

★ A NEWS JOURNAL DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF THE PEOPLE ★ 60 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE ENTIRE BAY AREA

VOLUME 65 - NUMBER 10 • THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2008



The New Face Of The Black Labor Movement

(First in a series)

(USPS 526-500)

By Gail Berkley

yrone Freeman is a man on a mission. Freeman is President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Healthcare, United Long-Term Care Workers' Union, Local 6434, California. In this position he is empowering the local's over 150,000 members across the state.

From his base in Los Angeles, Freeman, 38, is among the new African American leadership in the labor movement.

Inspired by his grandparents, particularly his grandfather who was a steel worker and trade unionist in Pennsylvania, Freeman has climbed through the ranks of the SEIU. "My grandparents really played an important part in guiding the work that I do," Freeman said in a telephone interview this week. Freeman said he grew up in Pittsburg and that he learned there the importance of making sure the voices of people of color and women are heard in the workplace.

Bachelor's degree at Allegheny College of Liberal Arts in Pennsylvania, Freeman said he worked in a nursing home during his breaks. From this experience he said he realized how difficult the work is. He said he also worked with the Democratic Socialists while in college regarding democracy issues.

"One place I knew our voices could be heard was in the workplace," Freeman said.

Later he interned with a local of the SEIU during his college breaks. After graduation he took a job as a union organizer in Atlanta and neighboring areas in Georgia. Freeman worked to unionize workers who were predominantly African American.

His leadership was rewarded when he became Executive Director of SEIU Local 1985 in Atlanta in 1994. In 1996, he became the youngest leader in the SEIU's 90year history to be elected to the International Executive Board. That same year Time Magazine honored him by featuring him as a leader that is revitalizing the American Labor Movement.

In 1999 he came west to Los While working toward his Angeles and accepted the position



Tyrone Freeman

of General President of the SEIU Local 434B, (now United Long-Term Care Workers' Union, local 6434 he has established a non-

6434). During his tenure with local profit training center for the community: the Homecare Workers Training Center. The center offers homecare workers training in several fields including Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), Licensed Vocational Nurse, (LVN) and Registered Nurse (RN). It also offers computer classes for English and Spanish speaking members, basic skills training, as well as First Aid/CPR and the In Home Support Services Series.

Freeman said he is most proud of the fact that he has "united workers of different ethnicities and creeds together to have a voice." He said the voices of those once silenced and unseen are now the driving force in in-home care in California.

He said the movement is similar to the impact that the Sleeping Car Porter's union had under the leadership of A. Philip Randolph.

'In home care workers provide longevity to people we care for," Freeman said. He said the union's activities have changed the community in Los Angeles.

"We've brought together the community, the churches and the

union," Freeman said.

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Senate Confirms **CPUC Commissioner** Timothy Simon

By San Francisco Bureau

he California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) last Friday announced that the State Senate confirmed the appointment of Timothy Alan Simon as a member of the CPUC.

"I am deeply honored to have been appointed to the CPUC by Governor Schwarzenegger and to receive confirmation by the Senate," said Commissioner Simon. "I will continue to work on behalf of the state, its consumers, environment, and economy.'

CPUC President Michael R. Peevey said, "On behalf of my fellow Commissioners and CPUC staff, I congratulate Commissioner Simon on his confirmation. I look forward to continuing our work together.'

Simon was by appointed to the CPUC by Governor Arnold



Timothy Simon

Schwarzenegger on February 15, 2007. Simon's term expires January 1, 2013.

CPUC Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to serve six-year terms. The yearly salary for Commissioners is \$128,109.



State Senator Carole Migden (District 3) hosted her annual Black History Month Celebration and Reception last week in the State Building in San Francisco. During the event seven community leaders were honored and guests also enjoyed inspirational musical selections and a youth oratorical speaker. Among the honorees were Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory School basketball star Tierra Rogers, who received the Student-Athlete Leadership Award. A special presentation was also made to the Rogers family. Activist Terrell Rogers, Tierra's father, was killed recently while attending one of her basketball games. Shown here are (from left) Tierra Rogers, Sen. Migden, Rogers' brother, Terrell and mother LaDonna Rogers. More photos on page I of Lifestyles section. Photo by Chris Duffy

Sen. Migden Honors Leaders

Karen Bass Elected Speaker Of The Assembly

By East Bay Bureau

ssemblywoman Karen Bass was elected to the state's second most powerful post- Speaker of the Assembly- last week by her colleagues in the Assembly.

Bass, who represents Los Angeles' 47th District, is the first African American woman to hold the powerful seat. Only the governor has more power in Sacramento than the Assembly Speaker.

Bass will take over from Current Speaker Fabian Núñez who is being termed out this year.

"This is an amazing, amazing moment," Bass, 54, said after the 80 Assemblymembers voted to approve her nomination. "Members, thank you so much for your vote of faith and confidence in me as your next speaker."



(ISSN 0890-0930)

Dedicated to the cause of the people-- that no good cause shall lack a champion and evil shall not thrive unopposed.

Published weekly by The Sun-Reporter Publishing Co. 1791 Bancroft Avenue San Francisco, CA 94124

Periodicals Postage Paid At San Francisco, California

Postmaster send address changes to -Sun-Reporter Publishing Co.

1791 Bancroft Avenue San Francisco, CA 94124

Phone: (415) 671-1000 Fax: (415) 671-1005 E-Mail address: sunmedia97@aol.com

Website:

www.sunreporter.com

National Representative: Amalgamated Publishers, Inc 341 West 38th street New York, NY 10018 Phone: (212) 904-1880

Subscription Rates: \$20 per year; 30 cents per copy. Member of National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc., and California Publishers Association. The Sun-Reporter has a five-column format, 2 1/16" per column with 1/8" between each column.

Carlton B. Goodlett, PH.D., MD., Editor/Publisher 1945-1997

> Amelia Ashley-Ward Editor/Publisher

Bass has been a State Assembly Member since 2005. Speaker Núñez selected Bass as the Majority Leader for the California State Assembly during the 2007-2008 legislative session, making her the first African American and the first woman to hold this leadership position. During the 2005-2006 legislative session, Bass served as the Majority Whip. She also serves as the chair of the Select Committee on Foster Care.

Nunez and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger both spoke highly of Bass and her qualifications to be Speaker after last week's vote. The historic nature of her new position was not lost on Governor Schwarzenegger who said in a written statement her achievement is an inspiration for all of the state's citizens.

