

R E S I D E N T S '

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AMERICA'S REFUGEES

Inside

*The Race for President P. 7
Access Report P. 15
Child of the Packsaddle P. 21*

Haymarket House AD

Contents

PAGE 4:
Fighting HIV/AIDS...by Debbie Britton

PAGE 5:
Relocation: Emergencies or Sabotage?...
by Mary C. Johns

PAGE 6:
The New Henry Horner Homes...by
Beauty Turner
Etta Jones: Jazz Goddess...by Arminta
Clark Muhammad

PAGE 7:
Stop The Violence...by Cenabeth Cross

PAGE 8:
Flannery Update...by Julio Martinez
Praising Racine Apartments...by Lorenzia
Shelby

PAGE 9:
Residents not on Pols' 2000 Agenda....by
Wateka Kleinpeter
Flannery Update (in Spanish)...by Julio
Martinez

PAGE 10:
Residents' Delivery Dilemmas...by
Jacqueline Thompson

PAGE 11:
Youth Jobs in Jeopardy...by Andre
Robinson

PAGES 12
Special Health Section

PAGE 13
Lathrop Homes News...by Bobby Watkins

PAGE 14
Urban Youth International Journalism
Program

PAGE 15:
Access Report...by Thomas Merriweather

PAGE 16:
Access Report (In Chinese and
Russian)...by Thomas Merriweather

PAGE 17:
Returning Home...by Alicia Z. McNeal
Access Report (in Korean)...by Thomas
Merriweather

PAGE 18:
Cabrini-Green News....by Cecelia A. Clark

PAGE 19:
Not Your Mama's Bus Tour....by Michael
Ibrahem

PAGE 20:
Childcare Woes....by Debbie Britton

PAGE 21:
Child of the Pack Saddle....by John
"Popcorn" Sampson

PAGE 22:
Letters to the Editor

PAGE 23
Dear Resident...by Patricia Johnson-
Gordon

FRONT PAGE

The front page photos of this issue
portray a Robert Taylor resident
relocating herself. Photos by
Arminta Clark Muhammad.

Credits

Publisher
Ethan Michaeli

Editor-in-Chief
Mary C. Johns

Managing Editor
Wateka Kleinpeter

Advertising Consultant
Jeff Davis

Intern
Crystal Medina

RJ Correspondents

Anita Baker, Earl Battles, Deborah A. Britton, Cecelia A. Clark, Cenabeth Cross, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Michael Ibrahem, Julio Martinez, Thomas L. Merriweather, Alicia McNeal, Arminta Clark Muhammad, Karen Owens, Andre Robinson, John "Popcorn" Sampson, Lorenzia Shelby, Marsha Smallwood, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner, Bobby Watkins

Photographers

John Brooks, Cecelia A. Clark, Mary C. Johns, George Johnson, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Wateka Kleinpeter, Karen Owens, Arminta Clark Muhammad, James Rayfield, John "Popcorn" Sampson, Jacqueline Thompson

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Publisher's Box

by Ethan Michaeli



The wrecking ball is hard at work every day demolishing Robert Taylor Homes. I can't see it as I sit at my desk. But sometimes, I can hear the rumble of concrete walls turning to dust. Even though I am two full city blocks away, I can hear the sound of peoples' homes being demolished. They were places of love and hate, laughter and pain, sorrow and joy, family and loneliness, life and death.

As a journalist who has covered Chicago public housing for the better part of the last 10 years, you would think I would be happy that those buildings are coming down. I remember covering the gang wars, the police sweeps, the lousy maintenance, and the ongoing redevelopment. I remember President Bill Clinton's 1994 visit to Robert Taylor Homes and I remember the pipes bursting and the buildings turning into ice castles.

But I'm not happy the buildings are coming down. I'm not happy because the simple truth is that while the buildings are coming down, I don't see anything being built.

CHA originally promised to rebuild the homes of all the residents on the State Street Corridor within 5 years. Mayor Richard M. Daley secured \$1.5 billion from the federal government by promising to rebuild 24,000 units of public housing and allow residents to move back to the neighborhoods where they lived.

When City officials took over CHA in May 1999, they promised residents would get the same police services as any other neighborhood. CHA and police officials recently declared that crime rates are down and arrest rates are up on CHA property. In the last few days, CHA officials announced that they have received federal grants to bolster their police efforts.

But as Cenabeth Cross found in her column (see "Stop the Violence," p. 10), residents continue to live under constant threat of violence - both from street gangs and from overzealous police officers. As I write these words, at least one public housing family is mourning the death of their son following a

America's Refugees

confrontation with police officers at Robert Taylor earlier today. Dozens of murders and shootings along State Street in the last few months betray the assertion that residents are safer now.

That means a big change for many residents. Residents, who will have to move at least twice no matter how long the redevelopment takes, will see a generation go by while they wait to move back to their neighborhoods. Many may not be able to move back, despite the Mayor's promise that everyone who wants to return to their neighborhood will be able.

In those 10 years, working families will retire and become senior citizens. Elementary school students will become adults who can vote, join the military and go to college.

Developers are certainly leering at many different parcels of CHA land and they are certainly using their wealth and power to influence the mayor and other city officials.

(Continued on Page 19)

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Fighting HIV/AIDS

by Debbie Britton

You can't get AIDS by kissing. You can't get AIDS by touching. You can get AIDS by sharing needles or having unprotected sex.

You can't know whether someone has HIV, the virus which causes AIDS, by looking at them. Someone may look good but they may still have HIV.

It's all about education. Don't use needle drugs and don't share them. Use condoms.

If you are sharing drugs or are having unprotected sex, get tested for HIV. The sooner you know, the better it will be. The sooner you know, the sooner you can get treatment.

I learned all this by spending time with Gary Owens, who works for the Community Outreach Intervention Project (COIP).

Gary Owens used heroin and cocaine for 25 years. He has been clean for three years. Gary started out as an outreach worker at the COIP South Side Field Station and was transferred to the North Side Field Station in July as an outreach specialist.

Gary said he was going in and out of recovery until a COIP field worker encouraged him and provided him with a "tough love" approach.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said recently that through December 1998, they received reports of 688,200 AIDS cases. Of those, 251,408 cases were African Americans.

"(The COIP field worker) encouraged me to pick myself up and keep trying until I got it right," Owens said.

I had the opportunity to ride and walk along with Gary through the Lathrop Homes development to observe just what he did as an outreach specialist. Gary passed out risk reduction intervention information and supplies. He also talked to Lathrop residents about HIV and AIDS.

Several residents made appointments to be picked up and taken to the field station for HIV and AIDS testing. After being tested, Gary gives them a ride back to the development.

On Aug. 5, Lathrop had a Back to School Fest. COIP staff Rocky Rondon, Matta Kelly, Gary Owens and Michelle Giles set up an information booth. They handed out literature and spoke with residents about HIV and AIDS.

Owens said, "The turn-out at the information booth was very successful. We had a lot of teens asking questions."

"When I finished talking with the teens, I felt I achieved just what I set out to do, which was to educate the younger generation because they are our future. I will continue in the things which I have learned and been assured of and pass that knowledge along to someone else in the hopes that they would learn something and pass it along to someone else. We conquer by continuing."

HIV/AIDS in Our Communities

It's all about education.

HIV and AIDS are still very much on the rise, especially among African Americans. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said recently that through December 1998, they received reports of 688,200 AIDS cases. Of those, 251,408 cases were African Americans.

African Americans make up about 12 percent of the

total U.S. population but 37 percent of all AIDS cases reported in this country. CDC officials state that 240,000-325,000 African Americans - about 1 in 50 African American men and 1 in 60 African American women - are infected with HIV. Of those infected with HIV, more than 106,000 African Americans are living with AIDS. In 1998, more African Americans were reported with AIDS than any other racial/ethnic group.

Sharing needles and trading sex for drugs are two ways that substance abuse can lead to HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), according to the CDC. Sex partners and children of drug users at risk as well.

Agencies and clinics in the community can combat the AIDS spread by being available for people with HIV/AIDS and people who need education about this disease. But local leaders like clergymen, schools, aldermen, business persons, community workers and families all have to do their part. The CDC says that everyone must come together to fight this disease.

Going the Extra Mile

Owens and the other employees of the Community Outreach Intervention Project (COIP) go the extra mile to help people who are at risk of getting HIV/AIDS. If you are a drug user who wants to get into recovery, they will find a program for you. If you need treatment for AIDS, they will help. It all comes together for them.

The clinics are there after the fact. But Owens and the other COIP staff members - as well as thousands of similar programs around the country - are there before people get HIV.

Like many anti-AIDS/HIV programs, COIP mainly hires ex-drug users and others who start volunteering with them. Out on the street, Owens and the other program workers talk to people regarding HIV/AIDS prevention. They hand out literature and condoms. If people need test-



A Lathrop resident (right) receives HIV/AIDS Intervention literature and supplies from COIP specialist Gary Owens (center) and Rocky Rondon, COIP Case Manager, during the Lathrop Homes Back-to-School Fest.

Photo by Deborah A. Britton

is a better mother and wife and is adding to her education as a college student.

"I've been drug-free for several years and thank God that I'm employable. I'm learning how to get in where I fit in. Too many times, we are labeled, 'Once a drug addict always a drug addict.' This is an oversimplified conception. I am an ex-drug addict who doesn't use today."

Phyllis Hood used drugs for 15 years. Hood started out at the COIP North Side Field Station as a volunteer. Hood has been on the payroll for 2 1/2 years and recently got a promotion.

Both Hood and Talbert credit the Gruesome Twosome with helping them make a change in their lives.

Hood said, "Rocky would always motivate and cheer me on to turn my life around."

Kelly's experience also inspired her daughter. Michelle Giles is a research interviewer for the Needle Exchange Program. With this program, drug users come in and exchange dirty needles for clean ones to stop the transmission of diseases such as Hepatitis A, Hepatitis C, and Endocarditis.

Giles interviews clients for one year and monitors them to see if they are effectively using the exchange program and progressing toward a drug-free life. After one year, Giles said she becomes emotionally attached to her clients.

"When a client becomes drug-free, this is a great feeling," Giles said.

"Seeing how my mom, Matta Kelly, changed her life inspired me to do what I do."

Seeking Help

Aaron (not his real name) is an African American man in his 40s who lives in Lathrop Homes. Aaron was introduced to COIP through a neighbor. He is seeking help through COIP because he wants to enter into a drug rehabilitation program that would de-tox him off methadone.

Aaron used heroin in a powder form for 10 years but has not used it for the past 8 months. He is now in a methadone program.

Aaron said, "I want to kick my habit. I want to stop using methadone because it's a drug same as heroin, just liquid form and more potent."

COIP's Andrea Talbert is going the extra mile to help Aaron get into a de-tox program.

"Other programs just said 'No,'" Aaron said. "The staff at COIP are very caring people. They treat you like a human being and not just a number."

Dedication

This article is dedicated to all the individuals and agencies who assist those affected with HIV/AIDS.

To all of you who put in countless hours researching a cure, I commend you on your efforts.

This article also is written in memory of Shannon, a Lathrop resident who died early this year of AIDS.

Transforming CHA

Relocation: Emergencies or Sabotage?

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Has the Chicago Housing Authority made it their policy to lie to residents in order to squeeze them out of their neighborhoods?

Advocates for public housing residents say yes. The advocates say the agency is violating their own "Plan for Transformation" by failing to repair occupied buildings. The neglected buildings quickly turn into emergency situations and residents are ordered to leave.

In those emergency situations, residents are forced to choose between limited options for relocation. Residents who move under emergency conditions may not get the Relocation Contract approved by resident leaders which guarantees they will move back to their neighborhoods.

In at least one development, CHA is declaring an emergency situation but has not – despite repeated requests from RJ – produced documentation to prove the buildings' condition.

Emergency Relocation

At the South Side Madden Park development, residents recently were told two buildings will be closed because of emergency conditions.

Residents of 3863 S. Cottage Grove Ave. – including me and my family – and 820 E. Pershing Road were told at a Sept. 28 community meeting they would have to move "before the holidays" because of the buildings' dilapidated conditions.

Crosby said it would be four to five years before qualifying relocated residents could return to the development.

At the community meeting, CHA officials announced the two buildings would be evacuated under an emergency winterization plan after an August 2000 inspection. They said the inspection revealed structural problems, including water pipes that showed a high potential of bursting during the winter months.

However, CHA couldn't provide RJ documentation

hey're trying to move people from buildings that have opposing gang lines into a single building, which is going to cause a bloodbath.

-Tom Finnerty, a consultant to the CHA Central Advisory Council (CAC)

of the buildings' condition.

RJ asked CHA spokesperson Derek Hill if CHA had a policy that allows the agency to close buildings under emergency situations without supportive documentation.

"I don't know. It depends upon how serious the emergency is," he said.

Hill said he was sure a document exists for inspections done of the two buildings but wasn't sure if I could have access to it.

"I'm sure there is but you're asking me to speculate," he said.

Hill referred me to Dwayne Bailey, CHA's chief of operations. Bailey referred me to Lillian Howard, CHA's senior relocation officer.

Howard said inspections of the building were done and documentation of the conditions does exist. But she could not produce the documentation.

"It's not like you can pull something out to give people proof," Howard said when I asked her about the possibility of receiving a copy of the documentation.

"It's a whole report. It's just not on 3863 and 820 E. 39th St."

"It's kind of hard for each resident when they call here to say 'you know, I don't believe you,'" said Howard. "Everyone knows that Madden Park/Wells is eventually going to be demolished. It's in the Plan for

Transformation," she said.

Tom Finnerty, a consultant to the CHA Central Advisory Council (CAC) – which consists of elected resident representatives – said that he too requested a current inspection report on buildings CHA wants closed.

Finnerty said CHA gave him a 9-year-old report that guesses how many years the buildings can operate. Finnerty said the report did not contain details of the buildings' conditions which would require an emergency evacuation.

"They gave us a thing called an Onsite Insight Report done in 1991, and updated in 1997-98, as part of the 202 viability test, not an engineering report," he said.

"I've written to CHA since April requesting it repeatedly. I have piles of papers regarding it."

Finnerty said he and Madden Park's elected resident leader, Local Advisory Council President Eunice Crosby, met with CHA officials and the private property manager in August. At that meeting, CHA described the buildings' closures as a "consolidation," not a winterization plan. CHA's plan at that time was to relocate the families into the Housing Choice Voucher program.

"When we met in August, they were just going to move you all into Section 8 at that point. And we said that didn't make sense," Finnerty said.

Both in the past and now, Finnerty said CHA has declared buildings to be in emergency situations when no real emergency exists. Finnerty added that these actions violate the Relocation Section of the Plan for Transformation as it was approved by resident leaders and the federal government.

"They are supposed to maintain the existing units so that crises or emergencies do not come to be," said Finnerty, referring to the Jan. 6, 2000 Revised Draft Plan for Transformation.

The "Goals" section of the plan states that CHA is to "maintain existing occupied units in a decent, safe and sanitary condition during the implementation of the plan, and to provide greater housing choice."

Since February of last year, CHA stopped re-occupy-



Residents of the Robert Taylor development sign a petition against CHA building consolidation during a community meeting at Omega Baptist Church.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

about relocating families with teenagers into Ida B. Wells.

The residents are afraid because of the past and current rivalries between the different street gangs and drug dealers that operate in each development. The residents at the meeting said they are worried their children will be harassed and attacked if they move into Ida B. Wells.

My own teenagers threatened to run away if we moved into Ida B. Wells.

McClinton Nunn, an employee of McCormack and Baron, the private property manager for Madden Park, said street gangs would not dictate their actions.

Nunn said his firm is working with Chicago Police Commander Ernest T. Brown to identify gang members and track illegal drug sales activity in the two developments.

"We are not going to be driven by the gangs. This is a business," he said.

Nunn said the emergency relocation would avoid the scenario in which hundreds of families from Robert Taylor Homes were relocated into hotels during the winter of 1998 – '99.

