RAYMOND A. JORDAN—PART I: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

By Frederick A. Hurst

I hesitated when asked to write an article about former Massachusetts State Representative Raymond A. Jordan, who recently retired from his federal job at HUD, because I know him so well. We’ve known each other since before we attended Classical Junior High School together and later Technical High School from where he graduated one year before me.

And he and his brothers and me and mine all but lived at Brookings playground playing endless games of pickup basketball, football and other games common to the times after school and on weekends.

And we partied together, had and lost girlfriends together, and often met up at the many twenty-five cent “socials” that our peers held to raise a few bucks and to party. And for many years we lived in the same Six Corners neighborhood and in later years cooperated in some ventures and notoriously clashed on others.

I wasn’t certain I could be objective.

We even worked together. While attending high school we worked summers in Connecticut tobacco fields, where we passed the time sliding down dusty dirt rows on our butts, picking the bottom three leaves from each plant which we stacked in rectangular buckets that were dragged by our sides while often playing the “dirty dozens” which our mutual friend, Robert Burgess, was so naturally good at (a competition involving holding insults about our respective mothers loudly across the rows, one that you could participate in without a fist fight only if invited and one that continues to page 5

SPRINGFIELD SUPERINTENDENT NAMED DEPUTY EDUCATION COMMISSIONER

“Alan Ingram is a strong leader and experienced educator, and he has worked effectively with principals, teachers, parents, and union leaders to implement efforts that have accelerated achievement… Alan’s commitment to excellence and equity is a trademark of his career. I am thrilled that he is joining our team. Alan’s leadership and experience will advance the statewide reform efforts we have implemented over the past four years.”


FIGHTING A SILENT KILLER

“This time it’s my battle. What I expected to be a routine PSA… blood test last year resulted in a call from my doctor that felt like a sledgehammer to the head: “Your levels are elevated,” she told me. “We want you to come in and get retested.” The second test also came back elevated. The biopsy that followed confirmed the worst: I had cancer. Damn.”

By Jerry Bembry – 10

CUPCAKES ON A TRUCK

“Yes, ‘Cupcakes on a Truck’ is a unique business that arrived in the Springfield area in September, 2011. It is owned by Helen McKinnie Johnson of Helen’s Hairum Salon fame.”

By Zelm Johnson – 16

STATEMENT ON U.S. SUPREME COURT RULING ON AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

“I am thrilled that the Court acknowledged the constitutionality of the extraordinary consumer protection built into the (Affordable Care Act)…. [There] are substantial reforms that have already yielded tremendous results for consumers to our residents.

By Victoria Veltri – 22

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

“We knew the Springfield superintendent search was a sham from the beginning. We knew the pool of qualified candidates would be limited. Why would you wholeheartedly search when the result was a foregone conclusion? Kudos to… Charles Racks who unsuccessfully tried to reopen the search….”

By Marjorie J. Hurst – 25

PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF OF LIBERIA VISITS WORCESTER

By Ed Cohen

KEVIN SHARPE: SPRINGFIELD’S MUSICIAN

By Frederick A. Hurst

The Kevin Sharpe Group

Forty-five-year-old Kevin Sharpe is a local musician who began his musical career at the age of seven singing gospel in his church choir. Sharpe sings and plays 14 different instruments. By age eleven he was playing drums for that same choir and eventually became one of the primary drummers for the Church of God in Christ in the region. He plays classical and Latin percussion, drums, base, keys—organ and piano—guitar and

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UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES

July
- Sabbatical Month
  1-9 Church-Wide Cruise
  11-13 Summer Sizzle Revival, 7pm

August
- Celebration Month
  11 Let Your Hair Down, 2pm & 6pm
  26 First Family Appreciation

September
- Covenant Month
  11 'Back to School' Rally, 10am-2pm
  15 S.W.A.T. Block Party, 12-5pm

October
- Kingdom Month
  17-19 Fresh Wind Fall Revival, 7pm
  31 Hallelujah Harvest Festival

December
- Christmas Month
  15 Christmas Drama Production
  24 Church-Wide Social, 8pm-11pm
  31 Watch Night Service, 9:30pm

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OH NO! DID YOUR HOUSE BURN DOWN?

I LOST YOUR PHONE!

R A Y M O N D A. J O R D A N—PART I: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

P R E S I D E N T E L L E N J O H N S O N S R I LEAF OF LIBERIA

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JUSTICE!

Suppose one shouldn’t gloat. But sometimes gloating is irresistible and justified. The treatment of Dr. Alan Ingram, superintendent of Springfield Schools (by now “former” superintendent), by members of White Springfield was a slap in the face to Black Springfield and everybody else harboring a sense of justice. The behavior was crass and the silence of those White folks (and Black folks, by the way) who should have spoken up in protest was telling, just as it is telling that so many of the detractors who left Dr. Ingram swinging in the wind of fabricated nonsense are now singing his praises as in “kissing ass.” To put it plainly, justice has prevailed and we folks who lamented the barbaric mistreatment of Dr. Ingram love it! I held no opinion one way or the other of Massachusetts Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester until he hired Dr. Ingram as his Deputy Commissioner. I now hold him in the highest regard for placing Dr. Ingram in a position that will allow him to continue influencing the direction of education in Springfield and the rest of Massachusetts. Chester used the highly regarded, nonracial criteria of competence rather than politics to make an excellent selection and place the folks in Springfield, who thought they had hijacked our school system, on notice that they will be scrutinized at the highest levels.

OBAMACARE SURVIVES!!!

By a five to four margin, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the Affordable Care Act, President Barack Obama’s signature health care legislation. The legislation was historical and placed the United States on par with other advanced countries in the world that recognized the need to provide all of its citizens with affordable health care, while at the same time depriving the Republican Party of an election issue they intended to use to drive Obama out of office. And John G. Chief Justice Roberts, Jr. provided the swing vote. What a great victory for President Obama and the country and for Justice Roberts whose legacy was hanging in the balance.

IT’S ABOUT CONDITIONING

At some subterfuge level we – African-Americans – still believe the garbage of innate criminality we have so assiduously been fed, and struggle with hating ourselves, as America long ago taught us to do. We struggle with it, yet we know better from firsthand, man-in-the-mirror experience. So how much harder is the struggle for white folks. (Leonard Pitts, May 8, 2012)

WE KNOW THE ROLE RACE IS PLAYING AND WE DON’T CARE WHAT YOU DO TO TRY TO SHAME US INTO SILENCE

The Republican’s attacks on President Barack Obama and his Black attorney general are not race neutral and we Black folks are not ashamed to say it and are pleased that some prominent White folks are finally speaking out about it.

LIGHTEN UP!

A seven-year-old White student dressed up as Martin Luther King, Jr. in compliance with a class assignment calling on students to dress up as a historical figure. He also put on black face makeup which caused school officials to send him home with his parents who were sitting in the audience. “I like black people” the seven-year-old is reported to have said to school officials (The Boston Globe, May 19, 2012), who were sensitive to the historical role black face played in demeaning Black Americans in earlier times. But think about it! This kid was not denigrating Black America. He was celebrating it! We need to lighten up and encourage our young, White allies.

A BLACK DISEASE?

Though African Americans are 12 percent of the population, we represent about a third of the kidney failures. Kidney disease is about five times more likely to affect African-Americans than other groups. We represent about 35 percent of the people waiting for transplants.

CATHOLIC ATTACK

So, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has decided to enter partisan politics and attack President Barack Obama because his healthcare law doesn’t give it the exemptions it wants from abortion related medical care. Too bad.

WE’RE KILLING OURSELVES!

Consider the facts: According to a U.S. Department of Justice 2007 report, blacks, who are only 12 percent of the population, accounted for 49 percent of all homicide victims in 2005….in 2007 homicide was the leading cause of death for black males ages 15 to 34. As a result of the high rate of violence in black communities, black children are 20 times more likely to be present during a murder than their white counterparts. Even more astounding than the rates of violence is the race of the perpetrators: Blacks commit 93 percent of the murders of other blacks. (The Boston Globe, April 28, 2012)

CHARLIE RANDEL RAMBLES ON

It’s not time for those upstart youngsters yet. Ancient, 82-year-old, Harlem, New York Representative Charlie Rangel held on to his seat recently in a tough primary battle against two prominent challengers, a popular Dominican and a well-connected African American. Good for Charlie and the memory of Adam Clayton Powell!

OBAMA AND THE RED SOX

Can you believe that every major television and newspaper carried articles about President Obama’s comment on the trade of Kevin Youkilis to the Chicago White Sox (even The Wall Street Journal!) as if the story was newsworthy!

I SUPPOSE THINGS ARE CHANGING

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which came into being as a breakaway Baptist group in protest of the Northern Baptist anti-slavery movement, elected African American Reverend Fred Lutor Jr. as its first Black leader. The formerly absolutely racist group, that banned Black folks from its pews and condemned the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision, has apparently reformed. Maybe things are changing?

SMART AS USUAL

Condoleezza Rice made a Sherman-like statement when pressed on the question of whether she would accept the vice presidency under Mitt Romney. As usual she demonstrated great wisdom. Even if one day she decides to jump into the political arena, doing so as partner to Mitt Romney would be foolish.

IT’S A GOOD LESSON TO LEARN

A critical moment in the battle of Gettysburg came when the 20th Maine Regiment, defending “little round top” ran out of bullets in the face of fully supplied confederate soldiers who were charging up the hill. Faced with the question of what to do, he ordered his men to charge. The Confederates where so shocked they all surrendered and, according to General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, the Bowdoin College professor who led the Maine regiment, begged for their lives. A good offense is the best defense under some of the most trying circumstances.
RAYMOND A. JORDAN—PART I: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

created an environment of humor and entertainment that mercifully distracted us all from the misery of our labor.

And we worked together on the second shift at Providence Hospital mopping floors following our supervisor’s perpetually rotating annual schedule. I worked there for one summer before leaving for college while Raymond, who also worked a day job for another company mopping floors at grocery stores, remained at Providence Hospital for a much longer time before leaving for a good-paying sheet metal job at Pratt and Whitney, a short-lived, two-month and twenty-nine day venture that fell apart for reasons beyond Ray’s control but that led him to a job at Savage Arms, where the money was less but where an opportunity lurked that changed his life forever.

Ray’s work ethic came from his strict father, who always worked two jobs until the day he was killed in a highway accident while driving his delivery truck in Connecticut, which occurred about eight or nine years after his wife, who also worked all their married life, had died. He expected and demanded that each of his boys earn his way, which Raymond began doing at an early age delivering groceries for a Walnut Street grocery store while also delivering newspapers.

Directly after graduation, chafing under the strict regimen of his father’s rule (which included the humiliation of being required to return home from his senior prom by midnight, earlier than his prom date was due home) and securely employed at Providence Hospital, Raymond moved out of his father’s house and into his own Cambridge Street apartment, which he shared with now-Bishop Curtis L. Shaird for several years before marrying his wife, the irrepressible Donna Harris with whom he had two daughters, one of whom is the Chief of Staff to the current mayor of Springfield.

Throughout this period, Ray also promoted concerts and dances. And he was a pro at it! Most have probably forgotten the signs he made and posted all over town announcing his next dance or concert, the tickets he sold, the crowds he attracted. But he did it all, was good at it, and made lots of money doing it! Most likely, Ray’s promotional background and his well-developed inclination to work hard were among the key elements that eventually led to his success in politics.

But there was something else Raymond Jordan and his three brothers, John, Ralph and Jeffrey, had at the time that many of us lacked. He was raised by a solidly middle class mother and father in a predominantly White, middle class neighborhood in a house they owned at 69 Cedar Street in a home environment in which a good education for him and his siblings was not a choice but a singular most important requirement that both his mother and his father assiduously promoted. I, and most of my friends, were raised by single parents in rental environments marked by all the struggles that attend to poverty and ghetto living and we all risked carrying the resulting “baggage” into our adult lives. It was a risk that Ray was fortunate to avoid.

The schools Ray attended were overwhelmingly White. As an honor student at Classical Junior High, he played sports – basketball and football – on all-White teams that went up against all-Black teams from Chestnut (North End) and Buckingham (Mason Square) Junior Highs. His football skills had been honed earlier at Brookings playground where he had been playing on mostly all-White teams since he was 12. And though Technical High School was more racially diverse due to the infusion of Black junior high students from Buckingham and Chestnut, it was still predominantly White. And for the first time, Ray played very aggressive football for three years with a mixed-race team that included other Black players, like Fred Lewis, Jay and Richie Griffin and Hamilton Ray and more. Though he didn’t know it at the time, since access for Black folks in Springfield to state political office was nil, Ray’s early diverse relationships turned out to be excellent preliminary preparation for his political future.

Ray also joined the Tech basketball team in his freshman year but quit after finding he was to spend most of the time on the bench, which didn’t suit his character then and, which anybody who knows him would agree, doesn’t fit his character today at 69 years old. Raymond A. Jordan will always be where the most action is and the idea that he will ever truly retire is not credible.

Even though Ray was raised in a White neighborhood, he didn’t lack regular exposure to Black folks. His first in depth orientation to his African-American counterparts came when he joined the 10-12 Dunbar basketball team. Later, as teenagers, many of us, who slowly seeped into the neighborhood (including Robert “Cee” Jackson, who remains one of Ray’s best friends), spent much time at Raymond’s house playing basketball in his relatively small triangular yard and many hours of Bid Whist in his living room or just shooting the breeze on his front porch after school.

