automatic bill payments or direct debits from lenders or other billers.

CFPB's new study both reinforces and heightens ongoing concerns that overdraft fees on debit card transactions in particular are harmful to consumers. CFPB also found that a 2010 rule from the Federal Reserve did not solve the overdraft problem. That rule required financial institutions to get consumers' opt-in to overdraft fees on debit cards; but it failed to address how large and frequent these fees can be. Additionally, many banks used heavy-handed and deceptive marketing tactics to lure consumers to 'opt-in.'

CFPB found that consumers subjected to overdraft fees on debit cards, pay an average of nearly $260 per year in overdraft and nonsufficient funds (NSF) fees. Nearly one of five consumers overdrew their checking accounts more than 10 times a year.

Every dollar charged for overdraft translates into fewer available dollars once a deposit is made into the account. Even worse, many consumers are unaware of the deficiency in their funds or how often these fees were charged until after the fact. As a result, many consumers can be blindsided by a barrage of fees resulting in a devastating financial impact. The hardest-hit of consumers in these scenarios are those with low- to moderate-income.

Some banks – such as Citibank, Bank of America, HBSC and a significant number of community banks – have chosen not to charge overdraft fees on debit card purchases at all. Even so, most banks continue to use overdraft fees as a lucrative revenue stream.

In recent years, civil rights leaders have spoken loudly and clearly against overdraft practices, noting that harmful overdraft increases the ranks of the unbanked. Two major banks, JP Morgan Chase and Wells Fargo were directly asked to end charging overdraft fees on debit card transactions.

Reacting to the new CFPB findings, Mike Calhoun, CRL president said, "Adding insult to injury, consumers get hit even harder when banks reorder transactions to trip consumers into paying higher fees and charge additional fees each day an account is overdrawn."

"Thankfully some banks have begun stepping away from these abusive practices. . . The CFPB should use its authority to ban or limit overdraft fees on debit card and ATM transactions and rein in excessive bank fees on all checking account transactions," concluded Calhoun.

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PHYSICAL ADDRESS
903 W. Edgewood Ave.
Jacksonville, FL 32208
Email: JfreePress@aol.com

TELEPHONE
(904) 634-1993
Fax (904) 765-3803

Sylvia Perry
PUBLISHER

Rita Perry
Publisher Emeritus

Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce

CONTRIBUTORS: Lynn Jones, Charles Griggs, Camilla Thompson, Reginald Fullwood, E.O.Huthchinson, William Reed, Andre X, Brenda Burwell, Marsha Oliver, Marretta Latimer, Phyllis Mack, Tonya Austin, Carlottra Guyton, Brenda Burwell, Rhonda Silver, Vickie Brown, Rahman Johnson, Headshots, William Jackson.

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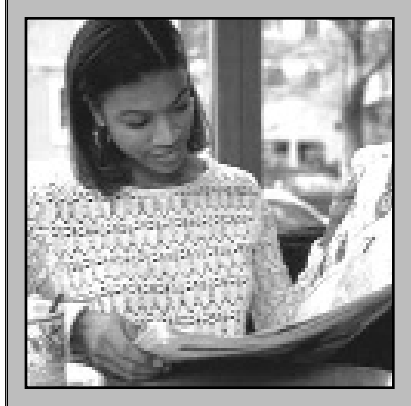

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For the Week of August 12 - 18, 2014

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE™

WireImage.com

SWEET HISTORY: Actor Wood Harris (above) to play Xavier grad and Basketball Hall of Fame inductee Nathaniel "Sweetwater" Clifton in upcoming film.

FOOTBALL IN THE AIR

GRIDIRON CLASSICS; MEAC TO TELEVISE EIGHT GAMES; HOPSON RE-UPS AT ALCORN

Football Notes

MEAC announces 2014 Football TV Schedule

The **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** (MEAC) announced its 2014 television football lineup featuring eight appealing matchups scheduled to telecast on the ESPN networks-including ESPN, ESPNU, ESPN Classic and ESPN3. The nationally televised games highlight the continued partnership between the MEAC and ESPN.

"The MEAC is proud of its continued partnership with ESPN, the Worldwide Leader in Sports," said MEAC Commissioner **Dennis Thomas**. "We are excited about these competitive matchups and look forward to highlighting our great and talented student-athletes, coaches and institutions on a global landscape."

The 2014 schedule kicks off with the 10th annual *MEAC/SWAC Challenge* presented by Disney, Sunday, August 31 in Orlando, Fla. The game will air live at 11:45 a.m. on ESPN. This year's game will feature the MEAC's **North Carolina A&T State** against the **Southwestern Athletic Conference's Alabama A&M**. The matchup will pose the first ever meeting between the two institutions.

The Thursday night slate features three live conference matchups on ESPNU. **Hampton** will face North Carolina A&T in the first Thursday night matchup on October 9 beginning at 7:30 p.m. in Greensboro, North Carolina. **Norfolk State** will host defending MEAC Co-Champion **Bethune-Cookman** on November 6 at 7:30 p.m. The B-CU Wildcats will also meet Hampton during a telecast at 7:30 p.m. on November 13.

Saturday televised games will feature MEAC conference rivals **Morgan State** against **Howard** in the *NY Urban League Classic*. The game will telecast live on ESPN3 and taped delayed at 10 p.m. on ESPNU.

In a battle of the Carolina's, defending Co-Champion **South Carolina State** will face North Carolina A&T in the *Atlanta Football Classic* on Saturday, October 4. The game will air live on ESPN3 and will re-air later that day at 10 p.m. on ESPNU.

Hampton will face local foe Norfolk State in the annual *Battle of the Bay Classic* during a televised contest on October 18 in Hampton, Virginia. The game will air live at 1 p.m. on ESPN3 and will telecast taped-delayed at 10 p.m. on ESPNU.

The 2014 televised schedule wraps up with the annual *Florida Classic* featuring Bethune-Cookman and Florida A&M on Saturday, November 22. The game will air live at 2 p.m. on ESPN Classic and ESPN3. The game will re-air on ESPNU during a time slot to be determined and announced at a later time.

All games will also be available for viewing on computers, smartphones, tablets, Xbox and Apple TV via the WatchESPN application.

Sun., August 31	**N. C. A&T** v. **Alabama A&M**	
	ESPN/W-ESPN	11:45 a.m.
	(MEAC/SWAC Challenge)	
Sat., Sept. 20	**Morgan State** v. **Howard**	
	ESPNU/ESPN3	4 p.m.*
	(NY Urban League Classic)	
Sat., Oct. 4	**S. C. State** v. **N. C. A&T**	
	ESPNU/ESPN3	3:30 p.m.**
	(Atlanta Football Classic)	
Thurs., Oct. 9	**Hampton** at **N. C. A&T**	
	ESPNU/W-ESPN	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 18	**Norfolk State** at **Hampton**	
	ESPNU/ESPN3	1 p.m.***
Thur., Nov. 6	**B-Cookman** at **Norfolk State**.	
	ESPNU/W-ESPN	7:30 p.m.
Thurs., Nov. 13	**B-Cookman** at **Hampton**	
	ESPNU/W/ESPN	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Nov. 22	**B-Cookman** vs. **Florida A&M**	
	ESPN CL/3/U	2:00 p.m.

(Florida Classic) *Game will air live on ESPN3 at time listed; will air on ESPNU taped-delayed Sept. 20 at 10 p.m.
**Game will air live on ESPN3 at time listed; will air on ESPNU taped-delayed Oct. 4 at 10 p.m.
***Game will air live on ESPN3 at time listed; will air on ESPNU taped-delayed Oct. 18 at 10 p.m.

Hopson gets three-year extension at Alcorn State

Alcorn State, Miss. – It didn't take **Alcorn State** President **Alfred Rankins** Jr. long to award Braves head football coach **Jay Hopson** for his exceptional leadership of the University's football program.

Jay Hopson

"We really appreciate what Coach Hopson has done in elevating our football program to the next level. It feels good to be recognized as one of the top teams in the SWAC," said President Rankins.

Hopson signed a three-year contract extension Thursday that will keep him in charge of leading the Braves to prominence for the next three seasons.