At Robert Taylor Homes, families were eventually offered rehabbed apartments on site. But at Madden Park, CHA officials said the redevelopment schedule would not allow the agency to rehab any vacant apartments. Redevelopment of the whole of Madden Park will begin in April 2001.

"Why couldn't other apartments be fixed-up in Madden Park?" asked one resident.

CHA's Lillian Howard answered that relocation to Ida B. Wells or with a Housing Choice Voucher would be less expensive for residents since they wouldn't constantly have to move.

"It's better moving twice versus three or four times," Howard said.

But Madden Park LAC President Crosby had another explanation. Crosby said at an Oct. 25 meeting that CHA doesn't want to spend the money to rehab apartments in Madden Park.

Other developments are experiencing the same problems involving relocation into opposing gang territory.

CAC consultant Finnerty said he met with Police Commander Brown in mid-October because residents of the Henry Horner development are experiencing the same problem of relocation into buildings controlled by opposing gangs.

(Continued on Page 19)

Transforming CHA

The New Henry Horner Homes

by Beauty Turner

Henry Horner Homes was one of the first developments to undergo the process of change.

Years ago, I read an article concerning Horner residents who were very upset about the demolition of their development. Being a curious reporter, I wanted to see what the residents' attitudes are like now that they have been relocated to new units.

So I took a little journey into the new Henry Horner development – also known as part of the West Haven community.

In 1995, a well known activist and vice president of the Henry Horner homes named Sue Sago was quoted in an article in the June 16-30 edition of *Streetwise*:

"I'll be staying in the neighborhood as long as the good Lord keeps me here," Sago reportedly said.

"I don't think that it's right that I have been here for 12 years, through hell and high waters, and then a bunch of white folks get to move in."

Since that remark, Henry Horner has undergone tremendous changes. It has

against CHA claiming that CHA engaged in "de facto demolition" – forcing people to move because CHA stopped repairing the buildings. After the residents settled the lawsuit, CHA built brand-new, low-rise town homes.

The new units clearly show what public housing living can look like - a touch of class and a thing of beauty. The exteriors as well as the interiors of these new homes look like a heavenly creation.

But my soul question was how many residents who lived in Horner in 1995 reside in the new units.

CHA spokesperson Derrick Hill told me that he did not have an answer for me.

I wanted to know what the residents of the New Henry Horner Homes thought of the new units.

The first person I talked to was none other than the most outspoken, prominent activist, still Vice President of Henry Horner Homes - Sue Sago.

Sago said, "In 1995, it seemed like the Chicago Housing Authority was trying everything in their power to push the people out of this community. They tried evictions.

Police kicked in doors. It looked like to me they tried everything to get us out.

"But now, in the year 2000, everything has gotten a lot better. So it is pretty nice here now. And by the way, I do have one of the new units and I love it here."

Irene Mitchell, a single mother of five and former resident of a high-rise who now resides in one of the new units, added to what Sago said:

"I like this new place. My children can play outside. We have nice neighbors. It's a lot better than living in the high rise, great security, a palace compared

to where I used to live," Mitchell said.

Her five children echoed the same sentiments. "We like it here now," they said.

But not everyone thinks the New Henry Horner Homes is totally satisfied. As I strolled through the new Henry Horner Homes, I met up with a resident named James Tate. A former resident of 1943 W. Lake St. who now resides at 128 N. Hoyne Ave., Tate ushered me into his home and he was not happy with his new unit.

He said, "This unit must have been in a fire before because I have many leaks and cracks in my ceiling."

He showed me his daughter's bedroom, where you can clearly see a crack in the ceiling with water damage. He showed me the master bedroom, where another leak damaged the ceiling. He pointed to a crack in his front room window.

He added that whoever came to fix the screen door did a bad job.

"They put a screw in the door that does not fit properly. I gave CHA a list as long as my arm about these problems and I have not received a response yet," Tate said.

But most of the residents like their new units. As I continued on my journey, I met up with a young man named Luke, the son of a long time resident of Henry Horner who asked that his last name not be used.

Luke said, "My mother is well known in the community. She used to reside (in a high-rise) and now she's at (a new unit) and compared to where she used to stay, meaning the high rise, this place is beautiful.

"They should have built the projects like this at first. A lot of the people who died in the development probably would still be living. It was a bad idea to put a lot of poor people on top of each other, no elbow room, 15 to 20 apartments all on the same floor, too many people in one spot.

"They should have made it comfortable like they did here. This is a good thing the city did."

As I walked down the well-paved, tree-lined street, I met a young man named Grady. I asked Grady what he thought of the new Henry Horner Homes. He was eager to talk:

"It's OK," Grady said. "As a matter of fact, it's cool: quiet at night, no gangs, no gunfire and it goes by your income. It is beautiful. What more can one ask for?"



CHA relocated Henry Horner resident Irene Mitchell, a single mother of five, poses with her children in front of their new low-income unit that was built as part of the revitalized community.

Photo by Beauty Turner

Lawyers close to the case said CHA demolished 5 buildings with 466 units and built 461 units in the first phase of the redevelopment.

I talked to Mamie Bone, the president of Henry Horner Homes and the Central Advisory Council as well as a CHA Commissioner, about phase two of the Henry Horner Homes redevelopment.

Bone said, "We are still in a negotiating process with CHA. Right now, until this process is over, there's nothing I could tell you about phase 2."

RJ will go out and get the news about phase 2 of the Henry Horner Homes redevelopment and we will definitely pass it on to you.

So residents, you know what to do, stay focused and stay tuned to RJ.

Etta Jones: Jazz Goddess

by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Etta Jones is a jazz singer that cannot be overlooked.

Jazz deejays around the city agree that this award-winning artist has contributed much to the jazz arena. Jones does jazz with a blues groove.

Men and women jazz singers have shown us that jazz music can be interpreted – beautifully – using the human voice. The proud tradition of jazz singers includes Arthur Prysock, Betty Carter, Nat King Cole, Natalie Cole, Bill Henderson, Clark Terry, Louis "The Bird" Armstrong, Johnny Hartman and Nancy Wilson and Joe Williams, just to name a few.

Jazz can be played instrumentally and/or vocalized.

Many jazz critics say that women singers deliver a greater impact in their songs than men.

"Female song stylists seem to be able to add that special touch on lyrics. They put that emotional touch to the song. A

song is something that is nurtured," said Darlene "Misty" Dotson, a radio personality for WBEE CD 1570 AM.

"The female vocalists will give you that heart-felt experience."

On "Good Morning Heartache," legendary singer Billie "Lady Day" Holiday's voice goes beyond what an instrument can do. Holiday's voice puts a special feeling in a listener's heart and mind regarding her love affair. Holiday's voice takes us all to that loved one that we truly care about or have lost.

One of the greatest jazz singers of all times is Ella Fitzgerald. Her smooth-as-silk voice made songs popular like "Laura," "A Tisket A Tasket," "Easy to Love" and "Now It Can Be Told."

Not to be confused with jazz singer Etta James, Etta Jones is a vocalist with tremendous impact in the style of strong voices like Lena Horne, Sarah Vaughn and Dinah Washington, whose real name is Ruth Brown. Jones was a very good friend of Washington's. Yes, there have been many contributions from women in the jazz arena and Etta Jones is

part of that contribution.

Jones said that if she had to describe herself in one word, it would be "friendly." During a recent interview following a performance at Governor's State University, Jones' vibrant smile greeted one openly.

Jones talked about her 33 years of performing with Houston Person. She has been his main vocalist all that time. When these two dynamic duo entertainers have a concert, one easily thinks of Billie Holiday and Lester "Prez" Young. Young was a tenor saxophone player that accompanied Holiday on many of the tunes she sang and recorded.

The same goes for Jones and Person. They have recorded many tunes together. Jones said, "Some might say we go together like cheese and crackers, or ham and eggs, macaroni and cheese. Many have said, we are like Billie Holiday and Lester Young - being modest."

Holiday was Jones' favorite singer.

"Holiday inspired and paved the way for many female singers," Jones said.

(Continued on Page 11)

by Cenabeth Cross

Community Policing

I was personally invited to the latest Community Alternative Policing Strategies (CAPS) meeting by the policeman who came to my door a few months ago looking for a boy who he said had run into my apartment.

He banged on the door loudly but not as loudly as the last time. He woke me up and I went to the door. After I promised to be at the meeting, he left.

The meeting was on Sept. 11 at Mt. Sinai Hospital, 2750 W. 15th Place. When I



Chicago Police Commander Ernest T. Brown of the City's public housing unit.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

arrived, a bit later than the 6:30 p.m. start time, there was no one there except the policeman who had invited me, a woman police officer and two women from 2650 W. Ogden Ave., the other building besides mine in the Ogden Courts public housing complex.

I stepped in and asked if the meeting was over. I was invited in anyway by one of the ladies, who said that maybe I could help. I sat down and listened as they talked. The lady wanted to know when they were going to get a certain boy out of the lobby of their building.

The policeman explained that the city's Anti-Gang Loitering Ordinance, under which they were working, will only let them make arrests every three hours. The policeman added that he wanted to be able to arrest this youth under state laws instead of city laws because state laws will allow the police to detain the youth longer.

A previous version of the city's Anti-Gang Ordinance was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court as unconstitutional. Police Superintendent Terry Hillard and other City officials say the new ordinance is constitutionally correct.

But Ed Yohnka of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the organization which first sued the city over the Anti-Gang Loitering Ordinance, was quoted in the Aug. 23 *Chicago Defender* that "we may well do it again." The new ordinance states that the city can define gang "hot spots" and can order people to leave those areas. After a suspected gang member has been warned, if they are in the same place 3 hours later, they can be arrested.

One of the women reminded the officer of who the boy's mother was. She described the mother as "the one on crutches."

The policeman then said he "would get on it right away."

The police make regular raids in our building. I recently saw one policeman chasing some of women with an aluminum baseball bat. The lobby is cleared for a while but then the gang members are back again.

I don't know many of the boys I see

Stop the Violence

now. One young man to whom I used to speak disappeared for a while. Since his return, when I speak to him, he laughs out loud and looks right past me. He doesn't hang in the lobby any more.

The lady then asked me to tell the policeman about any of the boys I knew because I live in the building. I got up and told them that I really didn't know many people at all and I left.

One week after the meeting, I received an invitation to the next two CAPS meetings in the mail. The trouble with this is that I hadn't given my name or address to anyone there.

I have to keep my own son out of the police officers' way and away from the gang action. The building is half empty now and many residents think their neighbors have been evicted under the One Strike policy.

The boys are caught in the lobby and arrested. The following day, it seems, the entire family has to move. The boys that were discussed at the CAPS meeting will disappear soon. Then their families

will follow. This will certainly help management when it's time to relocate the people that are left.

One of the ladies in my computer classes lives in a building on the West Side's ABLA development. She told me her son recently had been shot in the legs three times. She says the police check everyone in the lobby of her building before entering. They come now every day for a few hours and then leave and the shooting starts again. Most of the shootings is committed by gang members involved in drive-by's and police officers.

The residents are the prisoners now.

Rally Against Handguns

On Oct. 1, I attended the 18th annual rally against handguns. It was held at Dearborn Street and Jackson Boulevard at noon. There was a big turnout, including a lot of children. There were many speakers, including Mayor Richard M. Daley, state Comptroller Daniel J. Hynes, Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine, and several officials of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, including board Chairperson Elizabeth G. Coolidge and rally Chairperson Bob Williamson.

The Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence was started in 1973 and is the first statewide organization to address the problem. They educate the public on handgun violence and work to reduce death and injury caused by the non-regulated access to guns in our society.

CHA Security

My investigation of the takeover of the CHA by

the city police started back in the winter last year.

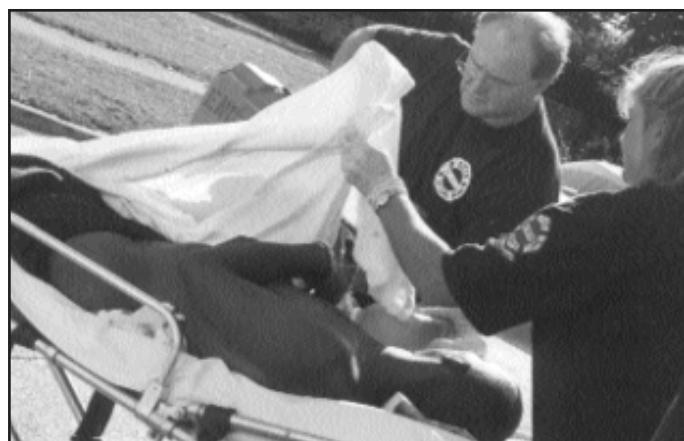
On Dec. 20, I interviewed Francine Washington, Local Advisory Council president of Stateway Gardens. At the time, Washington said that police officers entering Stateway buildings were taking their guns out of their cars even before they got out of their cars at the curbs, whatever they were there for. Washington expressed fear for her own life and the children in that complex.

At the time, I interviewed Nicee, a friend who lives in the Robert Taylor Homes. She had to send her boys to her mother's home after the change because the CHA policemen knew her children, who were in school and had never been involved in any trouble. Her two boys are 13 and 17 years old.

The new city policemen harassed all the young men and she feared for their lives. At the same time, she had to relocate because some of the buildings were being shut down in preparation for the demolition.

Now the residents hardly know one another. Since the shooting death of Ronald "Peabo" Terry in 4525 S. Federal St. this summer, my friend won't talk to me at all. She does not want to be involved.

Many tenants are angry because of the violence that is taking place around the State



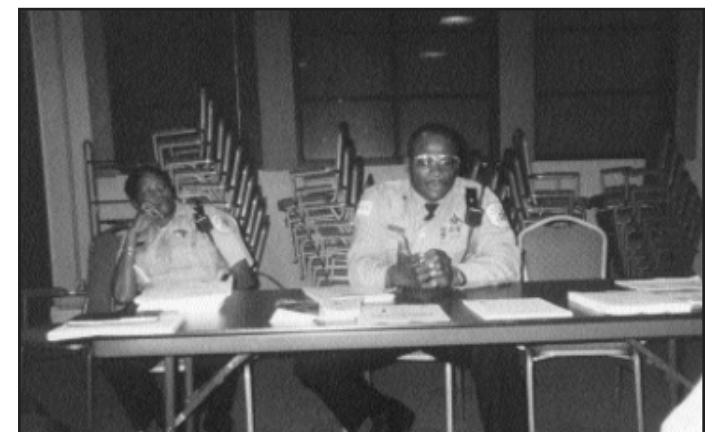
Ambulance workers cover Ronald "Peabo" Terry after he was shot by police officers at the Robert Taylor development this summer.

Photo by George Johnson

Street corridor. Since July 3, there have been at least seven killings in or near Robert Taylor Homes and Stateway Gardens.

U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush (D-1) and others are trying to organize broader leadership to address collectively the issues of violence in our own communities. In Englewood, the law enforcers will be putting up video cameras on the streets. This may help but it will be a year before any cameras are installed. In the meantime, there's nothing to stop crime but us.

Police Interview



CPD officers speak to West Side community residents during a Sept. 11 Community Alternative Policing Strategies (CAPS) meeting at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

I got a chance to ask a few questions to Police Commander Ernest T. Brown of the city force's public housing unit:

RJ: How is the takeover of the CHA policing unit working out?

EB: In the first place, it was not a take over. Community policing is the driving force behind the change. We think all people should get the same protection throughout the city. The people in Beverly are not any better than the people in public housing and the police have to treat everyone as equals.

RJ: Did the change have anything to do with (previous public housing) Commander (Michael) Tolliver's death?

EB: No.

RJ: Are the policemen being trained?

EB: Yes.

RJ: Previously, the CHA, under Deputy Chief Richard Smiley, trained its officers by making them take classes at Harold Washington College in psychology and social sciences to better understand the people they serve. Do your police receive any special training for this job?