But we were no Sunday school group that crowded onto the Jordan property, where his parents always warmly welcomed us. I can say categorically, and Ray agrees, had we been around today, our

Ray Jordan (2nd from left) serves as a groomsmen in Rick Hurst’s wedding in 1966

But we were no Sunday school group that crowded onto the Jordan property, where his parents always warmly welcomed us. I can say categorically, and Ray agrees, had we been around today, our

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Maria recently accepted a position as a residential mortgage loan officer at Webster Bank.

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of gratitude. It’s not enough to merely give thanks. We must be better at showing thanks. Similarly, you can’t “give” gratitude. Only those who actually benefit from acts of gratitude can name them as such. In short, unless someone values the “act” and acknowledges it as such, it matters not.

Appreciating is indeed a lovely idea, so much so that Americans have created an annual national day of Giving Thanks. For most of us, Thanksgiving consists only of sacrificing millions of turkeys and tons of desserts to our ever increasing waistlines. Some volunteer to serve at a soup kitchen, but most volunteer to watch football and gossip about relatives at our annual gathering – what gratitude!

It’s time we changed things. Stop misusing “gratitude,” both the word and the idea. Gratitude deserves better. Let’s do something that shows we actually are grateful. John F. Kennedy said it best: “As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

Why show gratitude? Is it just the right thing to do, or does it serve some other intrinsic value? Demonstrating sincere gratitude takes energy and thought. Having an attitude of gratitude requires the conscious effort of being thankful. So how can practicing gratitude have a permanent effect on us and those around us? Glad you ask.

When someone expresses thankfulness, it not only impacts the receiver, it also has benefits for the one giving thanks. Recognizing the blessings in our lives and acting upon them regularly increases our awareness and appreciation. Sharing our gratitude improves our quality of life because it results in positive emotions. And learning to appreciate what we have also makes life more valuable and meaningful.

Sometimes my light goes out and is rekindled by a friend, relative or even a stranger. I now more consciously think with deep gratitude of those who re-ignite me. I realize that they are sent my way to help restore my faith and focus on Him!

Acting on thoughts of gratefulness is challenging. Modeling a spirit of gratitude takes more effort than saying “thank you,” it’s a shift in thinking. People who model gratitude don’t take others for granted. They don’t make assumptions about how others should treat them or what others should do for them. They don’t walk around with a sense of entitlement, feeling they are owed more from the world. They offer or accept gratitude, making visits, calls, writing hand-written notes, etc. They just do it!

I Extend My Most Heartfelt Thanks and Gratitude To Each Of You! ■

By Patricia Spradley

C rrently in America because there are so many “experts” raising awareness for Education reform through political or financial avenues, the majority of Americans have heard of these reform efforts and perhaps understand the basic concepts. What the majority of Americans do not comprehend, however, is the underlying need for this reform. Why turnaround is important. What the relevance is of Education to us – individually and collectively.

The experts are touting his/her respective program, policy, or plan to fix Education, but are not providing an understanding of why Education needs to be fixed. The average American cannot access the political, financial, programmatic, and legislative jargon surrounding Education reform; and has an even harder time accessing or connecting to the roots of this reform – that Education is the foundation for life. This disconnect has manifested because society is not providing them with this information. We need to make the connections for them through a National campaign. A movement.

If we are to truly reform, we need to provide Americans with this understanding. If Apple, Coke, and Nike can change the world with material products, then we are obligated to at least change America by making Education no longer a “given” but a gift to be cherished. This starts with a vision for an America united in the understanding of the power of Education. This starts with putting an umbrella of relevance and connectivity over all the different players and programs that are fragmenting and separating and inadvertently disengaging and disconnecting those we need for the reform – the average American – the customer. This starts with a campaign…

“Education is Life. Learn. Live. Succeed” is one example of a National slogan. And though I understand evangelizing Education will require significantly more than a simple slogan, I believe in the power of the vision behind this campaign to evangelize. To create a movement based on common understanding before we find success in reform based on policies and programs and “fix its.” Basic research, fueled by my deep passion for this vision, denote that a National campaign is vital to the overall successes of Education reform. It is not an option to fail at this… it is a must to give Education a National voice. One message. United.

I am one person from a small city in Massachusetts, but I am dreaming big for Education and America. Steve Jobs changed the world with his dream, and I believe this campaign can change our Nation with mine.

To achieve a nation who understands the importance of Education as the foundation for societal successes – individual or collective – we must have an American Education Evangelist or visionary who has center stage on Education. We need a strong, non-controversial face for Education. Someone who can help people understand the need for education and make them care. Make Education relevant for all. Connect all the assorted programs, messages, and visions floating around into one vision of why we should care.

We have spokespersons for everything from AIDS to hair care and skin care products. Hard and soft news programs on everything from celebrity styles to international aid efforts. Nothing on Education. No focused messaging or reporting efforts. No collective voice. I am sure you can name the faces of many programs or projects or causes, but name one relatable face for Education.

Education stories are merely space fillers or clips on the “real” news shows, and reports often focus around money for new programs or platforms that are simply replacing the previous “flavor” or program of the month. There is no consistent, engaging hold on the

continues to page 33
SPRINGFIELD SUPERINTENDENT NAMED DEPUTY EDUCATION COMMISSIONER

MALDEN - Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester today announced the hiring of Springfield Superintendent of Schools Alan J. Ingram as Deputy Commissioner.

A retired Chief Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force and experienced school leader in multiple districts, Ingram has spent the past four years leading the state’s second largest school district. In Springfield, Ingram oversaw an annual operating budget of $410 million for a school district that serves 25,000 students and 4,700 personnel in 45 schools. Under Ingram, Springfield Public Schools made progress in closing the proficiency gap in mathematics across all grades and in English language arts at grades 7, 8 and 10.

“I welcome Alan’s leadership and wide-ranging experience to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as we work to close the achievement gap here in Massachusetts,” said Governor Deval Patrick.

“Alan Ingram is a strong leader and experienced educator, and he has worked effectively with principals, teachers, parents, and union leaders to implement efforts that have accelerated achievement,” said Commissioner Chester. “Alan’s commitment to excellence and equity is a trademark of his career. I am thrilled that he is joining our team. Alan’s leadership and experience will advance the statewide reform efforts we have implemented over the past four years.”

“Alan brings a wealth of experience in education administration to this position and I look forward to his continued partnership in furthering our collective efforts to ensure that every student in Massachusetts has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential in the classroom and in life,” said Education Secretary Paul Reville.

Ingram said he is excited and grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Commissioner Chester and Department staff as they serve the 400 operating school districts throughout the Commonwealth.

“I am extremely proud of the reputation Massachusetts has earned as a national leader for school reform under Commissioner Chester’s leadership,” said Dr. Ingram. “I’ve had the pleasure of working with the Commissioner since beginning my tenure in Massachusetts four years ago. I will work hard to help advance the state’s education priorities and support the work of teachers and administrators to elevate student achievement and close achievement gaps for all students.”

Ingram will join Jeff Wulfson as one of two deputy commissioners at the 500-person Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which oversees the Commonwealth’s public K-12 system.

(Excerpts from June 25, 2012 Press Release)

SPRINGFIELD’S GRADE-LEVEL READING INITIATIVE, READING SUCCESS BY 4TH GRADE, SELECTED NATIONAL FINALIST

Innovative plan to ensure that Springfield students are reading on grade-level by the end of third grade picked from more than 100 applicants

Springfield – The community-based initiative, READ! Reading Success by 4th Grade (RS4G), aimed at ensuring that more city children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade has been chosen as a finalist for the All-America City Award, sponsored each year by the National Civic League.

The RS4G plan was submitted by a broad community coalition that included early education providers, Springfield Public Schools, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Pioneer Valley United Way, the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation and representatives of the business community, and is one of 32 finalists selected through a peer review process from a field of more than 100 entries across the country. Winners will be announced July 2 in Denver, Colorado.

Beyond the award contest, Springfield’s plan makes the city a charter member in a national movement of local leaders, nonprofits and foundations putting a stake in the ground on third-grade reading. That milestone marks the point when children shift from learning to read and begin reading to learn. Students who haven’t mastered reading by then are more likely to get stuck in a cycle of academic failure, drop out of school, and struggle throughout their lives.

According to Sally Fuller, Project Manager of the READ! initiative, “Our work on improving early literacy in Springfield revolves around three key focus areas—families, schools and communities. Our goal is to improve reading proficiency by the end of third grade from 39% proficient in 2012 to 80% reading proficiently by the year 2016. We are gratified that the work we are doing on the ground has been recognized by the National Civic League with our community’s designation as a finalist for the All America City Award.”

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The tax system is “pay as you go” by law. If you have income on which no taxes are withheld, it is up to you to prepay the proper amount of taxes. Generally, if you expect to owe at least $1,000 in federal taxes and your withholding and tax credits are less than 90% of your 2012 tax liability (or less than 100% of your 2011 tax liability), estimated tax payments are required. You are essentially required to “estimate” your income and taxes, and make the appropriate payments. Additionally, your estimated tax payments must be computed to also pay for any self-employment (i.e. FICA) taxes on your net business and/or partnership income that you might also owe.

How do you make your “estimates” in order to comply with the IRS requirements? You should use the worksheets found in Form 1040-ES for the 2012 tax year. Once you compute your estimated income and taxes, you pay them in four installments with due dates of April 15, June 15, September 15, and January 15 of the following year.

The penalties for not properly paying your taxes on a timely basis can be severe. It’s certainly not something that you want to ignore or overlook. And the computations can be tricky. Also, there are special rules for farmers, fishermen, and high-income taxpayers. Your best bet is to have a qualified tax professional review your 2012 tax issues and assist you in determining whether any estimated payments might be required.

By Samuel N. Wilson Jr.
For some people, consuming enough dairy sources daily is not a hard task, while others struggle to get adequate amounts on a regular basis. Dairy sources include plain milk, yogurt, ice cream, custard, pudding, etc. Many of us were raised on old-fashioned whole milk. As a nutritionist, when I make an inquiry about why whole milk is preferred over other kinds of milk (2%, 1% and skim), I am told, “It’s what I grew up drinking.” Even when individuals are directed to what the updated research says, they still insist on following that childhood habit of drinking a glass of whole milk.

So, just what does the research show? Is there really a significant difference in types of milk? And if so, what is the difference? Before we go any further, let’s be clear that milk products are needed each day. Milk products provide us with servings of calcium, vitamin A, vitamin B12, protein and many other nutrients, including vitamin D. Vitamin D is known to promote strong bones and prevent such diseases as osteoporosis. Whichever type of milk an individual chooses will be packed with nutrients. The debate is over the fat content—more specifically—the saturated milk content.

As we have discussed in the past, several different science-based studies clearly show that consuming limited amounts of healthier fats, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in fish, nuts (like almond and cashews), olive and canola oils, avocados, whole grains, etc., help promote a healthier heart, not to mention helping to prevent obesity.

SUMMER IS IN FULL FORCE AND GARDENS ARE GROWING ALL OVER THE CITY. SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE EVEN HARVESTED A FEW TOMATOES FOR YOUR SALAD. THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE TASTE OF A FRESH TOMATO FROM A GARDEN. AND THE WORK THAT GOES INTO HAVING A COMMUNITY GARDEN IS MINIMAL. IT IS CALLED A COMMUNITY GARDEN BECAUSE OF ITS COMMUNAL QUALITIES. THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO DO SOME OF THE WORK.

For example, the Bay Street Community Garden is a collaboration of many entities. We started off by asking Bergen Circle apartments for permission to use the vacant space in front of their parking lot. We asked Rich Devine from the Sheriff’s Department to help us with tilling the ground to take up the grass that was there and prepare it for planting. They gladly collaborated with us. Then members of the community came together to plant the donations we received from various gardens. A UMASS student, Peter Merzbacher, helped those of us who knew nothing about gardening by facilitating workshops on what to do. There is no way to count how many community partners helped us last year and this year the list is growing.

There is now a Community Gardening Ordinance in Springfield which was submitted by the Springfield Food Policy Council. The city council approved it, agreeing to take vacant lots in the city and allow them to be assessed for the viability of a community garden in its place. This is a major feat for the parts of the city that have vacant lots and abandoned houses. It has been said that “blight causes crime” because when criminals see a place that is not being taken care of or looks abandoned, they feel safe to do whatever they please, regardless of the negative consequences to the neighboring families and their children.

Sergeant Delaney of the Springfield Police Department drove by Gardening the Community and the Bay Street Community Garden and said that we need more community gardens in our city. He said that when a community comes together to take care of a garden, it makes the criminals think twice before settling in. He said “community gardens make neighborhoods safer.” With the new community gardening ordinance on the books in the city, we are able to advocate for more community gardens. If you have an empty lot in your neighborhood, you can ask the Springfield Food Policy Council about the possibility of making it a community garden. All you need is a few of your neighbors and the will to do it.
Prostate cancer has claimed the lives of many black men, but it doesn’t have to be a death sentence.