East Bay Assemblymember Sandre Swanson also praised Bass' selection saying it filled him with joy.

"This is truly an historic day, and the beginning of a wonderful era for California. I am very proud to have supported Majority Leader Bass from the beginning of her campaign for the Speakership," Assemblymember Swanson said.



Karen Bass

Swanson is the lone African American Assemblymember from Northern California.

While no exact date has been set for Speaker-Elect Bass' official assumption of the post, Swanson said he expects a smooth and orderly transition, particularly given Bass' current position as Majority Leader and her strong working relationship with other leaders in the Assembly.

Swanson said," I have had the honor to participate in public service for 35 years. I can say without fear of contradiction that Karen Bass is one of the noblest among us, and sets the standard for integrity and professionalism. Her commitment to the children of our state, and to improving the quality of life for all of California's citizens, is a matter of record."

With California's looming fiscal crisis, Speaker-Elect Bass will be one of the 'big five' who will share responsibility for crafting a budget that can address the State's financial issues while attracting the necessary 2/3 support in the Legislature. "I have confidence that Speaker-elect Bass will be able to lead us through this historic budget crisis, returning our state to prosperity and fostering a community that makes education a real priority," said Swanson.

Since taking office, Bass has made Foster Care Reform her top priority, according to her Assembly website. As chair of the Select Committee on Foster Care, she organized bipartisan participation that has resulted in a legislative package of 25 bills focusing on improving the state's Foster Care System. She also helped secure \$82 million in the 2006/2007 state budget for Foster Care Reform, which is the largest increased allocation in more than a decade and develop new laws to help improve the System.

Bass, as vice chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, commissioned a report to research the basic demographic profile of Black Californians including the basic social and economic conditions. The State of Black California report included a statewide organizing effort to involve Black Californians in identifying their concerns and making legislative recommendations.

Bass was raised in Los Angeles and graduated from the University of Southern California, School of Medicine - Physician Assistant Program. She has been a faculty member there for more than a decade. Bass worked as a Physician Assistant in the nation's largest trauma center, Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center. During her tenure in the emergency room, she saw the despair and violence unleashed by the crack cocaine epidemic. Bass used her organizing experience by founding the Community Coalition, a direct response to the devastation of the drug epidemic and "war on drugs" on South Los Angeles.

Chauncey W. Bailey Honored Posthumously With Polk Prize

By. Chieh-Yu Lee Special to the NNPA from GIN

ormer Oakland Post editor Chauncey W. Bailey is to receive posthumously the

prestigious George Polk Award for local reporting. His prize will be awarded in April 17 at the Kumble Theater for the Performing Arts, Long Island University in Brooklyn.

Bailey had been investigating a local bakery linked to sexual abuse, intimidation, welfare fraud, and murder, when he was gunned down on an Oakland street. He is remembered as a tireless, hard-nosed journalist who dedicated his life to the concerns of California's Black community.

Other prizes in 14 categories were for journalists who exposed corporate and govern-



Chauncey W. Bailey

ment misfeasance, revealed the industrial roots of environmental catastrophe and uncovered the abuse of vulnerable populations including children, the elderly and veterans.

Tyrone Freeman Continued From Page 1

Freeman also created the Long Term Care Housing Trust Corporation in 2003 that is building affordable luxury homes for union families. In August 2005, the first two homes in the City of Compton were completed.

In the Bay Area Freeman's union works in Alameda, Santa Cruz, Solano, Napa and Mendocino counties.

He said the SEIU local is particularly interested in working with the African American community to build long standing partnerships. He said the union also hopes to tap into the black youth movement in the Bay Area.

Freeman said he recognizes that the Bay Area population like that of Los Angeles is diverse and that diversity will be embraced. "I come before from building strong coalitions."

"We're coming hard and strong," Freeman said. "We're doing it in South Central. We're coming to San Francisco."

He said, "In Northern California there are no black labor leaders... but the workers are. We're going to raise the issue 'Who's in charge?'"

In Southern California Freeman also serves on a number of boards.

He serves on the Board of Directors for the International Foundation of Election Systems (IFES). He is also a Board Member of the Prison Industry Board, Chair, SCLC Los Angeles Chapter, Vice President, LA County Federation of Labor and a Board Member, IFES – International Foundation of Electoral Systems

He has also won many awards for his leadership including Instituto Laboral De La Raza's Martin Luther King, Jr., Leadership Award, the A. Philip Randolph Legacy Award, from the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Los Angeles; Los Angeles Unified School District, Friend of Career Education Award and The John F. Kennedy "Profiles in Courage" Award (LA County Democratic Party).

Local 6434 endorsed Sen. Barack Obama in the Democratic Presidential race and Freeman said members of the union and staff traveled to Texas and Ohio this week to help get out the vote for Sen. Obama.

"We're excited about our role to be a part of this movement," Freeman said. He said the local also has a youth component.

In summing up what motivates him Freeman said, "I'm about empowerment. I'm straight up truth to power."

NUL State Of Black America 'Amplifies' The Voices Of Black Women

By. Hazel Trice Edney NNPA Editor-in-Chief

istoric tragedies and controversies have marked the beginning of the 21st Century: The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the war in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, the disparaging Don Imus remarks, the Jena Six debacle, the mortgage and sub-prime lending crisis, and the resurgence of noose threats, fueling marches and protests against social and criminal injustices. ished and subordinated to what is believed to be the more pressing concerns of others," says the civil rights icon. "But who better than us understand and empathize with the very real challenges that our brothers, fathers, husbands and sons face as they make their way in a nation that still has far to go to adequately address issues of race? And who better than us can understand the very real boundaries that all women face in navigating a cultural dynamic that still assigns roles and oftentimes limitations year. This means the economic standing of Black people is only 56 percent of the economic standing of Whites.

• The poverty index changed only minimally with three times as many Blacks than Whites living 125 percent of the poverty line.

• The gap in totally uninsured people increased this year, with the index falling from 56 percent in 2007 to 53 percent in 2008.

• The social justice subindex is the largest increase and the greatest improvement. Jail sentencing for Blacks decreased 15 percentage points from 93 percent in 2007 to 77 percent in 2008. Also, the average sentence for Blacks decreased from 44

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and the most inhumane."

months to 40 months and the average sentence for Whites increased from 34 to 37 months.