EB: No. One of the problems is for the police to look at you and assume that you should be treated any differently from those people in Beverly. It's not the same environment but they commit the same crimes. They should get the same treatment. We want to get to know the people. We want them to know that we will be there to stop the crime but we are here to stay. We won't just show up when there's trouble and then just leave.

The more they see of us, the sooner they will be able to trust us. We all have to stop acting like the people in CHA are Martians or from another planet. We must emphasize that every mother, daughter, father and son are treated the same. All the police in CHA asked to come. No one was forced or kicked here.

RJ: They all receive training on how and when to use their weapons?

EB: Yes. Every one of our policemen gets special orientation training. Then there is on-going training for all.

RJ: My publisher says that Julia Stasch, the mayor's chief of staff, told him there is a \$12 million grant put up for hiring new police. Can you tell me how that money is being spent?

EB: At my level, I deal with what they give me. My job is dealing with the people. It's all above my head. I do my job and leave the money matters to others.

More Violence

Back to my neighborhood for more violence. The street gang kingpin, Elbert Mahone, 38, was killed after being kidnapped during the turf war at the end of September. Community leaders and politicians held a press conference Oct.



CPD officers speak to West Side community residents during a Sept. 11 Community Alternative Policing Strategies (CAPS) meeting at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

by Julio Martinez

Dozens of residents lost all their belongings in the fire at the Flannery Homes senior building located at 1507 N. Clybourn Ave. on 30 Oct. 30, 1998. Two years later, the residents are still seeking a solution to their problems. To find out what really happened, I interviewed Timothy Fox, from the Chicago Housing Authority's legal department, at the CHA's headquarters at 626 W. Jackson.

I asked this always smiling gentleman about the concerns of the individuals who lived in this building since two years have now gone by and no one has furnished them with information. Although the residents were the ones who suffered losses, nobody has visited them yet.

Fox was not able to answer the main questions that most of the former residents still have: When will they be compensated for their losses? When will they

Flannery Homes Update

be able to move back into the building?

The building at 1507 N. Clybourn was burned when something went wrong during the construction of the market-rate town homes around the two senior buildings. A Peoples Gas main was punctured and a huge fire scorched the whole building. At first, CHA officials said the building would be rehabbed and residents would be allowed to move back in. But when I wrote my update on this situation last year, I found that CHA officials were no longer promising to rebuild the building. They still haven't said whether they intend to rehab the building.

Meanwhile, the lawyers for the construction compa-

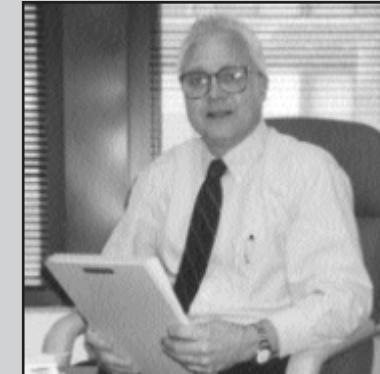


1507 N. Clybourn remains uninhabited since closing in 1998 after a fire.

Photo by Julio Martinez

nies, CHA and the developer of Orchard Park, the market-rate units around the Flannery Homes, are fighting over who has responsibility for the fire. The developer is Orchard Park Limited, 360 N. Michigan Ave., while the construction companies are Tropic Construction Corporation, 205 West Wacker Drive, and Herrington Excavating Construction, 4246 W. 124th Place. CHA's lawyers and the lawyers for Peoples Gas also are involved.

I interviewed Alan B. Minerbrook, who was living in the building which was burned and who now lives at 1531 N. Clybourn, the other Flannery Homes high-rise which was not burned in the fire. This gentlemen informs



Timothy Fox, a claims manager for CHA's RISK Management Department.

Photo by Julio Martinez

me that he already has a lawyer and a lawsuit to see if he might recover his losses.

I also visited Rosie Docherty, Ciola Chinn, Thelma Rainey and Birdie Whitfield. All of them lived in the building that burned. I tried to see Jeff Jones, who previously told me that he lost \$3,000 in this fire, but he was not at home.

Praising Racine Apartments

by Lorenzia Shelby

So many people talk about how their building is in deplorable condition. But let me tell you about a building where residents have pride.

The Racine Apartments, located at 1611 S. Racine Ave. in the Pilsen community, is under the management of the Habitat Company. The residents of the Racine Apartments are predominantly senior citizens but we have our share of younger people, too.

"The Racine Apartments are the most prominent in Chicago." "It's immaculate and beautiful." These comments bellow and echo through the hallways, stairways, all the way into the front yard. The people who live in the Racine Apartments are singing these words of praise for their home.

The credit is not just due to one person. The building's success is due to many people who devoted their time and talents to keeping the building in an eminent condition and making it a wonderful place to live.

Maria Reyes is a manager of the Racine Apartments. Reyes started working at the building Oct. 29, 1999.

Reyes was asked what she considered her biggest achievement in her one-year tenure?

"As a manager, I consider myself fair," Reyes said. "My achievements are the camaraderie I have established with the tenants and staff. I upgraded the security in the building by eight

hours when I brought in a new group of security guards and there's a lot of work yet to be done."

Mario Gonzales is the building's engineer. He was promoted to his position in October 1999.

Jeri Hall, a tenant, said Gonzales "is always on the go. His drive, persistence and stick-to-it ness to get the job done motivated him to elevate himself from janitor to engineer."

Garrick Calhoun, a long-term employee of the Racine Apartments, can be found between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. Monday through Friday, starting on the ninth floor sweeping, mopping and buffing the hallway floors. After he finishes nine floors of hallways, he is ready to begin work on the lobby and two sitting rooms.

One tenant said, "Garrick will work all day and all night if he's not stopped."

There are two new staff members: Othan Moran and Kimbel Barrett. Juanita Hymond is a clerk, secretary and part-time manager at the building.

Mattie Jackson said of her: "Juanita is more than just a clerk. She's a friend, sister and a nurse. She will help solve any problem you may have or correct any misunderstanding. She is wonderful."

Hymond was asked what she thinks of Reyes. In one word, she

exclaimed, "Brilliant."

The captain of the tenant patrol, Robert Richards, works tirelessly at keeping the tenant patrol properly organized. He keeps the tenant patrol's work schedules and how many hours they work in precise order. Richards said, "In the Racine Apartments, we have a few peo-



Peggy Harper, co-captain of the Racine Apartments Tenant Patrol

Photo by Lorenzia Shelby

ple who need getting rid of, that includes tenants and tenant patrol workers, and things would be better."

Richards talked about one of his tenant patrollers, Lester Jones: "He's good! He works far and beyond the call of duty. He does the walk down at night. He starts on the ninth floor, checking to see if they are all right. He will not leave until he gets a response to his knocking."

"(Jones) waters the flowers in the front yard and he sweeps the yard clean. He doesn't get paid

for this work. He even spends his money feeding a stray cat."

Peggy Harper is the co-captain of the tenant patrol. She wears many hats. She is also on the building committee. She supervises the distribution of food boxes donated by Catholic Charities.

Richards said of Harper, "She's a very hard worker."

The Racine Apartments' office is located on the first floor. The two sitting rooms, cafeteria and meeting rooms are on the first floor also. The west sitting room is used for recreation, playing cards, watching television and smoking. The other sitting room is non-smoking. This is where the exercise equipment is kept: three stationary bicycles and a treadmill.

Tenant Jeri Hall said the Racine Apartments were not a pleasant place to live just five years ago.

"It was an open building to gangs, prostitution and dope dealers," she said.

"The front yard was used as a beer garden."

George Cressie, a long-time resident, remembers when there were not any flowers in the yard, just a lot of benches broken by people who didn't live there. Another tenant named Bea said there was a tenant who once lived

there who raped and robbed several of the senior citizens in the building, men and women, until he was caught.

She recalled another resident, a tenant patrol worker who had a passkey to all of the apartments. He would go into tenants' apartments when they weren't home. He would cook breakfast and make a lot of telephone calls. Seniors were afraid to leave their apartments.

George Cressie said, "Nothing changed until Rick Castro came here as manager. He stopped the gangs from running rampant throughout the building and he evicted those (gang members) who lived here. He brought in security to protect the tenants."

"Castro eliminated prostitutes from having sex in the hallways and stairwells. Alcohol and beer drinking in the front yard; they were also eliminated."

Jeri Hall said, "Rick got rid of the rats and roaches. When he took over as manager, the lobby ceiling leaked and the west sitting room leaked after a heavy rain. Rick had the roof repaired to stop the leaks."

The stoppage was only temporary. The leak in the sitting room came back. Three subcontractors were summoned to rectify the problem in 1999 and 2000. But all three were unsuccessful."

The clerk, Juanita Hymond, said a new roof will be put on the west sitting room, hopefully in March 2001. I know the tenants will be happy.

Residents Not on Pol's' 2000 Agenda

by Wateka Kleinpeter
Managing Editor

It seems like you have to be someone really important to get an interview with anyone in either of the major party political campaigns for president.

A lot is at stake in this election coming up Tuesday, Nov. 7. The country will elect a new president, most likely either Democratic nominee Vice President Al Gore or Republican nominee Texas Gov. George W. Bush. The majority in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, not to mention the Illinois General Assembly, are in play.

I didn't want to talk either of the men themselves but I did want to interview someone in the campaign, a spokesperson, someone.

It's not like I haven't done this before. When a journalist covers a political campaign, you start by finding out who the two major party candidates are, research their platforms and the relevant issues and contact their campaign office. Usually, they have a press person



**Democratic nominee
Vice President Al Gore**

and you identify yourself as a member of the media and they'll ask you what issues you're concerned about. The press person will give you another person to speak with or take your information and have someone call you back.

For this article, I was looking for information that will help our readers make a decision of who will get their vote. Because of all the demolition of public housing in Chicago and displacement of people, the number one issue for our readers is affordable housing.

Several other issues of special concern to African Americans all over the country are racial profiling, hate crimes and police brutality, affordable health care, a continued good employment situation, welfare to work, and the continuance of affirmative action programs. Homelessness is another issue that concerns African Americans.

I started by calling the two campaigns' press offices: Gore's in Tennessee and Bush's in Texas. Then I checked out the World Wide Web site of both candidates. They contain a lot of pictures, biographies and issues that both candidates say are a part of their agenda if they are elected to the White House. I also watched the three televised debates and have been reading every newspaper article I can find about the campaign.

On his Web site, Gore addresses the issue of hate crimes. Gore mentions James Byrd, an African-American man who was dragged behind a truck until he died in Jasper, Texas. Gore writes on the Web site, "Crimes of hate against all people should carry a punishment that is swift and severe."

On Bush's Web site, he writes that about crime that "the best way to protect the innocent is to fully enforce the law and to ensure swift and sure punishment for criminals." He listed his accomplishments in the field of law enforcement as governor. Under his administration, crime is down in Texas by 20 percent and juvenile crime down by 44 percent.

Bush has a plan for home ownership. He wants to increase the number of people who own single-family housing. Bush plans to work with distressed areas to help low-income families achieve the dream of homeownership. But there was no mention of rental units or public housing.

Gore's Web site doesn't mention anything about housing at all.

Neither of the candidates listed homelessness on their web site or spoke of it anywhere I read.

Then I tried to interview someone from the two major political parties. I played phone tag for weeks. I called back and forth to both offices. I told the Bush campaign that I had already gotten information from the Gore campaign; and I told the Gore campaign that I had already gotten information from the Bush campaign. As a journalist, I tried to get both sides of the story. I was going to ask both parties the same questions.

But since I was unable to interview an actu-

al person involved with the campaign of either party, I listened to the debates and read newspaper accounts from all over.

The candidates in the two major parties seem to have similar views on many issues. They both have a plan for health care and the cost of prescription medicine for seniors, how to spend the surplus that the country has right now as a result of a good economy, plans for education of our nation's youths and fixing the already troubled social security program.

This election has several other important issues that will be addressed by the next president. For one, the new president will be able to appoint judges for the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the highest-ranking court in the land. Supreme Court justices are appointed for life. They rule on important issues such as whether abortion will be legal or not. The most famous case was Roe vs. Wade in 1973, which legalized abortion.

For the record, Gore believes women should have the right to choose an abortion. Bush does not support abortion as a legal option.

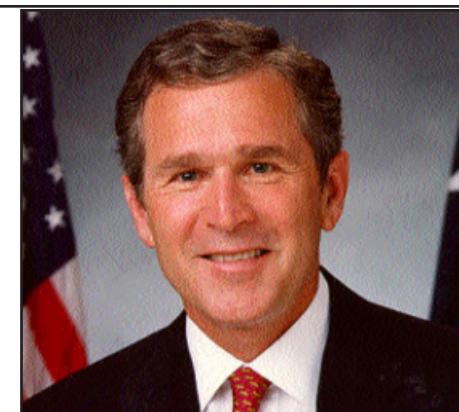
Another pivotal Supreme Court case was Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, in which the justices ruled against segregated schools. A young African American attorney, Thurgood Marshall, argued this landmark case. He later became the first African American to be appointed to the Supreme Court.

Gore and Bush's poll numbers are never far apart one way or the other. If Bush is ahead, it's been only by a few points and vice versa for Gore.

There has not been a lot heard from President Bill Clinton in this campaign. Some political experts have said that was good for Gore. Others think that he should have been more visible and more supportive. Gore is the current U.S. Vice President and, during the debates and on the campaign trail, Bush alluded to the reputation of President Bill Clinton without mentioning the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Gore has taken a stand that he is his own man, as he proclaimed in his speech to the Democratic Party Convention and in the debates. He said that he would like for people to look at the strong economy and other positive things that he has been a part of in the Clinton administration. Gore often elaborates on some of the positive things the Clinton administration did for the country.

Bush is trying to express the image of family values and diversity. At the Republican



**Republican Presidential nominee and Texas Gov.
George W. Bush**

National Convention, his very tan, very Hispanic-looking nephew, George P. Bush, spoke in English and Spanish. George P. Bush's father is Jeb Bush, the governor of Florida, and his mother is a Mexican American.

Republican candidate George W. Bush, currently the governor of Texas and the son of former President George Bush, has no experience as far as running the country is concerned. He has never served in the U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives. He is using his record as governor for his qualifications. Under Gov. Bush, the state of Texas is leading the country in death penalty executions. Bush is a former businessman who has been involved in oil production in Texas.

On the other hand, there are several other candidates one can vote for if you're not sure of the Elephant or the Jackass party.

There is the Green Party, which is lead by consumer advocate Ralph Nader, and the Reform Party, whose candidate is Pat Buchanan.

A newcomer who wants to be a write-in candidate is Barbara Moore. Moore is a resident of Robert Taylor Homes. She is the resident who refused to move from a Robert Taylor Homes building slated for last year's "winterization" plan. She defied then-CHA CEO Phillip Jackson. Moore's building, 5266 S. Federal Ave., had a famous worm farm which CHA eventually destroyed when Moore finally moved out of the building.

Moore announced her write-in candidacy in a mid-October broadcast of "Lu Palmer's Notebook" on WVON radio.

Información sobre Flannery

por Julio Martínez

El 30 de octubre de 1998, docenas de residentes perdieron todas sus pertenencias en el incendio que arrasó el edificio Flannery Homes para personas de la tercera edad situado en 1507 N. Clybourn Ave.

Dos años después, los residentes siguen buscando una solución a sus problemas. Para averiguar lo que ocurrió realmente, me entrevisté con Timothy Fox, integrante del departamento legal de la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) en la sede de esta organización situada en 626 W. Jackson.

Le pregunté a este caballero

siempre sonriente acerca de las preocupaciones de las personas que vivían en este edificio puesto que han pasado dos años y nadie les ha proporcionado información sobre su situación. Aunque fueron los residentes quienes sufrieron las pérdidas en este siniestro, nadie se ha molestado en visitarlos todavía.