(The Root) — Twenty-one years ago my mother, Mary Lewis, learned that she had cancer. It was skin cancer — melanoma — doctors told her, and by the time it was detected, the cancer had already spread to her lymph nodes. She was given six months to live, but even as the cancer ravaged her body, she held on for two years. She died at a hospice in 1993. She was 56.

Four years ago my oldest brother, Joe, sat me down in the living room of his home and explained to me the seriousness of his cancer. It was prostate cancer, and by that time it had spread to his lymph nodes, too. He explained that even though the drugs he was taking would buy him some time, the cancer cells would eventually consume his body. Our family was at Joe’s hospital bedside the night he died in April 2010. He left behind a wife and four sons — two of them in their early teens.

One family. Two devastating results. And now cancer’s back for a third round. This time it’s my battle. What I expected to be a routine PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test last year resulted in a call from my doctor that felt like a sledgehammer to the head: “Your levels are elevated,” she told me. “We want you to come in and get retested.”

The second test also came back elevated. The biopsy that followed confirmed the worst: I had cancer. Damn. Even though it’s been some time since I was told that I had cancer, I’m still numb. To know that something inside my body can potentially kill me consumes my thoughts every day. The thought of what cancer has done to my family — and what it can do to me — robs me of sleep every night. Still, I consider myself lucky.

Prostate cancer is a silent killer, and because it grows slowly, many men have no idea it’s there. With the spike in my PSA levels, it’s likely that I’ve lived with cancer for many years. Fortunately for me, the cancer was found in its early stages and, based on tests so far, never left the prostate. Doctors tell me that with treatment, I can expect a full recovery.

But some men never have a shot at recovery, mainly because they have no idea the cancer is there. After telling a close friend two weeks ago that I had prostate cancer, I asked him the question that I ask all my friends now: When was the last time you had a PSA test? His response: Never. He’s 49 years old, just like me.

The following facts — which I
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GOING UP! PAVING A PATH FOR THE
LEADERS OF TOMORROW

By Kirk Smith

B y definition, the word “leadership” refers to the ability to guide, direct or influence others. Although it’s a pretty simple word, becoming a leader and performing as a leader are anything but simple. In its truest sense, leadership is a lifelong commitment.

For many of us, our ability to lead others to bring about positive change in our community comes from overcoming personal hardships and the people who supported the efforts to do so. Whether due to poverty, academic hardships, illness, lack of adult influence, or any other reason, many of today’s leaders experienced challenging situations that inspired them to be agents of change in the lives of others. For some, simply knowing that these challenges exist for others is all the motivation they need.

No matter where the drive comes from, every successful leader that I have ever encountered has taken three very important steps:

1. They GET UP to GO UP. Leaders take initiative. Amazing things can happen when you decide where you want to end up. From there, you can decide where you want to see others end up.
2. They GIVE UP to GO UP. Leaders make sacrifices. You would be hard pressed to find someone in a leadership position who hasn’t had to overcome disappointment or given up something that they care about in order to improve the lives of others.
3. They GROW UP to GO UP. Leaders know how to be mature. Leaders realize that their emotions have value and can be a source of motivation, but they also know that emotions cannot dictate decisions.

True leaders never stop leading. They continue to set new goals and find ways to achieve them. What would the world be like today if renowned technology leader Steve Jobs felt his work was done when the first I-Pod was developed? How different our world would be today! The same is true for leaders in the non-profit community. Should we settle for mere improvements in our education system, for example? Absolutely not! We rely on our leaders to continue to make strides to close the educational disparities that plague this region. Is it enough for our health care leaders to say that many more families are learning to prepare healthy meals in their homes when countless others are still

leadership pioneer valley
LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY’S INAUGURAL GRADUATES PRESENT
CAPSTONE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Forty-one emerging and established leaders graduate from leadership program

Forty-one Leadership Pioneer Valley participants presented their accomplishments on Friday, June 8th from 2-4 pm at Smith College Conference Center in Northampton from working in six teams on issues facing our region. Team projects were based on action items from the Plan for Progress that still need action, including youth violence, workforce development, retaining young professionals, and racial barriers. Each team offered expertise and energy to make a difference on community challenges from throughout the region.

In many instances, teams collaborated with local non-profits and other experts to accomplish their goals. They raised any financial resources needed for their projects themselves. The Above the Violence team collaborated with the Holyoke Youth Task Force to provide the youth in Holyoke with safe alternatives to the illegal and/or risk behaviors in which many choose to engage. Their efforts resulted in a video that will be used to help expand the Task Force’s successful “Holyoke Nights.”

Bridging Pathways convened a meeting of stakeholders from higher education, businesses, workforce development, and other service providers to begin the process of better collaboration and new initiatives to better provide pathways to sustainable careers in the region. Nearly 100 people crammed into a room at Holyoke Community College in May to learn from one another and hear about models for success.

“I was so impressed with this team’s ability to get such high profile individuals in one room. Our table made the commitment to follow up with each other and to continue with the conversation that was started at the table. I look forward to working together for the betterment of the Pioneer Valley,” commented Armando Feliciano, Director of Springfield O.W.L. Adult Education Center about the meeting organized by Bridging Pathways.

The Next Generation Pioneers is helping to identify and engage young professionals in efforts to create a more vibrant culture within the Pioneer Valley. They formed a partnership with The Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts to create and distribute the first ever, regional survey on individuals between the ages of 18-45. The survey focused on identifying perceptions Young Professionals have about the Pioneer Valley and the amenities it offers. The data is being disseminated widely to assist efforts to attract and retain young professionals in the Valley.

The inaugural class of Leadership Pioneer Valley received certificates following a reception to recognize their completion of the ten-month leadership development program. Each participant participated in day-long monthly sessions from October until May featuring seminar-style leadership development sessions and hands-on field experiences in communities throughout the Pioneer Valley. Through the program they refined their leadership skills, gained connections, and developed a greater commitment to community stewardship and cultural competency. This culturally diverse class of forty-one men and women represent non-profit, private, educational and public organizations throughout Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties.

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“We are thrilled to graduate our inaugural class of Leadership Pioneer Valley leaders. They represent the best of the Pioneer Valley and I have seen their passion and determination to make a difference in the region,” remarked Lora Wondolowski, Director of Leadership Pioneer Valley.

2012 GRADUATES

Steven Abdow, Episcopal Diocese of Western Mass.
Kristen Adams, Florence Savings Bank
Raymond Berry, United Way of Pioneer Valley
Brady Chianciola, PeoplesBank
Jessica Collins, Partners for a Healthier Community
Nicole Contois, Springfield Housing Authority
*Alessa Days, City of Springfield
Christin Dereman, Human Resources Unlimited
Peter Ellis, DIF Design
Lorenzo Gaines, ACCESS Springfield Promise Program
Kathryn Girardin, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech
Annamarie Golden, Baystate Health
Zaida Govan, Partners for a Healthier Community
Brittney Kelleher, Westfield Bank
Deborah Kenyon, City of Springfield
Haydee Lambert-Rodriguez, MassMutual
Madeline Landrau, MassMutual
Joan Leahy, PeoplesBank
Michael Lewis, Greenfield Community College
Ruby Maddox, Mt. Holyoke College
Tony Maroulis, Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce
Andrew Maxwell, MassMutual
Calvin McFadden, St. John’s Congregational Church
*Tim McKenna, ARCADIS
Kelvin Molina, HAP Housing
Isolda Ortega-Bustamante, Holyoke Public Schools
Lynn Page, WGBY-TV
Giuseppe Perniciaro, Western Mass. Electric Company
Johnny Ramos, Baystate Health
Adam Robinson, Ostberg and Associates
Victor H. Rodriguez Sr., Hampden Bank
Rachel Romano, Veritas Preparatory Charter School
Marla Shelasky, Lander-Grinspoon Academy
Katie Stebbins, Your Friend in Springfield
Sam Stegeman, PVGrows
Rachel Stoler, Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Sarah Tanner, United Way of Pioneer Valley
Lori Tanner, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Tom Thacher, CareerPoint
David Thibault, PeoplesBank
Kimberly Williams, Baystate Health

SPRINGFIELD—The Massachusetts Career Development Institute, Inc. announced a transition in its core services that will increasingly revolve the agency around family self-sufficiency initiatives and de-emphasize some workplace training programs, many of which are now being undertaken at the community college and vocational secondary school level.

The move will have the immediate impact of downsizing the organization by 15% of its current workforce. The agency will also plan to relocate to a smaller, more efficient training and educational facility within Springfield as it transitions to a more appropriate operating model, according to Timothy L. Sneed, Executive Director of MCDI.

The new emphasis at MCDI will be on career counseling and training tracks that are in high demand, eliminating those that are being shifted to other training sources. However, MCDI will continue its vocational training programs that address the growing employer demand in healthcare through its Certified Nurse Aide/Home Health Aide and Medical Office Professional training programs.

While this reorganization is difficult, we see this as an opportunity to strengthen our core training programs with a vision of future expansion opportunities,” Sneed said.

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African American Point of View

COMMUNITY

LATIN@ GROOVE

MINDSET CANNOT BE LEGISLATED, IT MUST BE EDUCATED

By Magdalena Gómez

As a child I hated the color pink; it labeled me as a “girly-girl” which I have never been. I was expected to be feminine, please men and be demure. I was told to finish school before considering marriage by a mother who told me, “I’ll kill you if you get pregnant,” who simultaneously gave me baby dolls as gifts, complete with bottle and carriage. What I wanted was a tool set and art supplies, but all I got were blonde, blue-eyed dolls with straight hair, another coded message for the type of man I should choose as a husband. When I was planning high school, I wanted to attend Gompers Vocational school and learn how to be an auto mechanic, but at that time, only boys could attend trade schools. I learned how to make muffins instead. It was expected that I would become a secretary, marry, provide grandchildren, settle into a two-story, brick house with a “nice, clean cut, all-American boy” (code for white), as they were perceived to make better providers. Aside from the internalized racism of the colonized mind, the message also conveyed was that I could not provide for myself. In the sixties, I appeared on The Alan Burke Show, precursor to contemporary programs that feature edgy subjects and controversial personalities. The main guest that day was the first “transsexual” to bring media attention to sexual reassignment, Christine Jorgensen. Backstage, Ms. Jorgensen was the first person to ever tell me that I was a good poet. She gave me the courage to go out and be me. Shouldn’t everyone have that right?

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KEVIN SHARPE: SPRINGFIELD’S MUSICIAN

continued from page 1

more. He taught himself to play each instrument as needed in his professional career. Ironically, the one instrument he doesn’t play is the sax, which is his wife’s favorite instrument.

In college Sharpe studied classical percussion, arranging and choral conducting. The Springfield, Massachusetts native also studied voice with Dr. Horace Clarence Boyer and improvisation with Yusef Lateef. Since graduating with degrees in Music Education and Jazz Performance, he has performed with jazz artists Archie Shepp, Charles Greenlee, Avery Sharpe and Steve Turré. He has completed recordings with John Blake, Fellowship, soul diva Betty Harris and others. He was the conductor of the orchestral work “A Celebration of Family Community and the Life of Primus Mason” for the Springfield Arts Festival, and a guest conductor of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra’s Holiday Pops concert. He toured Europe as a vocalist and instrumentalist and he was a choral director for Dartmouth and Smith Colleges. He has also worked for several years as writer, music director and vocalist for the contemporary gospel group “Fellowship.”

Kevin has produced four albums, “Kevin Sharpe,” his first about 20 years ago; “By Faith” with his group, Fellowship; “Introducing the Kevin Sharpe Group,” the group that followed Fellowship; and the fourth most recent, “God Songs,” which is available at Morningstar Christian Books throughout the North East and on The Kevin Sharpe Group website.

Kevin formed Fellowship in 1992 and disbanded it in 2003 because he felt that “sometimes a band needs to go in different directions.” Before and after Fellowship, Kevin played for many bands and formed groups of his own including “Down Five,” one of the most popular local singing groups to come out of Springfield. After Fellowship disbanded, Kevin did without a group for a few years during which time he played in other bands, as he had done throughout his musical career and continues to do, “because that’s what (he) does for work.” It’s what puts food on the table and pays the rent.

In 2005 he was asked to put together a group for a specific “gig,” which he did. When he got a few more calls for the same service, he decided to make the group permanent and named it “The Kevin Sharpe Group.” Today, Kevin is the only original member of The Kevin Sharpe Group’s 13 musicians. He is the group’s director but he also writes, sings and plays the guitar. As Kevin describes it, the group does original modern gospel, “original” because it is his signature approach to gospel music, “modern” because it is not typical contemporary music. It is “here and now” but has no particular genre except that, lyrically, it is gospel, about God, Jesus. It is not simply inspirational but also based on the Bible. The Kevin Sharpe Group does not fit into any known niche. The group takes pride in being “artistic” as opposed to being like everyone else. Black folks sometimes think the group sounds like White Gospel and White folks sometimes think it sounds Black. The fact that the group is multi-ethnic and mixed denominational with members who live in diverse communities all over Western Massachusetts (Springfield, Chicopee, Williamstown, Westfield and more) might explain the dual perceptions. “Thing is,” Kevin commented, “Heaven’s going to look like that too.”

continues to page 30
We will save you money in the cost of having your home sided. Compare our prices with our competitors. You will see that our prices are the lowest.