Hopson is in his third season as the Braves head football coach. Since his arrival at Alcorn, Hopson has led the Braves to a 13-10 record over a two-year span (11-7 in SWAC games), which included a 9-3 (first time winning nine games since 1974) record in 2013. He was nominated for the ***Eddie Robinson Award*** (best head coach in the FCS) and has coached more than 10 players who have earned All-SWAC honors (the most in school history).

Hopson expressed his pleasure with the contract extension.

"This is truly an honor. We have a lot of work that we have to do in order to bring this school a championship. My coaches and I plan to put in our best effort to get our players in championship form," said Hopson.

The Braves will kick off the 2014 season at home, which will be the first of seven this season, against **Virginia University at Lynchburg** Saturday, August 30 at 4 p.m.

CAMP REPORTS

Winston-Salem State - From wssurams.com

WINSTON-SALEM - The **Winston-Salem State** University football team began preparation for the 2014 season on Wednesday, August 11 when the Rams hit the practice field for the first time.

New head coach **Kienus Boulware** and staff welcomed close to 130 players to campus for Boulware's first preseason camp. WSSU took to the field as a full squad for the first time on at 9:00 a.m.

The Rams will look for revenge as they open the 2014 season on September 6th hosting Div. II Independent UNC Pembroke for a 6:00 p.m. kickoff at Bowman Gray Stadium. The Braves defeated the Rams for the first time, 25-21, in Pembroke, N.C. last season.

Both Winston-Salem State and UNC Pembroke were NCAA DII Playoff teams last season.

Winston-Salem State is coming off of a season where it finished 10-2 overall, 7-0 in the CIAA, winning the South Division title for the third straight season, and made it to at least the second round of the NCAA DII Playoffs for the third consecutive season.

Virginia State - From govsutrojans.com

ETTRICK, Va. – After an offseason filled with excitement and expectations, **Virginia State** football hit the practice field for the first time this preseason camp at 3 p.m. ET Monday, Aug. 11.

Monday's practice was the first of 23 workouts permitted under NCAA rules prior to the September 6 season-opener against California University of Pennsylvania. All practices and scrimmages during camp are open to the public.

Second-year head coach **Latrell Scott** welcomed nearly 87 players to camp on Saturday. Several personnel off the roster spent the summer in Ettrick attending classes and going through a demanding offseason strength and conditioning program under new coach **Chris Neff**, who came to VSU from the University of Richmond.

The Trojans finished 9-1 last season and won the CIAA North Division title.

South Carolina State - From scsuathletics.com

ORANGEBURG, SC – MEAC co-champ **South Carolina State** held its first scrimmage of the preseason last Saturday evening (Aug. 9), with the weather shortening the almost the two-hour scrimmage at Oliver C. Dawson Stadium.

SC State also held its annual Media & Picture Day during the morning session, prior to the evening scrimmage. The Bulldogs started the scrimmage with its main focus on the installation of special teams (kicking and punting) in game-style situations.

"It was the first scrimmage and anytime you are trying something new on offense and defense it's going to be a struggle," said head coach **Buddy Pough**.

Bethune-Cookman - From the *Daytona News Journal*

DAYTONA BEACH , FL – **Bethune-Cookman** had its first day of practice in August 1 and little is known since.

B-CU head coach Brian Jenkins closes practices to fans and the media and reports have been practically non-existent since then.

The Wildcats shared the MEAC title with **South Carolina State** as both finished 7-1 in conference play last season. B-CU finished 10-3 overall including a first round loss in the FCS playoffs.

B-CU opens Aug. 30 at Florida International.

Albany State - From the *Albany Herald*

ALBANY — Defending **SIAC** champion **Albany State** got its preseason football practice underway Monday (August 11) with a two-hour practice with helmets and no shoulder pads.

The Golden Rams are coming off a 6-4 season and the team stepped onto campus this fall with a little extra excitement and momentum following last year's SIAC championship and season-ending, five-game winning streak.

The Rams are less than a month from their season opener Sept. 6 against Valdosta State, and head coach **James "Mike" White** said his biggest goal between now and then is to help the new players fit in with the returning starters.

"I just thought it took us too many games last year to come together as a group and find our weaknesses and strengths as a team," White said. "It took us probably until midseason last year before we started playing better. I'm just hoping we can get it together before we face our first opponent."

Southern - From the *Baton-Rouge Advocate*

Defending **SWAC** champion **Southern** returned to the practice field Monday after a 115-play scrimmage on Saturday. Sunday's practice was rained out.

Head coach Dawson Odums looked over film from Saturday's scrimmage and liked what he saw of the defense. The coach says there's plenty of work to do to get the Jaguars ready for a Aug. 30 opener at Louisiana-Lafayette, winner of last year's New Orleans Bowl.

"We're nowhere near where we want to be," said Odums. "We're going into a hostile environment. It's going to be a sellout crowd, and I know they're at least a top-30 football team."

2014 CLASSIC, BOWL AND CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL GAMES

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30
Palmetto Capital City Classic
Benedict vs. South Carolina State in Columbia, SC ..... 5:00 pm ET
16th John Merritt Classic
Tennessee State vs. Edward Waters in Nashville, TN ..... 6:00 pm CT
SUNDAY, AUGUST 31
MEAC-SWAC Challenge
North Carolina A&T vs. Alabama A&M in Orlando, FL ..... 11:45 am ET
30th State Farm Labor Day Classic
Texas Southern vs.Prairie View A&M in Houston, TX ..... 4:00 pm CT
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4
Battle of the First
Cheyney vs. Lincoln (Pa) in Lincoln, PA ..... 7:00 pm ET
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
Missouri Classic
Lincoln vs. Langston in Kansas City, MO ..... 3:00 pm CT
TIger Bowl 2014
West Alabama vs. Stillman in Tuscaloosa, AL ..... 3:00 pm CT
Inaugural Classic
Alabama State vs. Tennessee State in Montgomery, AL ..... 5:00 pm CT
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
Whitewater Classic
Tuskegee vs. Albany State in Phenix City, AL ..... 1:00 pm CT
Eddie McGirt Classic
Johnson C. Smith vs Kentucky State in Charlotte, NC ..... 2:00 pm ET
AT&T Nation's Football Classic
Howard vs. Morehouse in Washington, DC ..... 3:30 pm ET
25th Southern Heritage Classic
Tennessee State vs. Jackson State in Memphis, TN ..... 6:00 pm CT
Bahamas HBCUX Football Classic
Central State vs. Texas Southern in Nassau, Bahamas ..... 5:00 pm ET
6th Two Rivers Classic
Fayetteville State vs. UNC Pembroke in Pembroke, NC ..... 6:00 pm ET
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
17th Chicago Classic
Morehouse vs. Central State in Chicago, IL ..... 3:00 pm CT
17th Down East Viking Football Classic
Elizabeth City State vs. Benedict in Rocky Mount, NC ..... 4:00 pm ET
42nd New York Urban League Classic
Howard vs. Morgan State in East Rutherford, NJ ..... 4:00pm ET
Cape Fear Classic
Shaw vs. UNC Pembroke in Wilimington, NC ..... 6:30pm ET
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
Rumble in the Swamp Classic
Edward Waters vs. Point University in Waycross, GA ..... 3:00pm ET
2014 *Southwest Airlines State Fair Classic*
Prairie View A&M vs. Grambling State in Dallas, TX ..... 4:30 pm CT
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4
5th Louis Crews Classic / Homecoming
Alabama A&M vs. Grambling State in Huntsville, AL ..... 2:00 pm CT
31st Circle City Classic
Central State vs. Kentucky State in Indianapolis, IN ..... 3:00pm CT
25th Bank of America Atlanta Football Classic
SC State vs. NC A&T in Atlanta, GA ..... 3:30 pm ET
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11
79th Morehouse-'Skegee Classic
Tuskegee vs. Morehouse in Columbus, GA ..... 2:00 pm ET
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18
Battle of the Bay
Norfolk State vs. Hampton in Hampton, VA ..... 1:00 pm ET
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25
Lucille M. Brown Community Youth Bowl
Virginia Union vs. Bowie State in Richmond, VA ..... 1:00 pm ET
Prince Hall Shriner's Classic
North Carolina Central vs. Savannah State in Durham, NC ..... 2:00 pm ET
73rd State Farm Magic City Classic
Alabama State vs. Alabama A&M in Birmingham, AL ..... 2:30 pm CT
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8
Commorative Classic
Livingstone vs. Johnson C. Smith in Charlotte, NC ..... 4:00pm ET
25th Fountain City Classic
Albany State vs. Fort Valley State in Columbus, GA ..... 2:00pm ET
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15
CIAA Championship Game
North Division Champ vs. South Division Champ in Durham, NC ..... 1:30 pm
SIAC Championship Game
East Division Champ vs. West Division Champ in Montgomery, AL ..... TBA
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
91st Turkey Day Classic
Alabama State vs. Stillman in Montgomery, AL ..... 1:00 pm CT
Battle of the Real HU
Hampton vs. Howard in Hampton, VA ..... 1:00 pm ET
34th Florida Classic
Bethune-Cookman vs. Florida A&M in Orlando, FL ..... 2:00 pm ET
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29
40th Bayou Classic
Southern vs. Grambling State in New Orleans, LA ..... 1:30 pm CT
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13
Toyota SWAC Championship Game
East Division Champion vs. West Division Champion in Houston, TX ..... 3:00 pm CT

