

VOICICE

The Hampton Roads

SERVING HAMPTON, NEWPORT NEWS, WILLIAMSBURG AND NORFOLK

Vol. 16 No. 50 (854th Edition)

November 25 - December 1, 2010

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Are Democrats taking Blacks for granted?

Outgoing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi may have overcome dissensions among members of her party to retain her position as head of the Democratic Party. But in the process, she is being criticized for marginalizing the one Black member of Congress who has proven himself an effective leader.

Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina was forced to back away from running for re-election as minority whip. In declaring his candidacy for the post, Clyburn said he believed Democrats could reclaim their majority status.

"I'm running for whip because I believe we can do what Democrats have done twice before, win back the House in two years," he said.

Clyburn was majority whip when Democrats held the majority in the House. He was the third ranking member in his party behind Pelosi and Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland. Hoyer's position as majority leader does not exist for the minority party in the House. After pressuring Clyburn to drop out of the race for minority whip, Pelosi created a new leadership position as assistant leader. This ensured that Clyburn is still the third ranking Democrat when the new Congress begins next year with Democrats in the minority and not the second as he originally wanted.

The Hoyer-Clyburn contest took on racial overtones when 30 lawmakers, none of them Black, declared their support for Hoyer, and the Congressional Black Caucus came out for Clyburn.

Pelosi spent most of the week prior to last week's vote negotiating with Hoyer and Clyburn before crafting a deal to create the new post.

"The Democratic Party has shown its disdain for the Black community and Black Democrats, as usual, just sit back and continue to allow it to happen," noted political commentator Raynard Jackson last week.



(L-R) Outgoing U.S. Speaker of the House Rep. Nancy Pelosi with outgoing House Majority Whip Rep. James Clyburn and outgoing House Majority Leader Rep. Steny Hoyer.

Jackson, who runs a public relations firm out of Washington, D.C. lamented the lack of outcry from Democratic leaders, including the president and several Black organizations.

"Why is it that the Democrats always ask the Black candidate to back out of a race and not the white candidate?," asked Jackson. "This is the same party that makes a regular point about how 'racist' the Republican Party is supposed to be."

Jackson noted that Blacks vote Democratic upwards of 92 percent during presidential elections and about 90 percent during congressional elections.

"Can Blacks actually say they have received a sufficient return on their investment for that level of support? Of course not. So, why do Blacks continue to allow Democrats to marginalize and disrespect them?," Jackson noted.

Jackson wondered why Pelosi did not force Hoyer to drop out of the race.

"She could have created a 'new'

leadership position for him," Jackson opined. "This is the same party that tried to force current congressman from Florida, Kendrick Meek, to drop out of his race to become the first Black elected U.S. senator from Florida. The White House asked Bill Clinton to pressure Meek to withdraw from the race and support the governor of Florida, Charlie Crist. Mind you that Crist is a white Republican turned Independent. Meek resisted the pressure and said no."

Jackson says that Blacks, in the famous words of Fannie Lou Hamer, should be "sick and tired of being sick and tired."

"What makes me most angry is the total silence of those in the Black community.

"Clyburn has spent four years as majority whip. During this time, Clyburn has done favors for many Democratic groups that have come to him for help," noted Jackson, an unabashed Black Republican, who calls the Clyburn saga "Clyburn-ed." "Where were the voices of outrage from these

groups? Why didn't they promise holy hell if the Democrats didn't keep Clyburn in his leadership position?"

Jackson said the reason why Democrats continue to insult the Black community is because Blacks allow them to and as such, Democrats fear no retribution from Blacks. "Obama has met with the Hispanic Caucus on several occasions to discuss amnesty for illegals," said Jackson. "How many times has he met with the Black Caucus?"

"Obama fears the Hispanic community (and their votes); but has absolutely no fear of losing the Black vote; therefore, he felt no need to intervene in Clyburn's race or any other issue of particular concern to the Black community."

House insiders, prior to the vote, said Hoyer, a moderate Democrat, is a popular dealmaker with broad support even among colleagues more progressive than he is.

The race, though, they said, appeared to be Clyburn's to lose, given the political alignment of a House that has lost a host of conservative Democrats, if it is run along ideological lines.

Hoyer, the insiders said, came to the aid of many Democrats in tight races, help that is not easily forgotten. He contributed to or raised money for 218 Democratic incumbents and candidates and gave the maximum allowable contribution to 66 incumbents and challengers through his leadership PAC and Hoyer for Congress, giving more than \$1.57 million, more than any other Democrat. Clyburn, meanwhile, donated to 80 Democratic members and candidates.

"Blacks should have made it clear to Obama, Pelosi and Hoyer, that there would be hell to pay if Clyburn was challenged," noted Jackson. "Blacks are the most loyal voting block in the Democratic Party and they have nothing to show for it.

"When all is said and done, there's more said than done."

Adoption month to raise awareness

Gov. Bob McDowell has proclaimed November as Adoption Awareness Month in Virginia. The commonwealth is celebrating significant gains in the number of children adopted from foster care into permanent and loving homes. Still, more than 1,400 children across the commonwealth are waiting for a "Forever family." To introduce them to prospective parents, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has added a special feature to its website for November.

Borrowing from the famed poem "Monday's Child," VDSS is featuring a different child each weekday during National Adoption Month. Children waiting to be adopted are often referred to as Wednesday's Child from the poem.

"All children deserve a safe and caring home with a loving family," said VDSS Commissioner Martin D. Brown. "Virginia has made great strides to place more of our children in permanent homes, but there is still work to be done. Featuring children waiting to be adopted on our website makes it easier for prospective parents to get to

know the children and, hopefully, find room in their hearts and homes for one or more of them."

The number of children adopted from Virginia's foster care system has increased from less than 500 in State Fiscal Year 2003 to 706 in State Fiscal Year 2010. However, many more Virginia children are still waiting for a place to call home; currently 1,407 are in foster care with the goal of adoption.

"Research indicates that children do better when raised in families. Their future success depends on our continuing work to find caring adults to provide them with a nurturing and permanent family connection," said VDSS Director of Family Services Paul McWhirrey.

In addition to the daily feature, those considering adoption should use "Meet the Virginia Kids," a user-friendly database of hundreds of waiting children found exclusively on the VDSS website. The comprehensive database can be searched by age, region, gender and other demographics.

Tips to surviving Black Friday



These are the scenes shoppers should get ready for beginning Friday.

"Black Friday, historically the busiest retail shopping day of the year, starts the holiday shopping season and continues through the end of the year," according to Bud Bradley, vice president of Shopping Centers at Allied Barton Security Services. "But as the holiday season gets into full swing, some crooks and predators are celebrating their 'holiday cheer' with assorted mayhem, mischief and misdemeanors."

That's why Bradley and other law enforcement representatives urge shopper vigilance. In fact they offer tips to help shoppers safely navigate the shopping season that begins in earnest on Black Friday. The following tips are from the Newport News Police Department:

1. Do not buy more than you can carry. Plan ahead by taking a friend with you or ask a store employee to help you carry your packages to the car.
2. Shop online with companies you know and trust. Check a company's background if you are not familiar with it. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.
3. Save all receipts. Print and save all confirmations from your online purchases. Start a file folder to keep all receipts together and to help you verify credit card or bank statements as they come in.
4. Consider alternate options to pay for your merchandise, such as overtime or multiple disposable credit cards or money orders, at online stores and auction sites.
5. Wait until asked before taking out your credit card or checkbook. An enterprising thief would love to shoulder surf to get your account information.
6. Deter pickpockets. Carry your purse close to your body or your wallet inside a coat or front trouser pocket. If you do find yourself the victim of a robbery, larceny, etc. do not resist, give the thief the property. Nothing is worth being injured or worse.
7. Have your keys in hand when approaching your vehicle. Check the back seat and around the car before getting in.
8. Do not leave packages visible in your car windows. Lock them in the trunk or, if possible, take them directly home.
9. Tell a security guard or store employee if you see an unattended bag or package. The same applies if you are using mass transit.
10. If you are shopping with children, make a plan in case you get separated. Select a central meeting place and make sure they know they can ask mall personnel or store security employees if they need help.
11. Park in well lit areas as close as possible to the entrance of the store or mall area you intend to use.
12. Don't drink and drive, have a friend as a designated driver or take a cab. Also, drive defensively as there will be those drivers that have consumed alcoholic



First Lady Maureen McDowell (right) was presented with a 12-foot Fraser for this week from Joe Freeman of Mitchell's Member Tree Farm in Wilks, Virginia. She also received wreaths for the Executive Mansion from Sam Bostic of Joe's Trees in Newport News.

Senate ok's Black farmer's settlement; Va. farmers thankful

The U.S. Senate approved \$1.15 billion late last week to fund a settlement initially reached between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Black farmers more than a decade ago, according to Senate sources.

The 1997 Pigford v. Glickman class-action case against USDA was settled out of court 11 years ago. Under a federal judge's terms dating to 1999, qualified farmers could receive \$50,000 each to settle claims of racial bias.

"This is much long overdue justice for Black farmers," said John Boyd, founder and president of the Virginia-based National Black Farmers Association.

The Senate also cleared -- in the same piece of legislation -- \$3.4 billion to fund a separate settlement reached with the U.S. Department of Interior for mishandling of a trust fund managed for Native Americans.

In July, the House approved a war supplemental bill that included money to pay for the settlements. At the time, however, the Senate failed to approve the measure.

Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Oklahoma, dropped



John Boyd

an objection to the package last week after Senate leaders agreed not to finance it through additional deficit spending.

Prominent members of both parties had voiced support for paying out the settlements.

The measure is expected to win approval by the lame duck House before moving

to President Barack Obama's desk to be signed into law.

Pigford v. Glickman, named after Timothy Pigford, a Black farmer from North Carolina, claimed that Black farmers received little or no U.S. Department of Agriculture support in the form of loans and grants compared to their white counterparts. The case, which

began in 1997, saw a settlement reached in 1999 that stated qualified farmers could receive \$50,000 to settle claims of racial bias.

However, many farmers missed the filing deadline to receive payment. A settlement reached last February allowed those farmers to resume pursuit of their claims.

"Black farmers have already died at the plow waiting for justice," Boyd said. "I hope the ones who are living will see justice. The amount of money will not put farmers back into business".

The appropriations bill was stalled in the Senate for months while Democrats and Republicans fought over how to pay for the settlement. According to published reports, the settlement will be paid for from a surplus in nutrition programs for women and children and by extending customs user fees.

President Barack Obama praised the Senate for ending that chamber's refusal to clear the settlement. In a statement, he expressed hope that the House would follow in the Senate's footsteps and pass the bill as well.

Norfolk group announces new officers

The Greater South Norfolk Business Consortium recently announced the election of its incoming officers while promising to take an active role in helping to promote the revitalization of South Norfolk's struggling economy.

Caroline Taylor, president of TaylorMade Diagnostics, said she will lead the newly reactivated organization as president with the same energy, innovation and vision that has brought success within her own company.

"South Norfolk is absolutely the best location in all of Hampton Roads, a 'pearl' that is ready to be discovered by businesses looking for accessibility, an extraordinary location and opportunity," she said. "We are confident that we can make a difference in working towards revitalizing one of our region's most attractive locations with businesses that will positively impact South Norfolk."

Other officers elected include J.D. Miles, IV, of J.D. Miles Roofing (Internal Vice President); Kenneth Martin, owner of External Appearances (External Vice President); Dorothy Grant, Vice President/Branch Manager of The Bank of Hampton Roads (Treasurer); Allison Joyce of Magnet Media (Secretary); Darlene Sawyer-Lovern, Realtor, Exit Realty (Member at Large); and Jerry

Pattenaude, owner of Leo F. Johns Contractors (Past President).

Taylor is also celebrating her 15th year in business and 18 years of nursing experience. In 1995, she founded TaylorMade Diagnostics, an occupational medicine clinic delivery system that today serves federal and state agencies as well as commercial clients representing a broad range of industries in Hampton Roads. In August 2008, Taylor received an Entrepreneurial Excellence Award for TaylorMade Diagnostics from Inside Business and Regent University.