Fox no pudo responder las principales preguntas que la mayoría de los ex residentes todavía le plantean: ¿Cuándo recibirán una indemnización por sus pérdidas? ¿Cuándo podrán regresar al edificio?

El edificio situado en 1507 N. Clybourn se quemó a raíz de un accidente ocurrido durante la construcción de viviendas unifamiliares sin protección oficial alrede-

dor de los dos edificios para personas de la tercera edad. Se perforó una tubería principal de gas de Peoples Gas y un gigantesco incendio devoró todo el edificio.

Al principio, los representantes de la CHA afirmaron que el edificio sería restaurado y se permitiría que los residentes volviesen a habitarlo; pero cuando escribí información actualizada sobre el caso en estas fechas el año pasado, me di cuenta de que los representantes de la CHA ya no estaban prometiendo reconstruir el edificio y todavía no han afirmado públicamente si tienen o no la intención de restaurarlo.

Entretanto, los abogados de las compañías constructoras, de la

CHA y de la promotora inmobiliaria de Orchard Park, es decir, el nombre del conjunto de viviendas unifamiliares sin protección oficial alrededor de Flannery Homes están discutiendo respecto a quién es responsable del incendio.

La promotora inmobiliaria se llama Orchard Park Limited, con sede en 360 N. Michigan Ave., mientras que las compañías constructoras son Tropic Construction Corporation, con sede en 205 West Wacker Drive, y Herrington Excavating Construction, con sede en 4246 W. 124th Place. Los abogados de la CHA y los abogados de Peoples Gas también participan en esta querella.

Entrevisté a Alan B.

Minerbrook, quien vivía en el edificio destruido por las llamas y reside ahora en 1531 N. Clybourn, la otra torre de Flannery Homes que no se consumió en las llamas. Este caballero me informó que ya tiene un abogado y ha presentado una demanda legal en un intento por recibir una indemnización por sus pérdidas.

También visité a Rosie Dochery, Ciola Chinn, Thelma Rainey y Birdie Whitfield. Todas ellas vivían en el edificio destruido por las llamas. Traté de entrevistarlas con Jeff Jones, quien me informó previamente que había perdido \$3,000 en este incendio, pero no estaba en su casa.

Residents' Delivery Dilemmas

by Jacqueline Thompson

ast month, Idella Smith, a very frustrated resident of the Harold L Ickes Homes, called our office to report a civil injustice brought on by the fact that she lives in public housing.

Smith had been to two furniture stores shopping for a new bedroom set and mattress. Mattress World, located on South Halsted. This in itself was not unusual, however, because Ms Smith suffers from genetic illness that causes her to experience excessive weight gain, it was no easy task for her to shop around the store.

Finally satisfied with her selections, she sat down to pay for her furniture and to arrange to have it delivered. The salesperson prepared an itemized list with a bottom line of \$600.00. She paid cash and then was asked her address. When she gave her address the clerk informed her that they were "sorry" but they could not go to public housing to deliver her purchases. Needless to say she asked for her money back, got it and left the store severely insulted and overwhelmed by the denial of a social courtesy.

Because She still needed furniture, she decided to try Windy City Hotel Furniture Outlet near 22nd and Michigan. There she found two chest of drawers, paid for her selections and was satisfied until the day of delivery. Expecting the delivery men to knock on her door at anytime. She was surprised when they called her on the phone to tell her that her chest of drawers were downstairs by the curb and if she wanted them, she would have to send someone down stairs to get them. They would not be coming in the building.

RJ: how did you get your furniture up stairs?

IS: I had to call my brother and he got some guys who were standing downstairs to bring them up. Again I felt insulted and mistrusted by a commercial business company, "It just isn't fair." Feeling the depth of her experience, I went to Windy City Used furniture outlet and talked to "Cat" who

didn't want to use her full name, however she was not at all shy when asked questions about her company.

RJ: What is your companies policy on delivering furniture to residents of Harold Ickes Homes?

C: "We don't go up in "housing." For 20 years it has been our delivery policy.

RJ: Could you tell me what happened to bring about such a policy?

C: Yes, We used to deliver to there, but our men would get threatened and harassed.

RJ: By whom?

C: By them guys standing in front of the building's front door. Not the customer.

RJ: May I talk to one of your delivery men?

C: Sure

I did speak to one, however he did not want his name mentioned, but he told me that "one time, the last time, I tried to make a delivery, I was threatened and harassed so badly, I drove away with the back door of the truck open and half the furniture still on the truck. I ain't never going back."

C: "Now if a Senior Citizen needs a delivery, I see to it that they get theirs. I take good care of my Seniors."

RJ: Do a lot of people from Public Housing shop here?

C: Yeah, I got good customers in CHA. But I'm not going to risk my employees lives to deliver any used chairs and beds.

Soon after the disheartening interview with Windy City furniture outlet representative, I spoke to Mrs Lydiola Smith (Ms Idella Smith's sister) about her experience. She said "My purchases from Windy City, 2 televisions, 2 beds with mattresses, 2 dressers and an end table were paid for and never delivered. They kept putting me off saying they had no workers to deliver."

RJ: Did they have workers the day you made your purchases?

LS: Yes, They never delivered my furniture though.

RJ: Were you able to get your money back?

LS: Yes, I had to get my brother to go over to the store and get it for me. They did bring the dresser though, but like my sister, they left them down stairs for me to figure a way to get them upstairs. Even though I've heard a lot of information about this one particular store, many other companies have their methods of disregard.

Mrs. Gloria Williams shared other frustrating delivery experience with RJ.

RJ: Have you had any problems with deliveries?

GW: Yes from Montgomery Wards. In May of 1999, I bought new furniture and it took three delivery dates to get it. The only way I got it was they finally hired some black men to do the delivery.

RJ: Did you get satisfaction with the delivery?

GW: "Not really. I bought insurance on the furniture, one chair broke, I filed a claim and they still haven't settled, come out and picked up the broken chair or recognized my complaint. I might recall my paid premium."

The post office is notorious for not delivering packages to CHA residents. In 1998, this reporter expected a large box from Wilmette, Illinois. It left the sender on a Monday, one week along with boxes sent to other people in other sections of Chicago. After one week, all the other boxes had been delivered to single dwellings in other neighborhoods I was still waiting for mine.

I went to the post office on three different occasions. I was told by the supervisor that "it was not there." The third time I went, I mentioned calling the Post Master General's office and was asked to wait a while my mail deliverer would be in shortly. I waited 30 minutes, went home, my spouse said "the postman had just left, he was out of breath" but your box is there. Other residents made mention of items being returned to sender without notice from the post office, just never delivered. Some residents say, "there ought to be a law, against such practices and treatment.

Maybe some day there will be.



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Public Health Services



Dep. of Public Health
Sheila Lyne, RSM Commissioner



Comprehensive Clinics

	All telephone area codes are 312, except where indicated.	
Englewood	641 West 63rd Street	747-7831
Lower West Side	1713 South Ashland	746-5157
Roseland	200 East 115th Street	747-9500
Uptown	845 West Wilson	744-1938
West Town	2418 West Division	744-0943

Maternal/Child Clinics

Grand Boulevard	4410 South State	747-0005
South Chicago	2938 East 89th Street	747-5285
South Lawndale	3059 West 26th Street	747-0066

Public Health Clinic

Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV	530 East 31st Street	747-0102
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Affiliated Clinics

Circle Family Care	4909 West Division	(773) 921-8100
Komed Health Clinic	4230 South Greenwood	(773) 268-7600
Lakeview Neighborhood Health Center	2849 North Clark	(773) 528-1188
Lawndale Christian Health Center	3860 West Ogden	(773) 521-5006
Mile Square	2045 West Washington	996-9000
Woodlawn Adult Health	6337 South Woodlawn	(773) 747-7700



Key Public Health Telephone Numbers

All telephone area codes are 312, except where indicated

CDPH General Information	747-9884
TTY	744-8599
Addictions Services	(773) 476-0622
Outpatient Program	850-0080
Residential (Women/Girls)	(773) 737-4600
Residential (Men)	747-9825
Prevention	744-3796
Birth Certificates of Newborns	747-9875
Board of Health	1-800-4-CANCER
Cancer Information	747-8816
Case Management	746-5380
Communicable Disease Reporting	744-3800
Death Certificates	747-9810
Epidemiology	747-FOOD
Food and Dairy Protection	747-9726
Health Surveillance	747-8820
Hispanic Affairs	747-AIDS
HIV/AIDS	1-800-243-AIDS
Statewide Hotline	746-5380
Immunization	746-6122
Chicago CareVan Program	http://www.ci.chi.il.us
Internet Address	747-LEAD
Lead Poisoning	747-9768
Mental Health	747-9140
Nutrition Services/WIC Program	747-9822
Public Health Nursing	747-9805
Public Information/News Media Requests	747-5400
Sexually Transmitted Disease	746-5380
Tuberculosis	747-8787
Violence Prevention	1-800-603-HELP
Crisis Hotline	747-9569
Volunteer Services	

May 1999

157298-11-5

We Serve With Pride, We Treat With Compassion.

Youth Jobs In Jeopardy

by Andre Robinson

As a teen living in LeClaire Courts, I and my friends looked forward to the summer vacation, and not because it was a chance to be out of school for three months or to leave the city with family for some exciting vacation venture. My friends and I looked forward to getting a summer job and earning our first paycheck. It was a matter of being self-sufficient at age 14 and not having to hit up on mom and dad for a few dollars.

Today's teens also are getting this experience. But according to one city official, the results of the election could mean that fewer kids could be going to work in the near future.

Half of American 12-year-olds hold informal jobs like baby-sitting or yard work, and by age 15, nearly two-thirds are employed, according to a new Labor Department report.

"The American work ethic starts at an early age," said Labor Secretary Alexis Herman of the findings about young Americans' working habits, released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Still, the study found that a smaller percentage of the teen-age population held jobs in the late 1990s than two decades earlier in the late 1970s. During the period from 1977 to 1979, an average 30 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds held jobs during the school year and 43 percent held jobs in the summer. By comparison, from 1996 to 1998, an average of 25 percent in the same age group held jobs during the school year and 34 percent in the summer. The average weekly hours worked by employed 15 to 17 years olds were 23 in the summer and 17 during the school year.

White teenagers are more likely than minorities to work, the study found. Nearly two-thirds, 64 percent of white teenagers, did some type of formal or informal work by age 14, compared with 43 percent of Black teenagers and 41 percent of Hispanic teens.

Girls were just as likely to be working by age 15 as

boys, but were apt to be doing different types of jobs. Girls were more likely to hold informal jobs, like baby sitting, for example.

In Chicago, many young people go to work through a federally-financed workforce development program. The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) Summer 2000 Youth Employment initiative offered summer employment opportunities to 15,000 economically disadvantaged Chicago youths in community-based organizations, government entities and private sector businesses. MOWD helps young people between the ages of 14 and 21 identify meaningful job opportunities and then puts them to work.

The summer youth employment program aims to teach the young people a number of skills geared toward getting ready for the workforce.

Dexter West, a resident of LeClaire Courts and a summer jobs participant, said working with the program has given him an idea on what the real working world is like.

"Before I got into this program, I did not know how to begin to write a resume or go in for a job interview," West said. "But now I am more confident in my approach and self-assured."

Another MOWD participant, a 14-year-old resident of ABLA Homes, said, "I didn't know that I would have to attend classes and learn how to dress properly and speak properly. I just thought that the only thing we had to do was to go to work but I guess it is to help us."

Commissioner Jackie Edens has been running the summer youth program for two years. Through those years, Edens said it has been an uphill battle to receive funding to continue to maintain the 15,000 young participants in the program. Edens said her staff works through-



DuSable High School youth volunteers at the Hayes Family Health Center and the Ounce of Prevention Fund's Health Fair 2000 at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center on September 23.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

out the year to prepare for the summer. But this year, Edens said she is worried that the results of the election will jeopardize the program.

"Within the next couple of years of the program, we could hit a wall if there's a Republican president in office," Edens said.

"George W. Bush, the Republican candidate, has made it no secret that the two things he is focusing on are strengthening the military and improving education. By doing this, other programs may be cut through the Department of Labor and HUD, which is why if there was a time where we as a people needed to get out there and vote, it is this year."

Etta Jones: Jazz Goddess

(Continued from Page 6)

"Carmen McRae, Dinah Washington and Sarah Vaughn were a little ahead of her," said Jones.

"But (Holiday) was right there as well."

Jones was considered the baby in the group. When she started performing, she was only 15 years old.

Being at the right place at the right time enabled her to get her first singing gig. Jones said she was at the Apollo Amateurs Hour when Buddy Johnson was looking for a vocalist. His sister, Ella Johnson, had been his lead vocalist at the time. But Johnson was expect-

"Don't Go to Strangers," and was nominated for a Grammy for the album, "Save Your Love for Me," for which she also received the Eubie Blake Jazz Award. Jones received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Women in Jazz Foundation in 1996. Jones is constantly working.

Touring throughout the country in concerts and club venues like the New Apartment Lounge and the Jazz Showcase in Chicago, she often visits the New Leather Lounge when she performs in Chicago along with Maxim's and the Chestnut Room in New York City.

Jones can be heard on her latest CD, "All the Way: Etta Jones Sings Sammy Cahn," on

"Della Griffin is also a good singer. She's been around a long time and may not be a popular name that most are familiar with, along with a singer named Cythina Scott. She too lives in New York City and is a very good stylist."

Jones' advice to aspiring female vocalists is to "really, really love singing and stick with it. Sometimes things might happen where the situation might appear kind of bleak. You must have faith and trust that things can happen. And if you are dedicated and love it enough, then I think something good happens. So come on, there's room for you. We need more new, young, inspiring, talented female jazz singers. We're waiting for you."

Jones' partner, tenor saxophonist Houston Person, is an internationally known bandleader and composer. Radio personality "Misty" Dotson said Person makes a non-jazz listener enjoy his easy-to-understand style. A listener to Person's music can sit down or listen while working or playing.

Jones described her long-time partner as "very serious."

Jones added, "But once you get to know him, he's really a beautiful person. I wouldn't change him for the world."

Person studied at South Carolina State College and the Hart College of Music in Hartford, Conn. Person has appeared on recordings as a guest artist with Etta Jones, Lou Rawls, Lena Horne, Horace Silver and the late Charles Earland, just to list a few.

Person won the Independent Jazz Record of the Year award in 1990 for recording "Something in Common" with Ron Carter. In 1998, his recording for High Note Records,

We need more new, young, inspiring, talented female jazz singers. We're waiting for you.

- Etta Jones, renowned Jazz Vocalist

ing a baby and in those days, female entertainers were not allowed to be pregnant on stage. Boy, we have come a long way since then.

Jones said a spiritual reader informed her mother that she would become a singer and Jones has been singing since the tender age of 3. She would sing with the radio and learn all of the songs by heart.

Jones has performed with such great artists as J.C. Heard, Earl "Fatha" Hines, Jack McDuff, Oliver Nelson, Kenny Burrell and Cedar Walton, just to name a few concerts and recordings.

Jones' dedication and hard work has earned her a gold record for her recording,

the High Note label.

Jones is pure class and pure singing is her trademark. She was born in Atkins, N.C., but grew up in Harlem in New York City. Jones still lives in New York City and also has a home in Washington, D.C.

Jones works with many other women jazz singers, including many who are not as well known. She is quick to name other vocalists whom she respects. She considers Vanessa Ruben a good song stylist as well as a good friend.

"We have worked together," said Jones.

"Sometimes it is impossible to hear other female vocalists with working all the time.



Renowned Jazz Vocalist Etta James.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

"My Romance," reached number one on the Gavin Jazz Chart, the only national listing for jazz radio airplay.

Person produced the recording, "My Buddy: Etta Jones, the Songs of Buddy Johnson," where Person displays his tenor saxophone artistry. He was nominated for a 1999 Grammy award in the category of Best Jazz Vocal. His latest recording on the High Note label is "Soft Lights."