• In education, the drop out rate for Black high school students decreased from 15 percent last year to 13 percent this year. However, the index showed a 15

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Dr. Dorothy I. Height

Amidst it all, there is often the voice of the Black male that is publicized – too often overlooking the Black woman who is actually holding the pieces together, says Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League. That is why, he says, this year's annual State of Black America is dedicated to "The Black Woman's Voice," with all responding essays written by Black women.

The report is a stringent contrast to last year.

"Our 2007 State of Black America: 'Portrait of the Black Male' report examined the plight of young Black males faced with grim prospects," states Morial in the 254-page 2008 report, slated for release March 5, aptly during Women's History Month.

"This year's report explores the challenges encountered by the females within our community – the mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters who have been the backbone of the Black family. Women typically hold the family together, especially in the African-American community, where the marriage rate is lower than in other communities and where a higher percentage of single mothers are the heads of households."

He adds, "These women are the matriarchs and leaders of our community. They have risen to the challenge of maintaining the Black family unit in spite of trying conditions and limited opportunity."

Writing the foreword for this year's report is Dr. Dorothy I. Height, president emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women.

"Too often, our needs, concerns, struggles, and triumphs are dimin-



Marc Morial

based upon gender. Yet, it is also true, that there are special, dual challenges intricately linked to blackness and womanhood that we black women face and navigate alone."

Height knows well the loneliness of Black women at the top.

A peer of the Big Six civil rights leaders – A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, and John Lewis – she was the only one not allowed to speak during the 1963 March on Washington.

"With no apologies, the time is now, to finally focus on us," she says. "It is Black women who face most strikingly a double disadvantage in the world of work. Our earnings, for example, are reflective of both a race and gender pay gap. Yet despite this double disadvantage, we clearly understand what it means to work and work hard. Our participation in the labor force eclipses that of all other women and by 2014, is projected to grow by twice the amount expected among White women," she writes. "Still, in spite of this effort, too many of us continue to live life on the economic fringe; Black women's poverty more than doubles that of white women and noticeably outpaces that among Latinas. And even with all of the employment struggles that Black men face, it is Black women who are, in the final analysis, most likely to be poor.

According to key findings outlined in the report's tables and essays:

• The economic sub-index for Black America is at 56 percent, meaning it is unchanged from last "I'm blessed to be able to do the things I'm doing," says Roberta Jordan of her recovery from a stroke. Two years ago, an extremely painful headache sent Ms. Jordan to the emergency room. In the ER she learned that her "headache" was actually a burst blood vessel in the brain. "Had I not gone to the hospital and had I been as stubborn as I normally am, they probably wouldn't have

caught it in time." Today, Ms. Jordan is back at work and continues to care for her 88 year-old mother. "She looks terrific," says Dr. Jeffrey Thomas, Neurosurgical Director of California Pacific Medical Center's Comprehensive Stroke Program

Dr. Jeffrey Thomas, Neurosurgical Director of California Pacific Medical Center's Comprehensive Stroke Program and the surgeon who repaired Ms. Jordans' blood vessel. "You cannot tell that she had brain surgery. That is certainly a modern success story for stroke."

What is a Stroke?

A stroke is a "brain attack" that happens when blood vessels in the brain become blocked or burst. This slows or stops the blood flow to the brain. Without blood flow, brain cells cannot get oxygen and the cells begin to die.

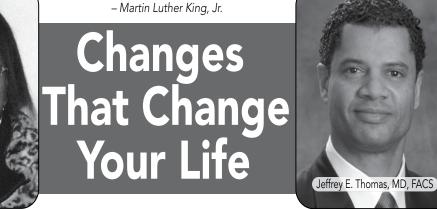
Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and is the number one cause of adult disability. Stroke is more common in African-Americans — even those who are young or middle aged. If you have high blood pressure, diabetes, a family history of stroke, or if you smoke, you have a greater chance of having a stroke.

Change the Things Under Your Control

Although you can't change your family history, you can change how you take of yourself.

"Controlling your blood pressure is the most important thing you can do to prevent stroke," emphasizes Dr. Thomas. "The best way to manage your blood pressure is to see a physician regularly. You need the guidance of your doctor to keep you on the right track." Medications are the most effective way to reduce blood pressure. Your physician may also recommend lifestyle changes such as exercise and reducing the salt in your food.

In addition to controlling your blood pressure, it is important to avoid smoking. Smoking damages blood vessels, which leads to strokes and heart attacks. Unfortunately, the effects



of smoking on blood vessels are often overlooked. "People think of lungs when they think of the bad effects of smoking," says Dr. Thomas, "but everyone gets arterial disease from smoking. The effects of the smoke go right to the arteries." Talk with your physician about programs or medication that can help you quit.

Think F.A.S.T. to Recognize the Signs of a Stroke

- F = Face numbness or weakness,
- A = Arm or leg weakness,
- S = Speech problems

T = **Time**, **call 911 immediately**. A stroke is a medical emergency. Some stroke medications are most effective in the first 3 hours after symptoms appear.

Stroke symptoms appear suddenly and most strokes do not cause pain.

Some people may experience small strokes called Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIAs). Although the symptoms of these small strokes may only last a few moments, these signs cannot be ignored. **Get medical treatment immediately**.

The most important thing you can do to prevent a stroke is to take good care of your health. Regular check-ups with your physician are important. He/she can monitor your health, answer your questions, and talk with you about your concerns.

If you do see the signs of stroke, remember that every minute counts. "Take care of it," Ms. Jordan advises, "don't wait until it's too late."

Stroke Resources in San Francisco

California Pacific Medical Center: 888-637-2762, Physician Referral Comprehensive Stroke Care Center: 415-600-5760

Chinese Hospital: 415-677-2365, Physician Referral Kaiser Permanente San Francisco: 415-833-3450, Physician Referral Saint Francis Memorial Hospital: 415-353-6566, Physician Referral Acute Rehab Unit: 353-6270

St. Mary's Medical Center: 800-444-2303, Physician Referral San Francisco General Hospital: 415-206-5176, Physician Referral UCSF Medical Center: 888-689-8273, Physician Referral VA Medical Center San Francisco:

415-221-4810 x2234, Physician Referral

For more information, visit www.hospitalcouncil.net click on the African American Health Disparity Project tab or email aahdp@sbcglobal.net or phone the Hospital Council at 415-616-9990.