Taylor is also the recipient of the "Health Heroes Award" for her achievements in corporate health care and is credited for creating the only occupational medicine center in Hampton Roads that focuses entirely on employees for all clinical testing, workers compensation injuries, case management, wellness programs, physical ability assessments, critical services such as CPR and First Aid training, drug testing, customized physicals, and Fit for Duty health screenings. In 2009, she opened an 8,000 square-foot medical facility at The Gateway at SoNo, a multi-use complex that is Phase I of a four-phase revitalization of the Poindexter Street corridor in South Norfolk.

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VGPA submits comments on Chesapeake water quality regulations

The Virginia Grain Producers Association (VGPA) has joined 29 agricultural and forestry organizations in submitting comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding water quality regulations it is proposing for the Chesapeake Bay. VGPA also submitted comments separately specifying concerns of grain producers. Both comments outline the agriculture and forestry community's concerns with the Agency's draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements for the Bay, while calling attention to the significant contributions of agriculture to water quality improvement in the Chesapeake Bay.

"Farmers work every day to make their operations more efficient not because of regulations or a new law but because it is the only way we can continue farming. As we noted in our comments, 'Mandates do not achieve water quality but, willing participants do.' The agriculture community supports water quality protection and has already made significant progress in improving our region's waters," said



Eugene Longest

VGPA President Eugene Longest. "In fact, Virginia agriculture has already met 52 percent of our nitrogen goals and 50 percent of phosphorus and sediment goals all through voluntary measures and incentive based programs."

VGPA has asked repeatedly for reality-based, sound science to go before any

new regulations yet EPA continues forward with the TMDL standards with admittedly inaccurate information. Despite our voluntary efforts and significant progress, VGPA comments state that EPA's models do not account for many of the voluntary agricultural and forestry practices that are currently being employed in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and as a result, the draft TMDL fails to acknowledge the success that has been achieved in the Bay by the efforts of the agricultural community and others.

In addition to highlighting EPA's oversight of the agriculture community's environmental stewardship efforts within the Bay, the comments criticize the Agency's lack of transparency regarding the draft TMDL and the models used to develop the requirements.

"Farmers continue implementing best management practices (BMP) but with no assurance from EPA that these practices will actually achieve the desired water quality goals. In fact, EPA has provided no assurance that the Draft TMDL standards are even achievable with today's population and economy. We have not seen any economic analysis of what this clean-up effort will cost taxpayers or how it will affect the food, feed and fuel supply provided by Virginia's farmers," said Longest. "The Agency has made it difficult for any farmer to understand what impact the TMDL will have because EPA's own information is constantly changing; providing a moving

target. This has prevented a meaningful dialogue about the costs, benefits, and challenges for policy makers, the public and agriculture."

Both VGPA and industry comments also address EPA's needed authority to implement such measures on Virginia taxpayers, citizens, land and waters. Comments state that EPA is clearly stepping outside the authority granted to them by Congress in the Clean Water Act.

"This is the most complicated, largest TMDL ever attempted. Establishing this type of precedent especially, with admittedly flawed data, is not the intent of the Clean Water Act," said Molly P. Pugh, VGPA executive director. "In our comments, VGPA states, 'EPA must not attempt to mandate 'one size fits all' regulations and expect water quality goals to be met.

"On behalf of our members, VGPA requests that EPA produce proof of BMP impact to the Bay, provide a full economic analysis of the TMDL standards, provide the legislation that outlines EPA authority over the states and most importantly, provide for public review the full and complete data used to create the TMDL standards.' Agriculture and forestry are Virginia's top economic sector. Without creating a feasible balance between economic growth and environmental goals, Virginia's economy will be devastated. That is an unacceptable trade-off for any goal," said Pugh.

Virginia gets health workforce grant

The Virginia Department of Health has been awarded a State Health Workforce Development Implementation grant in the amount of \$1.93 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Virginia is the only state in the nation to receive this grant, which will be used to implement and administer the new Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority and to make available funds for regional health workforce planning and implementation efforts.

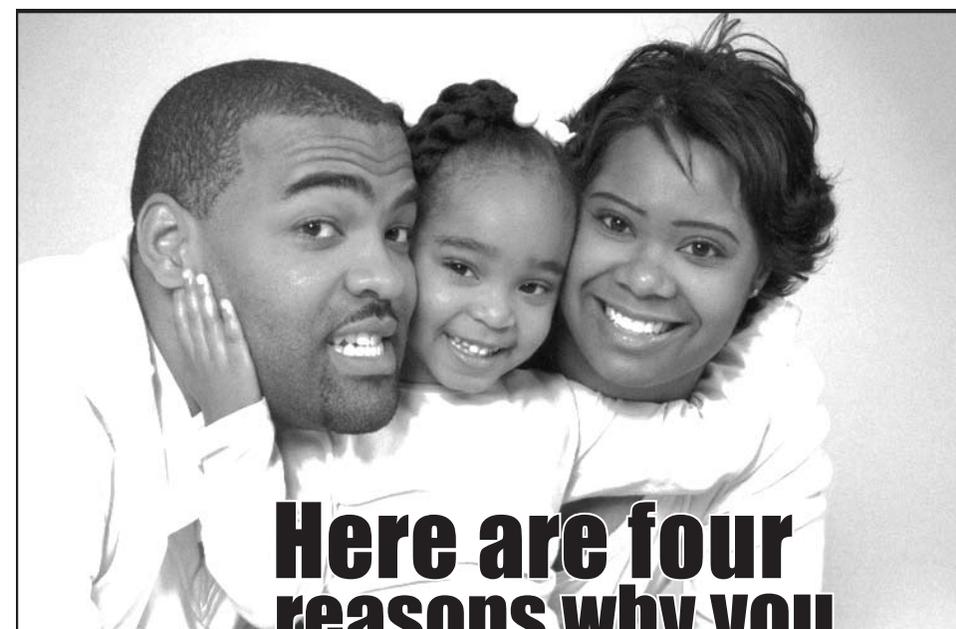
The mission of the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority is to facilitate the development of a statewide health professions 'workforce pipeline' that identifies, educates, recruits, and retains a diverse and culturally competent quality healthcare workforce for all Virginians.

"The statewide demand for health care services is projected to increase, particularly as the number of adults over 65 years of age is forecasted to grow by 65 percent over the next two decades," said Virginia Department of Health Commissioner, Karen Remley,

M.D., MBA, FAAP. "This grant will help us recruit and retain health care providers to address the growing health care needs of all Virginians."

The VDH Office of Minority Health and Health Equity led the effort in developing this grant proposal, bringing together partners from and leveraging the resources of multiple private and public entities, including the Virginia Department of Health Professions, Virginia Workforce Council, Virginia Health Care Foundation, Virginia Area Health Education Centers, Virginia Community Health Care Association and Virginia Academy of Family Physicians.

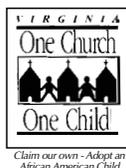
"As the agency that licenses Virginia's more than 350,000 healthcare workers in some 80 professions, the Department of Health Professions looks forward to this collaborative effort to addressing the commonwealth's current and future health workforce challenges," said Dianne L. Reynolds-Crane, M.D., director of the Department of Health Professions.



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VDOT, others, urge residents to prepare for wintry weather

Last winter Virginians got a big reminder on how brutal – and dangerous – winter weather can be. Today several state agencies joined forces to announce their preparedness plans, provide winter safety information and urge residents to get ready now for the coming winter.

“Gov. Bob McDonnell has declared Dec. 5-11 Winter Preparedness Week,” said Terrie Suit, assistant to the governor for Commonwealth Preparedness. “The loss of life and property during winter months can be greatly reduced if Virginians will take the time to prepare before snow or ice is even in the forecast.”

“During snow and ice storms, we will deploy every available resource to ensure that state maintained roads remain passable during winter weather,” said Sean T. Connaughton, Virginia secretary of transportation. “Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) crews, equipment and materials stand ready.”

“Last winter’s severe weather caused power outages that shut down schools, offices and businesses,” said Marla Graff Decker, Virginia secretary of public safety. We ask Virginians to make sure they are properly prepared for winter weather, and that they have an emergency kit on hand should they lose power.”

VDOT Readiness

This year, VDOT has a statewide snow removal budget of \$115.1 million, a \$21.4 million increase over last year’s budget. The commonwealth spent \$266.8 million on snow operations during the extraordinary winter of 2009-2010.

VDOT has a total of 7,519 state and hired pieces of equipment. About 48,000 tons of sand and 281,000 tons of salt, 330,000 gallons of liquid calcium chloride and 138,000 gallons of liquid magnesium chloride are in stock and will be replenished as they are used.

When snow or ice is forecast, crews will pre-treat trouble spots on interstates and other high-volume roads with anti-icing chemicals including salt brine, magnesium-chloride and calcium-chloride. These chemicals help prepare the pavement and prevent a bond from forming between the roadway and snow and ice.

VDOT’s goal is to have all roads passable within 48 hours after the storm ends. Crews begin by clearing interstates, primary roads and major secondary roads that connect localities, fire stations, employment hubs, military posts, schools, hospitals and other important

public facilities. Secondary roads and subdivision streets will be treated if multi-day storms hit the commonwealth, but crews will focus efforts on those roads that carry the most traffic.

A statewide network of 77 weather sensors in roadways and bridges, plus 16 mobile video data platforms, allows crews to quickly identify when and where road surfaces might be freezing.

VDEM Tips

Severe winter weather can lead to injury and death from hypothermia, heart attack, stroke and traffic crashes. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) urges citizens to:

Get a kit. Emergency supplies for winter weather include – at a minimum – these basic items: three days’ food and water; a battery-powered and/or hand-crank radio with extra batteries; and a family emergency plan. After getting these supplies, add a first aid kit, medications if needed, blankets and warm clothing, supplies for special members of your household, and pet items.

Make a plan. Choose an out-of-town relative or friend to be your family’s point of contact for emergency communications. Decide on a meeting place if your family cannot return home because of closed roads. Discuss with your family what you would do in case of severe winter weather in your area.

Stay informed. Before, during and after a winter storm, you should listen for up-to-date information from your local media and emergency officials. Local media will give instructions from local, state and federal agencies that cover road conditions, winter storm watches and warnings, power outages and health information. Make sure your battery-powered radio is working and you have extra batteries in case the electricity goes out.

VDOT and VDEM winter safety tips include:

Keep space heaters at least three feet from other objects. Never leave space heaters unattended. Install a smoke detector in every bedroom and one on every level of your home. Check the batteries monthly, and replace them once a year at the same time every year.

In case of power outages, use flashlights instead of candles for light.

Use generators only outdoors and only in well ventilated areas.

Make sure outdoor pets have adequate shelter, unfrozen water and food.

If your household includes someone with special needs (one who has a disability, requires electricity to operate

home medical equipment, needs to go to dialysis, etc.) call your local emergency manager to let them know where you live and what you will need during an emergency.

Driving is most dangerous when the temperature is at or under 32° F. If the road is wet, patches of ice are possible, especially on bridges and curves. Avoid using cruise control in winter weather

conditions.

Keep a safe distance of at least five seconds behind other vehicles and trucks that are plowing the road.

Don’t pass a snowplow or spreader unless it is absolutely necessary. Treat these as you would emergency response vehicles.

Keep an emergency winter driving kit in your car.



MILITARY HIGHWAY/NORVIEW AVENUE INTERSECTION CITY OF NORFOLK HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Find out about the proposed improvements to the intersection of Military Highway (Route 13) and Norview Avenue from .06 mile west of Military Highway and Norview Avenue to .024 mile east of Military Highway and Norview Avenue in the City of Norfolk.

Review the plans and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation in the form of a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion at VDOT’s Hampton Roads Interstate Management Office, 1992 South Military Highway, Chesapeake, Virginia, 757-494-5470. Please call ahead to ensure the availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions. You can also review the plans and NEPA Documentation at the City of Norfolk Public Works Department, City Hall, 810 Union Street. If you would like to discuss details about the project, you can call the VDOT Customer Service Center, at 1-800-367-7623.

If your concerns cannot be satisfied, VDOT is willing to hold a public hearing. You may request that a public hearing be held by sending a written request to Mr. Adam Jack, P.E., District Preliminary Engineering Manager, 1700 North Main Street, Suffolk, Virginia 23434 on or before December 2, 2010. If a request for a public hearing is received, notice of date, time and place of the hearing will be posted.