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During the summer season it is common to see hot dog carts in every city throughout the country, but what about "Cupcakes on a Truck?" Yes, "Cupcakes on a Truck" is a unique business that arrived in the Springfield area in September, 2011. It is owned by Helen McKinnie Johnson, a beauty expert with 30 years experience, skills as well. In addition to being a family and friends, but never entered the contest. However, in July of 2011, with her 'Yellow Velvet Cake.' From that moment, cake orders became more than a hobby, but a business. She sold 68 cakes from that day through Halloween (and only on a part-time basis). But realizing that everyone doesn’t want an entire cake to eat, but might just want a sample—the cupcake business evolved as she added cupcakes to her cake menu.

On Fridays, she began going to the Farmer’s Market. On her first day at the Farmer’s Market, Helen watched all of her cupcakes sell, but realized cupcakes on a napkin were unacceptable, so she returned the next day with individualized wrapping packaging. It was a learning experience about “product perception.” Then came her presence at MassMutual Vendor Days and Tower Square on Wednesdays. Because of her traveling schedule and the desire to reach different customers, the idea of a mobile business was born. She thought: How about selling cupcakes on a truck where she could travel to different locations, different days, and different times—similar to a food truck?

When I asked about cupcake flavors and cost, Helen informed me that there are over 100 flavors, including 4-16 flavors that are available every week. The average cost is $2.50 per cupcake and $25 per dozen. Because of her cupcakes’ popularity, Nee Nee’s Divine Edibles will be in the downtown area this summer at the Courthouse, City Hall and other locations. She can “auto-ship” cakes and cupcakes to any place in the world, including to active service men and women. Her cakes and cupcakes can be viewed at www.neeneesdivineedibles.com, or ordered by email at: Neeneesdivineedibles@yahoo.com, or by calling (413) 221-7666. She’s also on FACEBOOK.

And make sure to look for Helen and her husband, George, in person as they delight you with their new venture “Cupcakes on a Truck.”

**THE PRETTY PINK CUPCAKE TRUCK MAKES ITS DEBUT IN SPRINGFIELD!**

On June 16th, 2012, Helen McKinnie Johnson, the cupcake lady and owner of Nee Nee’s Divine Edibles, debuted her Pink Cupcake Truck at the Friends of the Homeless Shelter located at 769 Worthington Street in Springfield, Massachusetts.

As Helen began her journey in expanding her baking business, she proclaimed, “If God blesses me to move forward with this business, my first order of business will be to pass the blessing on to someone else.” Keeping to her prayer, Nee Nee’s Divine Edibles served free sweet treats at the shelter and, hopefully, served a small measure of joy to those in need.

Honoring the significance of Juneteenth and the Brethren Community Foundation, Helen also created a special cupcake, The Brethren’s Chocolate Surprise, a triple chocolate strawberry cupcake, with fresh native strawberries, that was available at the Juneteenth celebration.
COMMUNITY FOCUS

MAX SULLIVAN RECEIVES 2012 HOWARD DREW AWARD

By Coach Larry Libow

H igh School of Commerce Track Team Captain, senior Max Sullivan, is the 2012 Howard Drew Award winner. The award, given to a Springfield track and field athlete, is for “athletic excellence, pursuit of scholarship and perseverance despite injury.”

One hundred years ago, Springfield High School student Howard Drew was selected to represent the United States at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. An injury in the semi-final heat of the 100 meter dash prevented Drew, the overwhelming favorite, from bringing home Gold in the 100m and 200m events. World War I caused the 1916 Olympics to be cancelled so Drew never received Olympic recognition. During the years he attended USC on a work-study scholarship, he held every indoor and outdoor sprint World Record. He was the first person to be called “The World’s Fastest Human.” He studied Law at Drake University, became one of only four African-American lawyers in Connecticut, and was the first black judge in that state.

In many respects, although 100 years apart, Max Sullivan and Howard Drew have some uncanny parallels. Both were enthusiastic about football, and both were running backs even though both were/are of small stature, and both were captains of their track teams. Max will be the first in his family to attend college when he enters Franklin Pierce University this Fall and I believe that Drew was the first in his family to attend college.

Both Howard Drew and Max Sullivan had to deal with injury and disappointment. Both sustained injuries that prevented them from achieving their full athletic potential—Drew at the Olympics and Max during a pre-season scrimmage in his senior year where he sustained a torn ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament), which resulted in his inability to play to his potential during the football season, and seriously affected his senior track season. Max underwent physical therapy and wore a brace in order to lead the Commerce Boys Track Team as a captain and ran well enough to qualify for the Western Mass Championships. Had the injury not happened, Max would certainly have been in the 100m finals at Western Mass and the Commerce Boys 4x1 Relay would likely have repeated as Gold Medalists instead of taking 2nd place. Even though Max was unable to anchor his team’s 4x1 relay, a spot he held since his Sophomore year, in the spirit of Howard Drew, he held the starting blocks for his relay. It was the same selfless act as Drew saying that it didn’t matter who won Olympic Gold as

EBONY LEE SOARS

E bony Lee, born and raised in Springfield, the daughter of Irene Lee of Hyattsville, MD and My-Ron Hatchett of Springfield, MA, is on her way to the top!

She currently serves as Vice President, Mobility Solutions for Comcast. Her responsibilities include business strategy and program management for the innovation technology joint venture between Comcast and Verizon Wireless. Previously, Ebony served as Sr. Director, Business Strategy for Converged Products, where her responsibilities included business case development, strategic planning, and performance analysis of Comcast’s next generation video products and platform. As part of this role, she also serves as the primary interface with the Legal, Government Affairs and Content Acquisition teams.

Prior to joining Comcast in 2008, Ebony served as Sr. Manager, Corporate Strategy & Planning at Sprint Nextel, where she played a key role in the implementation and management of the Balanced Scorecard program and strategic initiatives across the company. She went on to join the Product Development team for one of these strategic initiatives — 4G/Wimax — where she managed the next generation product roadmap and planning process.

Ebony holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and she received her undergraduate degree in Finance & International Business from the University of Virginia. She currently resides in Philadelphia and serves on the Board of Musica and is a member of the Leadership Council of KIPP Philadelphia.

SPRINGFIELD MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS MAKE NEWS...

T he National Volunteer Award for 2012 was presented to Robert Klupa at the Integrated Training Summit in Nashville, TN. Klupa is a dedicated member of the Springfield Health and Human Services Medical Reserve Corps. He has spent many hours responding to the various disasters Springfield experienced in 2011.

The Medical Reserve Corps was established after the terrorist event of 9/11 by President Bush and is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. Klupa was given his award by Capt. Robert J. Tossatto, Director, Division of the Civilian Volunteers Medical Reserve Corps (OCVM) and Rear Admiral, Boris D. Lushniak, Deputy US Surgeon General and witnessed by hundreds of volunteers from across the nation.

Members of the Medical Reserve Corps are trained, badged and certified to do the work they do in responding to public health emergencies and other community health initiatives. Helen R. Caulton-Harris, Director of Springfield Department of Health and Human Services adds her “Congratulations to Robert Klupa, the MRC leadership and all the MRC volunteers who respond in the city’s time of crisis. Volunteers are always welcome and needed.”
Around Town & . . .

Members of Men of Color Health Awareness (MOCHA) at their Western Mass. Prostate Cancer Symposium

The Twelfth Annual Fruits of Labor Appreciation Award Night honored individuals who made significant contributions to the community. From left: Mistress of Ceremonies Willette Johnson, scholarship recipients Thomas Ashe and Arielle Ward, brother of Honoree Edward Anderson, scholarship recipient Dynasty Wilson, Honoree James Blain, Keynote Speaker Kevin Freeman, UConn Assistant Director Men's Basketball Administration, Big Will Express Committee President Joyce Williams Calhoun, and scholarship recipient Tori Brown-Carter

Hampden County District Attorney Mark Mastroiani (far right) invited an 8th Grade Class from Kiley Middle School for a field day event at Hampden County District Court, where students saw the court in operation and got to hear court staff talk about their roles in the judicial system

Revival Time Evangelistic Center recently held W.I.N. “Women in the Now” Women’s Empowerment Crusade. From left: First Lady Denise Williams, Keynote Speaker Bishop Iona Locke, and Pastor Steven R. Williams, Sr.

MetroPCS sponsored the USA Basketball Program in Springfield, MA and Meriden, CT. Participating from USA Basketball from left: Hall of Fame player and coach Lenny Wilkins, Darren Zanders of Hartford, Lucy Cardona of Bridgeport, and Rob Adams of Cleveland, OH

The Women of Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Presbyterian Church recently held their Annual Women’s Day Program. From left: Committee member Elder Joyce Davis, Guest Speaker, St. John’s Congregational Church’s First Lady Jamina Scippio-McFadden, committee members Elder Delphine Harris, Deacon Sandra Moultrie, and Deacon Kitty Brightwell
Family and friends gather to celebrate the unveiling of the Ernest (“Ernie”) Smith monument at the dedication of the playing fields at Blunt Park. Ernie was a former Park Commissioner who served on the Board of Park Commissioners from 1991-2009. He was the owner of Ernie’s Barbershop and a beloved member of the community. This monument and dedication is a fitting tribute to the years of commitment Ernie gave to Springfield’s youth.

Alden Baptist Church’s team, consisting of several cancer survivors, participated in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life event which took place at Springfield College.

The Brethren greet the community at their Juneteenth annual celebration held at Springfield Technical Community College.

Daniels New Bethel COGIC recently recognized community members for their contributions. From left: Pastor Andrew Daniels and First Lady Alice Daniels, Honorees Rev. Morris Stimage-Norwood and First Lady Jackie Stimage-Norwood of Greater New Life Church, Bishop Charles Pink and Asst. Pastor and First Lady Dorothy Pink of New Creation Discipleship Ministries, and Rev. Dr. Brett Snowden and First Lady Ambrozine Snowden of Progressive Community Baptist Church.

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) recently celebrated the organization’s 85th anniversary at the 2012 Western Mass. Annual Human Relations Award Banquet. From left: Award recipients Michael & Joan Sobon, Ronn D. Johnson, Dr. Carol A. Leary, Brian P. Tuohey, youth award recipient Caleb Wilkie, and NCCJ Executive Director Dr. Andrea C. Kandel.

During the Third Baptist Church 2012 Homecoming Worship Service, past and current members of the Third Baptist Choir posed for a reunion group photo.
COMMUNITY FOCUS

THE EXCHANGE CLUB OF SPRINGFIELD PRESENTS ITS FIRST ANNUAL GALA CELEBRATION

The Exchange Club is a well-kept secret,” says Dr. Bobbie Rennix, President, and she feels that it is time to increase the exposure of this wonderful organization and celebrate the club’s presentation of their yearly awards. Dr. Rennix has been the president since January of 2010 and was again voted president of the club for the upcoming year. She is the first Black president of the Exchange Club of Springfield in its 91 years of existence.

The Exchange Club dates back to the late 1800’s, when a group of business men began meeting for lunch in Detroit, Michigan to exchange business leads and information. When the club formally organized in 1911, the name Exchange was chosen because of the exchange of information. It became a national organization in 1977.

Their program of services is divided into the categories of Americanism, Community Service, and Youth, with Child Abuse Prevention emphasized as the national project in 1979, helping countless children to lead normal, happy lives. The Exchange Club’s motto is: Unity for Service.

The Exchange Club of Springfield is the premier service club in this region, and in 2011, they celebrated their 90th year of service. Springfield is the oldest club in the North East, established in 1921, ten years after the national Exchange Club was established.

The Springfield club has contributed to countless local organizations, including the donation of Tyrannosaurus Rex at the Springfield Science Museum, the train in Forest Park, the Christmas party for MSPCC at the Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Shriner’s Hospital.

Their main focus is the prevention of neglect and abuse to children.

This first Gala Celebration presented the A.C.E. award to Joanna Bynum from Putnam Vocational High School. This award recognizes a high school student who has overcome great obstacles to achieve high school graduation. The Blue and Gold Award is the Exchange Club’s highest tribute to the men and women of Springfield’s police and firefighting forces. Private Frank Jimenez and Private Juan Morales were the recipients from the Fire Department and Captain Peter Dillon was the recipient from the Police Department.

From left: Exchange Club Chairman Bill Duquette, Blue and Gold Award recipients Frank Jimenez and Juan Morales of the Springfield Fire Dept., A.C.E. Award recipient Putnam High School senior Joanna Bynum, Blue and Gold Award recipient Captain Peter Dillon, Springfield Police Dept. and Exchange Club President Dr. Bobbie Rennix.

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Entertainment • Luncheon • Vendors
Saturday, July 14, 2012
3:00 pm - 6:00pm
Springfield Sheraton
Proceeds benefit scholarship and community service initiatives.

For tickets, call 413-627-6127
Sponsored by Community Enrichment, Inc., a Foundation of the Xi Xi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
President Sirleaf has been hard at work rebuilding a country that had been decimated by a bloody civil war that cost the lives of over 250,000 Liberians. When she was elected president in 2005, the infrastructure of the country was severely damaged, the people were struggling to survive, health care was a scarce commodity, and the country labored under a staggering debt in the billions. Her background in international finance and relations helped her to skillfully negotiate the forgiving of the international debt and secure help with the rebuilding of the infrastructure. The health care system, which was damaged by the civil war, has been improved with the rebuilding of hospitals and health clinics with assistance from the international medical community.