Participating Hospitals: California Pacific Medical Center, Chinese Hospital, Jewish Home, Kaiser Permanente San Francisco, Laguna Honda Hospital, Saint Francis Memorial Hospital, St. Mary's Medical Center, San Francisco General Hospital, UCSF Medical Center, VA Medical Center - San Francisco.



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Black History Made At University Of Maryland

By. Perry Green Special to the NNPA from the Afro-American Newspapers

t may not be February any more, but the University of Maryland-College Park has still given us reason to celebrate Black history, as they house the only African-American led sports medicine team in all of NCAA Division-I athletics.

For years, African-Americans athletes have increased in number on both the collegiate and professional level. And according to Darryl Conway, assistant athletics director for sports medicine at College Park, you'll now find more and more Blacks walking the sidelines in roles beyond just athletes.

"The number [of Black athletic trainers] is constantly growing, especially in the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)," Conway said.

"But I truly feel that the athletic training profession is one of exposure and opportunity." Conway, who's been in the sports

medicine business since 1993, says he stumbled onto his current profession via his strong desire to stay involved with sports.

"I always played sports growing up in high school, but my parents stressed that I needed another option in case I didn't make the pros," Conway said.

"I met the athletic trainers for the [Washington] Redskins (Bubba Tyer and Keoki Kamou) who first introduced me to the profession and then I attended the Cramer Workshops at Salisbury with Pat Lamboni that cemented my interest."

Over the past 15 years, Conway has served as an athletic trainer

for Morgan State University, University of Delaware, University of Northern Iowa, University of Central Florida and the NFL's New York Jets.

Today, he supervises a staff of 14 certified athletic trainers and approximately 15-20 athletic training student assistants. Together, they oversee all medical and sports medicine operations for the University's 28 teams; 750 student-athletes.

12 members of Conway's staff are African Americans, including Head Team Physician Dr. Craig Bennett, who also serves as an orthopedic surgeon. Bennett worked in the NFL as well as a former team physician for the Baltimore Ravens and Pittsburgh Steelers.

Conway looks at how far he and Bennett made it in this industry and believes young Black kids should consider their profession as another option in life.

"School-age kids need to be exposed to athletic trainers and the profession as another opportunity," Conway said.

"That is what's lacking the most, especially since most high schools and middle schools in the country do not have athletic trainers working with their athletes. I think that once more athletic trainers are hired in schools and students are exposed to the profession more, the number of Blacks will continue to increase significantly."

Conway says the number of Blacks in his line of work is already on the rise, more so in professional sports than in college.

"Blacks are a minority, but not as much as in college," said Conway.

"There are several teams that have Black head athletic trainers, including the New York Giants, who has Ronnie Barnes as Vice President of their organization.

"The number is definitely growing on a yearly basis, as with other initiatives in the coaching ranks and front office level in professional sports. The NFL does a good job; better than other sports, at promoting minorities. They have a summer internship program for minority student athletic trainers."

Other African-Americans among Conway's staff include Dr. Yvette Rooks, Team Physician; Dr. Valerie Cothran, Team Physician; Dr. Sacared Bodison, Director of University Healthcare; Dr. Wiemi Douoguih, Orthopedic Surgeon; Kala Flagg and Gayna Lacy as Rehabilitation Coordinators.

A Growing Trend: Better Job, More Money - But No Health Insurance

By. James Wright Special to the NNPA from the Afro-American Newspapers

hen Bre Lucas decided to change employers to get more money and more leave time, she jumped at it. She thought it was a chance to improve her lifestyle and to be able to spend more time with her two young sons.

So when Lucas, a contract, nonunion security guard with Abacus Security, went over to Leonard Security, she thought that the benefits package was comprehensive. When she put her name on the dotted line two months ago, she was set to work at Northern Virginia Hospital's mental health facility in Falls Church and do what was necessary to be a good employee. However, she discovered earlier this year that something was missing.

"When I realized that I had no health insurance, I was very upset," she said. "The people at Leonard Security told us that we would be getting a better benefits package than what we had at Abacus and, of course, I went with the money. But I didn't realize that I was losing my health insurance. If I knew I was losing my health insurance, I might not have left Abacus."

Lucas, 30, is an example of millions of Americans who are working at jobs without health insurance. More than 42 million Americans are believed to be without health insurance, many holding full-time jobs.

Jill Jones, a Leonard Security branch manager, confirmed Lucas' account.

"That is true, we do not offer health insurance as a company, but we do offer it as a supplement with AFLAC," Jones said. "This was made very clear to the people from Abacus who came to us. When she left Abacus, she left her health insurance behind."

As the cost of health care escalates, many small businesses are either making employees pay more or they are cutting it out altogether. It is common for new employees of a company, especially if they are contract employees such as Lucas, to be left out in terms of health insurance.

Henry Aaron, a health care expert at the Brookings Institute, said that Lucas's situation is becoming more common.

"Fully a third of employees, mostly in small companies, do not have insurance," Aaron said. "Alas, the fraction of employed workers with coverage is falling."

Lucas said that when she talked to the president of Leonard Security, Scott Leonard, he told her that he made a business decision.

"He told me that he needed to get the contract with the hospital and one of the things he negotiated away was employee's health insurance," Lucas said. "He said that taking away health insurance lowered the cost and therefore he was able to get the hospital as a client. He also said that health insurance cuts into his profit and 'he did not want to do that anymore.""

Jones said that Lucas should be happy with the package.

"I don't see what the problem is," Jones said. "She is getting more money and those days off. She did not have that at Abacus. Bre was not forced to come with us. She could have stayed with Costs have become the predominant factor in health insurance coverage, Aaron said.

Abacus."

"Some employees decline coverage because they are myopic and don't appreciate its importance," he said. "Many take coverage for themselves, but not for dependents, usually for reasons of costs, but sometimes less defensible motives. Contract employees usually do not get benefits of any kind; that is one reason why companies hire people on contract rather than regular employees."

Lucas's children are covered by the Prince George's County health system, she said.

"My kids are fine, but what about me?"

NUL Continued From Page 3

percent decline in college enrollment for recent African-American high school graduates from 2007. Black students were less likely to enroll, compared to recent White high school graduates.