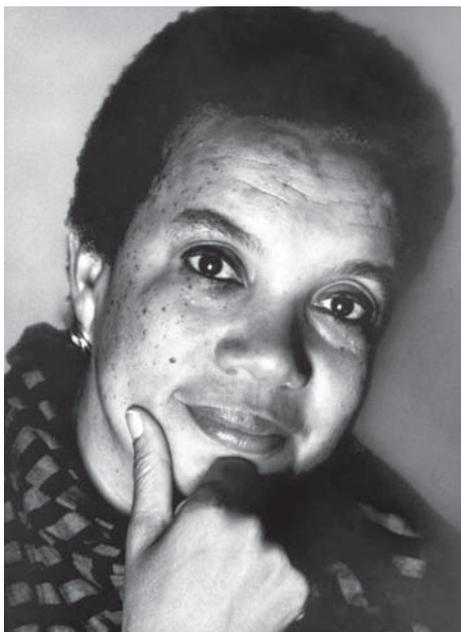
VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT’s Civil Rights Division, 1700 North Main Street, Suffolk, Virginia 23434 at (757) 925-2519 or TTY/TDD 711.

Project Number: 0247-122-187, P101, R201, M501

Federal Project: HSIP 5A03(154)

Hunger in a season of plenty

"It's dinner time in America. But for one in four children, you'd never know it." The ad with the simple image of an empty plate is meant to catch your eye — especially if you came across it in the November issue of a favorite magazine, tucked among the tips for a traditional Thanksgiving feast. It's part of a campaign by Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit organization that fights childhood hunger. As they say below the picture: "Dinner time is when families gather to share their day and create memories. But for nearly 17 million children, dinner time can be the cruelest part of the day. Right here in the United States, almost one in four children don't know when they will have their next meal."



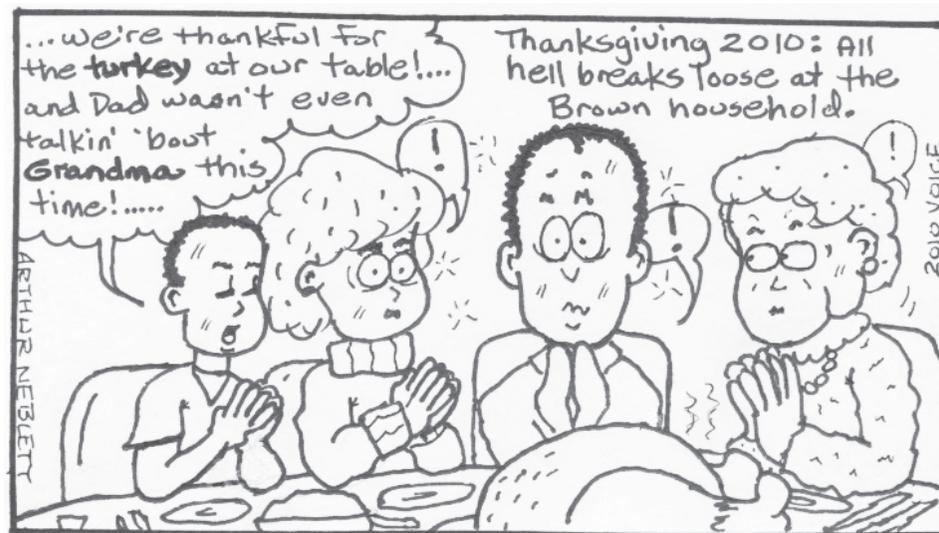
Thanksgiving is a season to celebrate plenty, and a day when many families sit down to tables overflowing with favorite foods to give thanks for all they have been blessed with. For many people, Thanksgiving dinner is the largest meal of the year — and by the time they've finished that last piece of pie, their stomachs are so full they'll be physically uncomfortable. But the canned food drives and other pleas for donations this month are a quiet reminder that for too many families, Thanksgiving will be like any other meal: not a time of plenty but a time of want.

Share Our Strength notes 50.1 million Americans aren't able to regularly put enough nutritious food on the table, and that food insecurity, which includes "running out of food without money to buy more, cutting portion sizes or skipping meals, and not feeding children in the family because there isn't money for food," exists in almost 15 percent of all U.S. households. Almost 70 percent of food insecure families live above the poverty line. These numbers aren't just statistics. They reflect the reality many of us are already seeing in our own homes, neighborhoods, or communities right now, as families who were blessed enough to be able to contribute to those canned food

drives during past Thanksgivings are today joining the lines of those in need.

Food insecurity is especially devastating for children, whose developmental well-being depends on access to adequate nutrition. Ensuring all children access to healthy, nutritious food will ultimately improve educational outcomes, reduce rates of childhood obesity, and enhance the mental and emotional health of our children. In addition to everything we know about the devastating short- and long-term effects hunger has on individual children, we also know that allowing children to go hungry is taking an economic toll on our entire country. This is documented in reports like Feeding America's "Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on Our Nation," which concluded "the direct and indirect effect of child hunger in the U.S. is a contributing factor to the nation's economic woes and puts America at a competitive disadvantage." Childhood hunger in the United States is a shameful and preventable crisis and we must work together to solve

See "Hunger" on page 7



The VOICE Unleashed

Former presidential candidate John Edwards famously described the country as split into two Americas — "One America that is struggling to get by, another America that can buy anything it wants." This could not be more accurate. Today there are Two Americas: the one that is struggling to get by and the other that resides inside the beltway.

Beltway America is faring quite well during the Great Recession.

- A recent study by the Center for Responsive Politics found that while the personal wealth of the American citizen has plummeted, the collective personal wealth of congressional members rose by more than 16 percent between 2008 and 2009, with more than half of all members (261) millionaires.

- While 8.3 million jobs have been lost in America since the onset of the recession, only 35,000 jobs were lost in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The DC metro area not only saw those jobs recovered in August 2009, but added 20,000 additional ones.

- While the national jobless rate is near 10 percent, the jobless rate in the D.C. metropolitan area is about 6 percent.

- Pay in Beltway America is sublime. Federal employee compensation and benefits average \$123,049, double their counterparts in the private-sector with an average compensation of \$61,051. The majority of Beltway America's workforce also enjoy solid job security.

Meanwhile, in the Rest of America, the state of the economy has left its citizens pessimistic, scared and beset by a nagging uncertainty of when, or even if, they will ever recover their losses. While Beltway America experts claim that the worst of the recession is over, those in the Rest of America are simply not feeling it.

While those in Beltway America enjoy the parties, perks and privileges, they become increasingly disconnected from the other America for whom they work and represent. Aside from visiting a soup kitchen in their local districts for a photo-op, it is difficult for Beltway politicians to empathize with the Rest of America. They can speak about jobs, but how can they identify with the real hardships of unemployment, much less a cut in pay when very few of them have ever experienced a job loss? The average term for a United States Senator is 14 years, enough to ride out at least two recessions unscathed. — Brent Regan

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ALL OTHER STATES \$40

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FOREIGN COUNTRIES \$50
(52 EDITIONS A YEAR)

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GOP earmarks and deficit hypocrisy

If the congressional Republicans were truly concerned about pork-barrel spending, why didn't they vote to ban it for six or 10 years or forever instead of just two years?

Earmarks are known commonly as pork-barrel spending. Powerful lawmakers send hundreds of millions of federal dollars back to their districts and states for all sorts of projects, including water and sewer projects, new roads and bridges, historic building renovations, museums, university buildings, equipment for law enforcement and other uses. While the pork spending made up a very small fraction of the federal budget, it's a lousy way to spend those dollars. A project gets funding based on the clout of the lawmaker, not on the value of the project.

Hypocrite Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama is an excellent example. He opposed the earmark ban, but has directed hundreds of millions of dollars to Alabama, much of that money for buildings that are named after him. The other Alabama senator, Sen. Jeff Sessions, supported the pork-barrel ban, calling earmarks "a political device used to buy votes from senators on bills." That is a true statement.

We know the federal government has to start somewhere in getting its fiscal house in order and on the surface this looks like a good first step. But obsessed with fixing the deficit is just another GOP gambit. The deficit recommendations are not sensible and just more conservative political crap.

Walt Hill

Appealing for turkey mercy

Is it fair to take a turkey's life to celebrate the blessings in yours? This Thanksgiving,

why not give a turkey something to be thankful for—your own personal pardon? You can have a tasty holiday feast without harming a soul. Try Tofurky, Field Roast's Celebration Roast, or Garden Protein's Veggie Turkey Breast with wild rice and cranberry stuffing, or whip up your own gourmet vegan meal. Have a happy and humane holiday!

Heather Moore

BS alert: JP's lips are moving

The We Won't Fly movement is eliciting panicked squeals from the leadership of Homeland Security and the TSA. TSA chief John Pistole calls the movement "irresponsible," and Secretary of Fatherland Security Janet Napolitano (JP) argues that ... well, that scanners are safe and pat-downs discreet.

Safe? This the same government that stonewalled for years on Agent Orange, depleted uranium, and Gulf War Syndrome. Some scientists are already warning that back-scatter radiation will raise the statistical incidence of skin cancer. The ionizing radiation is cumulative, just like that of X-rays. And since it mainly affects the skin, dosage estimates based on total body volume exposure are extremely misleading.

Discreet? Yep, a TSA employee shrieking "Opt out! Opt out!" in order to inflict maximum public embarrassment on the noncomplier sure sounds discreet to me.

But what about effectiveness? There are serious questions as to whether the Underwear Bomber's device would even have shown up on a body scanner. British researchers found that low-density items like liquid explosives and plastic don't show up very well on a body scan.

The main reason it isn't effective is that it's aimed at thwarting something al Qaeda probably won't try again, for the same reason it won't try hijacking airplanes with

box-cutters any more. Precisely because al Qaeda is an agile networked organization, rather than a lumbering bureaucracy, it's likely not to keep trying stuff that it knows the pointy-haired bosses at TSA have developed countermeasures for. TSA constantly and painstakingly develops measures for winning the last war. Everything it does is predicated on the assumption that al Qaeda is a bureaucracy as stupid as the TSA itself. The TSA approach -- Security Theatre -- is a lot like the drunk looking for his keys under the streetlight because the light's better there.

Napolitano pays lip service to the idea that al Qaeda constantly adapts its tactics, and that American security "depends on being ... more creative to adapt to evolving threats" than Osama Bin Laden is at dreaming up those threats. But the reality is more like the Ministry of Central Services in the movie "Brazil."

Secretary Napolitano's repeated references to "multi-layered" security are especially humorous. The top "layer" of the TSA bureaucracy, thanks to an overload of "intelligence" from an intrusive surveillance state on steroids, generates mainly false positives. Useful information, even highly specific information about who, when, where and how, is buried like a needle in a haystack. And every terror attempt elicits calls from the surveillance state to pile the hay higher. The Keystone Kops at TSA were unable to stop the Underwear Bomber even with specific, actionable intelligence from the perpetrator's own father.

The one thing large, bureaucratic organizations are good at is aggregating concentrated power, then making up plausible sounding lies to justify that power.

It's generally good policy, when an official spokesperson for such an organization claims a measure is either safe or effective for the purposes it ostensibly serves, to assume everything he or she says is a lie.

Kevin Carson

Hunger

From Page 6

it right now, from individual efforts in our own communities to supporting policies that fight hunger at the national level. A first immediate step is to make sure the massively underutilized federal summer feeding program's bureaucratic barriers are eliminated so that the more than three million children who get free and reduced price lunches can ease hunger during the long summer months. Hunger does not stop in June when school is out.

President Obama has set a goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015, and the federal child nutrition programs, which provide nutritious meals and snacks each day to millions of children, are an important component in these efforts. Right now there is an important Child Nutrition bill stalled in Congress because it is currently paid for with cuts in food stamps. The president and Congress must find another way to pay for the bill other than food stamp cuts. It is all about choices — what do we value? Tell your member of Congress that hungry children need help but not by taking from one hand to give to another.

Several years ago, the Children's Defense Fund's pro bono advertising partner Fallon Worldwide created a campaign for us that updated the moving words of Langston Hughes's poem "God to Hungry Child:"

Hungry child,
I did not make this world for you.
You didn't buy stock in my corporation.
You didn't invest in my mutual fund.
Where were you when my company went public?
I made the world for the rich
And the will-be-rich
And the have-always-been rich.
Not for you,
Hungry child.

As we are giving thanks to God for all our blessings this season, is that really the message God wants us to give to America's hungry children?