Person is a man whose horn tells his whole story. Person gives you pure music.

This story is dedicated to a Chicago jazz singer named Paula Greer, a legend in Chicago who many may not know. She has contributed a lot to the Chicago scene but has never been given much recognition.

Special Health Section

Breast Cancer Awareness

by Barbara Shaw,
RN, MSN, FNP
Hayes Family
Health Center

Breast cancer.

These two words strike terror in most women who hear them. And the facts about breast cancer are frightening. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in American women, accounting for one out of three cancer diagnoses. Breast cancer can happen to men, too, but it is much less common than in women.

The risk of breast cancer increases as women get older. It is the single leading cause of cancer death in women 20-59 years of age, and the leading cause of cancer death for African American women.

First, let's talk about what cancer is. Cancer is a group of diseases that happen when cells become abnormal and divide without control or order.

Each organ in the body is made up of different kinds of cells. Cells normally divide in an orderly way to produce more cells when they are needed. This process helps keep the body healthy. If cells divide when new cells are not needed, they form too much tissue.

This extra tissue, called a tumor, can be *benign* (not a threat to life) or *malignant* (invading and damaging other tissues and organs). *The great majority (80 percent) of all breast tumors are benign.*

So what can you do to monitor your breast health? October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During this month, many organizations are offering information and special screenings for women about breast health. Early detection of breast cancer is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family. When breast cancer is caught early, it can often be treated effectively with surgery that preserves the breast.

The first thing to learn to do is a thor-

ough "BSE" or breast self-exam.

It only takes a few minutes to do the exam and you only need to do it once a month. If you do the exam regularly, you will become aware of how your breasts normally look and feel. This will help you know more quickly if there is a change that you should report to your health care provider.

Some of the changes to watch out for while doing the BSE are:

A lump or thickening in or near the breast or underarm area.
A change in the size or shape of the breast.

A puckering, dimpling, or redness of the breast skin.

Remember, a change you see or feel in your breast does not mean for sure that you have a problem. If you are still menstruating, you probably notice changes in your breasts (pain, lumpiness) around the time of your cycle. But it is always a good idea to let your health care provider know if there is a change in the way your breasts look or feel.

The other very important test you should get, starting at age 35-40, is a mam-

mogram. Many women are afraid to get a mammogram. There is no reason to be afraid or embarrassed.

A mammogram is a simple procedure—an x-ray of the breast tissue that can detect problems early on. Mammography can be a lifesaver. A mammogram can reveal small breast cancers up to 2 years before lumps can be felt!

Right now, screening mammography is the very best way to find breast cancer early on. But scientists are working very hard on even better ways to detect breast cancer earlier—possibly through blood testing.

Take care of yourself! Do a breast self-exam every month and let your health care provider know if you notice something different in the way your breasts look or feel. Ask your health care provider to show you how to do a breast self-exam and ask about when you should be getting a mammogram.

Screening and early detection of problems are the keys to breast health.

Just For Today

by Dr. Bill Miller,
C.S.A.D.C.

Facing life each day can be difficult. So many people have come up with catchy sayings to remind us of this truth.

Members of 12-step groups are fond of "One day at a time." One of my favorites is "Life is hard by the yard. By the inch it's a cinch."

All such sayings are telling us that we must focus all our attention and energy on what we have on our plate today. If we don't, things are just going to be rougher tomorrow.

We have many clients at Haymarket Center who have been doing just that:

spending most of their time in remorse about what has or hasn't happened in the past or filled with anxiety about what may happen in the future. The result is predictable. They don't do what they must do today, so every day is generally worse than the last.

The only day in which we can possibly do anything constructive is TODAY. As we all know, we can't do anything about yesterday; it's gone forever. And we can only imagine about tomorrow. Therefore, today is the day for action. Trying to relive the past or live the future in advance will only result in distraction from what we need to do and failure today. This is trying to live "life by the yard."

To live life "by the inch" is to focus on today and do all we can with the problems and difficulties we are facing.

Do you live by the yard or by the inch? I hope that you're someone who is not plagued by remorse or anxiety. I hope that you're an "inch" kind of person.

If you choose to be an "inch" person, you will be able to face each tomorrow with faith - faith in your ability to deal

with problems as they come up, faith in God to deal with the problems you aren't able to handle.

But in every situation, you are continuing to discover that "by the inch, life is a cinch."

Correction

An advertisement in our June 2000 issue mistakenly identified Project Brotherhood: A Black Men's Clinic and 4 Men Only as programs of Cook County Hospital. Both programs are in fact programs of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, the 3rd largest public health system in the country. Project Brotherhood is located at Woodlawn Health Center of Cook County, one of the Bureau's Ambulatory and Community Health Network's 30 community, school and hospital based health centers. 4 Men Only is located at Provident Hospital of Cook County. The Ambulatory & Community Health Network, Provident Hospital and Cook County Hospital are among the six affiliates of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services.

R E S I D E N T S '

J o u r n a l

Residents' Journal is distributed free to all Chicago public housing residents and participants in the Section 8 subsidized housing program. But if you are not a public housing resident, and would like to support Residents' Journal's plan to become a financially self-sufficient entity, or would like to subscribe, please fill out the attached subscription form and mail a check or money order to:

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Organization		
Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Work Phone	Fax	

Lathrop Homes News

by Bobby Watkins

It's time for new recruitment for the Next Generation 4-H club ages 7-16. Sign up at the Local Advisory Council office.

I

Thanks to all the parents who helped produce the Halloween Party for the young people of Lathrop so they could have a safe Halloween.

Prayers go out to the Stevenson family on the 3rd anniversary of the death of Audrey Stevenson, daughter of LAC President Juanita Stevenson. Candles will be on hand at the play lot Nov. 7 at 5 p.m. for others who have lost loved ones.

Congratulations to Asia Edwards for her SAT scores at Lane Technical Magnet High School. Asia also was selected to be a part of the President's Scholars Program and attend a special program in Washington, D.C.

Private Management Update

In my last article about private management, I wrote that some of the residents differ with me. The differing opinions can be found below.

I

But I have had the chance to work with the new management and I would like to commend US Dwellings and especially Brenda Parker, our property manager, and her boss, Gershoun Jackson.

They've answered residents' questions and tried to work out rent problems. Even though they inherited a lot of serious problems from CHA, they have resolved many of them.

They work closely with the Local Advisory Council and have helped us to get a few jobs for the residents. I, along with another resident, recently met with Jackson, Parker and the regional manager to select an extermination team and also to select a security company which will do roving walk downs all around the development.

The residents are working with these companies. At every interview we have had

19 of women in the United States WILL GET BREAST CANCER IN HER LIFETIME

With early detection the cure rate for Breast Cancer is over 90%. This is why at the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, we are dedicated to helping our patients win the fight against **Breast Cancer**.

Our comprehensive Women's Cancer Center, Mobile Mammography Van, Support Groups and highly-trained, compassionate staff are among the many resources we have to provide the early detection, education, advance procedures and treatment necessary to win the Breast Cancer battle.

For more information about our Breast Cancer Services please call:

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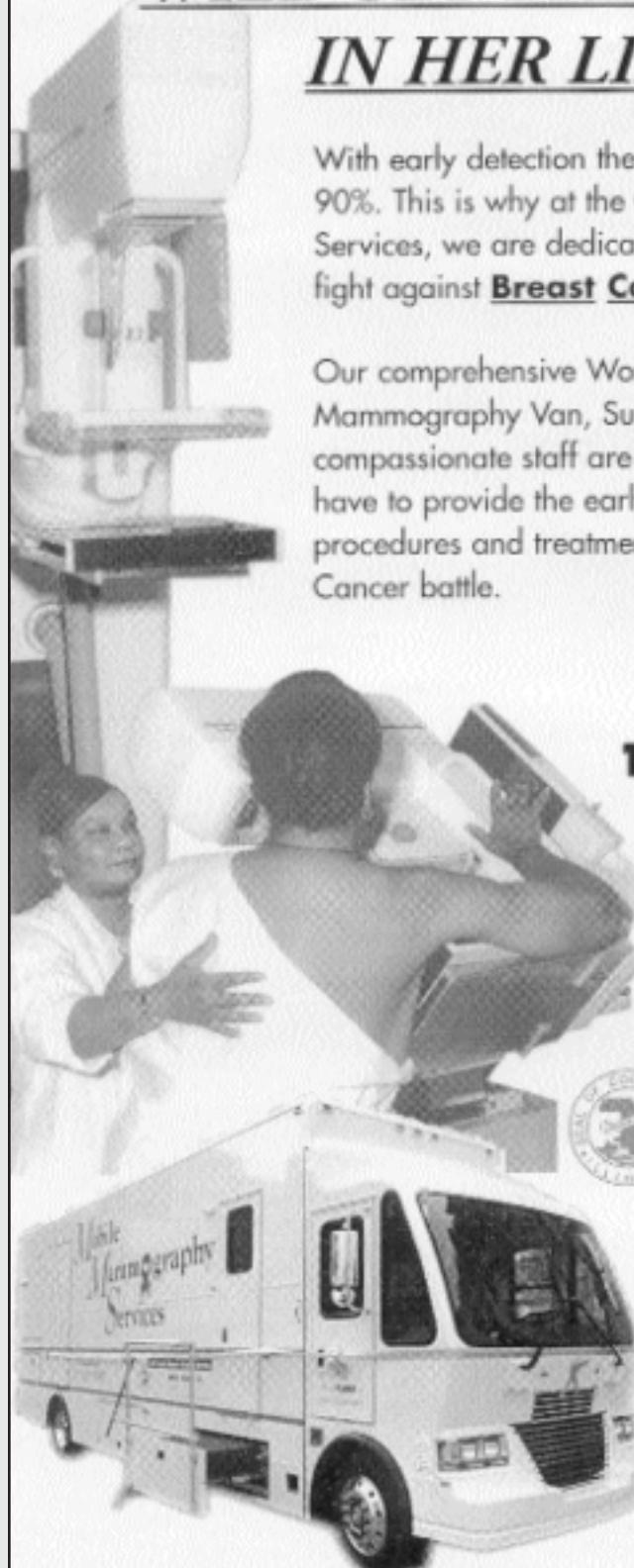
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Cook County Hospital
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Provident Hospital of Cook County



Lathrop Homes residents reporters Bobby Watkins (left), Earl Battles and Lathrop resident Charles Nix stand beside the Jimmy Thomas Nature Trail that was dedicated in memory of him last year. Jimmy Thomas was a RJ resident reporter who died in November 1997 due to complications from Sickle Cell Anemia.

Photo by Ethel Hodges



Littering Prevention by Valentino Marshall

How would the world change if people didn't litter?

Littering causes health problems because it leads to pollution in the air and spreads germs from old, dirty diapers and old, soft tissue that is put on the ground from people who have colds. Littering is caused by many reasons and it will be hard to stop because it is a real big problem in the world. Littering stops money from coming into different communities from visitors because people think it is rude. When people litter, it is nasty and disgraceful to many people.

Mark Farina, a spokesperson for the city Department of Environment, said people put things on the street because they do not take pride in their community.

"Litter tends to attract littering. If you

don't pick litter up, it keeps accumulating," Farina said.

Farina said that the City puts a lot of garbage cans by homes and stores but people don't use them. Farina said there should be more block clubs cleaning up and meetings taking place about the litter problem.

Farina said, "To sum it up, people should take pride in their property and like cutting their grass and cleaning their houses. The city can not do it all. It takes team work."

How does litter make people feel? It makes people feel like they are in a jungle with animals like rats and mice. When people litter, they are putting the following things on the ground: bags, candy wrappers, soda cans, beer bottles and more things that can be put in a garbage can.

Farina said the world will be better if people do not litter. Find a garbage dump to put the things in and the world will be better.

Littering is the biggest problem in the world. How will it be if littering is stopped? I asked the janitor for the Charles Hayes Family Investment Center. His name is D.C. and he said, "There will be a fall on Wall Street and business will be worse and janitor jobs will not be needed for many people and

the community and people will be needing more jobs to support their family and pay their bills."

D.C. also said that when people put things on the ground, they do not care about their community. People think that because one person puts things on the ground, they think they can, too. Many people put trash on the street because they are too lazy to find a trash can to put the trash in. "Once a lazy person, always a lazy person," D.C. said. He said that some people are too lazy to keep their area clean and beautiful.

Does litter make D.C. feel disgusted? D.C. said litter makes him feel like he is living "in the projects with a lot of 'bay bay' children."

D.C. also said that people who litter do not think that people have to pick up the paper that they put down and they must think that they have maids. People must not think that someone else will have a hard time picking up 30 beer and pop cans, 15 potato chip bags, 1001 candy wrappers and things that can be recycled.

D.C. also said that the litter makes the people who run the government not want to put nice things in our community.



Youth correspondent Valentino Marshall demonstrates the right way to handle litter.

The solution is for people to stop wanting to litter. If people didn't litter, the government will put nice things in our community and jobs will be easier for laborers. If littering is ended, pollution will be less of a problem in the community.

"People are our key to success," D.C. said.

Beating the College Jitters by Alicia Deberry

During my freshman year at Whitney Young High School just a few years ago, my counselor told me that I should start thinking about what college I wanted to attend.

At the time, I thought, "College? I don't have to worry about that for three more years."

But my senior year came before I knew it. Panic filled my body. I had the college jitters. I did not know what to do.

Throughout the last three years that I attended Whitney Young High School, the concept of attending college never again entered my mind.

Sure, people would ask me, "What college are you going to attend?"

I would answer, "I really don't know yet."

I was not serious enough about it. Now, here it was senior year and had no idea what college I wanted to attend or what my major would be.

Most of my senior year was spent in the counselor's office. I looked through many college brochures and videos. I also attended numerous college tours. I did not know which one to pick.

I finally came to the decision of Northern Illinois University (NIU). I sent my application in but I was not accepted there. I was devastated. I felt like a loser. I did not think that any college would accept me because NIU rejected me.

My mother and the counselor told me not to worry because I had sent out two other applications and that one of the other universities would accept me. I did not feel too optimistic about it. I did not feel like I had a future any more.

My parents and counselor were right. The

other college accepted me. I was to enroll at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC). I was so happy. I felt so much better. The college jitters were starting to fade away. I was so glad that my parents and counselor warned me to apply to more than one college. If I had not, then I would have been stuck with no college at all.

I was accepted at a college now. I thought that everything was OK now. But I did not think about the financial responsibility of going to college.

The college jitters were grabbing hold of me again. I realized that I needed money to pay for my tuition and to pay for my room and board. I was getting very nervous. I was upset because I did not believe that I would be able to get a scholarship with my grades.

I had a really rough junior year. I messed up. I was trying to be popular and have a lot of extra-curricular activities on my transcript. My senior year was better but I did not feel it was good enough to receive a scholarship. I felt like I was struggling to keep a balance between schoolwork and play.

College jitters had a complete hold on me. I did not feel like I was prepared financially or mentally for such a great transition in my life.

My parents and counselors went about helping me to establish myself financially for college. I was very pessimistic about the whole situation. I thought that I had waited too late to get any money for school and I was worried that my grades and my grade point average were not good enough.

I was very concerned about that. I went along with what my parents and counselor wanted me to do. I filled out the Federal Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA) and I also applied for two other scholarships. One was for my church and the other was from my neighborhood.

I was very excited when I was notified that my education would be paid for by the FAFSA. I was also excited that my church

granted me a scholarship and that I was chosen as one of the recipients of the neighborhood scholarship.

I was so glad.

The college jitters were starting to lose their hold on me. I was relaxing because now I knew what college I would attend and I knew how I would pay for my education.

A week before I had to leave, my church had a program and a social for the graduates of the year 2000. By the end of the program, I was crying. I did not let anyone see me cry.