• In the sub-prime lending crisis, according to Height, "It was Black women who were most likely to have been targeted and ultimately victimized by unscrupulous mortgage lenders. And it was upper-income Black women who, in the end, faired the worst, being nearly five times more likely to have received a high-cost loan than upper-income white men—thereby putting their economic futures as well as that of their families in serious peril."

The report contrasts from last year's in which Morial outlined statistics showing the underachievement of Black males as being among America's greatest crisis.

This year's report was not meant to give a statistical breakdown of the social issues that affect Black women as much as it was to "Look at the problem of the overall community through the voices of Black women," Morial said in an interview on Monday.

The report is not without answers to the persistent problems facing African-Americans. Morial outlines detailed policy recommendations. They include:

• Mandatory early childhood education, beginning at age 3 as well as guaranteed access to college for everyone.Closed gaps in health

care insurance system to ensure universal healthcare for children.

• Creation of an urban infrastructure bank to fund reinvestment in urban communities.

• Increasing economic self-sufficiency for individuals and working families by indexing minimum wage to rate of inflation and expanding the earned income tax credit.

• Expand "second chance" programs for high school drop outs, ex-offenders and at-risk youth to secure GEDs, job training and employment.

 Reform public housing to assure continuing national commitment to low-income families.
Ensure greater minority

participation in government con-

tracting by stringently enforcing federal minority business opportunity goals.

Among 10 other women responding with essays in the report are: Julianne Malveaux; president, Bennett College of Women; Maudine Cooper, president and CEO, Washington NUL; Renée R. Hanson, NUL Policy Institute emerging scholar; Johnnetta Betsch Cole, chair, Global Diversity & Inclusion Institute named for her at Bennett College; Andrea Harris, president, N. C. Institute for Minority Economic Development: Lisa Mensah, executive director of Initiative on Financial Security; Alexis Herman, former labor secretary and chairman and CEO, New Ventures, Inc.; Lucy Reuben, visiting professor at Duke University; Melanie Campbell, president

and CEO, National Coalition of Black Civic Participation; and Kimberly Alton, public policy counsel, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law.

In an essay, "Putting Homeownership Back Within Our Reach," – among the greatest recent crisis in the Black community – Mensah encourages, "We must not let it cause us to lose sight of the social good inherent in homeownership. This is a time not only to make much-needed reforms in the mortgage industry, but to also reassess our financial values as a nation and to make sure that long-term economic security and prosperity are attainable goals for all Americans."

ERSPECTIVES / NEWS ANALYSIS / FEATURES



A Gentleman Among Brutes

he end of Senator Obama's 11-state primary winning streak with Senator Clinton's victories in Texas, Ohio and Rhode Island has caused some to recommend that he "go negative." His single victory in Vermont in Tuesday's primaries has caused wild speculation among pundits and prognosticators. Some have cast his campaign as too high-brow for blue-collar workers in rust belt states like Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan. Others have said that he has been pampered by a media that has been caught up in his charisma. Others still have suggested that he is no more than a pop star with neither the substance nor the requisite experience for the task. Though Mr. Obama must indeed take his campaign to another level, he must not descend to the political gutter on the way. A large part of

his popular appeal is that he is a gentleman among brutes.

Barack Obama's campaign has generated tremendous activity because he is a picture-perfect paradigm of the change he advocates. The two other candidates represent a return to the status quo. Senator John McCain has a foreign policy more hawkish than President Bush's: he suggests that we stay in Iraq for a century. The nobility of his military record notwithstanding, if he is elected, we will fight-and lose-the Vietnam War all over again. On the other hand, if Senator Clinton is elected, two families-the Bushes and the Clintons-will have ruled us for 20 years: America will have sunk from democracy to dynasty. Moreover, both Mr. McCain and Mrs. Clinton are thoroughly enmeshed in business-as-usual in Washington: both are indebted to interests that span decades. Both represent the politics of the past: Mr. Obama represents a possibility for an American renaissance: the emergence of a new generation of leadership for a new century and a new world.

Everything about Barack screams "change." A post-civil rights era black man with a Columbia and Harvard Ivy-League pedigree says "change." A black man with an African father and an American mother says "change." His path from the periphery of Hawaii to the core of Chicago says "change." His stance against the war when Senators McCain and Clinton voted for it says "change." The most dramatic contrast between Barack and the rest of the pack is his gentility. He is a gentleman in the midst of brutes. He emphasizes his ideas without defaming the personhood of his opponents. His speeches package policy positions in prose and poetry. Though he paid his dues working in the gritty projects of Chicago, he oozes with class. He is change personified.

What America is tired of is the dirty politics and rude partisanship that characterizes Washington today. President George W. Bush not only rode the wave of the radical right into the White House by manipulating evangelical Christians and rousing neo-conservatives: he drove a wedge between the parties with dismissive and disrespectful treatment of all opponents. He encouraged a new wave of classless right-wing media talking heads that brought shock-jock sensibilities to political discourse. To watch a broadcast of Messrs Bill O'Reilly or Shawn Hannity is to behold a "host" interrupt, insult, and talk over their "guests" in the most loutish manner. Mr. Rush Limbaugh's right-wing radio rants may be insufferable to anyone with civilized sensibilities, but he is par for the course in today's degraded political environment. Not only are Americans tired of political incivility, they desire a leader who can take them higher.

Remember William F. Buckley, Jr.? The author, syndicated columnist, and founder of the National Review passed away on February 27 at the age of 82. Though his intellectual brilliance influenced the development of modern conservative ideology, he was the epitome of civil political discourse. I remember viewing a debate between him and Jesse Jackson in the 1980's. They were polar opposites. Though his positions were wrapped in the aristocratic language of the son of an oil baron, and Jesse Jackson's were couched in the rhythmic cadences of a black Baptist preacher from South Carolina; both men traded jokes and jibes that completely respected the positions and the personhood of the other. Today's uncouth commentators from the right could learn a few lessons from the dignity and grace of the late Mr. Buckley.