The writer is Marian Wright Edelman,

Critics blast president on faith-based hiring rules

By Adelle M. Banks

(RNS) A day after ordering a host of changes to the White House's faith-based office, President Obama is facing mounting criticism for keeping in place Bush-era policies that allow faith-based social service providers to hire and fire based on religion.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers last week voiced frustration that he has yet to hear administration plans to change those policies. He and other lawmakers were disappointed that no White House officials attended a subcommittee hearing on the faith-based office.

"This isn't a matter of one branch of government drawing a veil over a subject of this immediate importance and we have to guess or try to figure out what and why and when something further is coming," Conyers, D-Mich, said at the hearing.

"The president explicitly campaigned and made many remarks about this, not only as a candidate but as a senator, and we don't propose to wait any longer."

Obama's executive order on Wednesday was based on recommendations from a blue-ribbon advisory council that was told early on by the White House that the hiring



question would not be part of its portfolio.

At issue is whether religious groups that receive federal grants can hire and fire employees based on religious affiliation. The Bush administration supported that policy, but Obama campaigned against it.

The White House said such questions will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Justice Department.

"The administration looks forward to continuing to work with Congress and organizations from across the spectrum to ensure that federal faith-based initiatives are grounded in sound law and policy," said White House spokesman Shin Inouye.

The Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, told lawmakers that it is "ethically and legally wrong" for a religious group to consider religion in hiring when a job is funded with public money.

"In my experience, a Baptist does not

ladle out rice in a soup kitchen differently than does a Buddhist," he said.

Douglas Laycock, a scholar on religious liberty at the University of Virginia, said the changes advocated by Lynn and others would tie the hands of religious groups.

"It uses the power of the purse to coerce religious organizations to become less religious and more secular," he told lawmakers. "This committee should not try to force the administration into doing it."

The Rev. Welton Gaddy, president of the Interfaith Alliance, said the attention on Capitol Hill should send a signal to the White House officials that they cannot ignore a thorny legal question that has raised concerns among supporters and critics alike.

"It was a warning, almost, that the administration is leaving an important constitutional issue unresolved and it is time to resolve it," he said.

Obama's executive order was generally welcomed for clarifying the rights of people who receive services from federally funded groups, and for promising greater transparency about who receives such grants and the rules they must follow. But activists from across the political spectrum chided Obama for not tackling what Lynn called the "800-pound gorilla in the room."

"This admittedly divisive issue cannot be kicked down the road forever," said J. Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. "The president missed an opportunity on this point. It's simply wrong for the government to subsidize religious discrimination."

DOC lets prisoners whose religious beliefs violate grooming policies from segregation

After 11 years and an ACLU lawsuit, the Virginia Department of Corrections is finally allowing prisoners with long hair or beards out of segregation.

The ACLU lawsuit, filed in 2003 on behalf of Muslim and Rastafarian prisoners, claimed that DOC's policy requiring inmates to be clean shaven and to keep their hair short violates the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, a federal law prohibiting religious discrimination against incarcerated persons. RLUIPA was passed by Congress in 2000.

Even though no federal prison anywhere in the country has such policies, DOC claimed that long-haired inmates are a security risk. In court, DOC was never able to offer evidence that long hair had ever been a threat to prison security, but a Richmond federal district court in 2006 and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2008 upheld DOC's policy.

Since then the ACLU and other advocates for prisoners' rights have repeatedly asked DOC to do away with the policy.

"It should not have taken 11 years," said ACLU of Virginia Executive Director

Kent Willis, "but DOC is finally realizing that there was never any need to punish these prisoners because of their religious beliefs."

According to news reports, DOC is moving 31 inmates who have refused to comply with the grooming policies to Keen Mountain Correctional Center. There they will not have all the privileges of other inmates, but will be housed two to a cell, allowed movement within their housing unit, be able to keep more personal property and participate in educational and other program opportunities denied to them while in segregation.

The DOC grooming policy, which was enacted in 1999, requires all inmates to have their hair "cut above the shirt collar and around the ears" and to be no more than one inch in "thickness/depth." Inmates must be clean shaven, except for mustaches, unless they can obtain a medical exception. The policy contains no religious exemptions, meaning many incarcerated Muslims, Native Americans and Rastafarians are forced to abandon central tenets of their religious beliefs or face segregation.

Group touts religious celebrations

As communities plan for the Christmas season, Liberty Counsel, a conservative Christian group, is making sure Virginia citizens are aware of the opinion issued by state Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli that Christmas displays and nativity scenes can be legally exhibited on public property.

The group recently highlighted Cuccinelli's "detailed opinion" that "shed[s] light on the original intent of both the United States and Virginia Constitutions in regards to freedom of religion and concluded that the 'establishment of religion' clause does not, in fact, compel local governments to restrict religious speech on public property." He further stated that the local governments themselves may recognize such religious holidays as Christmas, as long as religious

symbols are accompanied by secular ones. Cuccinelli addressed an issue that many Christian employees face throughout the year, dealing with the right of public employees to display religious artwork or symbols in their offices. He concluded that only under certain limited conditions could the government restrict the religious speech of its employees. Liberty Counsel applauds the work being done by the Attorney General of Virginia.

"To celebrate or acknowledge the holiday season without Christmas is like celebrating a birthday party without the honored guest," according to Liberty Counsel. "Refusing to acknowledge Christmas while honoring every other conceivable holiday may well violate the Constitution."

Rapper Shyne resurrects his career in Holy Land, Jerusalem

The rapper Shyne is singing a new tune: After serving eight years in prison for a nightclub shooting, the former protege of Sean “Diddy” Combs has converted to Orthodox Judaism, come to Jerusalem, and is devoting his days to the study of Torah while plotting a musical comeback.

His arrival in the Holy Land caps an unorthodox journey that began in Flatbush, Brooklyn, where he grew up and was shot at the age of 15. He then joined the high-flying hip-hop universe and ended up in a maximum security state prison before he was eventually deported to Belize- where his father happens to be prime minister.

“Being in Israel is just the exclamation point,” he said recently. “This is the ultimate place to be who you are.”

During a two-hour conversation on a hotel balcony overlooking the walls of Jerusalem’s Old City, Shyne said his connection to Judaism goes back to his childhood - when he was still known as Jamaal Michael Barrow. His mother claims Ethiopian Jewish ancestry, but the man who now calls himself Moshe Levi Ben-David says his roots go even deeper and that even as a boy in the streets, he was oddly drawn to Judaism and

identified with its biblical heroes.

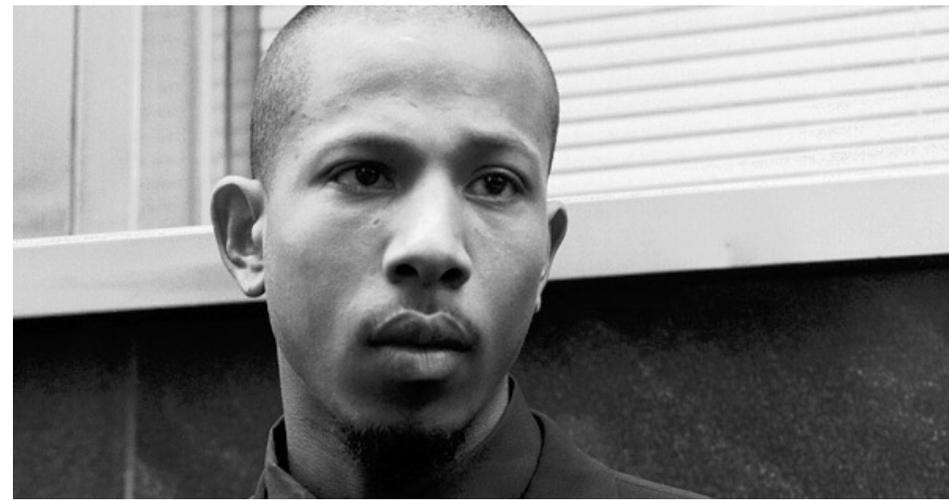
“I grew up in a war, constantly battling, and the only person I could relate to was King David. Of course I love Michael Jordan, I love Mike Tyson, I love the typical people that people love, Muhammad Ali, but I had more of a connection with King David,” he said.

Shyne, 32, has swapped his hip-hop attire of oversized basketball jerseys and diamond studded teeth for the traditional black suit and white knee-high stockings favored by the Belz Hassidic sect. He wears a black skullcap over his shaven head, but in a reminder of his former life, he still wears stylish black Ray Ban sunglasses.

Where he once rapped about loose women, fancy cars and hollowpoint bullets, he now fires off staccato sentences about Jewish law, peppered with Yiddish, in the same raspy voice once compared to that of the Notorious B.I.G.

“Wherever I go it is going to be the same shtick. This is who I am, you dig,” he said.

In his teens, he was discovered by Combs - then known as Puff Daddy- who signed him to his Bad Boy record label. Shyne embraced the lifestyle of women, booze and partying but said he was already turning away from that when “the incident” happened.



Shyne

In late 1999, Shyne was at a Manhattan club along with Combs and his then-girlfriend, Jennifer Lopez, when he was involved in a high-profile shooting that left three people injured. Combs was cleared of gun possession charges but Shyne was sentenced to 10 years for assault, gun possession and reckless endangerment. Shyne says he acted in self-defense after someone else pulled a gun.

It was in prison where he said he became “Baal Tshuva,” the Hebrew term for a

newly observant Jew. He changed his name, prayed regularly, kept kosher and observed the Sabbath. His faith helped him come to peace with his troubled past and his lengthy incarceration, saying it was God’s will and part of his ‘Tikkun’ - a spiritual voyage to make amends.

“He (God) gives kindness and He gives judgment. I’ve done some terrible things in my life, I’ve not always been the best person I can be and I gotta pay for those mistakes,” he said.



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Films highlighting plight of Blacks win Va. awards

Josh Radnor's "happythankyoumoreplease" recently captured the Audience Favorite Award for Best Narrative Feature for the recently-wrapped, and record-setting, 2010 Virginia Film Festival.

The Virginia Film Festival, which smashed previous records for both attendance and box office sales by 25 percent this year, is presented by the University of Virginia and its College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

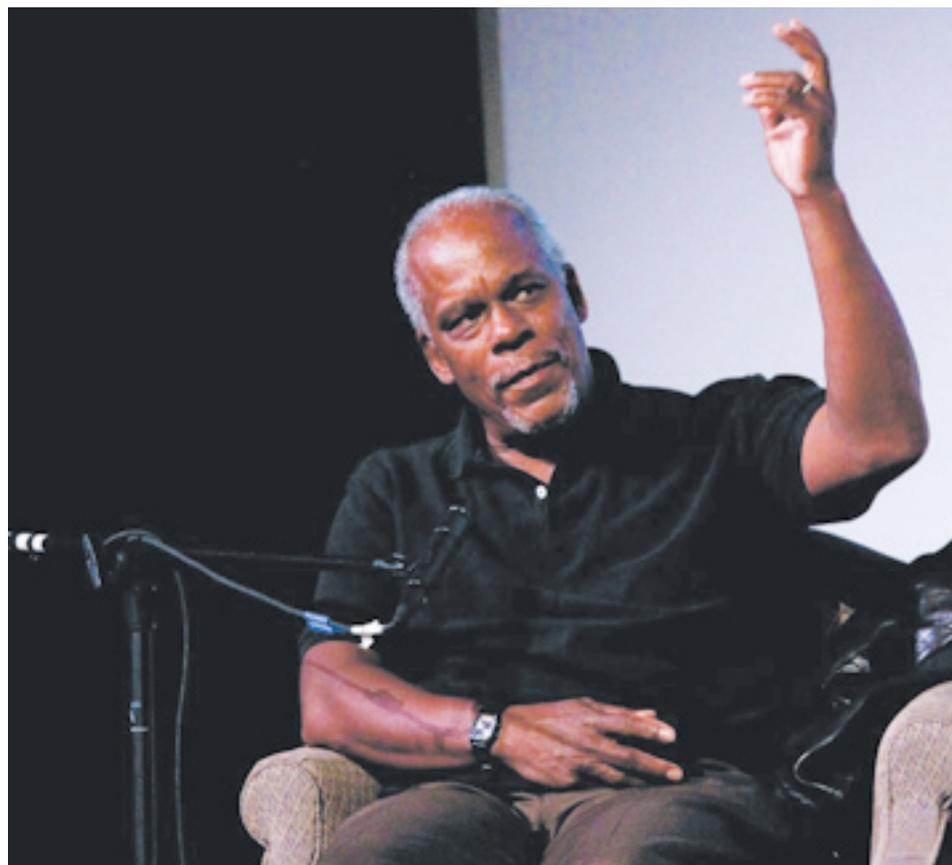
Radnor's "happythankyoumoreplease", which played to a full house at the Paramount Theater as the festival's Closing Night Film on Sunday, Nov. 7, also earned the Audience Award at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

Earning the Audience Favorite Award in the documentary category at the Virginia Film Festival was Stanley Nelson's powerful documentary "Freedom Riders", which showcases the uncommon bravery of the more than 400 Americans who stood up to racial intolerance in the early 1960's by riding mass transit in the deep South, in direct defiance of the laws of the day.