The Liberians at the community event expressed pride in the leadership that President Sirleaf has been providing. Many Liberians fled Liberia to escape the civil war and President Sirleaf emphasized that the country needed help from the worldwide Liberian community. “My message to you today, she said, “is be proud to be a Liberian.” She asked the Liberian community to join Liberia in rebuilding the country and told them unequivocally, “Your country needs you.”

The following day, President Sirleaf was introduced at the UMass Medical School commencement as one of the world’s great leaders. President Sirleaf, who was re-elected in 2011, was one of three winners of the Nobel Peace Prize last year for her work on women’s rights and bringing peace to her country.

As part of her address to the graduates, she commented, “We inherited a wounded country. We inherited a house divided against itself. Liberia stood in dire need of healing.” She thanked the UMass Medical School for helping to improve health care in her country. “Sixteen percent of Liberian babies die at birth,” she said. When she became president in 2005, less than half the country’s states had at least one doctor, and less than half the country’s population lived within an hour’s walk of a medical facility. President Sirleaf admitted that she was distressed to learn that infant mortality rates have risen in her country, mainly due to more accurate reporting.

Along with the honorary degree presented to President Sirleaf, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina M. Benjamin, and Joseph J. O’Donnell, the founder of the Joey Fund, which funds research into cystic fibrosis, also received honorary degrees.

President Sirleaf, who had suffered imprisonment and was exiled from her country before being elected president for two terms, advised the large group of aspiring doctors, nurses and biomedical researchers not to be afraid of failure. She said, “Failure matters. Oftentimes success comes through the lessons of failure.” She further advised the graduates that their lives wouldn’t be easy, and they would face adversity. “There will be days that will test your commitment to this profession, but I am confident that the perseverance that got you here will see you through.” She should know! ■

Hello, Art Lovers! Artist Square Group Gallery at Tower Square in downtown Springfield has saluted a collection of wonderful works from the area’s premier female artists. Art that is sure to charge one’s love of natural splendor as well as the vibrant drive for the abstract—these women bring it! The exhibit, which includes the likes of Delores Howard, Stacy Pringle, Jackie Griswold, Delois Barnes and Jennifer Forest, will run through July. So don’t fret; there is still a chance to view this amazing collection.

As sure as you were born from the mystery of feminine love and beauty, this thoughtful touch of artistic delight will stimulate and recall a paradise far beyond your imagination! Don’t wait to enjoy the world of art. Gallery hours are from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Whether it’s the spicy, fragmented works of Hannah Morris or the beautiful fabric art, or the visual art of Kristine Crimmins, you are sure to become a lifelong fan of one or all of these splendid artists.

Each woman brings her own unique flair, expressing an unmistakable joy and passion for their craft. At the Artist Square Group Gallery, we take pride in bringing the very best art that the Western Massachusetts area has to offer. We certainly hope that you’ll take time out of your busy day, every day to stop and enjoy the art that is all around you. ■

THE ARTS
ARTIST SQUARE GROUP GALLERY

WORKS OF AREA’S PREMIER FEMALE ARTISTS ON DISPLAY DURING JULY

By Rosemary (Tracy) Woods

“Dutch Tribute” by Delores Howard

“Lovers in the Grass” by Hannah Morris

Members of the Liberian Community from Central Mass. greet Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at a community gathering the day before the UMass Medical Center Commencement.
HEALTHCARE ADVOCATE STATEMENT ON U.S. SUPREME COURT RULING ON AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

HARTFORD, CT – State Healthcare Advocate Victoria Veltri released the following statement on the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling today (June 28, 2012) on the landmark Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA):

“I am thrilled that the Court acknowledged the constitutionality of the extraordinary consumer protections built into the ACA.

“Market reforms under the ACA have not received the level of attention that other parts of the Act have but they have provided or will provide substantial benefits to our residents, such as: dependent coverage to the age of 26, prohibitions on rescissions and pre-existing conditions exclusions for children and adults, the lifting of annual and lifetime limits, preventive screenings with no cost sharing, independent review of insurer denials of care, and accountability for insurers through medical loss ratio requirements that just returned $13 million to state residents in rebates for carriers who did not spend enough of their collected premium on medical expenses.

“These are substantial reforms that have already yielded tremendous results for consumers. It is important to note that while Connecticut has some of these protections in state law—many as a result of the passage of the ACA—about one half of our covered residents get their coverage through larger employers that offer self-funded health plans. Without the ACA, individuals enrolled in those plans would not have these vital protections.

“The Court also recognized the constitutionality of the critical provision of a Medicaid expansion that will allow us to cover people up to 133% of the federal poverty level with 100% funding from the federal government in 2014. Connecticut has a Medicaid expansion is vital to the goal of covering the uninsured in our state.

“The Medicare reforms under the ACA have saved consumers $53 million in prescription drug costs, will close the Part D donut hole in six years, allow preventive screenings with no cost sharing to encourage cost savings, and make significant investments in curbing fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicare program.

“OHA has received approximately $530,000 in consumer assistance program grants under the ACA. With that funding, OHA has served thousand of Connecticut residents in enrollment in and education on healthcare coverage and direct assistance with grievances and appeals.

“OHA is one of many state beneficiaries of ACA grants that are targeted toward consumer assistance, reforming the delivery of healthcare, increasing workforce capacity and containing costs.

The Supreme Court’s ruling today is a very welcome victory for consumers who have already benefited and those who will soon benefit from the broad reforms in the ACA.”
LIFE’S CHALLENGES

From Hartford, Connecticut

OVERCOMING TRAUMA

By Dr. Sweets S. Wilson

As we grow up, we are constantly learning about ourselves and the world. We are brought up with the notion that the world is a safe place. But what happens when it is not, and something traumatic happens to us? What do we do then? How do we draw from a spiritual presence when we have felt so alone in the past?

Webster defines Trauma as:

1. A serious injury or shock to the body, as from violence or an accident.
2. An emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person, often leading to neurosis.
3. An event or situation that causes great distress and disruption.

Trauma can cause a disconnection from various parts of a person’s being. This disconnect happens as a defense mechanism against feeling the effects of the trauma. Unfortunately, this disconnect can also be prolonged and present itself in the survivor’s relationships with family, and their relationship with the Jesus Christ.

Pain that is not transformed is transferred. Those who experience single traumas feel like they have lost their minds, but those who experience multiple traumas feel like they have lost themselves. Trauma healing is hard work. However, healthy grieving and mourning is a key to healing trauma. The next stage is forgiving and reconciliation and is often one of the first steps advocated by religious leaders. Although human beings do not heal in precise, linear steps, it is a roadmap, and the earlier steps make forgiveness and reconciliation more likely. The Beatitudes of Jesus comprise one of the best known passages in Christian scripture. Matthew 5:4 says, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Consider this seeming contradiction in light of trauma healing.

Survivors may feel as if they are broken or not worthy of love. It seems like having a connection is for those who are able to have faith and trust. For many survivors, it is important for them to recapture their spirituality in order to aid in their healing. For some, it may be a place too scary to go alone. One suggestion on reclaiming one’s spirituality is that you do this with a friend, counselor, or spiritual advisor. It may help to confront one’s trauma with someone else’s help.

Trauma affects lives in so many different ways. It is important to admit how it has affected yours. It may have had an impact on your relationships, sense of worth, feelings of safety—the list could go on indefinitely. These are battle scars that only you know about and it’s time to share them with others as this will lessen the shame associated with them.

Write a list of the effects the trauma has had on you in the following areas:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Financial
- Relational
- Occupational
- Self-worth
- Sexual

When you are able to see how these behaviors and the underlying emotional pain that fuels them impact you, then healing can begin. Next month there will be a follow up with more suggested lists of the effects that trauma can have on an individual.

INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS . . .

BY WILLETTE H. JOHNSON

DIRECTIONS, WHEN FOLLOWED, CAN BE A GREAT ASSIST

By Willette Johnson

On occasion, some of us have shared in criticizing men (sorry guys) who got lost while driving the family out of town but refused to stop and ask for directions. It’s probably true that those occasions have dramatically decreased. With navigation systems readily available to us, I can’t fathom a good excuse for individuals losing their way. Even MapQuest can help as a non-technical backup when we want to be certain of how to get to where we’re going. So what’s up with those folks who still refuse to use directions?

Could it be that we still acquire a sense of accomplishment when we plow through and find our way even after dealing with the initial frustration of being lost? Or, maybe the little voice of ego that leads us astray periodically also keeps us focused on doing things on our own without asking for help?

Lately, I find myself engaged in tinkering with objects that need assembling before use. It seems that almost everything useful to a baby’s day-to-day care is packaged with some assembly required. I admit that I have enjoyed small building projects that force me to use tools that, in times past, I never knew existed. A running joke between my friend Natalie Dorm and my daughters and me is “Willette (Mom), the builder, is at it again.” Despite the bookcase that I put together with the shelves facing backwards or the magazine rack that still sits on my porch in pieces, I have found pleasure in trying my hand at finding the right holes for the nails that come in the box. (Did you know that a Phillips screwdriver is different from a flathead?) Admittedly, during these times of building, directions become my best friend. I have discovered that the warning stating to read the directions before assembling is supplied for a good reason. They are a great assist!

Learning to follow directions is one of those human agreements that we must buy into someplace along the journey. For me, it has a lot to do with trust. Can I trust that the directions being given are accurate, that the originator of the directions had some idea of what she was talking about, that the step-by-step instructions will get me to my destination, or will these directions strip me of that satisfying feeling of accomplishment that doing it on my own might have given?

Our Creator presents forthright and clear directions. He departs knowledge on how to live our best lives and how to secure our place around the throne—for those who seek a spiritual existence and the assurance of a heavenly afterlife. These directions, when followed, are a great assist. Can we understand that we need not stay lost with such empowering directions within our grasp?

When we find ourselves smack dab in the middle of something that we realize we just can’t do like driving to a specific, unfamiliar destination, building or fixing a household item, or deciding to live a stronger, more focused life, look for directions. They are designed to be a great assist.
Raymond A. Jordan—Part I: A Historical Perspective

By Frederick A. Hurst

Hired Raymond as their supervisor because he knew that Ray was smart and could not be intimidated. Ray ran with everybody. And he was as tough as the best of those who worked for him and everybody knew it.

Ray’s performance at CEP was noticeably outstanding and within two years, based upon the recommendation of Dr. Andrew Griffin and his assistant, Henry Thomas, Ray was hired in 1970 as the director of the newly-established African American Cultural Center at American International College (AIC), a job Jordan accepted and turned into the center of activity in the Black community before using it, and his position as the Executive Director and Chief Operations Officer of the Harambee Holiday Festival, as footholds five years later to an outstanding career as Springfield’s first Black State Representative.

By the time he started at AIC, Raymond Jordan was headed for real power but still didn’t know it. No story about him could be complete without the details of his unanticipated election to political office and his spectacular rise to statewide power. They didn’t nickname him “Barracuda” for nothing. How he slashed his way to the top with admirable speed and finesse could fill a book. But the book, “Boss,” Mike Royko’s account of the famous political machine of the late Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, had been written long ago and Ray studied it well. As part of my preparation for Part II of this article, which will be published in August, I got a copy and read “Boss” for the first time. I remain amazed at the dramatic parallel between Ray’s and Richard Daley’s rise to power and how each systematically used reward and punishment and access to information as tools of control to maintain and expand their political reach.

Barracuda, indeed! What a story! But, that’s for the August issue. Stay tuned.

Letters to the Publisher

When I go to my barber shop, I make it a point to pick up a copy of Point of View. What a pleasant surprise to open it this time and find the lovely article you did on the April 21st remembrance service for my recently deceased sister, Garian. (P.O.V., May 1, 2012, “A Service of Remembrance: Garian Bernice Robinson Caulson”)

I have shared it with members of my family, and all send you a warm and sincere “thank you”.

Very truly yours,
Lew Robinson

Letters to the Publisher and other content MUST be sent electronically to: mjhurst@afampov.com

(please reference a subject matter or e-mail is automatically deleted.)

Rick Hurst and Ray Jordan at Symphony Hall at an affair welcoming Rick as Western MA Commissioner of the MCAD (Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination)

continued from page 5

African American Point of View
We knew the Springfield superintendent search was a sham from the beginning. We knew the pool of qualified candidates would be limited. Why would they apply when the result was a foregone conclusion? Kudos to Superintendent Search Committee Member Charles Rucks who unsuccess-fully tried to reopen the search process when faced with such a limited candidate pool. But where was everyone else during this process? And, what are we going to do now?

Yes, Barbara Gresham and Denise Hurst voted against the in-house candidate in the final school committee vote but where was the public outcry from our elected officials, the business community and the community at-large when their voices could have made a difference? Why were we put in the untenable position of having to settle for less than the very best for our children?

The city council loves to meddle in school committee business yet not one of their voices was raised in opposition to the flawed search process. The business community repeatedly points out how desperately they need skilled high school graduates yet not one of them was willing to publicly sound the alarm that by not giving our students an opportunity to get the best leader, we were hamstringing their futures. And the community—well, unfortunately, the community has no leaders.