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

DUNN TO LEAD TUSKEGEE HOOPS:

TUSKEGEE, Ala. — **Tuskegee University** has announced the hiring former Div. I head coach and New York Knicks assistant coach **Jerry M. Dunn** to lead the Golden Tigers basketball team. Dunn replaces **Leon Douglas**, who resigned in July.

Jerry Dunn

Dunn has more than 30 years of combined experience as a head coach, associate head coach and assistant coach of NBA and Division I men's basketball programs. He has a successful track record of recruiting, scouting and developing young talent. He is committed to the academic success of his players. He achieved an average 98 percent graduation rate per season, with several students continuing a career in both U.S. and international professional basketball leagues.

"I am very excited to have the opportunity to be Tuskegee University's head basketball coach," Dunn said. "My staff and family look forward to doing special things at a very special place. I am proud to represent the great Tuskegee brand and tradition."

Dunn has served the New York Knicks since 2012. From 2007 to 2010, he served as the associate head men's basketball coach for the University of Michigan. From 2003 to 2007, he served as an assistant men's basketball coach at West Virginia University.

From 1995 to 2003, he was the head men's basketball coach at Penn State University. Coach Dunn led his team to its first Top Ten ranking and an NCAA tournament appearance in his first season.

HORNE NEW ALCORN STATE A-D:

Alcorn State University President **Dr. Alfred Rankins Jr.** presented **Derek Horne** as the University's new athletics director during a news conference Friday, August 8, at the Vicksburg Expansion Center. Senior Woman Administrator, **LlJuna Weir** had been serving as Interim AD since July 1.

Derek Horne

Horne previously served as director of athletics at **Florida A&M**. Prior to that post, he had a 15-year tenure at his alma mater, the University of Mississippi, in athletics administration. As a student athlete at the University of Mississippi, Horne earned Academic All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) accolades as a senior and led his squad as team captain.

Horne will report to Alcorn later this month and begin to provide administrative direction and oversight for Alcorn's 17-sport athletic programs and activities.

Horne is a 1987 graduate of the University of Mississippi and a native of Quitman, Ga.

"SWEETWATER" TO BE ENSHRINED:

NEW ORLEANS — **Nathaniel "Sweetwater" Clifton**, a **Xavier University of Louisiana** standout in the 1940s and an NBA pioneer nearly 60 years ago, will be inducted Friday into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame at Springfield, Mass.

Clifton, selected as a contributor to the sport, is the first from Xavier to earn induction. He is one of 10 inductees this year.

A right-handed power forward listed from 6-feet-6 to 6-9 on various online sites, Clifton was one of a handful of African-Americans to integrate the NBA in the 1950-51 season. In 544 NBA games, Clifton averaged 10.0 points and 8.2 rebounds. He averaged a double-double in his second and third seasons — 10.6 points and 11.8 rebounds in 1951-52, 10.6 and 11.3 rebounds in 1952-53 — and averaged a career-best 13.1 points in 1954-55.

Clifton's lone NBA All-Star Game appearance was in 1957. He scored eight points and grabbed 11 rebounds in 23 minutes and still holds the record for the oldest first-time participant: 34 years and 94 days.

Meadowlark Lemon, the longtime "Clown Prince" of the Globetrotters and a 2003 Hall of Fame inductee, will be Clifton's presenter at Friday's ceremony at Springfield Symphony Hall. Clifton's daughter, JaTuan, will accept the honor on behalf of her father.

Clifton's arrival in the NBA will be portrayed in the cinema in "Sweetwater," with Wood Harris in the title role. The movie is scheduled for release in 2015.

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"*Walk in My Shoes*" Communitywide Shoe Drive

"Walk in my Shoes" is a Communitywide Shoe Drive to collect 3,000 Bags of gently worn shoes for needy families. You or your organization can help by collecting at least one plastic bag containing 25 pairs of gently worn shoes per bag. All sizes, styles and color shoes for men, women, boys, girls will benefit the Adolescents Choosing Excellence Youth Programs. The Shoe Drive will end September 1st. For more information and bag pick-up call the Women of Color Cultural Foundation at 683-1757 or email helen.jackson4@comcast.net.

JLOC Call to the Community

The Jacksonville Local Organizing Committee of the Millions More Movement Inc. (JLOC, MMM Inc.), a non-profit local organization is soliciting donation of your excess clothes, shoes, jackets and school supplies. Bring them to 916 N. Myrtle Avenue, between Kings Road and Beaver Street Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. If you have any questions or just want to learn more about the Millions More Movement visit www.jacksonvilleloc.org or call 240-9133 or email 1312@comcast.net.

The H. Alvin Green Memorial Alumni Chorale in Concert at St. Paul AME

In observance of their 73rd Anniversary, The Women's Progressive Club of St. Paul AME Church will present in concert, the H. Alvin Green Memorial Alumni Chorale. This celebration will take place on Sunday, August 17th, at 4 pm. The public is extended a special invitation to share in this special occasion. St. Paul AME is located at 6910 New Kings Road. Reverend Marvin C. Zanders, II is the pastor. For more details contact the church office at 764-2755 or visit www.stpaulamejax.com or email chreed10@bellsouth.net.

P.U.SH. Ministry Annual Worship and Word Service

The Refreshing Women Pray Until Something Happens Ministry will celebrate their annual Worship and Word Service, September 21st at 4 p.m. This year's theme is "Women Igniting A revolution," taken from 1st Samuel 17th verse. The speaker is Eldress Mary Palmer of Lawtey Florida. The location of the event is Power of Faith Church, 3910 Atlantic Blvd. at 4 p.m. A talent show will held and the Ms. RWPM P.U.SH 2014 will be crowned. All are welcome to attend this free event. For more information contact Reverend Mattie Freeman at 221-7322 or email revmattie@bellsouth.net or via the web at www.rwpm.info.

Historic Mount Zion A.M.E. Church 148th Annual Anniversary Celebration

The Historic Mount Zion A.M.E. Church located at 201 East Beaver Street, will celebrate its 148th Annual Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, August 10th, at 10 am. This year's theme is: "148 Years Building a Solid Foundation by Trusting in the Lord." The Speaker for this occasion is Reverend Lorenzo Ewing of The Fellowship of Love Church located in Houston, Texas. Several activities leading up to the Celebration Services includes: Saturday, July 26th at 6:30 p.m., a Summer Concert featuring music by renowned organist James Smith ; Sunday, July 27th at the 10 a.m. Worship Services it's the an Old Fashioned Dress-up Day. Fashion period ranges from 1866 to 1966. The theme of the day continues with an Old Fashioned Soul Food Feast immediately following the Worship Services; Saturday, August 2nd from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., an Old Fashioned Family Fun Day This event takes place on the Church grounds; and Saturday, August 2nd at 11 a.m. is the Prayer Brunch. The culmination of event activities for the 148th Annual Anniversary Celebration will feature Celebration Worship Services on Sunday, August 10th at 10 am. Come out and join Historic Mount Zion A.M.E. for activities the entire family can enjoy! For additional information regarding the 148th Annual Anniversary Celebration contact the Church Public Relations Office at 355-9475.