Gaining impressive access to influential figures on both sides of the issue, Nelson chronicles a chapter of American history that stands as an astonishing testament to the accomplishment of youth and what can result from the incredible combination of personal conviction and the courage to organize against all odds.

In 1961 segregation seemed to have an overwhelming grip on American society. Many states violently enforced the policy, while the federal government, under the Kennedy administration, remained indifferent, preoccupied with matters abroad. That is, until an integrated band of college students—many of whom were the first in their families to attend a university—decided, en masse, to risk everything and buy a ticket on a Greyhound bus bound for the Deep South. They called themselves the Freedom Riders, and they managed to bring the president and the entire American public face to face with the challenge of correcting civil-rights inequities that plagued the nation.

"We felt that the story of the Freedom Riders had not been explored, and that it was an important human story about the beginning of what came to be known as the Civil Rights Movement," said Nelson earlier this year. "We wanted to tell the story from as many different sides as possible. We wanted to include the voices of not only Freedom Riders but those who opposed them. We wanted voices of Southern politicians and the Kennedy administration.



Stanley Nelson speaks about his film, "Freedom Riders"

"We wanted to tell the story without narration, an incredible challenge when doing any documentary, and an even bigger challenge when making an historical documentary. There is a short segment in the Civil Rights TV series 'Eyes On The Prize' about the Freedom Riders—but it is great! We were continually inspired to do something as good if not better."

The 2010 Virginia Film Festival Audience Favorite Award winner for Best Short Narrative was "Prism", made by University of Virginia students Alexandra Miller, Debra Cohen and Dan Quinn. The winner for Best Short Documentary was "That World is Gone: Race and Displacement in a Southern Town". Directed by Hannah Brown Ayers and Lance Warren, the film explores the nearly-forgotten history of Charlottesville's largest African American neighborhood, Vinegar Hill.

The story in "That World is Gone..." follows Kathy's family which left on a Saturday morning in 1965. The rumble of bulldozers echoed through the neighborhood, and her block was empty. Federally-funded urban renewal had arrived in Charlottesville, scattering dozens of families like Kathy's. The once-vibrant African American community, built by former slaves who had successfully secured a long-denied piece of the American dream, disappeared.

Fallow land and parking lots replaced

the community that had, if not prospered, nurtured generations of residents. Families of the most modest means relocated to a new but quickly forgotten public housing development. Some struggled to find affordable homes; others left the city altogether. Revealing the history of Charlottesville's largest African American neighborhood, Vinegar Hill, "That World is Gone..." explores Black property ownership and the area's destruction in 1965.

Audience Favorite Awards were voted on throughout the festival through ballots handed out at each screening. The 2010 Virginia Film Festival Audience Favorite Awards were sponsored by the Charlottesville Albemarle Airport as part of a partnership that seeks to expand on the festival's success by building its profile as a significant destination festival for regional and national audiences.

This year's competition was so fierce, and the margins of victory so tight, that Virginia Film Festival Director Jody Kielbasa decided to amend his original award plans, expanding his original plan for a single Programmers Award to include one for each category.

"We were thrilled, first of all, at how many of our audience members voted for these awards," Kielbasa said. "It shows a tremendous level of engagement with the festival as a whole, which was also

represented in our record turnout throughout the weekend. Then on top of this we were surprised at just how close the voting was for these audience awards, many of which were determined by mere percentage points. So, as a nod to the number of truly outstanding films and filmmakers we had at the festival this year, we decided it would be appropriate to offer Programmers Awards in each category."

The winner of the 2010 Programmers Award for Best Narrative Feature was "Kawasaki's Rose", a film by Czech filmmaker Jan Hrebejk that tells the tale of a scientist whose complicated past is on the verge of being exposed just as he is to be awarded for extraordinary achievements in his field.

The Programmers Award for Best Documentary went to "Louder Than a Bomb", a powerful story from directors Greg Jacobs and John Siskel about a group of inner-city Chicago teens preparing to compete in the world's largest youth poetry slam. An inspirational tale of passion, competition, teamwork and trust, the film has been hailed throughout the festival circuit this year, capturing top documentary honors at the Chicago and Austin Film Festivals.

Winning the 2010 Programmers Award for Best Short Narrative was Kamal John Iskander's "Jesus Comes To Town"; and earning top honors in the Best Short Documentary category was "The Enduring Legacy of Pocahontas Island", a history of one of the oldest African American communities in the country, made by students at Virginia State University overseen by noted actor and director Tim Reid.

The full listing of the Virginia Film Festival's Audience and Programmers Awards is below:

Audience Favorite - Narrative
winner: happythankyoumoreplease
Audience Favorite - Documentary
winner: Freedom Riders
Audience Favorite - Short Narrative
winner: Prism
Audience Favorite - Short Documentary
winner: That World is Gone: Race and Displacement in a Southern Town
Programmers Award - Narrative
winner: Kawasaki's Rose
Programmers Award - Documentary
winner: Louder Than a Bomb
Programmers Award - Short Narrative
winner: Jesus Comes to Town
Programmers Award - Short Documentary
winner: The Enduring Legacy of Pocahontas Island

Faith Evans teases audience about BIG

Faith Evans – recently out with her own CD, “Something About Faith,” and a duet with El DeBarge called “Lay With You” – is speaking out about the murder of her former husband, Christopher “Notorious B.I.G” Wallace.

In a recent interview with Voice-Online.com, Evans said that over a decade after B.I.G’s death, she has a theory as to what happened to him, but she’s not exactly sharing the specifics.

“We put the case on hold; until [the police] can prove that they’re actually pursuing it. But in our hearts – the family – we have an idea what happened,” says the platinum recording artist.

“We don’t know who pulled the trigger, but we have an idea what went on. It’s not

something I would speak on because it’s still a pending case, so that wouldn’t be smart at all. But we have an idea, though we don’t know if it will ever be solved in the judicial system.”

Evans also cleared the air on her relationship with rapper Lil Kim, saying she holds no hard feelings for B.I.G’s former protégé who reportedly had affairs with the rapper during their marriage.

“I don’t hate anybody,” she says. “I have a lot of respect for her and I really hope she comes out with new music. I think she’s one of the best female rappers out there. I don’t have a personal relationship with her, but I don’t have any issues or hard feelings with her either. I don’t see her often but when I do, I say hello.”

Legendary soul group releases holiday album

Soul superstars The O’Jays invite R&B fans to celebrate “Christmas With The O’Jays” as they release a new album and launch a holiday tour this winter hitting select cities such as Chicago, New York, Orlando and Newark.

“This CD was created with the best intentions and in good spirit,” said Walter Williams, Sr. of The O’Jays. “Every now and then an opportunity like this comes along. We, The O’Jays, Bruce Walker & Jacques Richmond were able to capture the holiday love and spirit in these performances for our fans’ enjoyment.”

“Christmas With The O’Jays” serves up plenty of new reasons to groove around the Christmas tree. The 10 song CD features soulful holiday classics including “Silent Night,” “Joy To The World,” “The First Noel” and “Jingle Bells” as well as two new songs, “I’m What You Want This Christmas” and “Cause it’s Christmas.”

“This was one of the fastest records I ever recorded,” said Eddie Levert, Sr. “It is a great product that I am proud to have been a part of. It was a great experience going into the studio to create what I am sure will be a long lasting holiday treat.”

Mike Jason, a recor company executive, said “Christmas with The O’Jays” pairs one of American music’s greatest groups with a cherished American tradition--the holiday album.

“Turn the fireplace on, pour yourself a glass of egg nog and enjoy The O’Jays this holiday season with a brand new album of classic songs along with two newly written soon-to-be classics,” he said.



The O’Jays

The O’Jays introduced the sound of Philadelphia soul to the world in the early 1970s, hitting the Top 10 with million-selling singles including “Back Stabbers,” “Love Train,” “I Love Music,” and “For The Love of Money,” which found a new generation of fans as the theme song to Donald Trump’s reality competition show “The Apprentice”.

They have had 20 albums in the Top 20 chart, 13 Top 10 singles and countless gold and platinum albums. With a career that spans over 50 years, The O’Jays were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005, the Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 2004 and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from BET in 2009. The O’Jays were also featured in the 2003 film *The Fighting Temptations*.

“It is such a pleasure to work with one of R&B music’s legendary groups on this Christmas album,” said Michael Mitchell, another record company executive “Walter Williams and Eddie Levert have voiced several of the most memorable songs of our time. Their interpretation of these Christmas classics make a terrific record.”



African American heirlooms

The Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture’s *Save Our African American Treasures* initiative currently travelling the country, is allowing residents to consult with experts on how to maintain and preserve their African American-themed artifacts and prized heirlooms. James Gordon, public affairs specialist with the museum, said the initiative has been held across the country with the latest stop in Detroit over the weekend. Shirley Burke of West Bloomfield brought in a fiddle, believed to be 150 years old, that belonged to her great-grandfather, who she said received it from his slaveholder in Arkansas. She is interested in donating the instrument to the museum.

“It doesn’t help or serve any purposes to have it in the closet,” Burke said.

Ask Gwendolyn Baines

My business partner abandoned her duties!

Last year I went into business with a lady I had only known for three months. This is the problem: I borrowed \$20,000 to start a home for the elderly – 24 hr. sitting. I used the money to rent a large facility that had once been a small patient clinic. I purchased all furniture and medical equipment needed. I immediately had near full capacity.

My daughter came home one afternoon with a schoolmate. Her schoolmate told me her mother was looking for a job. After talking with her mother, she explained to me she was looking for a partner and not necessarily a job.

I quickly accepted her as my partner. We did the schedule. From the beginning she wanted all weekends off. Then she wanted to be paid and actually she had not worked long enough to receive a paycheck.

We were supposed to split the bills. Now six months later, she has not paid her portion of the expenses. Gwendolyn, how can I get my money?

Sarah



Dear Sarah:

Let me tell you this: In your explanation concerning your partner’s share of expenses, you did not mention the fact that you had already secured the loan, the facility, the medical equipment and other needed items to operate the business. What were you thinking about? You didn’t need a partner. You had already done the upfront of everything needed for the business.

Unless your contract was done by a legal professional, you may not receive one dime from this lady. I do suggest that you dissolve this ‘partnership’ immediately. Many entrepreneurs make the mistake as you did. The business you have started is a much need one. You don’t need a partner. What you need is --- a sitter for hire.

JMU students step away from campus and into a teepee

Native American powwows, dancers and authentic food are not on every college student's weekend agenda. However, for James Madison University students who signed up to leave the familiar comforts of campus to participate in the Center for Multicultural Student Services (CMSS) Native American Indian Immersion trip Nov. 12-14, it was an unforgettable experience.

According to Tracy Lanier, CMSS assistant director, highlights of the trip included a powwow, shooting a bow and arrow, exploring a teepee and eating Native American food.

"The residents of the reservations added a current face to the Native American Indian population," said Lanier. "They were able to speak to the size of the reservations and how the land was distributed and the culture was passed down."

The students traveled to Richmond to explore the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Indian reservations to witness the basics of the Native American lifestyle. The

weekend included a visit to the Henricus Historical Park to experience outdoor colonial structures, followed by a trip to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

"Traveling to the two different reservations allowed the students the chance to interact with Native Americans today who are working to preserve their history and educate others," said Lanier.

The students learned a combination of historical facts and the current plights of Native Americans in Virginia. They gained much knowledge from comparing and contrasting folklore and popular culture's images of Native Americans with the way this population actually lives and experiences life.