So what do we do now?

I really don’t know what you plan to do now but I intend to watch this new superintendent’s every move because my question is not whether he’s “right for Springfield schools” (just because he’s spent 35 years in the school system as opined in The Republican’s endorsement of him, June 20, 2012), but whether he’s right for Springfield’s students.

continued from page 10

learned after I was diagnosed — will, hopefully, have him calling his doctor this week:

One in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. Think about that: If you’re at home having a cookout with 11 of your buddies, it’s likely that two of you at some point in your lives will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

If you’re an African-American man, those odds increase to nearly one in five. African-American men have the highest rate of prostate cancer in the world and have the disease at rates three times higher than those of white men.

Prostate cancer is the second-most-common cancer among men, behind skin cancer, and the second leading cause of cancer deaths among men.

If a first-degree family member has prostate cancer (like my brother), you have nearly three times the risk of being diagnosed.

The average age of diagnosis is 65. But I’m proof that, while not the norm, the disease also occurs in younger men. I was diagnosed at 49, but the cancer may have been growing inside me since my first PSA spike, when I was 45. St. John’s basketball coach Steve Lavin was 46 when he was diagnosed, and dealing with the disease took him out of last season.

Here’s the most important stat: Most men with prostate cancer don’t die from it. But the key to surviving prostate cancer is regular testing. People like Joe Torre, Robert De Niro, Colin Powell and Harry Belafonte are alive today because their prostate cancer was detected in its early stages.

There’s some debate about whether PSA tests are necessary. A report released last year by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force suggested that PSA tests don’t save lives and that routine tests aren’t necessary.

I’m here to tell you that panel report is wrong. PSA tests are necessary. With the results of that test, I get a chance to be a cancer survivor. Without the test, I’d probably be dead in six years.

There are many ways to treat prostate cancer, and I’ve researched them all. I’ve decided to have my prostate removed. The surgery was supposed to occur this week but was postponed because of a lesion found on one of my ribs. Hopefully that lesion turns out to be an old sports injury. If that’s the case, I’ll undergo surgery in the coming weeks.

This hasn’t been a pleasant experience. My body has been probed, penetrated and pierced, and pieces of my prostate have been clipped and removed during this process. Some of those procedures, months later, still leave me shaking. But it’s all necessary. This entire ordeal hopefully gives me a chance to have the best 50th-birthday celebration in September — a celebration of my continuing journey to be cancer free.

I’m learning a lot during this process of getting this disease out of my body, and I’ll share my experiences and what I’ve learned about prostate cancer in my blog (jerrybem bry.com). There are a lot of changes you can make in your life that can limit your risk of prostate cancer. Hopefully, what I have to say will help keep someone away from the situation I’m in now.

In the meantime, heed this advice:

If you are a male over 40 and, like me, have been so caught up in the grind of work that you’ve skipped a few physicals, get tested.

If you’re a woman who cares about her age-40-plus man, husband, brother or father, urge him to get tested.

If your family medical history is like mine, you already know the deadly effects of cancer. If you’ve passed your 40th birthday, please get tested.

If not for cancer, my oldest brother would have been sitting at Carnegie Hall two weeks ago alongside his wife and three sons, watching his youngest son, Jayson, perform as a finalist in a classical piano competition. If it weren’t for cancer, my mother would have had a special weekend last week: a joint celebration of her granddaugh-ter’s college graduation and Mother’s Day.

Cancer took those moments away from my family. Cancer, within my immediate family, is undefeated. In addition to my mother and brother, cancer has claimed two uncles on my father’s side (both victims of prostate cancer) and one uncle on my mother’s side (liver cancer).

Now it’s my turn facing cancer, and I’m here to claim the first victory. And when I’m cancer free, I have this message for the disease: Please leave my family alone. You’ve caused us enough pain.
RELIGION

RELI GIO N

By Rev. Glen Snowden, Associate Minister, Progressive Community Baptist Church

STUDENTS OF THE GOSPEL

Last fall I was able to enroll in a course in Basic Biblical Greek. The course was definitely not basic! It was quite the surmountable challenge. The course was time consuming and painstakingly challenging. I had to study, morning, noon and night. I had to pray without ceasing asking the Lord to allow my mind to understand the material. I had to humble myself and use flashcards. The last time I used flashcards was in elementary school. I also purchased an audio book, which I listened to as I commuted to and from work. In order to stay afloat with the course requirements, I had to immerse myself in my studies. The course is a requirement but my goal in taking the course was to gain a deeper understanding of God's Word. One of my comrades in ministry, who had successfully taken the course, told me that in order to pass the course, I would have to study everyday.

Even though I took the class for an academic requirement, the course work was very reminiscent of our Christian journey; we have to study God's Word everyday. As Christians we are all taking a course in becoming better students for God's Kingdom. God wants us to learn and live in a way that we can be more effective in carrying out the assigned work that He has called us to. Whether we are assigned to be an usher, a choir member, a Sunday School teacher or a minister, we are all students of the Gospel. Just like the course that I took, being a student of the Gospel will require sacrifice and, at times, it will be a struggle.

When you are a student of the Gospel you need to study, morning, noon and night. Basically, as students of the Gospel, we have to saturate ourselves with the Word of God and prayer in order to pass the course. We must study and be prepared because we will have to face life's tests from time to time. Some of life's tests are like surprise quizzes, you think it's going to be an ordinary day and then surprise, here's a test. As Christians, some of our tests will be like MCAS exams; if you don't pass, you won't move ahead in your faith.

Paul tells his student Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 to “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” One thing that I learned in my Greek course is that you must translate each word before you can go to the next word. There are no shortcuts in translating Greek words to understand their true meaning. You can't make a word into what you want it to be so that you can get ahead. The same is true in God's Word; we can't make it into what we want it to be. As students of the Gospel, we have to learn what the Word says and not attempt to change it to fit our personal needs.

Paul wants all of us as students to be ready for the test. When we study God's Word, we can pass the test of trials; with God's Word, we can pass the test of time and when we study God's Word, we will eventually have a testimony.

In the introduction of the Basic Biblical Greek textbook, the author advises the student that when you feel like quitting the course to stop and remember that you are undergoing a process to be more effective for the Lord. I thought it was interesting that the author knew that frustration and disappointment would set in to the point that quitting would become an option. The Lord gave Paul the direction to write not just to his student Timothy, but also for you and me as believers today. The Lord knew that challenges and frustration would set in and at times it would be easier to throw in the towel than to study. If we know the Word of God when the test comes, we will have all the correct answers. It won't be our answers but the Word of God will answer life's tests for us.

The entire Point of View staff sends its condolences to the family and friends of Springfield Police Officer Kevin E. Ambrose who, in the line of duty, gave the ultimate sacrifice of his life, to protect the lives of a mother and her child. By all accounts, Officer Ambrose was a dedicated policeman liked by all who knew him; a caring husband, father, brother and son; and a committed community volunteer. He will be sorely missed.

THE PLAID ROBE

By Mary E. Bogert

Cora Lee Lewis

I wore that robe for forty years. As the years rolled by, it began to fray. The material was fluffy and warm and it did the job it was created for. It also had another avenue of warmth, and that was the warmth generated by love. I had to pray without ceasing asking the Lord to humble myself and use flashcards. The last time I used flashcards was in elementary school. I also purchased an audio book, which I listened to as I commuted to and from work. In order to stay afloat with the course requirements, I had to immerse myself in my studies. The course is a requirement but my goal in taking the course was to gain a deeper understanding of God's Word. One of my comrades in ministry, who had successfully taken the course, told me that in order to pass the course, I would have to study everyday.

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MUSICIAN WANTED

Third Baptist Church, located in Springfield, Mass., has an opening for a Musician who will report to the Pastor of the Church, and be responsible for directing the Third Baptist Church Choirs to include: Sanctuary Choir, Children’s/Youth Choir and the Male Chorus. Must be available weekly to rehearse with the various choirs.

The Musician must be able to play the piano and/or the organ. The Musician must be able to play various types of music: gospel, hymns, spiritual and anthems. Must have a minimum of three to five years of experience directing, playing and working with church choirs and must be able to read music. If interested in applying for this position, please forward a cover letter and resume to:

Rev. Nathaniel Smith, Sr.
Third Baptist Church
P. O. Box 91166
Springfield, MA 01139

Officer Kevin E. Ambrose (06/22/1956 - 06/04/2012)

(Rev. Glen Snowden, Associate Minister, Progressive Community Baptist Church)

Dr. Brett Snowden, Editor
Pastor, Progressive Community Baptist Church
599 State Street
Springfield, MA 01109

Officer Kevin E. Ambrose

Rev. Glen Snowden

Officer Kev in E. Ambrose

By Mary E. Bogert

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Officer Kevin E. Ambrose

Rev. Glen Snowden

Officer Kevin E. Ambrose

RELIGIOUS DIRECTORY

PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
599 State Street
Springfield, Massachusetts
(413) 736-8844

“A Church Determined To Follow Christ”

Dr. Brett Snowden, Pastor
Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.
Sunday Bible School - 9:00 a.m.
Bible Study - Wednesday - 6:30 p.m.

Family Church
245 Bay Street, P.O. Box 2513
Springfield, MA 01101-2513
(413) 731-1288
Pastor Gail L. Hill

Order of Services
Sunday Christian Education 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday Prayer 6:30 p.m.
Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

SHILOH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
The Church in the Heart of the City
Sabbath Services (Saturday)
Sabbath School - 9:00am
Divine Worship Services - 11:00am
Adventist Youth Services - 5:30pm
Community Service Center - Mon. & Tues.
10:00am - 1:00pm
Prayer Meeting - Wednesday - 7:00pm
Church School (SSAJA) Monday - Friday
797 State Street, Springfield, MA 01109; Tel: 413-734-0103
e-mail: clerk@shiloh.comacsbiz.net

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Springfield, MA 01119
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Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 am
Weekly Bible Study/Prayer Service Tuesday 7:00 pm
Bishop Curtis L. Shaird, Pastor
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Rev. James D. Bullock, Minister of Music
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10:00 am
Church School
Saturday 11:00 am
Bible Study/Prayer & Class Meeting
Wednesday 7:00 pm

New Life Calvary Baptist Church
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Sunday School 9:00 AM
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Prayer/Bible Study Wednesday 6:00 & 7:00 PM
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African American Point of View

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Phone: 413-796-1466
413-426-3912

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413-739-5053

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Morning Worship Service ------10:45 a.m.

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Sunday School for all ages 9AM
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trinitumc361@gmail.com
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Wednesday Noon & 6:00 p.m.
Bible Study Monday & Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
Youth Ministry Friday 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Bethany Ministries Church of God in Christ
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Rev. Dr. Mark E. Flowers, Senior Pastor
The ARTS

CHILDREN’S BOOK CORNER

“TWICE AS GOOD”

By Richard Michelson
Illustrated by Eric Velasquez

c.2012, Sleeping Bear Press $16.95 / $18.95 Canada 32 pages
Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer

Willie wanted to learn to play golf on the smooth lawns at Edgewater, but the golfers told him that “his kind” wasn’t welcome there. He was used to that, though. He was often the only Negro boy wherever he went and that didn’t stop Willie. He went to Edgewater anyhow, every chance he got.

Eventually, one of the golfers let Willie be a caddy, which meant carrying a heavy bag filled with golf clubs. That didn’t stop Willie, either; in fact, he worked twice as hard because being “good” at his job wasn’t good enough. Soon, he was earning money at being a caddy.

Then one day, someone asked Willie to play a round of golf and Willie loved it! From then on, every chance he got, he practiced. By the time he entered high school, he was one of the best golfers around. He even entered competitions.

Still, lots of white golfers didn’t want Willie playing on their course. They wouldn’t let him join the club or share their clubhouse. But Willie had dreams, not only for himself but for his baby daughter, too.

He knew that someday, there’d be a place where she could learn to play golf, too, and nobody would turn her away. Willie was sure there’d be a course like that, even if he had to build it himself...

Got a kid who wants to be the next Tiger on the links? Show him (or her!) that someone helped groom the course by reading “Twice as Good.”

Author Richard Michelson took the true story of a boy who refuses to take “no” for an answer to his dreams, and makes it into a kid-friendly story of perseverance in the face of racism. I liked that Michelson gives his young hero a graceful determination with no room for discouragement (which is very inspirational), and Eric Velasquez’s illustrations fit Michelson’s story to a tee.

I think that if your 3-to-6-year-old loves a good read-aloud, this is one to put on the roster. For you, “Twice as Good” is a book that’s hard to say “no” to.

LETS TALK URBAN - BRIDGEPORT, CT

LET’S TALK URBAN INTERVIEWS

CYNTHIA MILLER

By Felisha Bradshaw

Writing is therapeutic and reading has the same effect, serving as hiding places and safe havens. Writing and reading is this and more for Authoress/Urban Grapevine Magazine writer, Cynthia Miller. Because of her novel, In Rare Form, it’s the same for her readers. Between the pages are a wrath of confessions about addiction and sexual abuse. Cynthia has overcome life’s most monotonous obstacles. Ahead she shares how the darkness began and how the light of writing brought her into victory.

LTU: Let’s talk about the cloud that hovered over you even on the sunniest day.