Mr. Obama's mistake was not in refusing to go negative, but in refusing to go. There is a big difference between taking the high road and not getting on the road at all. When Mrs. Clinton questions his readiness to answer a call at 3:00 a.m., he must respond that she clearly wasn't ready when she answered one Senate roll call

Mr. Bush's invasion of Iraq. When his opponents show him in African dress in order to raise fears about his Muslim name, he must boldly declare his Christian faith without fear of contradiction. And when he fails—and he has and will—he must acknowledge it quickly. The only thing that people despise more than a gutter politician is an ivory tower intellectual who stands arms distance from the nitty-gritty issues of real life. Mr. Obama is a big boy, and he is now in the big leagues. If he can't handle a video attack from Mrs. Clinton, then he certainly won't be able to handle a violent attack from the deadly enemies of our nation.

at 2:00 a.m., and rubber-stamped

He is well equipped for the task. When Prime Minister John Howard of Australia suggested that Senator Obama's opposition to President Bush's "surge" was a benefit to terrorists, he quickly retorted that unless Mr. Howard sent 20,000 Australian troops to Iraq, his words were empty rhetoric.

A political cartoon recently suggested that Mr. Obama was not brutal enough to be President. But the presidency doesn't require a brute, but a warrior. So I say to the Junior Senator from Illinois, I'm glad that you talk the talk and walk the walk, but now it is time to fight the fight. Just make sure you fight the good fight.

Emil M. Thomas' email address is bishopman@churchfolk. com

Cancel Haiti's Debt: What Are We Waiting For?

By. Nicole C. Lee NNPA Columnist

here is an old Haitian Creole saying that roughly translates "things are so bad, we are eating dogs."

Today, things are so bad in Haiti that mothers, fathers and children are starving while their country is forced to pay an international debt burden of almost one million U.S. dollars per week.

Once again the plight of the people of Haiti is in the news. There are terrible stories from the nation's capitol, Port au Prince, where times are so difficult that many Haitians have no alternative but to eat dirt. "Dirt cookies" - cakes made from salt, butter and dirt, while not a new survival tactic -- highlight the grim reality of day to day life for many Haitians. Some 80 percent of the country's people are forced to live on \$2.00 a day, 50 percent survive on a \$1.00 a day or less. One in four children are chronically malnourished.

Haiti's once arable land continues to be deforested as the poor cut down trees in order to burn them for cooking and heat. Health care is inaccessible for so many and the conditions that cause disease—contaminated water, poor shelter, and malnutrition--- are rampant. While Haiti has a democratically elected government, the needs on the ground remain enormous. Due to the strain of natural disasters and the effects of structural poverty,

President Preval has recently requested that "Temporary Protective Status" be granted to Haitians who face deportation in the U.S.

The roots of Haiti's impoverishment run very deep. Born of a slave rebellion in 1804, Haiti was forced to pay the French for "the loss of its colony," even the loss of slave labor. This so-called debt was not paid off until the early 20th century and left the country virtually bankrupt. In the 1950s-1980s, Haiti's dictators were granted loans by International Financial Institutions (or "IFIs") such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank.

The U.S. has a majority vote in many of these institutions, sets the rules, and provides much of the financing. While these institutions were created to eradicate poverty, notorious dictators such as Francois Duvalier and Jean Claude Duvalier were provided loans that furnished their lavish lifestyles and repressive regimes rather than assist the people. This behavior by dictators went on with a wink and a nod and today, Haiti has nothing to show for these loans except a legacy of repression.

Nevertheless, Haiti is forced to pay off these debts. Every week, the government pays almost one million dollars to IFIs, in large part, to pay off these odious and onerous debts. One million dollars per week the government could use for poverty alleviation programs and democracy building. One million dollars spent on debt that could afford each child an education, healthcare and a real future.

When world wide debt relief initiatives began to take root, Haiti was left out of those programs. While Haiti had an overwhelming debt for a country of its size and production, it did not meet the debt burden threshold necessary to be eligible for relief programs such as HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative). Despite paying on the debts, from 2000 until the coup that removed President Aristide, Haiti remained under a defacto humanitarian aid embargo. IFIs, under the watchful eye of Washington, withheld \$146 million dollars of aid for potable water, roads and, healthcare.

Only recently, the IFIs have committed themselves to cancelling some of Haiti's odious debt. Although this is a good sign, the cancellation is conditional based on further reduction of public services for the Haitian poor and will take a year or more to be effective.

Stopping these conditionalities and speeding up Haiti's debt relief has received bi-partisan support. But Congress must act now to alleviate the suffering in Haiti. The US government must use its profound influence with the International Financial Institutions to demand immediate cancellation of Haiti's debt. There is no reason to wait. What could we possibly be waiting for?

Nicole C. Lee is the Executive Director of TransAfrica Forum





We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Freedom's Journal, March 16, 1827.

Obama-Farrakhan: Guilt By Disassociation

By. George E. Curry NNPA Columnist

third person has suddenly appeared in the contest between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton – Minister Louis Farrakhan. Though Farrakhan hasn't shared the stage with the two Democratic candidates, he has become the litmus test for Obama and any African-Americans seeking public office.

Before addressing the presidential flap over Farrakhan, it should be noted that Obama isn't the only Black office seeker being pressured to repudiate the Nation of Islam leader. In Indianapolis, Andre Carson is seeking the congressional seat held by his deceased grandmother, Julia Carson. A special election will be held March 11 to the fill the vacancy.

Farrakhan delivered a eulogy at Rep. Carson's funeral last De-

cember and though Andre Carson had nothing to do with funeral plans, he is being criticized for Farrakhan's presence. Not only was Carson uninvolved in planning his grandmother's funeral, the candidate says he has never been a member of the Nation of Islam and is, in fact, a Sunni Muslim.

In Minnesota, Keith Ellison, the first Muslim to serve in Congress, is facing criticism because he spoke favorably of the Nation of Islam as a college student. He denounced the Nation of Islam during his successful 2006 campaign, but he is still being dogged by his past affiliation.

Former Rep. Cynthia McKinney was defeated in Georgia and is trying to revive her political career by running for president on the Green Party ticket. McKinney claimed that she was targeted for defeat in 2006 by major Jewish organizations after Farrakhan campaigned on her behalf.



George E. Curry

Of course, Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign became sidetracked until he repudiated Farrakhan, one of his earliest and strongest backers, in a Manchester, N.H. synagogue. And Kweisi Mfume, then serving as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, was forced to back away from a proposed covenant between the CBC and Farrakhan.

As Obama would later learn, even when Minister Farrakhan is denounced in the strongest possible terms, that still will not satisfy verocious critics.