"The interaction with the residents of the reservations showed a true picture of harmony and understanding to the students," said Lanier. "The native people are seeking to be in peace and acceptance with all individuals. This message of



JMU students with storyteller Minnie HaHa Custalow on the Mattaponi reservation.

understanding and welcoming was one of the most powerful of the trip."

Since 2004, CMSS has sponsored experiential learning trips each fall and spring, allowing students to explore new cultures. ELTs are designed to immerse

students in unique and diverse ethnic experiences they may not otherwise be familiar with or have the chance to participate in. CMSS will sponsor an ELT this spring to New York City focusing on Latino culture.

HU receives colored troops archives

Noted historian and author Bennie J. McRae Jr. has donated his entire archives on the African American military experience to Hampton University. The centerpiece of McRae's collection is the history of the Union Army's United States Colored Troops that served in the Civil War. The scope of this extensive collection features online histories of the men and women who served or supported the Union military.

"The Bennie McRae Jr. Collection is a remarkable landmark contribution to the memory of the United States Colored Troops," said Dr. William Harvey, HU president. "No longer will their strategic importance to the Union Army's victory remain a footnote in the history of the Civil War. Most importantly, these valuable archives to be housed on our campus, will provide a truthful repository of the authentic experiences of the former slaves in their fight for freedom in America."

The Bennie McRae Jr. archives will be accessible to historians, researchers and the general public. McRae's donation to Hampton University is believed to be one of the world's largest repository concerning the history of the US Colored Troops in the Civil War.

Bennie McRae Jr.'s body of work spans 20 years of research. His sterling body of work is taken from the Official Records of the Union and Confederate armies, Civil War archives, field studies, and donations from

noted historians like William Gladstone. The collection chronicles the active service of Black soldiers, and sailors beginning in 1862 and the fascinating histories of the female and male Black contrabands whose service as spies, guides, scouts, nurses and cooks in the Union Army. McRae corrects the mistaken belief that the majority of the Black military originated in the North. Instead, his research attests that the majority of the US Colored Troops came from the secession and border-states of the South. The largest numbers were from Louisiana.

America's Civil War memory often slants to the battlefields and Union and Confederate generals in Upper and Middle South. McRae's archives present a more thorough and balanced history of the Black military in all regions of the Civil War. They testify to the bravery of the legendary First Kansas Colored in Indian Territory, the first Black unit to engage the Confederates (Bates County, Missouri); the Third United States Colored Cavalry assault on the Black River Bridge, Mississippi, described as "one of the most daring and heroic of the war"; and the First South Carolina Volunteers engaged in expeditions with the 48th New York Infantry in 1862; and the First Louisiana Native Guards, the first regiment mustered into the Union Army.

The collection draws on both Union and
See "McRae Collection" on pg. 13

Chemistry Nobel Laureate to lecture at HU

The Hampton University Department of Chemistry presents a lecture by Dr. Sidney Altman, 1989 Nobel Prize in Chemistry winner, on Thursday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. in the HU Student Center Ballroom.

Altman, Sterling professor in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology at Yale University, will also present a technical seminar and informal meeting on Friday, Dec. 3 from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Hampton University Student Theater. This visit is sponsored by the American Institute of Physics Nobel Laureate Visitation program.

Altman's public lecture, *The Origin of Life*, will focus on his Nobel Prize in chemistry winning research. In 1989 the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded jointly to Altman and Dr. Thomas R. Cech for their discovery of catalytic properties of RNA.

It was believed that tRNA was simply a passive carrier of genetic codes between different parts of the cell, until Altman and Cech discovered that RNA could also serve as a catalyst. Based on this information the field of biotechnology research opened up allowing scientist to review traditional theories of cell function.

Altman is a graduate of MIT and received his Ph.D. from The University of Colorado and continued his education at



Dr. Sidney Altman

Harvard University. Altman has taught at Yale University since 1971.

"This event will provide students, faculty, and the local community with the opportunity to meet with a Nobel Laureate," stated Dr. Isai T. Urasai, chair of the HU Department of Chemistry. "The audience will be able to explore and become more connected with science and scientific research."

The Department of Chemistry is co-sponsoring this event with the Hampton University Honors College and the Hampton Roads Section of the American Chemical Society.

Would segregation work today?

Expert who lived through it reveals hidden benefits of program

Gary Bolick sat in a school bus for more than two hours each day as part of a court ordered desegregation program in 1970s North Carolina.

At the time he didn't realize that the benefits of this program would reverberate for decades. The ironic twist on this scenario is that Bolick is not Black.

"I grew up in a reasonably affluent neighborhood in the far western part of Forsyth County. I was bussed to a school in 'East Winston' the inner city, the Black section of Winston-Salem. Many of my classmates had grown up in the projects. I was in the minority, now, both racially, and culturally. In the early 70s the south was the laboratory for race relations in America. I wouldn't realize the results or feel the effects of that experiment until years later while sitting in a classroom in Paris, France and after that, at Wake Forest. In both instances I was surrounded by students who had never attended an integrated school. It was during my studies in Paris and in college that I realized that my hour long rides to and from East Winston benefited me socially, academically and culturally

in ways that I am still just realizing today. The experiment worked. Unfortunately the same warning signs that were present in the 60s and 70s are surfacing again, today. We have a Black president in the White House, but the lines dividing [the races] are reappearing once more. Why?"

Bolick, author of the novel "Angel's Oracle" -- an allegory for modern race relations -- believes that it might not be a bad idea to consider desegregation once again, as citizens find the diversity in the country beginning to drift apart, instead of converge.

"Over the last few decades, after desegregation suffered severe blows both from the Supreme Court and the Nixon administration, the statistics that prompted educational leaders to advocate desegregation are starting to emerge again," Bolick said. "The schools in upper socioeconomic areas have better resources and graduate more students, while schools in lower socioeconomic areas continue to be plagued by the same issues that plagued inner city schools in the 1960s and 70s -- family strife, dwindling resources and a



Gary Bolick

more transient teacher population."

According to researchers at Amherst University and the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, Bolick's right. Nationally, the share of Black students' schoolmates who were Caucasian rose from 22 to 36 percent between 1968 and

1980 before falling to roughly 30 percent in 2000. The decline in this measure during the 1990s resulted from a decline in the number of white students, like Bolick, who were attending schools in lower socioeconomic communities.

Moreover, the share of Black students attending schools with fewer than 5 percent white students fell by more than 50 percent after 1968, almost eliminating the statistical gains achieved in the early days of desegregation.

"Desegregation opened the door to the other side of the American experience. As a white man it shamed me to realize that my ancestors had suppressed an entire race for personal gain; it enriched me to experience first-hand the grace and power it takes to overcome that same oppression, and thrive. My Black teachers and friends taught me the power of humility and perseverance, and the profound effects that forgiveness has on the spirit. I was accepted as a friend and an equal despite "my" past. It is an experience that I hope we will once again pass on to our children so that they will not 'pay for the sins of their fathers' yet,

Can food additives affect ADHD?

By Amanda Gardner

If your child has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), it's not because he or she played too many video games, logged multiple hours of TV viewing, or ate the wrong kinds of foods. In fact, researchers think the cause of ADHD is largely genetic. But it is tempting to look for dietary factors that could be making symptoms worse.

In particular, a possible link between ADHD and certain foods -- including food dyes and preservatives -- has been suspected since the 1970s. Still, despite decades of research, experts can't agree on whether eliminating dye-containing foods from a child's diet can ease ADHD symptoms like hyperactivity and impulsivity -- except in perhaps a few special cases.

"Scientific evidence is limited to support the association between food additives and ADHD symptoms," says Dr. Maida Galvez, M.D., director of the pediatric environmental health specialty unit at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, in New York City. "Although it is possible that a very small group of children who are allergic to artificial colorings or preservatives may show improvement in symptoms on restriction diets, evidence

is insufficient to recommend routine, widespread use of restriction diets to treat a child's ADHD symptoms."

However, Bernard Weiss, Ph.D., professor of environmental medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, in New York, says it's clear that food additives can sometimes affect child behavior, at least in the short term. He has conducted controlled trials on the topic and says: "From the standpoint at least of acute effects produced by food color consumption, you really can't deny the evidence any more."

For example, a 2007 study published in The Lancet found that a mixture of four artificial food colors plus the preservative sodium benzoate aggravated hyperactivity in two groups of children without ADHD -- 3-year-olds and 8- to 9-year-olds.

But a second mix didn't have as great an effect on the 8- to 9-year-olds, even though it also contained sodium benzoate and two of the same colorings, albeit in lower amounts.

Part of the controversy lies in the fact that most food products contain more than one dye or preservative (some candy products have as many as 10 dyes). And most studies have looked at blends of additives, not single ingredients, making it difficult to sort out the culprits.

McRae Collection

From Page 12

Troops and their strategic importance in the Union victory at the Battle of Nashville, the Siege of Vicksburg, the Battle of Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend. It reports on Virginia's 25th US Army Corps, Army of the James, the only Corps in the history of the Army made up entirely of Black infantry regiments Comprised of 30 US Colored Troop regiments, it is noted for its bravery in the Union victories at Petersburg, Richmond and Appomattox.

McRae stated, "I am delighted and overjoyed to have this collection accepted by the prestigious Hampton University. My archives will be preserved and made available to students, researchers and the general public."

McRae was born in Louisville, Alabama now lives in Trotwood, Ohio. A veteran of the United States Air Force, he served for four years in the Korean War. McRae is an internationally recognized scholar on the US Colored Troops and historian on the Black American Military experience. He was a consultant to Australian Television's broadcast, "Black Soldier Blues" documenting the African American military in Australia and the South Pacific. He is the co-author of "Nineteenth Century



Bennie McRae Jr.

Freedom Fighters" centered on the 33rd Regiment, United States Colored Infantry in South Carolina, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Tyler Trowbridge. McRae is the founder of Lest We Forget, an online resource documenting America's centuries-old Black military experience.

McRae is a member of the American Legion, lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a proud associate member of the Sons of Unions Veterans of the Civil War.

Can Your Fines

Newport News library patrons can make donations of food and personal items over the holiday season instead of paying fines for overdue materials.

The Can Your Fines program allows a nonperishable, nonexpired food item or personal item to take the place of a fine for overdue materials from Nov. 27 to Dec. 30 at all Newport News Public Libraries. All items collected will be donated to the Foodbank of the Virginia Peninsula.

Can Your Fines applies to outstanding fines for long-overdue items that are returned, but does not apply to lost or damaged materials or to fees charged once an account had been sent to the collection agency.

The Newport News Public Library System's Can Your Fines program has been a holiday tradition for more than 20 years.

Paws to Read

Children ages six to 10 build their confidence by reading out loud to trained therapy dogs at Grissom Library on the first Saturday of each month. The next Paws to Read program will be 3-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4, at Grissom Library. Parents are required to fill out a permission slip and may accompany their children, as well. No registration is required.

Decorating for the Holidays

Floral designer Michelle Belsches will teach adults how to decorate their tables and homes for the holidays, making a statement using holiday colors, 1-5 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 4, at Pearl Bailey Library. Registration is required and is ongoing online at www.nngov.com/library/custom/onlinereg or by calling Pearl Bailey Library at 757-247-8677.

Music Scholarships

The Virginia Choral Society is now accepting applications for a scholarship for entering college freshman majoring in either voice performance or vocal music education at an accredited four-year institution.

The top three applicants will be invited to an interview and audition with the selection committee. The winning applicant will receive the cash award of \$1,000.00 and present a solo at the Virginia Choral Society's Spring concerts (April 30-May 1, 2011, Trinity Lutheran Church, Newport News ("Modern Masterpieces"). The application deadline is Monday, Dec. 20.

For more information, visit www.vachoralsociety.org.

Holiday Open House

The Battersea Foundation Board of Directors is excited to open the doors of Historic Battersea to the public on Sunday, Dec. 5 from 2-5 p.m. for their annual Holiday Open House. This colonial villa in Petersburg is one of the foremost historic, Anglo-Palladian sites in Virginia and this is one of the best times of year to visit. In addition to its unique 18th century architecture, visitors will have the rare opportunity to experience Battersea decorated for the holiday season.

This event is open and free to the public. Contributions are welcome and all proceeds go towards the restoration of Historic Battersea.