A new form of the college jitters was bothering me. I was becoming afraid to leave home. My heart was very heavy. I knew that I would miss all of the people that I saw every day. I would also miss the love that I felt from them. After the program was over, at the social I gave a hug and a kiss to everyone I could.

My parents took me out to a dinner and a movie. We had a great time. It was like a farewell party because a couple of my closest friends were there with us. They were all congratulating me on going to college and wishing me luck.

When we got home, I told my parents that I had college jitters. I was afraid of leaving. They told me not to worry and that everything was going to be fine. They reassured me by telling me that I had people in Chicago who loved me and that no matter what happened, I could always come home and that they would support me and love me. I felt much better.

The next day, I packed and we were off to Carbondale. I was feeling a bit sad the whole time. When we arrived, we unpacked the car and loaded my things to my room. I said my last goodbye and they were off to Chicago.

My college jitters were finally gone because I knew that I had a family at home who loved me no matter what happened and that if I was ever to need them, they would be there.

Urban Youth International Journalism Program

Editor-in-Chief

Ethan Michaeli

Program Director

Andre McClerkin

Assistant Director

Kari Lyderson

Participants

Jason Alexander, Jumote Amoakom, Aaron Belton, Kevin Bingham, Marcus Boswell, Shenika Brown, Aramis Collier, Alicia Deberry, Duval Harden, Dakota Haynes, Carly Hodges, Ladonna Howell, Aaron Johnson, Kareem Lewis, Ivory Lloyd, Jasmine Marshall, Valentino Marshall, Rodney Moore, Therris Morris, Ramsey Pabruie, Valerie Redmond, Adriane Stigler, Felisha Swan, Kevin Trotter, Ramondo Walker, Tabanni Walls, Joanna White,

by Thomas L. Merriweather

In the continuing saga of transportation difficulties for those of us who are members of the group identified as "People with Disabilities," it is very difficult to pin anyone down as to what is needed to remedy the failure of numerous entities involved in this area.

I have attempted to touch bases with someone in a significant area of responsibility at the Chicago Transit Authority numerous times. CTA officials have failed to speak with me even when they committed to a specific day in order to conduct a telephone interview.

On the day I am writing this story (and it is the day before the deadline for the October issue of RJ), I was advised that nobody would give me an interview because everybody was involved in budget activity. The media representative who gave me this information would not give me his name.

Originally, I talked to Jeff Stern, CTA's media spokesperson, who referred me to Maria Tuscano, who was to establish my interview with the appropriate individual on this date.

Earlier in the year, I began attending meetings of the Jane Addams Senior Caucus and began serving as secretary. State Rep. Sara Fiegenholz (D-12) was present at one of the Senior Caucus meetings and she referred me to Jeff Stern as a valuable contact in addressing transportation issues.

From a telephone contact I had with Stern, his expertise and involvement appears to be in main line busses and trains, definitely not in CTA Paratransit Operations, the door-to-door Special Services that I and many persons with disabilities use. People with disabilities will continue to need these special services unless there are vast improvements in the condition of streets and sidewalks in many areas of the city.

In looking at the situation objectively, it appears that CTA Paratransit needs to scale down the number of clients certified to use the door-to-door service by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Dropping people is not an easy process so long as the existing problems continue to exist. In fact, many of the problems have become worse.

Early in the year, CTA Paratransit anticipated an increase in the number of carriers for the door-to-door service. There had been four carriers for many years. But instead of increasing, the number of carri-

Access Report

ers dropped to 3 because Simtran had been dropped. That company was dropped allegedly because of a large number of accidents, perpetuated by drivers of this carrier being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The three carriers remaining are Cook-Dupage Transportation (CDT), SCR Transportation and Art's Transportation. CDT, the largest of the three existing carriers, has a total of 150 vehicles and a contract for 300 drivers. But CDT reportedly often is short-handed because of a constant turn-over. Sources close to the situation say the high turn-over is perpetuated by the fact that CDT's executives are unwilling to pay wages of \$15 per hour, a competitive figure in today's economy per the entire group of those who transport individuals, whether they have disabilities or otherwise.

Many drivers with the paratransit services say their salaries are low compared with CTA bus drivers and motormen who operate trains. This includes the special services of CTA Paratransit as well as vehicles used in medical transportation.

CTA is currently conducting surveys via mail to evaluate the fixed route buses and trains and the following items are covered on these surveys:

- Barriers to prevent wheelchair users from getting access to busses and trains such as missing curbs/ramps to enable such mobility impaired individuals from crossing to a bus stop.

- Wheelchair lifts not working, making it impossible for individuals who use wheelchairs to board the bus.

- Elevators at train stations not operating, making it impossible for wheelchair users to gain access to trains.

- Obstacles blocking the aggress of a wheelchair user to be able to gain access to busses and trains.

- A general lack of courtesy of bus operators or train personnel in abiding those who use wheelchairs.

CTA is planning a 6-month trial program that may include many mainline improvements along with possible discounts in mainline fares for Paratransit clients. This is a pilot program and is open to any individuals who wish to participate in the evaluation of the mainline services. In addition, CTA will be holding focus group discussions

with Paratransit clients who are willing to aid in the improvement of service.

I am planning to be part of these focus group discussions and provide information on why the fixed route system of CTA will not be able to replace the existing door-to-door service without the matter of the poor condition of many streets and sidewalks being diligently addressed.

CTA Paratransit Operations

has also been failing in its system for reservation of trips. From my observation, many of these customer service representatives are badly in need of re-training.

Trip reservation personnel are required to identify themselves when they finally answer the telephone following a period of busy signals and customer service recordings. But the representatives provide their names only about one-half the time or

less.

I recently reached a customer service rep who ignored my request for her name. When I later called that evening - as is my usual practice - to verify my trips for the next day, nothing in the computer had been entered. I had to contact a CTA Paratransit official the next morning so that she could provide me with trips from those normally held in reserve for medical emergencies.

These are examples of the continuing problems with the CTA's services to people with disabilities which are not given the proper attention.

"THE FUN IS IN THE DISCIPLINE THE DISCIPLINE IS IN THE FUN"

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RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

CHINESE TRANSLATIONS

Returning Home

by Alicia Z.
McNeal

moved out of the Ida B. Wells housing complex shortly after graduating from high school vowing to never look back.

My immediate future plans were filled with college, boys and parties, not necessarily in that order. A prestigious career in broadcast journalism or radio seemed inevitable. I would make it big and never look back.

But here I am today back in Ida B. Wells. I am a single, degreed mother of one, broke and back home. Iyanlya Vanzant would call it "financially challenged."

Whatever you'd like to label it, the end result is the same. For seven years, I have struggled to remain off the welfare system. I have had little to no support from my "baby's daddy" or parents.

Somewhere down the road, I became so consumed with my image, my things, my bourgeois friends. I began to hate a part of myself and my parents for not giving me the silver spoon.

Then real life kicked in.

Choices. We all have them. How we choose is more important than the choice itself. How we choose and make decisions can cause a domino effect devastating enough to challenge the faith of the most devout believer.

You might be saying, "Wow. Living at home doesn't sound like such a bad thing." Dorothy in the "Wizard of Oz" traveled the Yellow Brick Road to get there. Stephanie Mills bellowed tunes proclaiming there's no place like it.

Yet for me, it's where home is that bothers me.

Yes, I will admit that coming home would have been easier if it had been a 5-bedroom, 2-bath home in Beverly. I will also admit that recently, I took a look around me to survey my circle of friends. The majority of them are from the Darrow Homes. Some reside in marital bliss to classmates or neighbors.

The building that once housed our family is currently kissing the wrecking ball every morning. At the bottom of that rubble lie some painful memories about my family and friends, some of whom are no longer here.

Even in the midst of the redevelopment, my opinions of Ida B. Wells has not changed. My observations rhyme like an old rap song: "broken glass everywhere, people pissing in the stairwell, they just don't care."

I think of Ida B. Wells as a scary yet realistic adaptation of the ever-so-popular, ghetto-fabulous-in-the-hood videos complete with hoochie mamas and pit bulls.

Yes, my disappointment runs deep. Isn't poverty enough without contributing negative factors to our neighbor-

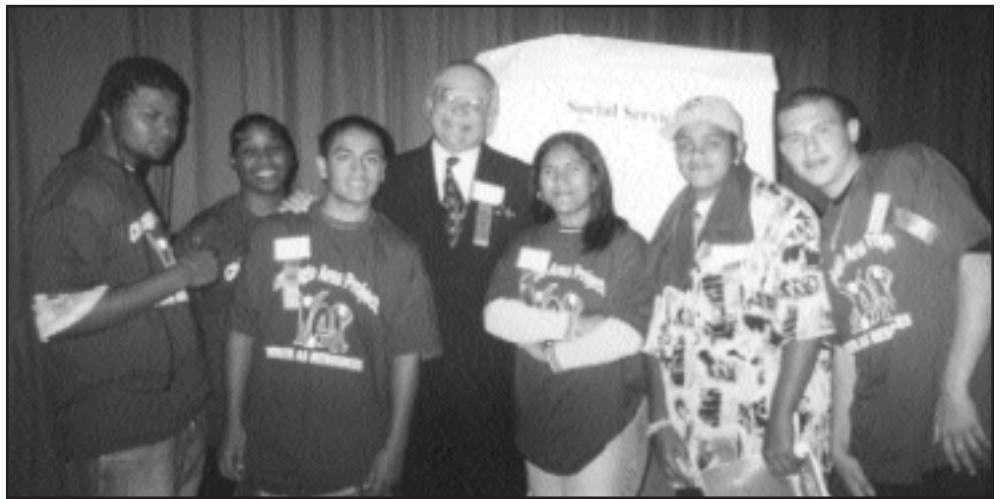
hoods? Did you miss the message in the "Stop the Violence" video? You didn't hear the message from the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson? How about the message from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King?

Home should be clean, comfortable and, most importantly, safe for everyone. There should be mutual respect for *everyone* without regard to gang affiliation or territory.

Returning home has put a lot of things in place for me. I can now truly appreciate who I am and where I am come from. It is

not my place to pass judgement or look down upon anyone. It is my job to make sure I give back to the community all I can. It is my job to make better choices in my own personal life. Returning home has put a dozen things in perspective for me.

I once had a dream of being a journalist, on air personality or writer. The fact that you are reading this article proves dreams don't have to be just that. There is no place like home.



WVON radio host Cliff Kelly poses with members of Youth as Resources at the group's Community Convention on Youth Crime and Juvenile Justice Sept. 30 at the Illinois Institute of Technology. The event was co-sponsored by the Chicago Council on Urban Affairs and moderated by Lu Bailey.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

KOREAN

Translation

Cabrini-Green News

by Cecelia A. Clark

Violence by handguns has claimed the lives of so many people, especially our young children.

If everyone listened to a mother tell the horror story of losing all three of her children to handgun violence, it would awaken communities across this city. It would make everyone question how someone can take away something so precious that they are unable to give it back - life.

To a mother and father, no matter what the age, their children are special. There are no words to describe the hurt, suffering and pain endured by the families left behind.

On Sept. 12, Wayman A.M.E Church on the Near

Predators want our young children because they can't defend themselves... (The predators are) the gang bangers and drug dealers.

-Richard M. Daley, mayor of the city of Chicago

North Side hosted an evening event dedicated to stopping handgun violence. The Rev. Dr. Walter Johnson presided over the event, which included a speech by Mayor Richard M. Daley. Also in attendance were the Revs. Vance Henry, David C. Coleman and Steve Petigo of the Near North Ministers Alliance as well as Gloria Purefoy from Youth Net and a number of City officials: Carlos Azcoitia from the Chicago Public Schools, Ald. Walter Burnett (27) Ald. Vi Daley (43), Police Superintendent Terry Hillard, 18th District Police Commander Joseph Griffin, Cook County State's Attorney Dick Devine, Cabrini-Green Local Advisory Council President Cora Moore and Chicago Housing Authority CEO Terry Peterson. Nearby businesses such as Dominick's and Starbuck's Coffee Shop also had representatives at the event.

Johnson opened with a prayer. In the pews, one could see children who attended this event holding signs that read "Stop Killing People" and "There's No Room for Domestic Violence in this Neighborhood."

Johnson introduced Mayor Daley, who spoke about the damage gang violence and drugs dealers do to a community.

Shirley Chambers, a resident of Cabrini-Green who lost three of her children to handgun violence, said, "I didn't think anyone really cared about my children."

After the death of her children, she said, "Sometimes

I feel there's nothing to live for."

As she spoke, one could see the pain and suffering she has endured. She thanked everyone for coming out to march against handgun violence.

After Chambers spoke, everyone who was in attendance at the ceremony started to assemble outside Wayman A.M.E Church to march against handgun violence.

One resident attending the march said, "Everybody is here but the President."

The march started down Elm Street and Cleveland Avenue, then went onto Division Street over to Seward Park, where there were hundreds of different colored balloons.



CHA Cabrini-Green resident and community members and others take to the streets this September to march and rally against gun violence.

Photo by Cecelia A. Clark

The Rally



Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley (3rd from left), top city officials, ministers, community organizers and leaders march with residents of the Cabrini-Green community against gun violence.

Photo by Cecelia A. Clark

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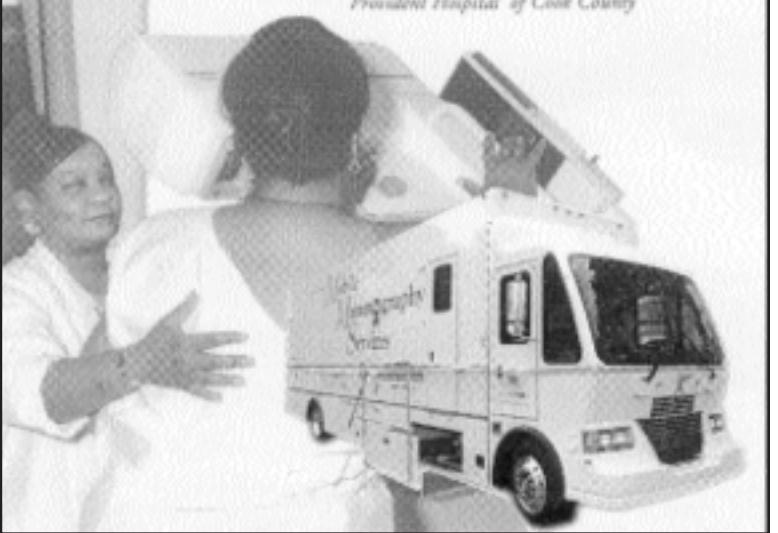
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Not Your Mama's Bus Tour

by Michael Ibrahim

The date was Aug. 23. That was opening night for the "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" performances. That night, for the first time, people got on a yellow school bus and were driven to different sites – Grant Park, Maxwell Street, Malcolm X College and Cook County Hospital, among others. At each site, we performed skits and monologues about our lives.

That night is one of the most memorable of my life. I was allowed to participate in this magical occurrence with a magnificent group of people. "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" was written and created by Streetwise vendors, homeless individuals, persons with disabilities and our friends.

This was something I had longed to do. Something I thought about many times. I never really knew just how I would go about it, to structure such an event. Then suddenly, this summer, out of the blue, it happened.

What happened? Well first off: my whole life, I have wanted to exploit my vision of the world by explaining my world view to anyone who would find the time to listen. Not that I, even for a moment, considered that there were a whole bunch of people who wanted to listen anyway. But as I began to find more and more fragments of myself in books, film, theatre, in classics of all kinds from around the world, my desire grew restless.

I was called upon to pull together decades of experiences. Learning and analyzing and assimilating these aspects of myself in my mind, now I was being offered a chance to do something with it.

Homeless people often have the mindset that anything can happen at any time. Homeless people are therefore able to flow with any situation. So for me, outwardly, opening night of "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" felt like I wandered onto a stage and suddenly someone said to me: "Ready. Lights, curtains and action!"