Emanuel Missionary Baptist Church Celebrates 122 Years

The Community is invited to share with Emanuel Missionary Baptist Church in celebrating 122 years of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The anniversary celebration will take place on Sunday, August 17th, at 4 p.m. Special guests for the 4 p.m. service is the Rev. C. Edward Preston, pastor of St. John Missionary Baptist Church of Middleburg; Rev. Darryl Edwards, pastor of Greater Bethany Baptist Church, and the Rev. Dr. James W. Henry, pastor of Summerville Missionary Baptist Church. The choirs and members of our guest churches will accompany their pastor. The celebration will continue on Sunday, August 24th with the Rev. H. B. Charles, Jr., pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church; the Rev. Dr. Kelly E. Brown, Jr., pastor of Greater Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church and their choirs and members are special guests for the 4 p. m. service. Everyone is invited to attend these services of praise, worship and powerful preaching. Emanuel Missionary Baptist is located at 2407 Rev. S. L. Badger, Jr. Circle. For more information call the church office at 356-9371. The Rev. Dr. Herb Anderson is pastor.

Greater El-Bethel Divine Holiness ChurchBack to School Give-A-Way

The Greater El-Bethel Divine Holiness church presents an International Back-to-School give-a-away, Sunday, August 17th at 725 N. 4th St. Free Food and refreshments will be available. For more details email gospell75@aol.com or call 359-0661.

NOTICE: Church news is published free of charge. Information must be received in the Free Press offices no later than Monday, at 5 p.m. of the week you want it to run. Information received prior to the event date will be printed on a space available basis until the date. Fax e-mail to 765-8611 or e-mail to JFreePress@aol.com.

NCI 9th Annual "Tournament of Unity" Fundraising Event

On Saturday, August 30th at 7 a.m. join Northside Community Involvement for their 9th Annual Charity Golf "Tournament of Unity" on the Ocean Links Golf Course at the Omni Resort Amelia Island resort, 6800 1st Coast Hwy, Fernandina Beach, FL. Event is open to all male and female amateur and professional golfers. PGA Golf Clinic is at 7:30 a.m. The "Tournament of Unity" raises funds to support the services of "low or extremely" low income children and families to assist with child development, families and children intervention, and transitional housing. For any questions contact Jerry Harper at 302-5141 or visit www.ncijax.org.

St. Philip Episcopal Church Weekend Fundraiser

St. Philip's Episcopal Church will be hosting a Fundraiser September 12th-13th and September 26th-27th. On both Saturdays, there will be a car wash, a DJ, raffles, wii video game competition, dominoes, and card games for adults. Lunches will be served on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and on Saturday at 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The fundraiser will assist with the repair cost for the church buildings. For further information call the church office at 354-1053 or email stphlps@bellsouth.net.

Saint Paul Lutheran Church Presents a Praise Connection Service

The Saint Paul Lutheran Church 2014 Praise Connection is scheduled for Sunday, September 28th, at 4 p.m. at Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Reverend James Wiggins Jr.-Pastor, 2730 W. Edgewood Avenue. The event serves as the official debut of the A'saph Worship Team. Refreshments will be served immediately after the event. For more Information, contact the founder Jasmine J. Bullock at 352-708-0277.

God is Not Only A Promise Giver But A Promise Keeper

by Pastor E. A. Deckard

Special to the NNPA from the Houston Forward-Times

"It doesn't matter if a million people tell you what you can't do, or if ten million tell you no. If you get one yes from God that's all you need." — Tyler Perry

Jeremiah 17:7 "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him."

Forward Thinkers, my role as a Pastor has expanded to a community leader and I often find myself fighting for the rights of the "underdog". Forward Thinkers when building a case to provide assistance for those fighting "injustice" I have to remove all my personal emotions and deal with the evidence at hand.

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Forward Thinkers, people often confuse faith as something unreal or immeasurable, but the reality is the bible defines faith as something that can be backed up with evidence. The bible is full of men and women of faith whose lives are evidence that God is actively involved in the affairs of their life.

Forward Thinkers, a "faith" that cannot be tested or measured is a faith not worth possessing. You show me a man or woman of faith being used by God and I promise you there will be a trail of evidence following them.

Forward Thinkers, hearsay unfortunately is often more available in our culture than the search for the truth. We often use hearsay to try to fight our battles even though the bible encourages us to study for ourselves. Forward Thinkers we must not be found guilty of putting our trust in hearsay. The reality is, that hearsay is often thrown out because it is not strong enough to stand under examination. We need evidence to win our battles.

Evidence God Is

Genesis 18:10-14 "Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?" Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Forward Thinkers, God promises by this time next year I'm going to do something amazing in your life. The bible is full of evidence that God is not just a promise giver but the ultimate promise keeper.

Forward Thinkers Don't Let the Facts Frustrate You—Remember Facts Can Be Misleading.

Fact # 1 – They are old

Forward Thinkers, God is able to do the impossible, therefore; age is not a problem for God. As a matter of fact there are no problems too big for God to overcome. Forward Thinkers, actually age should encourage you that God can begin a new thing in your life at whatever stage of life you may be in.

Fact # 2 – They have passed their time to succeed

Forward Thinkers remember God controls the time, therefore; time to God is never an issue. God has an appointed time for everything, therefore; time is not the issue but patience to remain faithful at all times is our biggest issue. The bible is full of evidence where God works wonders and performs miracles for those who have been told they are either too old or too young. God created the four seasons and controls every stage of our lives so we must trust God to perform great works in our life time. Forward Thinkers, don't allow the critics to control your destiny.

Fact # 3 – They have been disappointed a long time

Forward Thinkers, the bible often reminds us to let go of the past and press ahead into a marvelous future. We need to realize all our past disappointments have an expiration date and God does not need the approval of our past to grant us favor on today. Forward Thinkers, the bible is full of evidence that God can turn your disappointments of yesterday into your "miracles" of today.

Fact # 4 – They are tired

Forward Thinkers, the bible warns us not to become weary in our well doing. You may be tired this season of your life but hold on to the promise that God will renew your strength. In the midst of you being tired remember, God will give you wings like an eagle. There is evidence in God's word where The Lord stopped the earth from rotating until a tired Joshua had been renewed with the strength to win. If The Lord renewed the strength of Joshua, He will also renew your strength.

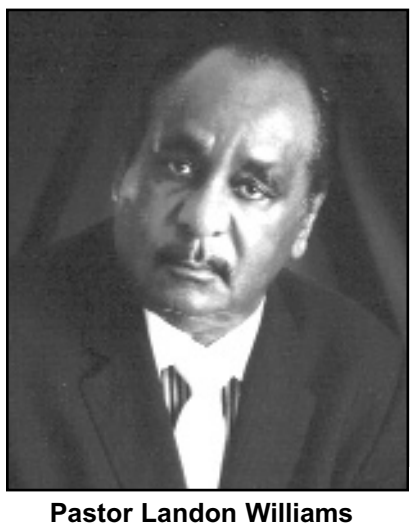
Genesis 21:1-2 "Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him."

Greater Macedonia Baptist Church

1880 West Edgewood Avenue

Seeking the lost for Christ

- Matthew 28:19 - 20



Pastor Landon Williams

8:00 A.M. Early Morning Worship

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Tuesday Evening - 7 p.m. Prayer Service
Wednesday - Bible Study 6:30 - 7 p.m.
Mid-Week Worship 7 p.m.

Radio Weekly Broadcast - WCGL 1360 AM
Sunday 2 PM - 3 PM

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Bethel Baptist Institutional Church

215 Bethel Baptist Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202 (904) 354-1464

Bishop Rudolph McKissick, Jr.
Senior Pastor

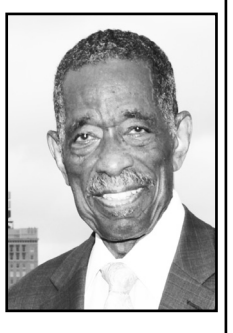
Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Worship
8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Church school
9:30 a.m.

Bible Study
6:45 p.m.

Midweek Services
Wednesday Noon Service
"Miracle at Midday"
12 noon - 1:00 p.m.