On the eve of the Million Man March in 1995, President Clinton, speaking in Austin, Texas, said: "One million men are right to be standing up for personal responsibility. But 1 million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division," a reference to Farrakhan, organizer of the march.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole of Kansas blasted Clinton for not being even stronger in his criticism of Farrakhan.

"I am shocked and dismayed that President Clinton did not find the moral courage to denounce Louis Farrakhan by name in his speech today in Texas," Dole said. "Farrakhan is a racist and anti-Semite, unhinged by hate. He has no place in American public life, and all who would lead must say so."

NBC's Tim Russert raised the Farrakhan issue at the debate last week, asking Obama: "Do you accept the support of Louis Farrakhan?"

OBAMA: You know, I have been very clear in my denunciation of Minister Farrakhan's anti-Semitic comments. I think that they are unacceptable and reprehensible. I did not solicit this support. He expressed pride in an African-American who seems to be bringing the country together. I obviously can't censor him, but it is not support that I sought. And we're not doing anything, I assure you, formally or informally with Minister Farrakhan.

RUSSERT: Do you reject his support?

OBAMA: Well, Tim, you know, I can't say to somebody that he can't say that he thinks I'm a good guy. (Laughter.) ... I have been very clear in my denunciations of him and his past statements, and I think that indicates to the American people what my stance is on those comments.

Hillary Clinton tried to draw a distinction between how she and Obama handled reprehensible, unsolicited support.

CLINTON: .. I'm just saying that you asked specifically if he would reject it. And there's a difference between denouncing and rejecting... I just think, we've got to be even stronger...

OBAMA: Tim, I have to say I don't see a difference between denouncing and rejecting. There's no formal offer of help from Minister Farrakhan that would involve me rejecting it. But if the word "reject" Senator Clinton feels is stronger than the word "denounce," then I'm happy to concede the point, and I would reject and denounce.

As the above exchange illustrates, even when one has strongly and consistently denounced and rejected Farrakhan, opponents still try to link the two with political Velcro.

It's time to now "denounce and reject" those who repeatedly seek to use the Farrakhan stick to pummel Blacks seeking public office.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site, www.georgecurry.com.

Imus Redux: Talk Radio Needs To Clean Up Act

By. Marc H. Morial NNPA Columnist

To Be Equal:

lmost one year after radio shock jock Don Imus sent shockwaves through the African-American community with his offensive and inflammatory remarks regarding the Rutgers University ladies basketball team, it's as if a repeat of history is upon us, in an election year in which an African-American candidate has a serious chance of winning the White House. Back in January, Golf Channel's Kelly Tilghman seriously botched anattempt at humor when she suggested that younger golf players might want to lynch Tiger Woods in a back alley in hopes of spicing up the tour.

The comment drew little ill will, at least publicly, from Woods, who reportedly considers the broadcaster a friend, but it prompted her employer to go into full damage control mode and suspend her for a few weeks.

"While we believe that Kelly's choice of words was inadvertent and that she did not intend them in an offensive manner, the words were hurtful and grossly inappropriate," Golf Channel representatives said in a statement.

The controversy precipitated yet another numbskull decision in the media, the display of a noose on the cover of Golfweek. There again, quick action rightly resulted - the sacking of the editor responsible.

But, believe it or not, it seems that the world of sports journalism seems to be aspiring to a higher standard in its response to embarrassing and offensive gaffes on air than the world of talk radio.

Earlier in February, radio commentator Laura Ingraham put her foot fully in her mouth and down her throat in her criticism of President George W. Bush's invitation of the Rev. Al Sharpton to the White House's recent Black History Month event. On her national syndicated radio program on Talk Radio Network, she said she had hoped that ''they nailed down all the valuables.''

Then, Fox News personality and radio talk show host Bill O' Reilly just had to invoke the phrase ''lynching mob'' in reference to Michelle Obama's comments regarding the United States on his syndicated radio show. On MSN-BC's ''Countdown'' in February, Washington Post columnist Eugene Robinson expressed disgust over O'Reilly's comment.

"There's certainly nothing at all funny or remotely appropriate about the use of a lynching reference about Michelle Obama," he said. "It's - I'm speechless."

As President Bush pointed out so eloquently during the Black History Month event, the noose represents "more than a tool of murder but a tool of intimidation" to generations of African-Americans. Nooses not only robbed some of their lives but many of their peace of mind.

"As a civil society, we must understand that noose displays and lynching jokes are deeply offensive. They are wrong. And they have no place in America today," he said.

Neither O'Reilly nor Ingraham has been reprimanded by their respective employers even though the Fox News personality did offer a half-hearted apology.

At least Ingraham didn't drop the l-word but her suggestion that Sharpton, a former presidential candidate and respected member of the African-American community and beyond, is a petty thief reeks of race-baiting and negative stereotyping of African-Americans and black men in particular.

But it's hardly the first time either has ventured into questionable and offensive territory. How can we forget O'Reilly's less-thaninformed comments regarding a dinner he shared last year with Sharpton at Sylvia's in Harlem? O'Reilly expressed surprise over how similarSylvia's was to other restaurants in New York restaurants.

"There wasn't one person in

Sylvia's who was screaming, 'M-Fer, I want more iced tea,''' he said.

As the Washington Post's Robinson sadly observed on MSNBC in February, "All you can go by is his words and his actions. And he keeps saying these things that sound pretty darn racist to me."

Has talk radio learned anything from Imus' decline and fall? Of course not, because it didn't take Imus too terribly long to get a new gig.

Our nation's media outlets should not provide a platform for racialhostility and hateful speech now or in the future. What kind of messageare we sending to our children, our nation and our world?

In such an historic election year, we cannot stand aside and allow individuals to use the airwaves as an outlet for insensitive and misguidedcommentary. If you hear something that offends you, speak up.