But inwardly, it seemed more like a moment from a Robert Browning poem: *That one face far from vanishes/ rather grows or decomposes/ but to recompose becomes my universe that feels and knows.*

The homeless have a very hopeful attitude on life. The homeless have a spontaneity that is rarely available to anyone else. Everyone should be homeless at some point in their lives.

We were all eager to demonstrate by our writing, staging and acting that we were no less capable of self-reflection, insight, transformation and humor than anyone else in our burgeoning society.

We were certainly aware that Chicago, with its history of diversity, was rapidly becoming even more diverse. We felt that everywhere there were anecdotes and stories being told and

added to every day in the media. Now it was our turn.

To many of us, "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" was not only an opportunity but a device or a mechanism. All of us at the Streetwise Writers Group feel as if we have been pushed to the margins of our society. We are resented as if we are all uneducated, dope fiends, dope dealers and low-lives one way or other. "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" is our way of resisting the tension

bring healing, insight and in effect to transform. We wanted to change or at least alter some perceptions and misconceptions about who we are.

We - the disenfranchised, the disabled, the homeless - stood naked and exposed to the community that had seldom greeted us with acceptance and to whom, as a consequence, we had not always responded in ways geared to make us well liked.

What was it we most wanted to say to our audiences each night? First, that our stories are not that much different from the

rest of society. We wanted to speak of our personal heroism regarding what for each of us often appeared nothing less than a Herculean effort to meet life's challenges with both acceptance and fortitude.

Joe Harding and Lorenzia Shelby co-wrote a story about overcoming violence, anger and prejudice. Addie Bell made a passionate plea for social justice about Joseph Gould, a Streetwise vendor who was shot to death by an off-duty police officer. Kay recounted that she had been part of a dance troupe. Now a senior citizen and Streetwise vendor, she performed an Irish jig on the sidewalk in front of Orchestra Hall.

In the constant application of such efforts, we - in time - have sustained noble victories. Everyone in our group feels strongly our accomplishments are due to the strength that only the Almighty Himself gives.

Above all, albeit so slowly, the process of overcoming obstacles allowed us and continues to allow us to grow and gain our balance in order to be able to place ourselves back at the center, into the mainstream; to be marginalized no longer.

We felt that "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" benefited everyone who participated in it as well as everyone who saw it by witnessing something of our personal transformations.

We hoped those who saw our performance learned something. We all start at the center and are marginalized in our lives. By meeting challenges, we all come back to the center. We come to grips with a personally realized truth.

So finally, I would like to summarize using the words of another poet, Thomas Carey:

Wise poet/ That wrote Truth in tales/ Knew her themselves/ Through all her veils

"Not Your Mama's Bus Tour" ran for two weeks as a pilot project. We're planning to run the play on a permanent basis starting in summer 2001.



Greg Pritchett, one of the guides for "Not Your Mama's Bus Tour."
Photo by Michael Ibrahim

and the conflicts that accompany being pushed to the margins. The play is our way of establishing a place at the center.

In fact, when Berthold Gunster showed up, he was like an answer to our prayers. For more than a year and one half, the StreetWise Writers Group had planned to stage a performance just so that we would have our voices heard. We didn't know whether it would be a musical or a hip-hop performance or a dramatic reading. We just wanted to tell our stories in our own words.

Gunster is the renowned director of the Mandarjn Theatre Group of Utrecht, Holland. He approached our small group with the idea of doing the bus tour during his first visit to our city in May 2000. After explaining it to us, we were all immediately quite excited. It did not take us very long at all to fully commit ourselves to the project.

It all came together with Gunster's able direction along with the very capable guidance of our esteemed writing instructor, Paula Mathieu. Help came from many other sources as well. There was, of course, funding to consider.

Our guide to working our collective way through a maze of funding considerations was Anthony Oliver, the executive director of StreetWise. Without his support, assistance and leadership par excellence, we would have never been able to accomplish our goal.

The performances became for us a very personal way to

Some Madden Park residents selecting Housing Choice Vouchers may end up without any options at all.

At the Oct. 21 meeting, CHA Relocation Specialist Henrietta Hawkins said that residents selecting the Housing Choice Vouchers will have to search for housing while undergoing a background screening process. Residents will not receive the vouchers unless they pass the screening. But because the Madden Park residents are moving under an emergency process, Hawkins said they should start looking for housing now.

"We don't give vouchers first anymore," she said.

Once residents have found an apartment, Hawkins said they should inform her or the management office. CHA or the manager will then supply the resident with a document stating they have selected the voucher program and asking the landlord to hold the unit, she said.

Hawkins said the residents who choose vouchers would be assigned counselors to work with them on finding housing. The counselors would then take them to look at units, work with them on budgeting their finances, and supply them with a list of housing in the areas of their choice.

The residents will be surveyed door-to-door to make their choices, Hawkins said. She said residents would be given 48

"CHA officials did not respond to numerous requests for information on this matter" or "CHA officials were unavailable for comment." Those phrases mean that CHA either does not feel they are required to provide information to the public or that they simply don't know what's going on.

The truth is that the agency may well be adrift at sea. As Wateka Kleinpeter found in her report on the two major party candidates for U.S. President (see article p. 14), no one is paying much attention to public housing these days. And since residents are not, at the moment, taking to the streets or fighting the City's plan in court, it looks like the Mayor and City officials will have their way.

Whether it's a conspiracy or gross incompetence, the

hours advance notice of the survey.

CHA Senior Relocation Officer Denise Johnson said the agency would be very sensitive to the needs of those with disabilities, and that the residents could expect a better place.

"We will not move you from dump to dump," she said.

CHA officials did not say at the Oct. 21 meeting what would happen to those residents who are denied the Housing Choice Vouchers because they fail the screening.

And four days later at a community meeting, a resident said Madden Park's private management company wasn't providing the documentation needed for her to move into a private apartment.

The resident told LAC President Crosby that she found an apartment. But when she went to the management office to get the promised statement, the clerk "didn't know what I was talking about."

Crosby then told the residents that Madden Park's manager was fired the previous week and that residents would have to come to her with their concerns for the time being.

"What am I supposed to do?" asked the resident.

As of Oct. 25, we are still waiting to be surveyed for our relocation choice.

results are that whole neighborhoods are being emptied out.

Whether Mayor Daley and City officials are consciously trying to evacuate whole neighborhoods or are just incapable of coordinating their construction with their demolition, the result is the same.

CHA residents are being told to go to neighborhoods that usually don't have any services for them and often do not want them.

While City officials congratulate themselves for 'transforming' Chicago public housing, they are making CHA residents into America's refugees.

Madden Park

(Continued from Page 5)

Finnerty said Brown made his position on the matter very clear: that they had no intentions of honoring the gang lines.

Finnerty expressed concern about the commander's stance.

"If their intentions are to ignore gang lines, then they better provide enough security to take care of and protect the people who they're forcing to move.

"They're trying to move people from buildings that have opposing gang lines into a single building, which is going to cause a bloodbath," Finnerty said.

"The reality is, what about the innocent people and the kids that get affected when it comes to the point that they start fighting over turf and shooting?"

Finnerty said CHA has a legal obligation to protect the families of its properties and urged residents to hold CHA accountable for their living conditions and what goes on in the developments.

Housing Choice Vouchers

Publisher's Box

(Continued from Page 3)

And no Chicago politician has forgotten that the last time public housing residents came out en masse to support a candidate, Harold Washington was elected mayor.

But I'm not sure that CHA is capable of implementing a conspiracy. Having cut the staff from 2,100 to just over 500 in less than one year, I'm not sure that there is enough of a crew to steer the ship.

As you look through various articles in this edition, you'll find a disturbing number of times we were forced to write:

Childcare Woes

by Debbie Britton

want a full-time job. I need a full-time job. I'm experienced. I've got skills and I'm employable. But the one thing blocking me is getting my 7-year-old from point A to Point B.

Like many other parents, I am going through the dilemma of getting my son from school to an after-care program.

We have great schools and great programs in Chicago. School buses will drop off children at after-care programs. But Chicago Public School rules only allow buses to drop off students a short distance from the school. Like many parents, I am having trouble finding decent after care close enough to my child's school.

The school system's goal with the transportation rules is to "improve both the safety of students and increase the efficiency of the bus routes," as stated in CPS documents.

They have a point. But parents have a point, too. Many parents trying to move from welfare to work are experiencing this transportation problem.

The problem soon will get worse for those parents with children in neighborhood schools with magnet programs. CPS is cutting yellow bus service to these schools. Education advocates are worrying this will hurt working parents and re-segregate city schools.

A Parent's Dilemma

North Sider Billina Chambliss' 7-year-old son, Darion Chambliss, attends Audubon Elementary School. Chambliss' son rides the school bus every day but her dilemma is that the bus cannot drop him off at the Boys and Girls Club at Sheridan Road and Lawrence Avenue for the after-care program because the club is not a designated stop. The designated stop for her son is at Leland Avenue and Campbell Street, which is four blocks from their home. The Boys and Girls Club is beyond the transportation limit guidelines.

Chambliss works from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and has to make arrangements on a daily basis for someone to pick her son up at his designated stop and take him to the Boys and Girls Club. Chambliss did not have a regular person who she could count on until her husband changed shifts just to transport her son. Chambliss has to work and needs her son to attend an after-care program. Chambliss recalled having to leave her job to pick up her son, take him to after-care and then return to work.

"The staff at Audubon has worked very hard to help me with this dilemma. It is not the school's fault that I am having this problem. The staff at Audubon could only do so what was allowed according to CPS guidelines," Chambliss said.

"I can't just quit my job. I have to take care of my son and me and pay bills. Something of this nature just forces one to get on Public Assistance."

Chambliss wants her son to continue attending Audubon's mag-

net program.

"Now that we have a choice of what schools we want our children to attend, wouldn't you know, here comes a stumbling block. Special transportation should be made available," Chambliss said.

CPS Responds



CPS children marching in the State Street corridor "Back to School" parade sponsored by 2nd District Police, Mid-South Planning and Development Commission, and Bank One in September.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Wendy Fitzmaurice, general manager for CPS' bureau of student transportation, said parents should find ways to get their children to after-care programs.

"Transportation to after-school programs is a parent's responsibility. The CPS system cannot assume this responsibility," he said.

Fitzmaurice explained that the school system already spends \$100 million on transportation and there is not enough money available for extra transportation.

"We need to spend every cent on teaching children to read and write. Every dollar spent on transportation is taking away from this," he said. "Because of the need to free up money, in the future, you will see less and less yellow school buses."

Fitzmaurice said 250 neighborhood schools with magnet programs will lose

their buses in the next few years. Neighborhood schools without magnet programs have controlled enrollment. When a school is overcrowded, students are sent to other schools with availability. They will not be affected by the cuts.

"We understand the difficulties but we can't solve them," Fitzmaurice said.

Fitzmaurice suggested parents seek

offering bus passes to 4th through 8th grade students to stop the drop in students.

"We have a good school in our community," Bonilla said. "I hate to have to lose teachers. Our teachers are committed."

Bonilla would like to offer an after-care program in her school and has applied for funding through CPS.

"If we're not approved, children will go home and just watch television while their parents are at work."

"After-school programs give a child a place to socialize instead of them being on the streets unsupervised with nothing to do. Parents who work benefit from after school programs as well."

Bonilla added, "We need to create an awareness to the Board of Education on how this change has affected the school, children and parents. "The Board of Education doesn't have a clue of what we do in terms of academics or activities."

Segregation

ome education advocates are worried that the transportation cuts will re-segregate public schools. **S**

Linda Lenz, editor and publisher of *Catalyst*, a magazine covering school reform, said, "The school board owes the parents and the public an explanation of what the impact is going to be when yellow school buses are phased out for children who attend neighborhood schools with a magnet program. And what will the impact be on racial segregation?"

Julie Woesthoff, executive director for Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE), was concerned about how the bus cuts will affect desegregation involving magnet programs.

"Phasing out student transportation for children who attend a neighborhood school with a magnet program defeats the purpose to desegregation. This is just taking another step closer to stop busing to magnet schools altogether."

"(CPS CEO) Paul Vallas and his system will force children into isolation. Children won't have access to better schools and will have fewer choices. They are taking away from the at-risk kids and poorer kids and feeding to the richer kids."

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Child of the Pack Saddle

by John
“Popcorn”
Sampson

The story that I am about to tell you, brothers and sisters, is every bit an accurate account of what happened in the life and times of a little Creole American who was born in the Bayou land of Louisiana on Feb. 4, 1919. This child ran off from a good home, a loving grandfather, and a host of relatives to go in search of a mother who neither loved him nor wanted him around her.

The boy went out among the rank and file of a society in which the Great Depression's ill winds of the depleted economy threatened to blow America off of its foundation, sending its citizens scampering hither and yon like fear-struck movie-goers at the outcry of fire.

I, Popcorn, am that courageous little boy. I was christened at birth Ernest Jacques Sampson. However, I later changed the name of Ernest Jacques to John Winter Sampson to keep the name of my father alive, even though I was only in the presence of my father for less than a year – and that was when I already was 19 or 20. But by that time, I was widely known by the name of “Popcorn,” a name given to me by my beloved cousin, who was affectionately called “Pooch,” when the two of us were five and six years old.

I was born in the small Bayou town of Mansura, Louisiana, which is located five miles southeast of Marksville, which is the parish seat of Avoyelles Parish. I am the only child born by Virginia Johnson, an unwed daughter of Jimmy Johnson, a sharecropper.

My father also was a native of Mansura. He was a Pullman Porter who worked on the Texas and Pacific Railroad between Marksville and New Orleans. He had a wife and four children, two boys and two girls, living in New Orleans at the time that I was born. It was rumored that my father raped my mother out in my grandfather's cotton patch while he was on furlough from the army in 1917.

My grandfather on my father's side was Paul Sampson, a well-to-do farmer who owned and operated his own farm on which he produced a variety of products, such as cotton, sweet potatoes and peanuts. Two of Paul Sampson's daughters, of his five children, were Grambling College graduates and tutors of Mansura's Black children. Both of my aunts later became some of the very first females of color to become nuns in this country. Many of the townspeople said they were able to become nuns because of their light complexion, which allowed them to pass themselves off as white women. Both of my aunts had taken after their mother, who was Cajun.

However, neither one of my grandfather's daughters regarded me as their brother's son nor did any other member of my grandfather's high and mighty family. And all because of my dark complexion. As every child of the Pelican State knows all too well, that bigotry and

discrimination among light-complexed African Americans – or ‘Negroes’ as we were known then – and darker-complexed African Americans was a common practice in the olden days. But I could never understand how or why my aunts could ever adhere to such a delish and inane discipline as complexion



heard the voice of my beloved cousin Pooch calling out to me, “Hey, Popcorn. Where're you going? You better come back here. Grandpa gonna get you for leaving this mule like this.

You better come back here, boy. Popcorn, Popcorn, you better come back here. Hear me, Popcorn?”

Three quarters to a mile from the back nine cotton patch where we were plowing was a T.P. (Texas and Pacific) railroad track that ran between Mansura and Bunkie, La. I took these tracks and started toward Bunkie. I walked a while and trotted a while in cadence. I don't know how long I walked. I traveled in this manner until I came upon a group of African American men numbering 15 or better working on the tracks under

I was given a pretty decent evening meal in the mess car by Leroy the cook along with the men of the Gandy Camp. Then, after supper, I had the never-before pleasure of sitting among a group of grownups and listening to the strange tales they told. The subjects of their stories were much too baffling for my inexperienced comprehension.

The following morning, I was awakened bright and early. After taking care of business in the washroom, I went into the dining car, where I found Leroy, the camp's cook, playing a starring role in the culinary arts.

I had been in the diner about five minutes or so when the door open and in walked Tobay. He had a beaming, bright smile spread across his face that seemed to accentuate the

breakfast, Tobay called the men together for his instructions as to what was to be done while he was away. He then told them to say goodbye to me before he took me into town where he was going to do something for my own good. Then, in a slight tone of voice that was meant to hoodwink me, he said to the men, “I'm sure y'all get my meaning,” then winked.