Bishop Rudolph McKissick, Sr..
Pastor Emeritus

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Church Summer Camp Exposes Children to Fun and Unique Experiences

Shown left are campers showing their superlative certificates and right, student counselor Albreona Williams, Program Counselor Edna Herring-Cooper and student counselor Darius Williams

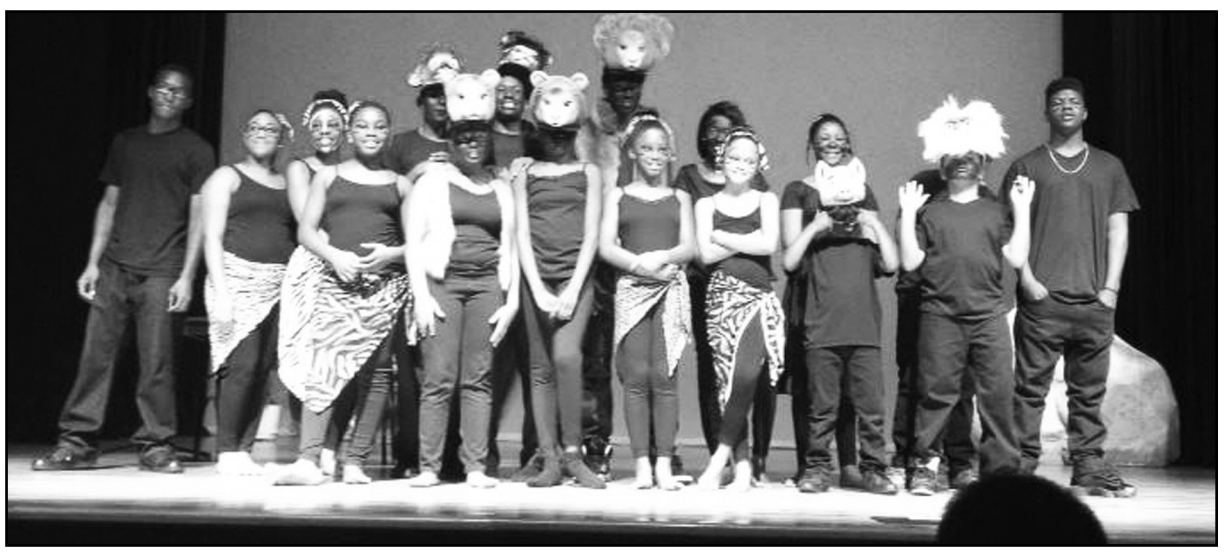
By Kourtney Wesley

Last week, the children of the Cedar Creek Baptist Church summer camp, entertained friends and family during its end of the year review. Campers' sang, danced, and showed off all they learned during the eight week camp. Canterbury Gardens Apartments, located in the1500 block off Lane Ave, provided their clubhouse free of charge to the church. This unique day camp experience was created for tenant's children and children in surrounding neighborhoods. The camp was the brain-child of new owner, John Slattery. Slattery and his partners purchased the property in December of 2013, wanted to provide a constructive and fun resource to the children. Edna Herring-Cooper was the program's coordinator for the eight week summer camp. Herring-Cooper, wanted to make sure the kids had a fun time and were able to experience new things. "I really wanted to expose these kids to new things this summer. We took them ice skating, to the Florida Theater to see a children's play, and swimming- thanks to this program several of our kids learned to swim", says Herring-Cooper. Campers also participated in by weekly Bible study, courtesy of the youth ministry at Cedar Creek Baptist. And through her efforts, Herring-Cooper was able to run the low-cost summer camp which provided breakfast provided by Publix Supermarkets and lunches were provided by the Summer Break Spot program.

Emmanuel Temple Back to School Giveaway

On Saturday, August 9th, Pastor Sharina Jefferson of Emmanuel Temple of Love Ministries, 2564 Edgewood Avenue held their 1st Back to School supply give-a-way and church fundraiser. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. children from the surrounding communities enjoyed refreshments and were provided a backpack filled with school supplies. Students Kemiah Preston, Heaven Shephard, and Troy Jenkins smile as they thank Pastor Sharina Jefferson for the backpacks and a day of fun! *R. Silver photo*

Share and Seed Performance Gives New Meaning to the Lion King



On stage thanking their supporters in costume are performers: Trestyn Stevens (Rafaki), De'Lando Mathis (Scar), Jazlyn Mathis (Young Simba), Richard Hill (Adult Simba), Martez Royal (Timon), Johdeem Jones (Pumba), Khadijah Taylor (Nala), Pride Rock Animal Dancers: Alyssa Warren, Kenya Gee, Maiya Smith, Monique Austin, Nezariah Mathis and Shayla Jackson, Vocal Soloist- BreAsia Gibson, Dance Soloist- Ryanne Hill and Qwuannell Jones.

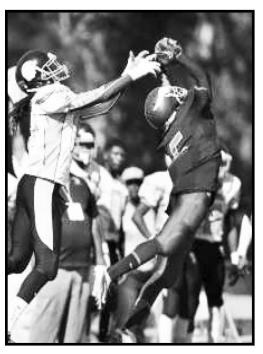
The Share and Seed Academy for the Performing Arts presented the Share and Seed Lion King (not the Disney Musical) with a special performance by teenage superstar "Nala" Nickalay.

NicKayla, 13 years old, has been singing and acting since the age of two. She recently played Young Nala in Disney's The Lion King on Broadway and numerous other shows. The event took place Saturday, August 9th at the Ritz Theater. The academy students alongside youth ambassadors from Greater Payne African Methodist Episcopal Church delivered a flawless performance before a delighted audience of parents, sponsors, friends and community supporters. The Share and Seed Academy for the Performing Arts is implemented as a partnership between Greater Payne Community Development Center and Family Support Services of North Florida. Both entities joined after the performance to present awards to students and volunteers.

The audience was packed with young performers, students and parents catching a glimpse of their children on stage and discussing back to school performance activities! For more information on The Share and Seed Academy for the Performing Arts, visit www.shareandseedgpc.org or call 355-6015.

Northwest Classic Celebrates 45 Years

One of the state's longest and tradition rich high school football rivalries will celebrate and play in its 45th game on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at 3pm at Raines High School.



Since 1970, "The Friendly Neighborhood Rivalry" [as it's been called] between Raines High and Ribault High has displayed exciting finishes and fond memories for the alumni and fans of the two predominately black high schools.

Site locations for the game includes the former Gator Bowl, Jacksonville Metropolitan Stadium, First Coast High, in addition both schools serving as host. During the first 44 years, the average attendance for the game has been about 10,000.

The list of former players reads like a "who's who of high school football, with several of the former players having coached their respective alma maters, in addition to having gone on to have outstanding collegiate and professional careers.

Raines holds the series record with a 33-11 advantage.

Wayman Ministries' Women of Virtue Conference 2014

Wayman Ministries' Women of Virtue Women's Ministry presents their 2014 Women's Conference August 22-24th. The theme is "More Like Him". Event highlights include Sisterhood Night, Friday, August 22nd at 7 p.m. at Wayman Chapel, 8855 Sanchez Road. Enjoy food, games and fellowship! The conference workshops for youth and adult women will be held at Spirit of Life, 1176 Labelle Street, Saturday, August 23rd, 9 – 1 p.m. The Closing Worship Service is Sunday, August 24th at 11 a.m. with guest speaker Pastor Sharon Y. Riley of Orlando, Florida. For more information or to register visit www.wayman.org or call 739-7500.