Historic Battersea is located at 1289 Upper Appomattox St. in Petersburg. For more information or directions, visit www.batterseafound.org, or call 804-732-9882.

Book Discussion

Adults will discuss the book "Skipping Christmas" by John Grisham, 7-8 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 8, in the Friends of the Newport News Public Library Bookstore at Main Street Library. This book is available to borrow from the Newport News Public Library System, and participants are asked to read the book completely before attending. Registration is required and is available online at www.nngov.com/library/custom/onlinereg or by calling any Newport News Public Library.

'Tis The Season

December brings about the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and the tradition of giving to those we know and love. It also brings about a time to reflect on our own good fortune throughout the past year.

The impact of giving is great, and NAWBO invites you to its "Tis The Season" program on Dec. 15 from 5:30 - 8 p.m. EST at Town Point Club in Norfolk. Dinner and programs will follow at 6 pm.

JoAnn Batson, executive director of the Food Bank for Southeastern Virginia will speak about the special efforts of the Kid's Café and Backpack Programs and Tracey Keller, CEO of the Girl Scout Council of Colonial Coast will share ways in which the community can contribute to the continuing endeavors of the Girl Scout mission.

NAWBO is the premier group for the woman entrepreneur. Preregistration is required to the event. Register online at www.nawboseva.org.

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Obama names 15 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients

Poet and activist Maya Angelou, Rep. John Lewis, former President George H. W. Bush and investor Warren Buffett are among 15 recent recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom named by President Barack Obama. The Medal of Freedom is the nation's highest civilian honor, presented to individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. The awards will be presented at a White House ceremony early next year.

"These outstanding honorees come from a broad range of backgrounds and they've excelled in a broad range of fields, but all of them have lived extraordinary lives that have inspired us, enriched our culture, and made our country and our world a better place," said the president. "I look forward to awarding them this honor."

Angelou is a prominent and celebrated author, poet, educator, producer, actress, filmmaker, and civil rights activist, who is currently the Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. She has served on two presidential committees, was awarded the

"..[A]ll of them have lived extraordinary lives that have inspired us, enriched our culture, and made our country and our world a better place..."

- President Obama

Presidential Medal for the Arts in 2000 and the Lincoln Medal in 2008.

Lewis is an American hero and a giant of the Civil Rights Movement. He served as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), helped to organize the first lunch-counter sit-in in 1959 at the age of 19, and was the youngest speaker at the 1963 March on Washington. In May 1961, he participated in the initial Freedom Ride, during which he endured violent attacks in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Montgomery, Alabama. In 1964, he helped to coordinate the Mississippi Freedom Project, and, in 1965, he led the Selma-to-Montgomery march to petition for voting rights where marchers were brutally confronted in an incident that became known as "Bloody Sunday." Eight days later, President Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress, condemned the violence in Selma, and called for



From left to right: Maya Angelou, Rep. John Lewis and Warren Buffett

passage of the Voting Rights Act, which was enacted within months. Since 1987, John Lewis has continued his service to the nation as the U.S. Representative for Georgia's 5th District, which encompasses all of Atlanta.

Buffett is an American investor, industrialist, and philanthropist. He is one of the most successful investors in the world. Often called the "legendary investor Warren Buffett," he is the primary shareholder, chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway. Buffett has pledged that all of his shares in Berkshire Hathaway – about 99 percent of his net worth – will be given to philanthropic endeavors. He is a co-founder of The Giving Pledge, an organization that encourages wealthy Americans to devote at least 50 percent of their net worth to philanthropy.

Bush was the 41st president of the United States. Prior to that, he was vice president in the Reagan Administration, director of Central Intelligence, chief of the U.S. Liaison's Office to the People's Republic of China, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and a member of the House of Representatives from the 7th District of Texas. He served in the Navy during World War II. President Bush and President Clinton worked together to encourage aid for victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.

Other awardees include Angela Merkel, the chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany; John H. Adams, who co-founded the Natural Resources Defense Council in 1970; Jasper Johns, an American artist who has produced a distinguished body of work dealing with themes of perception and identity since the mid-1950s; Gerda Weissmann Klein, a Jewish Holocaust survivor who has written several books about her experiences; Dr. Tom Little, an optometrist who was brutally murdered

on Aug. 6, by the Taliban in Afghanistan; Yo-Yo Ma, considered the world's greatest living cellist; Sylvia Mendez, a civil rights activist of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, Stan "The Man" Musial, a baseball legend and Hall of Fame first baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals; Bill Russell, a former Boston Celtics' captain who almost single-handedly redefined the game of basketball; Jean Kennedy

Smith, who founded VSA, a non-profit organization affiliated with the John F. Kennedy Center that promotes the artistic talents of children, youth and adults with disabilities; and John J. Sweeney, the current president emeritus of the AFL-CIO who revitalized the American labor movement, emphasizing union organizing and social justice, and was a powerful advocate for America's workers.



Veep meets NBA Hall of Famer

Vice President Joe Biden, second from left, greets National Basketball Hall of Famer Earl Lloyd, the first Black to play in the NBA, in his West Wing Office, and Lloyd's wife, Charlita (partially hidden behind the vice president).

It was 60 years ago that Lloyd entered the history books by becoming the first African American to play in an NBA game when his Washington Capitols vided the Rochester Royals. At the time, the milestone received little fanfare, but more than a half century later, the milestone received a wave of well-deserved recognition, including from the vice president.

Official White House Photo by David Lienemann

Senators: GAO reports action needed to modernize Navy's shipyards

Citing a new report on the multi-billion dollar backlog of restoration and modernization requirements at the nation's four naval shipyards, U.S. senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner called on the Navy to maintain its existing shipyards properly before spending \$1 billion for redundant maintenance facilities in Mayport, Florida.

The new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that the Navy's process to capture and calculate its total restoration and modernization needs understates total costs. The year-long study recommends the Navy take several actions to improve strategic planning and management associated with multi-billion-dollar restoration and modernization requirements at its four aging naval shipyards.

"The Navy has reported a backlog of its shipyard restoration and modernization needs," the report states, "and recognizes that this backlog poses a challenge to future shore readiness." According to the GAO, the Navy estimated a backlog of \$3 billion in such projects at the four shipyards in October 2009.

"This study documents why the Navy should invest more resources in our four naval shipyards before building redundant nuclear-support infrastructure to homeport a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Mayport, Florida," said Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.). "The yards play a key national security role through their performance



Senators Mark Warner (left) and Jim Webb

of critical ship repair, maintenance, and modernization work. Instead of spending more than a billion dollars for new repair facilities in Mayport, we owe it to our shipyard workers, the fleet, and the American taxpayer to maintain our existing shipyards properly."

"In this age of extreme fiscal challenges, we must ensure we are maintaining our existing infrastructure and providing our

shipyard employees a safe place to work," said Sen. Warner (D-Va.). "I think the Navy has realized that to add an additional \$1 billion to the debt to embark on building a new nuclear port complex, when we are having difficulty maintaining our existing inventory, is a poor fiscal choice and has wisely deferred the Mayport project. The combat readiness of our Navy is directly tied to the health of the shipyards, and this

stubborn backlog is something that must be addressed."

The GAO also reported that the Navy's guidance to the four shipyards restricts the number of military construction projects each yard submits per year. This limit can delay needed projects in the face of competing priorities and lead to critical failures and other emergencies. For example, Norfolk Naval Shipyard originally estimated \$15.5 million was needed to repair and upgrade a damaged pier in fiscal year 2000. The repairs remained unfunded for 10 years, however, until the pier was eventually condemned, demolished, and replaced in fiscal year 2010 at a cost of \$85 million.

Shipyard commanders submitted restoration and modernization projects for consideration in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 totaling roughly \$1 billion, but they told GAO they would have submitted additional projects totaling \$508 million if they had not been constrained by the Navy's guidance.

The GAO said the Department of Defense concurred with its report's recommendations.

In July 2009, Webb and Warner, along with five other senators, requested the GAO to conduct an investigation into the material condition of the U.S. Navy's four public shipyards—Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Washington, and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in Hawaii.

Missouri rep. is new CBC head

As House Democrats regroup after major losses in the midterm elections, members of the Congressional Black Caucus chose Missouri Rep. Emanuel Cleaver to lead them through the new political terrain.

He will become chairman of a group next year whose 42 members all survived the midterm elections, even as many of their more moderate and conservative colleagues are now packing up their offices and preparing to head home.

After his unanimous approval Cleaver told the group, "Because we now occupy the minority, the challenge we are faced with will be greater If we walk together, we will accomplish our aim."

He was elected one day after the House ethics committee found Rep. Charles Rangel of New York, a once prominent member of the caucus, guilty of multiple ethics violations.

But it will be the direction of the House Democrats where Cleaver will put his energy over the next two years.

Earlier in the day, they re-elected Rep. Nancy Pelosi, currently speaker, as their

minority leader in the next Congress.

They did so despite concerns from a party that had just been soundly rejected by the voters. Forty-three, nearly a quarter of the Democrats, opposed her. But her re-election sends a signal that House Democrats will defend their beliefs, even if it means challenging the White House.

"You're hearing both survivors of (swing) districts and others say that we need to change our ways and we need to say 'no' to the White House more," Cleaver said. "We never said 'no' on anything."

At the same, the Black Caucus will be expected to help increase the African American turnout in 2012 when President Barack Obama runs for re-election and Democrats try to regain the House.

Compared to 2008, about eight million fewer Blacks went to the polls this year, said David Bositis, a senior analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Cleaver, a minister and not prone to political fireworks, said the agendas of the Black Caucus and the president will not



Rep. Emanuel Cleaver

always be in sync.

"We recognize the need to support the president, but there's also the feeling being expressed rather loudly that the White House will become concerned only about the survival of the president in 2012, and we will be out here blowing in the wind," he said. "We may be moving down two separate paths toward 2012."

A former mayor, Cleaver comes from a safe Democratic district and was just

re-elected to his fourth term. He is close to Pelosi and the House leadership, as well as the White House.

A former top aide now works for Vice President Joe Biden. His economic "green zone" project in Kansas City has been touted by the administration as one of the stimulus program's signature projects. The new Republican majority may try to take back some of the money already awarded to the zone that has yet to be spent, however.

Cleaver also works across the aisle. One of his best friends in Congress is Republican Rep. Jeb Hensarling of Texas.

Two of the new Republican freshmen are African American. At least one, Allen West of Florida, has indicated he may want to join the Black Caucus.

Bositis said Cleaver "is not going to be as confrontationally partisan as some former chairs of the CBC. There are plenty of members who are willing to be confrontational. But it most certainly will involve him speaking out on issues of importance to African Americans."

Survey highlights cost of cancelled conferences in Arizona

The lucrative convention and conference business is the backbone of Arizona's tourism industry and it has been significantly hurt by the state's enactment in April of harsh anti-immigration legislation. The industry's losses will cost the state \$253 million in economic output and more than \$86 million in lost wages over the next two to three years, according

to a report commissioned by the Center for American Progress.

The study, conducted by Arizona-based Elliott D. Pollack & Company, found that the losses from meetings that were cancelled following approval of the immigration control law S.B. 1070 total \$141 million in direct spending by convention attendees. Further, the economic hit from cancelled

Pa. appointees to focus on minorities



Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter

By Eric Mayes

In an effort to boost business opportunities for minority-owned businesses, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter recently named members to two advisory boards — the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Construction Industry and the Office of Economic Opportunity Advisory Board.

"This is one of our most important causes and efforts," Nutter said as he announced his appointments.

The construction advisory commission was a reincarnation of a board of the same name that dissolved almost two years ago after issuing a report on diversity in the construction industry.

In its new incarnation the board will prioritize its recommendations and draw up a strategy to make them happen.

"The natives are getting restless," said John Macklin, of the National Association of Minority Contractors, who was named to the commission. "They're looking for jobs, jobs, jobs."

In March 2009, the original commission issued a list of 75 recommendations in a 180-page report. Those recommendations were broken down into 31 categories to increase inclusion of minority, female, and disabled construction contractors and 44 suggestions to increase minorities and women in the construction workforce.

On the workforce side, the commission

recommends that the mayor, city council, and city departments, agencies, authorities, and others set common long-run goals of 32 percent minority and seven percent female participation in the region's building trades workforce. Other top recommendations include the collection and sharing of demographic data on membership, employment, and filling apprentice classes with at least 50 percent minorities until membership goals are reached.