Cynthia: It wasn’t the Department of Corrections but God. I had a bra full of dope ready for sale when something tapped me to turn myself in on an old warrant. A Bible was in my room so I opened it to Psalms. Pouring my heart out to my mom, she guided me to God. I begged him to clear my addiction. I wanted my children back and didn’t want this life, begging him to hear me. The next day’s events carved the way for the changes I have now made. Almost 3 years to the day, my prayers were totally answered!

LTU: Wow, talk about a testimony.

Cynthia: In my book I talk about my arrest. My mother tried posting bail but my adult children stopped her, a blessing in disguise. I shot my last dose of heroin in the parking lot, refused medication because I never wanted to forget the pain. Facing ten years, my lawyer got it down to six. Then the miracle came but you will have to read the book! I started writing poetry in jail and working on my life story. I shared it with other women and they released their pain to me. I knew this story could save lives. Upon release I had a third of my story done. I left California with a couple of thrift store clothes and the flash-drive with In Rare Form on it tucked in my bra. I have never looked back! I have no regrets!

NOTE: Everyone is not cured through reading and books don’t cure addiction but a testimony opens doors to faith and through faith God makes things possible. Reading is a rap at the door of your conscience… the author’s way of saying if I can, then there are infinite possibilities. So tap at someone’s door—the gateway to their addiction —pass them in rare form and watch faith work. ■
BACKLASH BEHIND THE BULLYING ON BASKETBALL WIVES!

By Brenda’s Child

Or should I say ex-wives and would be’s
Suddenly they are setting a bad example…
but since when have they been anyone’s role model
when they only model
their signature earrings and designer clothes?
I’m supposed to feel empathy
for someone who makes more in an hour
than I’ve made since graduating college?
Because she’s been bullied, a purse was kept,
or a glass was thrown?
Because someone searched through someone else’s phone?
Yes. It’s buffoonery, but isn’t all reality TV?
It’s mostly scripted and hardly real,
so excuse me for not thinking it’s a big deal.
Oh, that’s right, they are making US look bad.
Italians in Long Island, Jersey, and the classy Orange County
can act a fool, but when Tammy and Evelyn do,
it’s not cool.
They represent the entire Black Race.
(Wait… I thought Al Sharpton did?)
Are you kidding me?
We can’t keep trying to fight the mainstream’s stereotypes;
it’s a waste of time.
They will think whatever they want to;
it doesn’t matter what the scorned and cackling exes
of Basketball players say or do.
So… No!
I won’t sign a petition to ban a television show;
there are just too many other things more significant to me.
If I don’t like something, I can always exercise my right
to turn the channel on the TV.

CRACK KIDS

By Robert E. Thompson (Sky)
c. 2007 International Library of Poetry

Crack vials on the stairways,
syringes on the floor,
doesn’t anybody care anymore?
Children killing children
after smoking that stuff;
wow, being a kid is really getting tough!
Two inches of money in their little fists,
some of them can’t even read a grocery list.
I don’t know what’s going to happen,
but it’s really pretty sad
to know so many children will wind up on a slab.

(My inspiration for this poem came from seeing so many young kids
Unfortunately, it is still a problem today.)

JUANITA TORRENCE-THOMPSON


TALKING WITH STANLEY KUNITZ

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

c. 2012 Torderwarz Publishing Company $14.95
Reviewed by Barbara Hantman

Mrs. Torrence-Thompson’s seventh book of verse, TALKING WITH STANLEY KUNITZ, takes the reader on a variegated journey from her Queens residence and Manhattan’s Broadway to New England, the American South, England, Malaysia and South Africa. The voyage is cast chiefly in free verse and the sestina; she uses the latter form for evocative nature poetry (“Falling in Love with Little Neck Bay”), gentle feminist musings (“A Sestina of Bridges”), exploration of African roots (“Traveling in Africa”), affirmation of “noble” Civil Rights leadership (“Traveling on the Road with Dr. Martin Luther King”), political criticism (“On the Road – a Sestina Written During G.W. Bush Administration”), social criticism of the overly meek (“Vital Signs”) and a surprise encounter involving spontaneous magnanimity (“Driving Robert De Niro”).

Veins of realism that display the author’s discerning, detail-oriented eye and empathetic soul given to capture of emotional nuance will engage the reader in such poems as “Doctor in the Shop,” which lovingly describes a devoted husband who “Carefully places/his chocolate brown Fedora/on the wooden rack/then sits in the barber chair.” The author presents a series of tsunami poems, including “The Boy and the Sea,” that show how world news of disaster touches her deeply.

Readers who prefer the evanescent and lyrical will enjoy such nature poems as “Carolina Sky” which begins, “The wind cracked/Drifted high/Coooling a skatty rhythm.” Artists will be charmed by a series of poems on writers, writing and writers’ colonies; conservationists will appreciate the ecological consciousness of “Transition in New Hampshire” and “Cicadas Times Three” which, with concern, depicts how “Cicadas invade rural silence/as unwanted, infrequent visitors/striping country folk of peace/and a less complicated way of life.” Realism, fantasy, the universal, the particular, free verse and formal verse: There is something for every aficionado of poetry books in TALKING WITH STANLEY KUNITZ.

(Barbara Hantman is a Phi Beta Kappa English major with a Master’s Degree in the Teaching of English from Teachers College, Columbia University. She has been a monthly feature lecturer and contest winner at the New York Poetry Forum, and serves as Fresh Meadows Poets’ Corresponding Secretary. She won first prize from Lone Star Magazine for her poem, “The Velvet Toolbox.” Her Jewish-themed verse appears in Poetica, The Deronda Review, Women in Judaism and CALL OF ABRAHAM’S KIN (Xlibris, 2010). cf. www.BarbaraHantman.com)
African American Point of View

Food and Fashion

The Urban Cook

Rhonda Jones is a Personal Caterer and a Food Consultant
rtjcoks@aol.com

A Real Family Reunion

By Rhonda Jones

There’s something to say about a Southern family reunion. No offense to my Northern family and friends, but maybe it’s the smell of that sweet country air when you step out of the car or being welcomed by family members young and old. Or it could be that sweet, sweet smell of peach cobbler, coconut layer cake and homemade ice cream.

I remember when we would load up in the New Yorker with pillows and blankets on our way to Virginia. We would play games and sing songs until we reached New York and New Jersey; it was like a light show for us—very magical when you’re young.

My Mom would fix sandwiches and fried chicken for the ride south along with soda pop and pound cake. For some reason my Dad loved to travel at night so when he arrived in his hometown, his Momma and siblings would run out the house with joy and excitement to welcome home their beloved son.

The first few years we stayed at my Grandma’s house even though my Mom never wanted to. My Mom was kind of on the spoiled side. She was used to having her own space but didn’t want to hurt my Dad’s feelings so she gave in. As I got older, my Mom didn’t care about feelings. She told my Dad like it was: “No, Tom, we will be staying in a hotel,” and that was it. Of course, my sisters and I were thrilled because my Grandma lived deep in the woods of Virginia and all you heard all night, it seemed to us at that time, were the sounds of scary creatures—like lions, tigers and bears.

It seems like families in the South all live on the same street or in the same vicinity of each other. I had three uncles who lived on the same street and each of them had acres and acres of land. This is where the family reunions would be held, between their three houses. At that time, it was the coolest thing to me. There would be food all over the place and men barbecuing delicious chicken and ribs where the meat just fell off the bones and melted in your mouth. Then you would look over to the left or right and find someone else frying fish and roasting pigs. The desserts where endless, along with the sweetest watermelon that I’ve ever tasted.

Now that I’m older, I feel like my kids have missed out on the experience of a real family reunion. I haven’t been to a family reunion in over ten years but that’s about to change. My family and I will be going to the family reunion this month with bells on and ready to Chow down.

Fried Fish Seasoning

Salt and Pepper
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 cup yellow cornmeal
2 tablespoons flour

Season fish with salt and pepper. Mix all other ingredients together and bread fish before frying.

Kevin Sharpe: Springfield’s Musician

Kevin graduated from Springfield’s Cathedral High, earned an undergraduate degree from UMass in jazz performance and music education and a Master’s in entertainment business from Full Sail University. He taught for 12 years in the Springfield Public School system at the School of Science and Technology, Talmadge, Brightwood, Forest Park, White Street and others. What he learned in his travels from school to school is that when the school budget gets tight, the first to be let go are those in the arts.

So, though Kevin’s ability to make a living outside of the education system was motivated by, among other more lofty goals, an element of survival, he is also aware that, with some notable exceptions, Gospel is generally not a big money business. But Kevin still looks forward to the financial security that will allow him to just work with his music. He is well on his way. He recently recruited Miguel King, POV’s Connecticut director of distribution, to assist him with promotion. I can assure Kevin that if Miguel is as aggressive in pushing other outlets for promotion as he was with Point of View, he hired the right man for the job.

The stated goal of The Kevin Sharpe Group is to reach the masses with quality music that touches lives and “exalts the name of Jesus,” which it does well... in Springfield and well beyond, and Kevin Sharpe, as quiet and unassuming as he is, is the reason why.
BLACK SPORTS

BLACK SPORTS INTERNATIONAL

DR. LEROY T. WALKER
A UNITED STATES OLYMPIC ICON
(JUNE 14, 1918 - APRIL 23, 2012)

LeRoy T. Walker was the first Black President of the United States Olympic Committee. In the 1996 Olympics, Dr. Walker was delegated to lead a 10,000 member group of the most talented athletes in the world.

His goal was to make sure that American citizens have a feeling of ownership in the U.S. Olympic Program. “We ought to keep them informed. We ought to let them know what the Olympic movement is all about and what’s happening to the dollars that they give,” said Walker.

In 1988, he was the treasurer of the Committee’s Contingency Fund. While under his wing, the Fund increased about $45 million.

He gave up his six figure salary position as the Director of Sports for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to take the unpaid presidency position.

Dr. Walker received degrees from Benedict College and Columbia University. He received his Ph.D. in Biomechanics at New York University.

He went back to Benedict College to begin a track and field collegiate coaching career. He received enough sports scholarships to finance his college expenses.

In 1945, he became the head coach for the North Carolina Central University (NCCU) track team. He also chaired the Physical Education and Recreation Departments.

NCCU track and field athletes were all in the Olympic Games between the years 1956 and 1980.

When Dr. Walker retired in 1986 as North Carolina’s Chancellor Emeritus, his team won 11 gold medals, 111 were named All-American, and 40 had national championships.

In addition to coaching NCCU, he coached track teams from other countries. In 1960, he coached both Israel and Ethiopia track teams. He coached Trinidad and Tobago in 1964, Jamaica in 1968, and Kenya in 1972.

The last team he led to the Olympic Games was for the United States in 1976. The team included Edwin Moses and Bruce Jenner.

He has a daughter, Dr. Carolyn Walker Hopp, and a son, LeRoy T. Walker Jr. His home is in Durham, NC. Katherine, his wife, died in 1978.

Dr. Walker was a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

AWARDS
In 1991, Walker was awarded the Eagle Award from the United States Sports Academy. The Eagle Award is the Academy’s highest international honor. It was awarded to Walker for his significant contributions to international sport.

LEROY T. WALKER BIO

Born
June 14, 1918

Died
April 23, 2012 (aged 93)

Nationality
United States

Ethnicity
African-American

Alma mater
Benedict College
Columbia University

Title
President of United States Olympic Committee

Term
1992–1996

Children
2

Awards
USATF Hall of Fame
USTFCCCA Hall of Fame
Benedict Hall of Fame
South Carolina Hall of Fame

Memorial Award
George Dales Award

(Not all Hall of Fame membership listed)

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FOR MORE SPORTS GO TO: www.bstmlc.com

PAUL HAMM RETIRES

ONLY U.S. MALE TO WIN A WORLD OR OLYMPIC ALL-AROUND GYMNASTICS TITLE

Paul Elbert Hamm, a Washburn, Wisconsin native, is an artistic gymnast. He is a World Champion gymnast and three-time Olympic medalist. He won the all-around competition at the 2004 Olympic Games.

Hamm participated in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia. He finished 5th in the team event and 14th in the individual all-around competition. Despite the disappointment in Sydney, he had been making great improvement. In 2003, he became the first American man to win the all-around title at the World Championships.

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He competed at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, with his twin brother Morgan. He won the Silver Medal in the team event, and was awarded the Gold in the individual all-around competition.

In the individual all-around competition, Hamm held a good position after the first three rounds, but a disastrous fall on the vault, in which he nearly fell into the judges’ bench, dropped him to 12th place. He looked to be completely out of the running for a medal of any sort. Indeed, had a judge and the bench not been able to break Hamm’s fall, he might have fallen from the podium and sustained injury. However, numerous faults by

continues to page 32
COMMUNITY INFORMATION

STCC TO HONOR OFFICER AMBROSE THROUGH LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD

 Springfield, MA — Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) Foundation President Michael J. Olekasak announced the establishment of a scholarship in honor of Springfield Police Officer Kevin E. Ambrose ('77) for his service and sacrifice in the line of duty to provide safety to the Springfield community.