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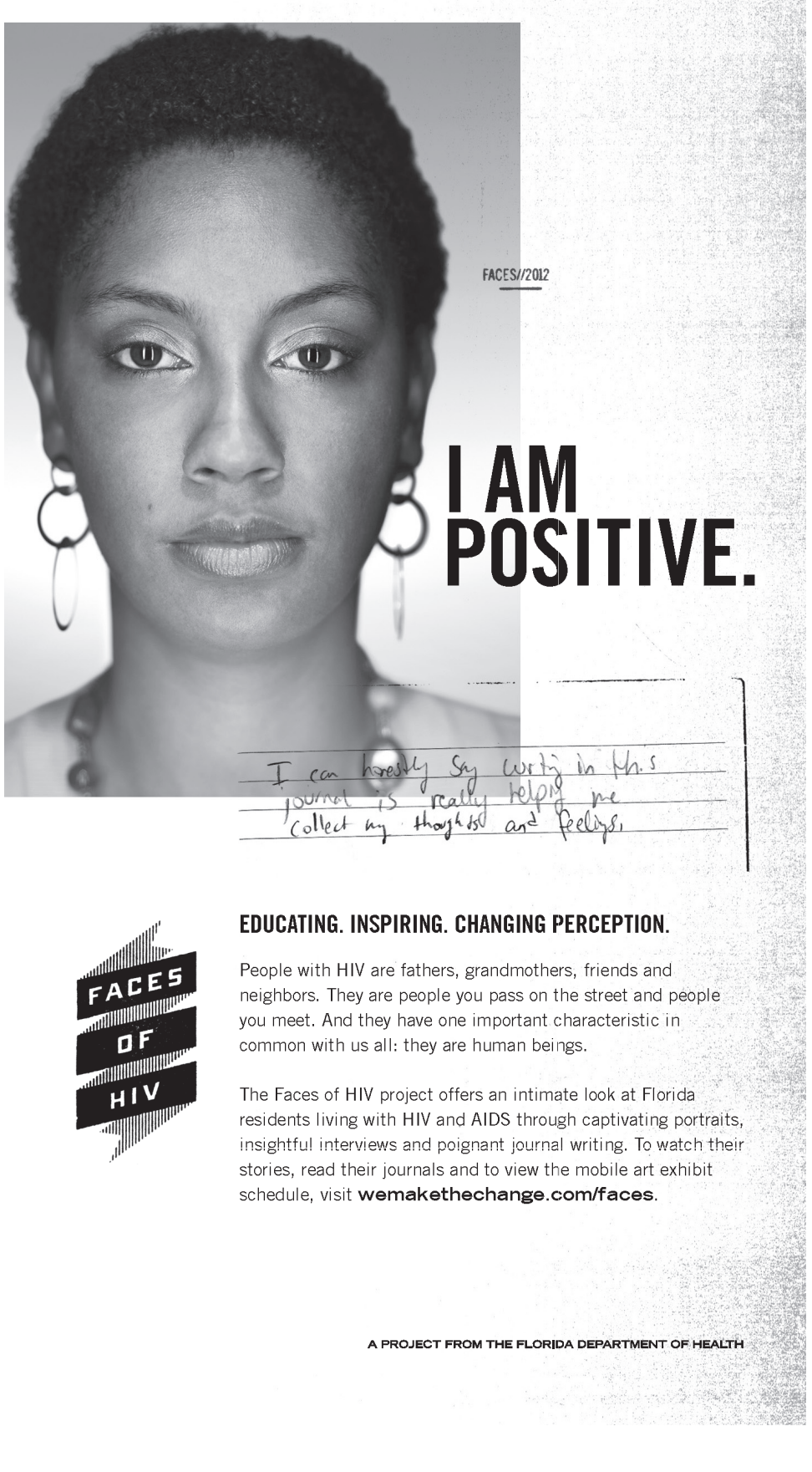

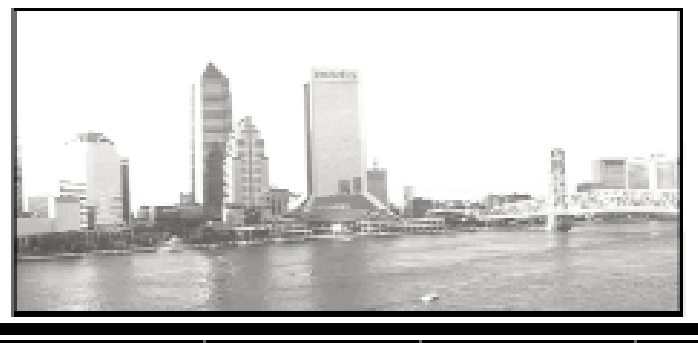

AROUND TOWN

What to do from social, volunteer, political and sports activities to self enrichment and the civic scene

Eat Up Downtown

Eat Up Downtown is when local eateries collaborate to bring delectable meals at even more mouthwatering prices. Each restaurant has created an exclusive three-course menu that will leave your stomach and wallet full - but begging for more! The eating will take place **through August 24th,** 6 to 11 p.m. For more details visit www.eatupdowntown.com or call 634-0303.

Empowerment Resources Celebration

Empowerment Resources, Inc. presents the "Give 10" mixer, an exciting evening of networking, drinks and complimentary appetizers. The event will take place Thursday, **August 14th,** 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Havana Jax, 2578 Atlantic Blvd. For more details email info@empowermentresourcesinc.org or call Elexia at 813-8737 or visit www.empowermentresourcesinc.org.

FOBL Education Bash

The Friends of Brentwood Library end of summer fun and education bash is scheduled for Friday, August 15th, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Brentwood Public Library, 3725 N. Pearl St. Enjoy hula hooping, jump rope, jewelry crafts games, bike safety tips door prizes and refreshments, backpacks and more! For more details call Sharon Coon at 444-3743 or email swcoon@comcast.net.

Marsha Dean Phelts Lecture at the Library

Marsha Dean Phelts, author of An American Beach for African Americans and The American Beach Cookbook, will discuss her books and memories of the Civil Rights Movement at the Main Library on Saturday, August 16th at 2 p.m. on the Conference Center Level, 303 Laura Street N. The event is free and open to the public. For more details call Olga Bayer at 630-2353 or email OBayer@coj.ne.

Eastside Love Vendor Fair

The Eastside community will receive a whole lot of love Saturday, **August 16th** at the Eastside Love Arts and Vendors Market from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at A. Philip Randolph Park, 1096 A. Philip Randolph Blvd. Local business owners and area non-profits, artists and performers will come together to expose their various talents, products and services. For more information call 610-7103.

Montford Point Fundraiser

The Fine Arts and Cultural Education presents a Montford Point Fundraiser, Tuesday, August 19th, at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. at 1068 Park St. Hosted by Lawrence Walden and Jessica Porter. Tell a friend and bring a friend! For more information call 647-5226 or visit www.aplusparentradioandtv.com.

JCCI Kick-Off Event

JCCI Forward Kick-Off event takes place at Co-Work Jax, 5 W. Forsyth St., Thursday, **August 21st** at 5:30 p.m. Join Forward as they kickoff the 2014-2015 programming year and learn how young professionals can plug into their community to advance JAX2025. The event is free and open to all. For more information call Aschelle Morgan at 396-3052, ext 309.

Riverside Arts Market Back to School Bash

The Riverside Arts Market Back-to-School Bash is scheduled for Saturday, **August 16th.** The Back-to- School-Bash will feature food, vendors and entertainment. RAM is located under the canopy of the Fuller Warren Bridge. For more details call Heather Bailey at 389-2449 or visit www.riversidearts-market.com

Restoring Your Rights" Meeting

State Representative Mia Jones and the D.W. Perkins Bar Association Inc. and Three Rivers Legal Services Inc. invites the community to Project R: "Restoring Your Civil Rights" on Thursday, **August 21st**, at 6:15pm. at the Wells Fargo Springfield Community Center, 1601 N. Main St. 2nd Flr. The subject of sealing and expunging records will be discussed as attorneys and others will be available to assist individuals. For more info call 924-1615.

Tech Networking Mixer

The Socially Innovative: Inaugural Tech Networking mixer is scheduled for Thursday, August 21st, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at River City Brewing Company, 835 Museum Circle. For more information call 398-2299 or visit www.rivercity-brew.com.

Jax Sister Cities Association Mandela Celebration Event

The City of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Sister Cities Association (JSCA) will celebrate the life of Nelson Mandela by sponsoring a fundraising banquet in support of health programs for the citizens of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in South Africa,. South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool will be the keynote speaker Thursday, **August 21st**, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Hyatt Hotel. For further information visit www.jsca.org or call Betzy Santiago at 630-4710.

The Wiz

Stage Aurora Theatrical Company 100 Youth Voices presents "The Wiz," Saturday, **August 23rd** at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The Wiz is a Broadway musical with the lively and dazzling mix of rock, gospel and soul! For more information call 765-7372 or visit www.stageaurora.org. Stage Aurora is located at 5800 Norwood Avenue.