On the contracting side, the commission suggests that the city and other project owners break down large contracts into multiple small projects whenever it is possible to do so without significant increases in cost, reduce small contractors' needs for credit by expediting payments to general contractors, require expedited payments to subcontractors on small projects, and explore innovative ways to reduce barriers created by bonding requirements.

Another key recommendation includes the establishment of 10 private sector companies that will institute an economic opportunity plan with their procurement departments to establish and achieve contracting goals.

The commission will meet quarterly with Angela Dowd-Burton, executive director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

The advisory board for the OEO was an entirely new body charged with helping to speed up the process of putting the commission's ideas into place.

"We will see the recommendations we made turn into a reality," said Sharmain Matlock-Turner, president of the Urban Affairs Coalition, who was named co-chair of the OEO advisory board. "I know the work sometimes seems slow, but the city is making progress."



Former Az. Gov and current Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano with Angela M. Kelley, CAP's vice president for immigration policy and advocacy.

meetings that would have occurred over the next two to three years—\$253 million in economic output—affects 2,800 jobs that would have been supported by that activity.

Arizona's anti-immigration policies have come at a time when the state's economy can least afford it. Other high tourism states—Florida, Texas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, to name a few—should heed this report's warnings before jumping on Arizona's derailed economic train.

"Citizens in other states must remain on high alert as politicians begin to talk about moving Arizona-like measures, especially in these fragile economic times," said Angela M. Kelley, CAP's vice president for immigration policy and advocacy. "Clearly, the numbers show the economic train wreck that happens under this anti-immigrant strategy waged by politicians who pander to hyperbolic fears of immigrants. Taxpayers are the ones who will have to dig deeper in their pockets to make up for local budget shortfalls created by empty convention spaces," Kelley added.

Arizona's enactment of S.B. 1070 during a sluggish economic period also damaged the state's high-dollar commerce with Mexico, said Lea Marquez-Peterson, president and CEO of the Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, during a telephonic news media conference. "We're hurting in Arizona. It's been very tough," she said of the impact on the business sector, adding, "The law has certainly impacted everybody, not just Hispanics or Latinos."

Also speaking to reporters was the head of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Florida, where state lawmakers are

considering Arizona copycat laws.

"Anyone who thinks an Arizona-type of law would not hurt Florida—a state that is home to theme parks, beaches, and sports complexes—is living in their own little Fantasyland; in their own little world," said Julio Fuentes, president and CEO of the Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

"This loss in economic activity (in Arizona) is also expected to be spread over multiple years," emphasized Danny Court, a senior economic analyst at Elliott D. Pollack & Co.

The Pollack company's economic analysis, compiled by Kelley and Marshall Fitz, CAP's Director of Immigration Policy, notes that cancelled convention bookings represent only one part of Arizona's economic losses as a result of the draconian immigration legislation.

The study did not take into account unrelated leisure travel cancellations, losses from damaged international relations with Mexico, and decisions by members of the entertainment industry to stay out of Arizona. Nor did it quantify the consequences of workers and families that have reportedly left the state or the costs of litigation to defend a law that has been preliminarily ruled as unconstitutional.

As the study states, "even the narrow and targeted scope of this report shows that Arizona is facing severe economic and fiscal consequences. This report provides a clear window into the potentially catastrophic impacts of pursuing harsh, state-based immigration policies and should give other state legislatures pause before pursuing such measures."

From BBC Wire Reports

Shock as SA charges gang rape victim

South African rights groups have expressed shock at a decision to charge a 15-year-old alleged gang-rape victim with having underage sex.

The girl was charged with statutory rape along with her alleged rapists, who are aged 14 and 16.

The alleged rape happened earlier this month in a school east of Johannesburg in front of other pupils who filmed the incident on their phones.

Prosecutors said rape charges were dropped because of a lack of evidence.

However, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) said it had decided all three could be charged under South Africa's Sexual Offences Act, which outlaws consensual sex with a minor.

The Children's Right Project, a legal advice group at the Western Cape University, said taking the matter to trial would not serve

the girl's interests.

"There are other ways to handle to matter, the prosecutors are sending a horrific and harmful message to other rape survivors. That causes great concern," the group's Lorenzo Wakefield said.

Other groups have accused the NPA of failing the 15-year-old school girl, who was reported to have been drugged with a spiked drink before the alleged rape.

"We do feel that this is further brutalization," South Africa's Eye Witness News quotes Lynne Cawood from Childline South Africa as saying.

"Secondly, dramatization of a child who is incredibly vulnerable," she said.

South Africa has one of the highest incidences of rape in the world.

One woman is raped every 17 seconds, child rights groups say.

South Africans cycle for Hajj pilgrimage



Two South Africans recently shared their joy at cycling almost 11,000km (6,800 miles) to Saudi Arabia for the Muslim Hajj pilgrimage.

Natheem Cairncross, 28 and Imtiyaz Haron, 25, reached Mecca days before it started - ending a nine-month journey from Cape Town.

"It was a life-changing experience. I would definitely do it again," said Cairncross

Millions of Muslims descend on Mecca every year for the religious ritual.

The pair said they spent months saving for the journey.

"I sold my car and my friend had to sell some of his possessions to raise money for the trip," said Cairncross. "We also received a lot of help from our families, communities and the people we met along the way."

But their trip met with some challenges, including not getting visas to enter some

countries.

"We had to change course because we could not get visas for Ethiopia and Sudan so we then decided to fly to Turkey and cycle the rest of the way from there," he said.

The route included cycling through Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Turkey, Syria and Jordan.

"We were determined to do it because we wanted to complete our Hajj this year, because we knew it would lead to a special relationship with our creator," he said.

"There came points where we weren't enthusiastic, but there was never a time where we thought to turning the bikes around and going back to Cape Town."

Muslims describe the yearly event as the "final pillar of Islam" - and believe attending the pilgrimage strengthens their relationship with Allah.

Oil giant tried to "rebrand" itself in Nigeria

Intervention programmes to end female genital mutilation (FGM) can only succeed if they address the needs and wishes of the community, a report says.

UN children's organization Unicef has released a report on ways in which communities can be encouraged to end the practice.

The report looks at five African nations and at the prevalence of mutilation elsewhere.

Unicef regards FGM as a major human rights violation.

Girls who suffer it endure pain and, often, years of ill health, it says.

An estimated three million girls and women in Africa are at risk each year - but interventions from Western aid agencies motivated by outrage are unlikely to succeed, Unicef says in a new report.

Communities which practice FGM often believe they are doing the best for their daughters, the report points out.

Parents fear their daughters will be ostracised, or remain unmarried if they do not undergo FGM.

"A family's decision to practice or abandon FGM/C is influenced by powerful social rewards and sanctions," said Gordon

Alexander of Unicef.

"Understanding the diverse social dynamics that perpetuate FGM/C is changing the way in which abandonment is approached. There is no one answer, no one way, and no quick fix. But there is progress. These efforts need to be scaled up to bring change in the lives of girls, now."

In the five African countries surveyed - Egypt, Senegal, Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia - the most successful projects aimed at ending FGM built up local trust by reinforcing positive aspects of local culture, and they incorporated development projects into their work with local communities as well.

This takes time, Unicef says, and changing long-standing social behavior will not happen overnight.

Nevertheless, in each of the five countries, rates of FGM are falling slowly, it says.

Attitudes towards the practice are changing too: a Unicef film on video-sharing website YouTube shows that, increasingly, women say they think the practice should end.

In communities which have abandoned FGM, parents now say their main reason for doing so is because they want the best for their daughters.

Egyptian blogger freed after three years

A prominent Egyptian blogger who was imprisoned for four years for insulting Islam and defaming President Hosni Mubarak has been released.

The case of Abdel Kareem Nabil Soliman, often known as Kareem Amer, highlighted early government restrictions on political bloggers.

He was the first Egyptian convicted specifically for his writing online.

Human rights groups and opposition figures had campaigned for him to be freed.

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), which represented the blogger in court, said he was in bad health and was beaten by security officers in Alexandria before his release last week.

"We are of the opinion that he shouldn't have been tried for his opinions and that it was an unfair trial," said the head of ANHRI, Gamal Eid. "Now we are also looking for a full investigation from the general prosecutor because Kareem was beaten twice - once when he was in prison in 2007 and the second time a week ago as Kareem was held for 11 days beyond the end of his sentence.

A Ministry of Interior source confirmed the date of the blogger's final release but denied he was beaten.

Soliman, 26, a former law student at al-Azhar University, a state-run, religious institution was arrested in 2006.

He was accused of posting blogs that insulted Mr Mubarak by calling him a "dictator" and incited hatred of Islam.

He had called al-Azhar, "the university of terrorism", and accused it of promoting radical ideas and suppressing free thought.

The university expelled him and pushed prosecutors to put him on trial.

According to the Free Kareem website set up by supporters, the blogger spent 1,470 days behind bars. It expressed gratitude to all who backed Soliman through his ordeal.

"Thanks for everyone who has protested, rallied, supported, donated, written, shared or even tweeted anything about Kareem from all over the world!" it read.

Another blogger, Muhammad Mari, who met Soliman after he was also imprisoned, sent him the message: "Congratulations on your freedom."

Soliman is now said to be resting and considering his future. He is expected to

156-1119
HAMPTON SOLICITATION



The Director of Finance or his designated representative will accept written responses in the Procurement Office 1 Franklin Street, Hampton, VA on behalf of the Entity(ies) listed below until the date(s) and local time(s) specified

CITY OF HAMPTON

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

2:30 PM – ITB 11--22/C LED Traffic Signal Upgrade

CITY OF HAMPTON

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

1:30 PM – ITB 11--21/C Window Replacement and Waterproofing at Spratley Gifted Center

For additional information, see our web page at <http://www.hampton.gov/bids-contracts>.

A withdrawal of bid due to error shall be in accordance with Section 2.2-4330 of the Code of Virginia. All forms relating to these solicitations may be obtained from the above listed address or for further information call; (757) 727-2200. The right is reserved to reject any and all responses, to make awards in whole or in part, and to waive any informality in submittals. **Minority and Woman-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply.**

Karl Daughtrey,
Director of Finance

PSA

There is a great need at this time for the men that are returning back to our community after being released from jails and prisons. Each year approximately 29 percent return back to prison or jails after three years of being released. The numbers are escalating, with about 24,500 of Virginia state inmates returning back to our community. The reason most return is because after release they have little to no family or community support.

Freedom Outreach, founder Dr. James Robinson, who is also the Senior Chaplain at the Newport News City Jail. Dr. Robinson accepts inmates (if qualified) into one of the two transitional houses. The residents can be trained and mentored into becoming law abiding productive citizens upon release from the program.

In order for these transitional houses to remain open, we desperate need your financial and moral support in order to serve these men.

Visit us at freedomoutreachcenter.org. When donating by mail, use the following address: Freedom Outreach Center Transitional Home, Post office Box 5593, Newport News, Va 23605. All donations are tax deductible.

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CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS
INVITATION FOR BIDS

The City of Newport News will accept SEALED Bids in the Purchasing Conference Room, City Hall, 4th Fl., 2400 Washington Ave., Newport News, VA 23607, until the time specified below:

IFB #2011-3087-2005

SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT BRIARFIELD ROAD AT CHESTNUT AVENUE UPC #17522 December 21, 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

BID DUE DATE:

(This project is a City Administered, VDOT project with Federal and State funding sources. All State and Federal rules apply.)

This contract consists of plans and technical specifications as amended by Special Conditions and the 2007 edition of the VDOT Road and Bridge Specifications and the 2008 edition of the VDOT Road and Bridge Standards. Plans and technical specifications for said contract may be obtained by bona fide contractors and suppliers at the Office of the Department of Engineering, 8th Floor, City Hall Building, Newport News, Virginia, telephone (757) 926-8611 for a non-refundable fee of \$15.75 including tax per copy or by free download from the website www.nngov.com/purchasing.

The City reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, to award this contract in whole or in part, and to waive any informality in the IFB process.

Bidders making errors may request withdrawal of their bid by giving written notice, including original work papers, within two (2) business days after the IFB due date.

Sheri L. Chapman, CPPB
Director of Purchasing

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