God's Covenant With David

Lesson: 1 Chronicles 17:1, wanting to build God a house 3-4, 6-15 was pleasant, "Do all that is

PLACE: Jerusalem

TIME: possibly around 1000 B.C.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel: and I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee" (1 Chronicles 17:7-8)

fter David had been living in his new palace for some time he said to Nathan the prophet, "Look! I'm living here in a cedarpaneled home while the Ark of the Covenant of God is out there in a tent!" (The Living Bible, Paraphrased). It disturbed David that the symbol of God's presence, sat in a tent while he lived in a house of cedar (expensive paneling used in houses which represented wealth). Because the prophet Nathan was David's personal counselor one might say, and when he spoke David listened, the prophet's response to David

waiting to build God a house was pleasant, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you." (1 Chronicles 17:2)

The prophet indeed was humble and exercised wisdom when referring to David. David was a man of war, and God did not want a warrior to build His temple (1 Chronicles 28:3 and 1 Kings 5:3). David shed much blood. Surely, building a temple for the Lord was a good thing but not God's will. God's final words to David given through the prophet Nathan in 1 Chronicles 17:4, "Go and give my servant David this message: 'You are not to build my temple!'

The Ark of the Covenant traveled from place to place with no resting place or permanent home, and David was well aware of this. In addition to having "lived" in modest surroundings, God had also "lived" like a nomad, as the house of worship moved from one place to another. In the time of the judges, the tabernacle was at Shiloh (Josh. 18:1) and possibly Nob (1 Samuel 21:1). Before that, it had wandered with Israel through the Sinai desert before being set up at Gilgal (Josh. 4:19; 5:10). At this time it resided at Gibeon. (The Nelson Study Bible, KJV) (1 Chronicles 17:6)

The Lord God spoke once again to the prophet Nathan in 1 Chronicles 17:7, "Tell my servant David, 'The Lord of heaven says to you, I took

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you from being a shepherd and made you the king of my people." And I have been with you everywhere you've gone; I have destroyed your enemies, and I will make your name as great as the greatest of the earth." And Christians if this was not enough God continued His covenant with David in pronouncing, "And I will give a permanent home to my people Israel, and will plant them in their land. They will not be disturbed again; the wicked nations won't conquer them as they did before, when the judges ruled them. I will subdue all of your enemies. And I now declare that I will cause your descendants to be kings of Israel just as you are." (1 Chronicles 17:8-10). Yes, David's will was to build God a temple but God had much more blessings in store for His servant David. Remember in 1 Chronicles 17:8 when God said, "And I have made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth" he meant that David's reputation as a leader had become internationally known. He was in the ranking with great and

well known rulers of various nations.

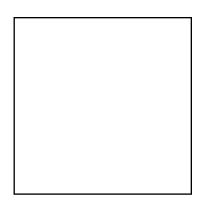
In 1 Chronicles 1:10-12, As used here, house meant dynasty. David had said that he would build a house – that is, a temple – for God, but God told David that He would build a house – that is a dynasty – for David. (The Nelson Study Bible Notes, KJV)

Because God is faithful, look at His continual blessings towards David in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14, "When your time here on earth is over and you die, I will place one of your sons upon your throne; and I will make His kingdom strong. He is the one who shall build me a temple, and I will establish his royal line of descent forever. I will be His father, and he shall be my son; I will never remove my mercy and love from him as I did from Saul. I will place him over my people and over the kingdom of Israel forever - and descendants will always be kings."

In 1 Chronicles 17:14, we understand and see how God shifted from His servant David now to his son Solomon. Solomon would be the next one in line to succeed his father David, and God would bless David's son just the same. Yes, Nathan declared and told David everything the Lord God said.

Christians, whatever success we experience in this life is due to the marvelous grace of God 1 Chronicles 17:7-9 – Jarl K. Waggoner

(I dedicate this week's column to Sister Cynthia Lewis-Harris who has gone home to be with the Lord – and to Pastor Alfredo Lewis, First Lady Karen Lewis, Mother and Grandmother, Cynthia's entire family and the Mt. Vernon church family—we are praying for you) *





13th African American Lenten Tabernacle

n Thursday, March 13, the 13th African American Lenten Tabernacle celebration will continue as the Host Church/Pastor is the Missionary Temple Church, 1455 Golden Gate in San Francisco, (415) 921-3324. Rev. Leroy Johnson is the pastor. The preacher for the evening is Rev. Dr. Arelious Walker and the guest choirs will be the Missionary Temple and the True Hope COGIC. The theme is: "The Faithless Challenge His Authority" - St. Mark 11:27-33.

On Thursday, March 20, the Host Church/Pastor is Bethel AME Church, located at 916 Laguna in San Francisco where Rev. "J" Edgar Boyd is the pastor. The preacher for the evening is Bishop Donald Green, pastor of the San Francisco Christian Center. The guest choirs for the evening will be Bethel AME and the San Francisco Christian Center. The theme is: "The Agony of Betrayal" – St. Luke 22:39-57.

On Friday, March 21, the SEVEN LAST WORDS service will beheld at the San Francisco Christian Center located at 5825 Mission Street in San Francisco, (415) 584-5515; Bishop Donald Green is the pastor. All Congregations within the communities are invited to participate. The Seven Last Words Service will begin at 12 noon until 3 p.m.

On Sunday, March 23 – Easter Sunrise Worship Service will be held at the Bethel AME Church, 916 Laguna Street in San Francisco beginning at 6 a.m. BREAKFAST WILL BE SERVED FOLLOWING THIS SERVICE.

Cosmopolitan B.C. Usher Board Hosts Annual Spring Musical

he General Usher Board of the Cosmopolitan Baptist Church in San Francisco invites the public to celebrate the Annual Spring Musical on Sunday, March 30 at 3 p.m. The Theme is "Singing Praises Unto the Lord" Psalm 98:1-6. The guests include the Echoes of Praise, Sis. Jean Cooper, Bro Richard Robinson, Sis. Carolyn Gage "Praise Dancer", Sis. Helen Cumming, Bro. Rascol Peters, Sis. Constance Rickey and many others. We are looking forward to a great time in the Lord. The church is located at 199 Farallones Street in San Francisco. Sis. Betty J. Moore. Usher President, and Rev. Dr. A.

Valley Christian Fellowship Hosts Worship Service

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enior Pastor and First Lady Gillette along with the Valley Christian Fellowship family are cordially inviting the public to worship with and celebrate Jesus in the temporary facility. Valley Christian Fellowship is a committed and dedicated ministry empowering people through Jesus Christ. The infrastructure has been set forth on morals and family values reflecting Christian doctrine.

The Valley Christian Fellowship worship services will be held at the Ella Hutch Center, 1050 McAllister Street in San Francisco on Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. For more information, please contact us at (415) 863-8977 or visit vcf-sanFrancisco.org. "Practicing, promoting, producing, and populating the kingdom of God."



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