Valor Academy Trailblazer Ceremony

Save the date for Valor Academy's Trailblazer Ceremony, Saturday, **August 23rd** at 6 p.m. at FSCJ North Campus, 4501 Capper Road. Join Valor Academy as they commemorate the inaugural year by presenting Valor Schools as learners, leaders and trailblazer during a rite of passage celebration. Keynote Speak is Cleve Warren. For more information call 469-8195 or visit www.valoracademy.org.

NBC's Tina Lifford in "The Circle"

Join the Alhambra for a one-of-a-kind play featuring Tina Lifford from NBC's "Parenthood" with two shows of "The Circle" **August 24th** and 25th. The Circle is a play about the inner journey seven women take in a Sister Circle. A Sister Circle is a special way these women support one another as they all navigate the choppy waters of their lives. For more information visit www.alhambrajax.com or call the box office at 641-1212. The Alhambra Theatre is located at 12000 Beach Blvd.

Seniors Citizens Strut The Runway

On Saturday, **August 23rd** come watch as senior citizens strut on the runway with senior citizen models from Jacksonville and Atlanta as they model in the first annual "Senior On The Runway Fashion Show" at the Prime F. Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water St. Seniors ranging from ages 55-89 will entertain the audience with the finest clothes, shoes, and accessories that money can buy! For more information contact Carrie T. Hamilton at 957-7324 or email carriethamilton@hotmail.com.

Gun, Knife & Military Show

Gun collectors and concealed weapons holders attend the North Florida Arms Collectors Gun, Knife and Military Show at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. S**aturday August 23rd and Sunday, August 24th.** The show is at the Prime F. Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water St. For more information visit www.cliffhangersgunshows.com or call 633-6110.

NBC's Tina Lifford in "The Circle"

Join the Alhambra for a one-of-a-kind play featuring Tina Lifford from NBC's "Parenthood" with two shows of "The Circle" **August 24th and 25th.** The Circle is a play about the inner journey seven women take in a Sister Circle - a special way twomen support one another as they all navigate the choppy waters of their lives. For more information visit www.alhambrajax.com or call the box office at 641-1212. The theatre is located at 12000 Beach Blvd.

The Ritz Sound and Vocal Auditions

Calling all Middle School and High School Singers!!! Are you looking for the opportunity to gain exposure for your talent and travel while doing it? The Ritz Sound and Vocal Performers is holding auditions, Thursday, **August 28-29** at 4:30 p.m., 829 N. Davis St. Download your application online at www.ritzjacksonville.com or call 807-2010.

Tom Joyner Family Reunion

The TJFR is set for Labor Day weekend in Kissimmee at the Gaylord Palms, 6000 W Osceola Pkwy, Kissimmee, Florida, **August 28th to September 1st.** Enjoy the party with a purpose and meet national celebrities, attend seminars, vendors and concerts! For more details call 407-248-9191or visit blackamericaweb.com/category/tom-joyner-family-reunion.

Beres Hammond in Concert

Reggae singer Beres Hammond known in particular for his romantic lovers rock and soulful voice will appear in concert, at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, Friday, **August 29th** at 7 p.m. For more info visit www.pvconcerthall.com or call 209-0399.

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Bessie Smith Biopic to Trigger a Ripple of Residual Returns for All Star Cast, Descendants

Shown is Queen Latifah and who she will bring to life Bessie Smith. Mo'Nique will portray Ma Rainey

by A. Scott Galloway

Two years ago, it was reported that an in-the-works biographical motion picture on the life of pioneering blues singer Bessie Smith (1894-1937) – "Empress of the Blues" – was being prepared by the artist's estate. Since then, HBO Films has stepped into the ring with a star-studded Bessie Smith movie for television with Queen Latifah in the starring role. How will this affect the projects that were already in motion?

Beverly Ann Clarke, granddaughter of Bessie Smith and head of her estate, along with Lindsay Guion, will serve as Special Consultants to HBO Films throughout the making of the movie. "The estate's primary goal is to preserve and enhance the legacy of the legendary Ms. Bessie Smith," Guion states. "Though the estate still has many plans to carry forward Bessie Smith's unprecedented story, including a theatrical musical film, we feel this movie for television will create key awareness among viewers who do not yet know who she was. They have a great all-star cast that will connect those important, and we're absolutely excited about how their project can fit into our plan. The estate wants to insure that the Bessie Smith brand will shine again."

Queen Latifah will star as Bessie Smith

HBO Films has partnered with Zanuck Co. to produce a biographical Bessie Smith telepic entitled "Bessie" a/k/a "Blue Goose Hollow," named after the area in Chattanooga, Tennessee where the legendary Roaring `20s entertainer was born and raised. It will be scripted and directed by Dee Rees with source material being the Chris Albertson biography, "Bessie." At press time, the telepic was still being cast but already has the following attached: Oscar-winner Mo'Nique will play Smith's legendary peer Blues singer "Ma Rainey;" Charles S. Dutton will play William "Pa" Rainey, husband and partner to Ma Rainey (Note: Dutton was nominated for a Tony Award for his portrayal of "Levee Greene" in the Broadway production of Ma Rainey's Black Bottom written by August Wilson); Michael Epps will play "Richard Morgan," bootlegger and romantic interest to Bessie Smith. Tika Sumpter plays Lucille, a chorus girl in Bessie's troupe; Khandi Alexander will play Bessie Smith's mother "Laura;" and Michael K. Williams will play Bessie's spouse "Jack Gee."

Bessie Smith was a pioneer not only for Black recording artists and women in general but for the American recording industry as a whole. Blessed with a powerful voice that cut through the shellac and static of early recording techniques and with a sass that delighted folks of all persuasions, The Empress recorded 160 sides for Columbia Records in the `20s and `30s that transcended the realms of Blues music and "race records." Her biggest hits included "Downhearted Blues" (1923), "Empty Bed Blues" (1928) and "St. Louis Blues" (1925) which she later reprised on the big-screen in the two-reeler

Black cast film in 1929 (with Fletcher Henderson's band, a chorus AND strings – highly unusual and grand for the time). Beyond her artistry, Bessie Smith is a fascinating figure for the struggles she endured as a woman – a Black woman – her marriage, her lovers (male and female), her fierce work ethic, her legendary run-in with the Ku Klux Klan, her business dealings and more – all of which will play well in today's marketplace as folks will see "the more things change the more they stay the same."

Because the Bessie Smith estate is in the process of creating its own film, it was understandably initially resistant to HBO's movie for television project. "When Beverly and I first discussed this HBO project, I sent them a cease and desist letter," says Guion. "After some thought, we decided to see if we can all work together. What we've settled upon is to work in a non-exclusive capacity so that when we go forward with our big-screen version, there is nothing to hinder us from doing so. That's why Beverly is so excited about what's happening because we still have the freedom to do what we're doing plus be on board as part of this HBO piece as well. The estate does have some say in how the image is portrayed – we want to make sure that they are not tarnishing the brand. HBO agreed with us so we're absolutely happy."

Ms. Clarke adds, "Initially I was almost afraid to get too excited because of disappointments I've had in the past. But I strongly believe that Bessie's story needs to be told and now is the time to tell it. I want people to know her music, the kind of family person she was – very big on family – and the things she went through on her way to becoming the highest paid Black entertainer of her era."

The Bessie Smith estate has many more endeavors on the front burner to preserve her legacy. In a New York City ceremony held June 9, performance rights organization ASCAP honored Bessie and other jazz luminaries by adding her name to the distinguished ASCAP Wall of Fame. There's the licensing of her music in all appropriate areas. Her publishing assets are overseen by co-owners Sony/ATV Music Publishing and Paul McCartney-founded MPL Music Publishing, a company renowned for sensitive and honest handling of historical art copyrights. A "star" for Bessie Smith on the Hollywood Walk of fame is in the works as is a reissue of the Bessie Smith Postage stamp for which 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the original.