“The STCC family has lost one of our own, Kevin E. Ambrose, STCC alumnus class of 1977. To honor our fallen hero, the STCC Foundation has established the Kevin E. Ambrose Law Enforcement Award to provide scholarship support to a deserving student who demonstrates the qualities that made Officer Ambrose a beloved and courageous public servant to the City of Springfield,” said STCC President Dr. Ira H. Rubenzahl.

The award is available to any student entering or enrolled in the law enforcement/criminal justice program at STCC. Students must be enrolled in good academic standing to apply and an essay will be required. Preference will be given to the son, daughter, or grandchild of a police officer.

The award fund is an open-ended, restricted endowed fund. Additional donors are welcome to contribute to the fund at any time. Contributions to the fund can be mailed to: the STCC Foundation, c/o Ambrose Fund, Armory Square, Suite 1, Springfield, MA 01102-9000. For information about how to contribute, please contact STCC Foundation and Alumni Services Interim Director Robert LePage at rplepage@stcc.edu, (413) 755-4477, or visit www.STCC.edu/foundation.

PAUL HAMM RETIRES ONLY U.S. MALE TO WIN A WORLD OR OLYMPIC ALL-AROUND GYMNASTICS TITLE

continued from page 31
the other gymnasts, combined with Hamm’s performance on the parallel bars, returned him to fourth place after the fifth rotation. His high bar routine gained him a score of 9.837, winning him the Gold Medal by a margin of .012, the closest in Olympic Gymnastics history. His scores on the six disciplines were:

- Floor: 9.725 (1st)
- Pommel Horse: 9.700 (4th)
- Rings: 9.587 (8th)
- Vault: 9.137 (12th)
- Parallel Bars: 9.837 (1st)
- Horizontal Bar: 9.837 (1st)

Total: 57.823 (1st)

Hamm also nearly won the Gold on the horizontal bar at the 2004 Olympics, but was awarded the Silver after a tiebreaker.

Hamm was voted the James E. Sullivan Award winner for 2004, as the outstanding amateur athlete in the United States.

He took some time off after the 2004 Olympics to focus on school at Ohio State University. He announced in February 2007, that he would return to competitive gymnastics, starting at the 2007 U.S. Championships.

In March 2008, he won the American Cup held in New York City. This was the first time he won this competition and performed with a strong showing.

On May 22nd, he competed on the first day of the 2008 U.S. Championships, but was forced to withdraw after injuring his hand. During his routine on the parallel bars, he fractured the fourth metacarpal of his right hand. Orthopedic surgery five days later placed a titanium plate and nine screws in his hand. He was not cleared to return to gymnastics until July 3rd. After sitting out the Olympic Trials, he was named to the 2008 Olympic Team on a provisional basis depending on his recovery. On July 19th, he secured his spot on the 2008 Team by participating in an inter-squad meet. He performed in all six events, only slightly modifying his routines to prevent aggravation of his injury.

On July 28th, Hamm announced his withdrawal from the United States Olympic Gymnastics Team due to persistent pain in his right hand and a new injury to his left shoulder from his accelerated recovery efforts. He was replaced on the team by Raj Bhavsar.

This year, rather than compete for a position on the United States Olympic Gymnastics Team, Hamm indicated that he will permanently retire from the sport. Reprint permission and photos courtesy of www.bsrmllc.com.

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JULY 2012 EVENTS
For Updated Events, go to: www.afampointofview.com/events.htm

THRU OCTOBER
Hampden Bank Farmer’s Market
Where: EVERY WEDNESDAY
Where: Wilbraham Branch Office, 2005 Boston Road
Wilbraham, MA
When: EVERY FRIDAY
Where: Indian Orchard Branch Office
187 Main Street, Indian Orchard, MA

Mason Square Farmers Market
Where: EVERY SATURDAY from 10am—2pm
Where: Baystate Mason Square Neighborhood Health
Center, 11 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA

WEDNESDAY—4
Star Spangled Springfield Independence Day Festivities
When: 7:30pm
Where: Riverfront Park’s Festival Field, Springfield, MA
Info: FREE; spiritofspringfield.org or 413.733.3800

MONDAY—9
Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater
Springfield, Inc. 2012 Golf Tournament
When: 10:30am—8pm
Where: The Ranch Golf Club
65 Sunnyside Road, Southwick, MA
Info: $; 413.755.1322 or larose@myonlinechamber.com

MONDAY—JULY 9 THRU FRIDAY—AUGUST 3
Camp JC Bible Vacation Camp
When: 8:30am—1pm
Where: J.C. Williams Community Center, MA
116 Florence Street, Springfield, MA
Info: Ages 5-15; 413.886.4227

REFORMING THE REFORM
continued from page 6
American people for Education. They need to understand that Education is the foundation for their existence and connects us all. We hear enough about money being spent to “fix” Education, but not enough about why we need to fix the system in order to succeed as a whole society. The United in Hope: National Education Advocacy Branding Campaign is the foundation for this understanding – the foundation for true reform.

If Steve Jobs could convince people that Apple is “increasing social capital by enhancing individual productivity” and created an entire movement around this principle, then how can we continue to ignore Education – the foundation or epitome of “enhancing individual productivity.” There is no justification...

Author’s Note:
To join the movement, contact Gianna at 703.930.0243. Website and blog coming soon...

WEDNESDAY—11
St. John’s Congregational Church Groundbreaking Ceremony
When: 6pm
Where: 45 Hancock Street
(across from Union Street location) Springfield, MA
Info: Dr. Calvin J. McFadden, Sr., Senior Pastor; 413.734.2283

WEDNESDAY—11 THRU FRIDAY —13
St. John’s Congregational Church Summer Sizzle Revival with Guest Preacher Bishop Victor S. Couzens
When: 7pm Nightly
Where: 648 Union Street, Springfield, MA
Info: 413.734.2283 or www.sjkb.org.
(See ad on page 2)

FRIDAY—13
2012 GNEMSDC Supplier Diversity Golf Classic
When: 8pm—4:30pm
Where: Lyman Orchards Golf Club, Middlefield, CT
Info: $; 203.288.9744 or 617.578.8900

SATURDAY—14
Beauty Advice by CEO/Founder Nadine Abraham Thompson and April Robinson
When: 10am—3pm
Where: J.C. Williams Community Center, MA
116 Florence Street, Springfield, MA
Info: $; For tickets call 413.886.4227; Includes lunch

Xi Xi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. “Annual Hats Off”
When: 3—6pm
Where: Springfield Sheraton Hotel, Springfield, MA
Info: $; For tickets call 413.627.6127;
Entertainment; Luncheon; Vendors; Proceeds benefit scholarship and community service initiatives (See ad on page 20)

MONDAY—16 THRU FRIDAY—20
Progressive Community Baptist Church Family Vacation Bible School, Theme: Heaven’s Kitchen: Nourishing a Healthy Soul*Body*Mind
Where: Progressive Community Baptist Church
599 State Street, Springfield, MA
When: 6:30—8pm
Info: 413.736.8844; ALL are welcome

FRIDAY—20
The Friends and Family of Raymond A. Jordan present a Retirement Party in honor of Raymond A. Jordan
When: 6—11pm
Where: Sheraton Springfield Hotel, Springfield, MA
Info: 50; 413.782.0077 or friendsofrayjordan@hotmail.com for tickets
Brighter Than Before Entertainment presents EROTICA (Entertainment, Education & Enticement)
When: 7pm—12midnight
Where: Arts of Monarch
125 Main Street, Springfield, MA
Info: $20 in advance; $25 at door; 25 & older event; www.brighterthanbefore.com

MONDAY—23 THRU FRIDAY—27
St. John’s Congregational Church Vacation Bible School
When: 9am—12noon
Where: St. John’s Congregational Church
45 Hancock Street, Springfield, MA
Info: 413.734.2283

FRIDAY—27
One-Day Salsa Cruise & VIP Party to benefit Hampden County Employable Garments
When: Leaving Springfield at 3:30pm; Returning at 3:30am
Where: Dr. Alan J. Ingram, former Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools, on being named Deputy Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

C ongratulations to Dr. Alan J. Ingram, former Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools, on being named Deputy Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

C ongratulations to Raymon A. Jordan on his retirement as Regional Liaison for Faith Based and Community Initiatives for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

C ongratulations to Davian McDonald, a student in the Gifted and Talented Program at Academy Hill School, and son of Kevin McDonald, for being accepted into the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth.

C ongratulations to Henry M. Thomas III, CEO and president of the Urban League of Springfield, on being appointed the new chairperson of the University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees.

C ongratulations to Victor Woolridge, Vice President of Cornerstone Real Estate Advisors, for being named the 2012 winner of the Springfield Leadership Institute’s Community Service Award and to Sarah Tsitso, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club Family Center, for receiving an award for Community Service and Leadership from the Young Professional Society of Greater Springfield.

CORNER

C ongratulations to Kristen M. Hickey, National Supplier Diversity Manager for AETNA for receiving the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Minority Small Business Champion of the Year Award.

C ongratulations to Brian P. Tuohy, President, Collins Pipe, and Caleb Wilkie, Hall High School senior and community organizer, for being presented with the National Conference for Community and Justice’s Annual Human Relations Awards.

C ongratulations to Ronn D. Johnson, Principal R.D. J. Associates, Dr. Carol A. Leary, President, Bay Path College, Michael and Joan Sobon, O’Connell Oil, Brian P. Tuohy, President, Collins Pipe, and Caleb Wilkie, Hall High School senior and community organizer, for being presented with the National Conference for Community and Justice’s Annual Human Relations Awards.

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St. John’s Congregational Church Vacation Bible School
When: 9am—12noon
Where: St. John’s Congregational Church
45 Hancock Street, Springfield, MA
Info: 413.734.2283

FRIDAY—27
One-Day Salsa Cruise & VIP Party to benefit Hampden County Employable Garments
When: Leaving Springfield at 3:30pm; Returning at 3:30am
Where: On Boston Harbor, Boston, MA
Info: $80 by July 10th; 413.262.7729 or onedaysalsacruise@gmail.com
ST. JOHN’S CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH’S SEASONED SAINTS MINISTRY CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

By Marjorie J. Hurst

The group will become the national model for Rev. Dr. Barbara Reynolds’ REV-UP program

Saturday, June 23rd was a day filled with inspiration and “ole fashioned” good fun from the beginning to the end as the St. John’s Congregational Church’s Seasoned Saints Ministry (“Seasoned Saints”), under the leadership of the venerable Maxine Brown, celebrated its 10th anniversary at Twin Hills Country Club in Longmeadow, MA.

The theme for the celebration was “Celebrating Our Success, Sharing Our Strengths.” And that they did in style! Dressed in royal blue and white, members of the group mingled with their guests and guests with each other during the musical prelude performed by Bill Arnold and Ralph Whittle. Then after the welcome by Shellers Fitch, Mistress of Ceremonies Delores Ojunga-Andrew and Master of Ceremonies Tyrone Sullivan took over and the program was underway.

After the blessing of the food by Pastor Timothy Jones, Montenia Shider stirred our souls with her impeccable rendition of “Up Where We Belong.” It must be noted that the staff of the Twin Hills Country Club added to the celebratory atmosphere with their friendly and responsive service. And when bowls of grits were brought to each table to go along with the breakfast, we knew we were in the right place.

After breakfast, Barbara Lanier shared the history of the Seasoned Saints from their beginning as simply a way to connect the seniors in the church to each other and their pastor to all of the diverse activities they currently host, including Drop-in Days, Friday Night Movies, Book Club Discussions, Twice Yearly Bus Trips, an Annual Christmas Luncheon and much more. Then the audience was treated to a historical video presentation by Seasoned Saint-in-marination Gillian Hinkson (She has a way to go before she reaches the qualifying age of 55). Next, Carol Sullivan gave us a glimpse of the treat we were in for as she introduced the guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Barbara A. Reynolds.

Reverend Dr. Reynolds is an award-winning journalist, author, educator and has appeared on television shows such as the “Oprah Winfrey Show,” “Politically Incorrect,” “C-Span,” “CNN and Co.” and was heard for a decade on her own radio show called “Reynolds Rap.” She is the recipient of awards too numerous to name, a few being the Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major for Justice Award and the 1999 Journalist of the Year Award from the National Association of Black Journalists. She currently is a Blogger/Columnist for the Washington Post.

But it was her message to the seniors (and those who care about them) about her REV-UP program that was so inspiring. REV-UP stands for Revolutionary Elders in Victory and Dr. Reynolds’ message is straightforward: “Remain Fit, Fabulous, Focused, Faith-filled and embrace aging as a gift, a spark, a treasure to bless the age in which we live with dignity, peace, joy and wisdom.” And she sees in the Seasoned Saints a group that already models what her program is about and she plans to partner with them as an example to others of what they can and should be doing as seniors instead of becoming (continues to page 35)
continued from page 34

“marginalized, pushed to the sidelines and isolated.” Stay tuned for more as our Seasoned Saints go national!

And there was more! Another selection by Montenia and then the finale: a Fashion Show expertly coordinated and skillfully moderated by Olivia Lovejoy with models who stole the show with their crowd-pleasing strutting, audience engagement and modeling of the latest fashions right out of their own closets. Needless to say, each and every one of them was a hit!

And the lesson exemplified by the Seasoned Saints at this fabulous 10th anniversary celebration is that they are a true model of Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.” Carry on, Seasoned Saints, carry on!
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