Biggest of all future plans include a "Bessie" on Broadway musical (very timely with the recent successes of "Jersey Boys" and "Motown the Musical") as well as a Las Vegas counterpart. An all-star tribute concert and commemorative album as well as the aforementioned theatrical motion picture to boast both a score and a soundtrack album. "Going after artists and entities for all of these projects will be so much easier now that the dots are being connected via Queen Latifah's attachment to the HBO movie," Guion admits. "Just last year, a lot of people didn't know who Bessie Smith was! The looks on the faces of people you would have thought knew her…when I mentioned her name, they were embarrassed but they simply did not know her. We'll have a better chance getting that star power now. Plus because the HBO movie is not for theatrical release, there will be certain storylines and events missing from their film that our big-screen and Broadway projects will pick up."

A final concern has been the need to crack down on unauthorized Bessie Smith-related items, something that is sure to rear its head again with the trailblazer's newfound popularity and awareness. "People have jumped out there creating t-shirts and images that we've had to put a stop to," Guion admits, "and we will vehemently continue to do so."

It's been a long road for Bessie's granddaughter Beverly – now 73– who became the sole living heiress/trustee to the estate after the passing of her grandmother Smith, her grandfather Jack Gee, and then her father Jack Gee Jr. When the HBO film makes its bow in 2015, she hopes it will trigger a windfall domino effect for her legendary loved one. Humming "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" – the song of Bessie's she says speaks loudest and clearest to her of the essence of who she was – what she wants most now is to see this all transpire in her lifetime.

"The story should've been told long ago, but the time is now," Beverly says. "I'm ready for it to be brought to the big-screen, so that the world knows the kind of entertainer Bessie Smith was; the extraordinary life she led, the struggles she endured, and the wonderful person she was."

Pat Singleton Celebrates 63 Years Young!

Retired Duval County School Board teacher of 35 years Pat Singleton celebrated her 63rd birthday with family and friends at her home on August 10th. Pictured smiling with money clipped to her shirt is honoree Pat Singleton, MacDonald Burch and Margarite Thomas. *R. Silver photo*

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Lesley McSpadden, the mother of 18-year-old Michael Brown, wipes away tears as Brown's father, Michael Brown Sr, holds up a family picture of himself, his son, top left, and a young child. In the inset, people scatter as police officers fire teargas in Ferguson, Missouri. Photograph: Robert Cohen/AP .

St. Louis Police Fire Teargas into Crowds Protest Over Shooting of Unarmed Black Man

Authorities in a St Louis suburb where an unarmed black teenager was fatally shot by police have used teargas and rubber bullets to try to disperse crowds as unrest continued through Monday night.

Ferguson police Chief Tom Jackson said a group had gathered relatively peacefully throughout the day on Monday at a burned-out convenience store but turned rowdy as night fell.

Jackson said people threw rocks at police and gunfire came from the crowd. He says officers used teargas and shot "beanbag rounds" meant to stun them.

An Associated Press photographer said police were telling people to go home but authorities had blocked exit streets off. Jackson said police blocked off the area where most of the looting and vandalism occurred the previous night out of concern that cars passing by might hit demonstrators in the street.

Jackson said officers were focused on dispersing the crowd, which was smaller than the night before, but were making arrests and reported being fired on at some locations. "They are shooting at us now," Jackson said, adding that officers from 10 to 15 jurisdictions were assisting Ferguson.

St Louis county police spokesman Brian Schellman later said there were at least five arrests and no reports of looting. He said police using loudspeakers were urging people to go home.

Looting and unrest initially broke out on Sunday following a vigil for 18-year-old Michael Brown, who police said was shot multiple times on Saturday after being confronted by an officer.

The FBI opened an investigation on Monday into the death. Police have said Brown was shot multiple times on Saturday after being confronted by an officer in Ferguson, where nearly 70% of the 21,000 residents are black.

Authorities were vague about exactly what led the officer to open fire on Brown, except to say that the shooting was preceded by a scuffle with a man. It was unclear whether Brown or a man with him was involved in the altercation. Some witnesses have denied there was any scuffle under way involving Brown when he was shot.

The FBI was looking into possible civil rights violations, said Cheryl Mimura, a spokeswoman for the agency's St Louis field office. The US attorney general, Eric Holder, said the case deserved a full review.

Following a candlelight vigil on Sunday night, crowds looted and burned stores, vandalised vehicles, assaulted and threatened reporters and taunted officers.

Thirty-two people were arrested, police said. Two officers suffered minor injuries. There were no reports of civilians hurt.

On Monday the scene of the shooting was marked with a makeshift memorial of candles and signs in the middle of the narrow street where Brown fell dead.

Its' Not too late to Consider Cultural Beach Travel for Your Summer Vacation

By Rosaland Tyler
New Journal and Guide

If you helped push the tab for African-American travel up to $48 billion in the past four years, what are your vacation plans this year?

"Our family would pack up after work on Friday and head to the lake," Barry and Cindy Rock wrote in their website, Camping in Color.blogspot.com. "We would swim, fish, and ride bikes. Soon others came with us, nieces, nephews, friends and other family. All of whom still camp today and take their own families. With so much technology and desensitizing information, we hope this will awaken your senses and motivate you to Camp in Color."

The Rock couple has spent more than three decades pitching tents with relatives. Originally from Boston they live in Georgia. "I think most folks need to just relax a little bit, Barry Rock said in a Jan. 3, 2014 New York Times story.

If you're looking to relax at the beach, consider visiting a historically Black beach.

At the turn of the 20th century, African-Americans owned "vast swaths of property along America's shores," Andrew Karhl, an assistant professor of history at Marquette University, said in his 2012 book, They're Coming for the Land: African-American Coastal Property in the Jim Crow and Sunbelt South.

"By 1920, many of these family properties were converted into beachfront resorts that catered to and sought to capitalize on an increasingly mobile Black American public," Karhl said. "Such resorts later served as places for working-class families to relax and reclaim their bodies, and for middle-class and elite Blacks to retain their sense of status and respectability."

In her book, Finding Martha's Vineyard: African-Americans At Home on an Island, journalist Jill Nelson says her annual childhood visits to a historically Black beach in Oaks Bluff, Mass. insulated her family from negative racial assumptions and expectations.

"There was no need to be the exemplary Negro here, or to show white people that we were as good as or better than they were, to conduct ourselves as ambassadors for integration and racial harmony," she writes.

Visitors at Dorothy West's Oak Bluffs cottage, now a site on the African American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard

In Maryland, visit Highland Beach founded by Charles Douglass in 1893. The adjacent area contained summer homes owned by many African-Americans including E. Franklin Frazier, Lawrence Dunbar, and Blanche Bruce.

Right here in Florida, we have American Beach right up the street which was popular in the 1930s and 1940s. Founded by the Afro-American Life Insurance Company, it was near numerous Black-owned summer cottages. Today it is experiencing a resurgence with a variety of modern architecture lining the streets. Landowners have been pressured or forced to sell to developers.

In Massachusetts, visit Oak Bluffs Beach at Martha's Vineyard. The beach can be traced to the 1890s, but the site took off in the 1930s and 1940s, and remains the summer home of elite Black professionals across the U.S., including Spike Lee, Henry Louis "Skip" Gates and Vernon Jordan.

Or visit Freeman Beach in Wilmington, N.C. Robust in the 1940s, it declined after massive hurricanes in the 1950s. Currently, it is the subject of a lawsuit that aims to force the displacement of the Freeman family and the liquidation of its assets as a result of its status as heirs property.

Historically Black beaches are also located in Sag Harbor, N.Y. Buckroe Beach near Hampton attracts tourists and hosts festivals. In South Carolina, the Gullah Sea Islands extend miles inland.

Other travel ideas can be found in "Go Girl!" The first travel book for African-American women includes 52 travelers' tales by writers such as Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, and Jill Nelson. Stories span the globe including treks to Iceland, Australia, and Africa. It also offers tips on how to deal with racism abroad. It covers historic places. And it offers useful advice on everything from packing, to traveling inexpensively, creating a travel fund, and staying safe and healthy on the road of particular significance in Black history.

Or consider booking the Soul Train Cruise that will sail Feb. 22-March 1, 2015. The cruise will set sail from Fort Lauderdale travel to Grand Turk, San Juan, St. Thomas, and the Bahamas. While you cruise, expect to hear many well-known entertainers including Frankie Beverly, Gladys Knight, The Stylistics, Regina Bell, The Spinners, and The Blue Notes. To learn more about the cruise's easy payment plans and pricing which starts at just $1975/person. For more information, call (855) 768-5872.