Our trip into town was made in an old Ford truck of a foregone vintage, a vintage that predates the correct and elongated petty coat, or so it would seem from all outward appearances. But alas, we arrived in downtown Mansura with all its no more than several business establishments: its 8' by 10' feet post office and its two-room sheriff department. The sheriff's department was manned by a long, lean, pot-faced, tobacco-chewing red-neck, whose usage of the English language was more difficult to discern and/or dig than four Chinese talking at the same time.

When Tobay first pulled up in front of the sheriff's place of business, I was so lost in a panorama of phantasmagoria, I didn't realize that we had stopped. Then Tobay said to me, “Hokay, handsome. Na-po-le-on has landed. All hands abandon ship.”

We got out of the truck and bridged the boardwalk that divided the dirt roadway from the one and only brick structure in the town, if not the entire eastern kismet of Avoyle Parish.

I already was inside the sheriff's office when I looked up and saw Sheriff Borvet before I woke up to where I was at and what I was into. What had happened, plain and simple, was that I had been chumped, tricked and made a fool of by an elephant ass, big mouth, Cajun pecker wood.

My realization brought to mind a few words I once heard my old, ugly, stringy haired grandmother say. I heard her tell my Aunt Juliana, “When I was a girl, my daddy used to tell me all the time, ‘Girl, don't ever you dare trust a Cajun. You hear me? I'm a Cajun myself and I know Cajuns. Better you trust a snake than to trust any Cajun because Cajuns are the most deceitful, the very most two-faced, and the most unreliable people that the Lord ever created.’”

Tobay said to the sheriff, “Do you know this good looking little Creole, sheriff?”

Walking up within reaching distance of me with a broad grin across his face that displayed a row of scattered black teeth, the sheriff said, “You can bet your last dry match that I do. This here is Jimmy Johnson's boy. Jimmy's been looking under every bush for Popcorn here.”

The sheriff took me back to my grandfather's farm. And for years afterward, I hated that Tobay. It wasn't until many years later that I understood that big, red-headed, elephant-ass Tobay was, in reality, trying to do me a favor by taking me to the sheriff's office. From the first moment he saw me, he knew I had run away from home and was trying to save me from myself.

To be continued....

Two months following my 11th birthday, I ran off from home for the very first time.

discrimination. Not while their father, Paul Sampson, was no less than the epitome of ebony. In short, my grandpa Sampson, when seated among his children, resembled a chunk of coal in a pile of snow. Need I say more!

As for my grandpa, Jimmy Johnson the sharecropper, he was the son of a Seminole Indian chief and an African American woman. Grandpa Johnson was the father of two children, my mother Virginia and her brother Jimmy Johnson Jr., whose nickname was “Pretty Boy.” Jimmy Johnson Jr. was a cook.

The life and practice of my mama, however, I know nothing about. The only thing that I can say about my mama that merits a gram of truth is this: She was a pretty woman but a mother who was without love for her child. But I am not and was never angry with her and never held anything against her. How can one not forgive one's mother?

Two months following my 11th birthday, I ran off from home for the very first time. I remember the whole episode that occurred approximately sixty-nine years ago in every detail as if it all happened this morning. My reason for running away was the pain of loneliness and the need for a mother's love and a father's guidance. Plus, I hated plowing and chopping cotton.

I made my decision to run away from home one morning while my grandpa, Jimmy Johnson, and my first cousin, nicknamed “Pooch,” whose name was Jimmy Johnson III, were out in the field plowing cotton. Grandpa left Pooch and me in the field while he went back to the house for one reason or another. But it was during the time when grandpa was between Pooch and me and the farmhouse that I decided I was going to run off from home. I told Pooch as I walked away from my mule, whose name was Nick, that I had to go in the bushes for a bit. Fearing that my grandpa would get back before I had a chance to make good my escape, I made it through the rows of cotton in a clip of which Jesse Owens would have been proud. As I was running, I

the direction of a white man who turned out to be a Cajun named Tobay or “Mr. Tobay,” as the men called him. Tobay was great big white man with a red beard, a bald head and a voice that roared much like a lion. I had a few minutes of conversation with Tobay and from jump street, we hit it off like beans and corn bread. I was especially delighted when Tobay asked me if I would like to hitch up with his Gandy Camp, which was composed of a dining car, kitchen and all the works. A Gandy Camp crew moved around the country repairing train tracks, replacing cross tires and rails. The camp included two or three sleeping cars, a tool car with all the needed paraphernalia for making all sorts of work on a railroad.

Placing his arm around my shoulder, Tobay said to me, “You will travel all over the country with the crew and get paid \$1 a day for washing dishes. How would you like that? Oh, you didn't tell me what your name is. I've got to know what your name is so I'll know what name to put on your check.”

“Popcorn,” I said, in a blare of enthusiastic gratification and sheer bliss, aching with the out-of-control happiness of a little puppy. “My folks call me Popcorn, sir.”

“Well,” said Tobay, “That's what all of us is going to call you, too. Ain't that right, ‘fellas?’” “Yes, sir,” all of the men answered in total unison.

“Now then,” Tobay continued, “What we got to do is this. Tomorrow morning, early, me and you, just me and you, got to go into town to my office. That's where I got all my special paper and stuff for doing things proper is kept. You understand what I'm talking about, don't you, Popcorn?”

“Oh, yes sir,” I said back quickly. Patting my shoulder, Tobay said to me, “You know, Popcorn, you and me is gonna be the best of friends. It sure is gonna be nice working with you. But first we got to take you in town tomorrow morning and sign you up so you can get your money. You know that, don't you, Popcorn?”

reddish glow of every single strand of hair in his vivid red beard. It was the sort of smile that had the magic to beguile even the most distrustful heart of a dog, much less that of a naïve country boy.

I was totally taken by this man and I cannot give a reason why. Perhaps it was because of his massive stature. Or maybe it was because he was the sort of man I had dreamt of as being the perfect role model of a father I had pined for all my life, even though he was a white man and common reason dictates that my father was a Black man.

But then too, children hardly ever think of greatness in shades of goodness let alone shades of Black and white. Not that I ever thought of myself as being a child.

After having entered the diner, Tobay walked over to me and laid his huge right hand on my shoulder. In the most humane, gentle and warm-hearted tone of voice I had ever heard come out of the mouth of a white man speaking to a Black person, he said, “Good morning, Popcorn, and how was your night? Did you sleep well?”

Little did he know that I had indeed slept the best night that I had in a very long time. For one thing, I had slept in a bed all by my lonesome without being awakened by a foot in my head or a Black ass in my face.

“Oh yes, sir,” I said in a whole-hearted tone of voice. “I sure did, Mr. Tobay. Mighty good. Thank you, sir.”

“Good. That's good to hear, Popcorn,” Tobay said. “Now, after we have breakfast and I drink my gallon of coffee. Ha, ha, ha! I'm just funning, Popcorn. I'm not going to drink a whole gallon, maybe just a half gallon. Then we will go to town and sign you up. That OK with you, handsome?”

“That's real good, Mr. Tobay,” I said in a state of gladness the likes of which I had never known before.

Our breakfast was typical of the usual sort of a morning meal fed throughout the Bayou land of Louisiana: sausage and eggs, grits, biscuits and a big cup of chicory.

After everyone had finished

Letters to the Editor

Free Tickets to Humanities Fest

Dear Editor,

I am delighted to write to you regarding the Chicago Humanities Festival, which will be happening at sites all over Chicago Nov. 2-12.

In particular, I'm pleased to tell you that free tickets are available to a number of the programs and group transportation may be available for groups of 15 or more.

If any of your readers are interested in free tickets, please ask them to call 312-661-1028 and ask for the operator.

One of the special aspects of this year's festival, which will focus on the year 2000, the moment between the millennia, is the first-ever Children's Humanities Festival. Among the wonderful programs of the Children's Festival, which will take place over the weekends of November 4-5 and 11-12, are the following:

Stories and Songs of African People: Shanta, a Chicagoan, is a storyteller who entertains and educates using visual elements, poetry and musical instruments of African origin. She will perform Sunday, Nov. 5, from noon-1 p.m.

Juan Felipe Herrera, a wonderful Mexican-American poet and musician, will read from his work and involve the children in attendance in some spontaneous theater and bilingual word games on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

On Sunday, Nov. 5, from 2-3 p.m., writer

and illustrator Ludmila Zeman will lead an illustration workshop; materials will be provided so you just have to show up!

These three programs will all take place at the Ogden School on the Near North Side.

On Friday, Nov. 10, and Saturday, Nov. 11, at 7:30 p.m., there will be a performance of "The Second Hurricane," a children's opera by American composer Aaron Copland. The opera has been updated to take place in a TV

studio and the performance will feature the Jubilate Children's Choir, so it should be terrific. This performance will be at the Francis Parker School in the Lincoln Park area.

A complete listing of the Children's Humanities Festival programs is available by calling 312-661-1028 or going to the Internet site: www.chfestival.org.

The Humanities Festival itself includes over 125 programs. Readers can learn about the entire festival by going to www.chfestival.org on their computers or by calling 312-661-1028 and requesting an information brochure.

Tickets to most programs are \$5.00/person; if you are interested in a free ticket, just ask when you call to see if any are available.

Among the Festival highlights are: Award-winning African American author John Edgar Wideman talking about his work on Saturday, Nov. 11, from 3-4 p.m., at Roosevelt

University; Chicago professor and author Michael Eric Dyson, talking about his recent book, "I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King Jr.;" and William Warfield, Benjamin Mathews and Robert Sims in a wonderful program of spiritual music at St. James Cathedral downtown on Thursday, Nov. 2 from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

For the cyber world fans among your readers, 12 different programs on everything from privacy and the Internet, to art on the Internet, and how the Internet is affecting young people will be held. See the Internet site for more information about them.

The world-famous African American composer Jelly Roll Morton will be the subject of two days of musical programs taking place at the Field Museum Nov. 11-12. The musicians will include Chicagoans like Orbert Davis, Reginald Robinson and Jon Weber.

Finally, for history and politics buffs, the Festival features some of the world's most important historians and, on the weekend following the Presidential election, a group of journalists from foreign newspapers will share their views on how the rest of the world sees the U.S.

The Festival is the only event of its kind in the entire U.S., bringing artists, musicians and writers from all over the world to one city to



Free tickets may be available to see Poet, musician and storyteller Shanta will perform at the Chicago Humanities Festival Sunday, Nov. 5, from noon-1 p.m.

share their work with us. So, we hope your readers will participate and look forward to welcoming them.

- Eileen Mackevich
Executive Producer

Religious Leaders Call for Housing

by Sister Bernie Galvin, cdp

All faith traditions hold that housing is a universal, sacred right. When these rights are violated or ignored at any level of the government, we are morally bound to raise our voices to influence a just and appropriate response on the part of our elected officials to these violations.

The division between the rich and the poor in our society is increasing. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the area of affordable housing. We have become a nation of those who can afford to have homes and those who cannot.

The housing shortage in this country has become both chronic and increasingly acute in recent years. The lack of affordable housing rips at the fabric of all our nation's communities. The tragedy of homelessness and homeless families permeates the national landscape. Homelessness has spread from urban centers and the coasts to the heartland states, to suburban and rural America.

Currently, 5.4 million families in the United States are forced to live in unsafe, unhealthy and or unaffordable housing.

There are additional millions of women, men and children whose only "home" is the harsh and dangerous streets of our cities.

This monumental social tragedy exists simultaneously with unprecedented national prosperity. This year's \$5 billion Federal

Commentary

Housing Administration (FHA) budget surplus alone could impact immediately and significantly our nation's housing crisis.

Incredibly, President Bill Clinton and the Presidential candidates have been silent on the nation's housing crisis. Only in late August was any real attention given by Congressional leaders to the use of the \$5 billion surplus. In the face of the immeasurable human suffering resulting from our nationwide lack of affordable housing, such silence is unconscionable.

Deeply rooted in this moral tragedy and the government's lack of response to the situation, a broad coalition of prominent religious leaders from across the country are raising their united

voices on this matter.

Over the past month, we at Religious Witness with Homeless People, a San Francisco-based interfaith coalition, have organized our second annual national housing campaign, the Religious Leaders' National Call for Action on Housing.

More than 400 prominent, diverse religious leaders from all across the nation have signed a strongly worded letter to our national political leaders urging the immediate allocation of the \$5 billion FHA budget surplus for the increase of affordable housing and the preservation of the existing stock. This FHA revenue offers a solution for eliminating the ever-widening gap between the demand for affordable housing and the shrinking supply of low-cost units. The proper applications of this surplus could set us on the path of a permanent solution to America's longstanding housing crisis.

As people of faith, we must insist that the sacred right of all people to decent, affordable housing be reflected in our federal state and local budgets.

TEARS OF A COP
by Officer Angela Odum
8th District

I have been where you fear to go
I have seen what you fear to see
I have done what you fear to do
All these things I've done for you

I am the one you lean upon
The one you cast your scorn upon
The one you bring your troubles to
All these people I've been for you

The one you ask to stand apart

The one you feel should have no heart
The one you call the man in blue
But I am human just like you

And through the years I've come to see
That I'm not what you ask of me
So take this badge and take this gun
Will you take it? Will anyone?

And when you watch a person die
And hear a battered baby cry
Do you think that you can be
All those things you ask of me?

**Residents' Journal welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents. Please send all letters to our new address:
4859 S. Wabash Chicago, IL 60615.
You may also call our office at (773) 285-0200 x 3372 to discuss your ideas for submission.**

Dear Resident

by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

Dear Resident,

As the first year of the new millennium comes to a close in America, we must only take note of the sights and sounds of the upcoming presidential election to realize that many things for some of America's poorest families are coming to a close, too.

In the not so distant future, when we speak of public housing and other need-based, government-funded programs, phrases like "I remember when," "There was once," and "There used to be" will begin the conversation. These phrases will begin the conversation because these programs will no longer exist as they have in the past and neither will we exist as we have in the past.

Many of the programs to assist America's poorest families once administered by the federal government are now administered by state and city governments.

If you listen closely to the presidential candidates, you will hear the American agenda for the new millennium and there's not much mention of America's poor and their plight (unfortunate, difficult, precarious <dangerously insecure> situation).

If you listen, you will hear the debate about killing unborn children and death row inmates. You will hear the debate about tax breaks for the working middle class instead of the rich upper class. You will hear the debate about improving education since more children from working, middle-class families attend public versus private school. America is and has always been a three-tiered society with upper, middle and lower classes.

If you listen closely, you will hear issues that primarily affect the life of Middle Class America. That's who the presidential candidates address because that's who votes.

Because of its enormous wealth, Upper Class America seldom is affected by the vote and politics. And when they are affected, they use their money and influence in their favor.

Lower Class America is primarily poor, uneducated people of low social status sometimes viewed as a burden on society. They are considered, by some, to be irresponsible and responsible for their own low standard of living and the problems associated with poverty. This, especially after decades of need-based, government-funded programs, incentives and affirmative action initiatives designed to level America's playing field by giving them a foot up. A foot isn't much when you're at the bottom of the ladder.

Historically, Lower Class America does not vote. One needs to see the benefit in doing a thing. There is no benefit in the presidential candidates addressing the issues of a group that does not vote. The same holds true for voters.

When I was a little girl, they actually paid individuals \$2 to vote. Back then, \$2 was a reasonable amount of money and a benefit of voting.

During the late '50s, '60s and very early '70s, especially with the civil rights movement, the gradual improvement in housing, jobs and social programs were a benefit of voting. There was a trickle-down effect through the class system by which everyone in America benefited to some degree. It may not have been much but enough trickled down to America's lower class for an improved quality of life. Today, the trickle-down effect stops at the top of Middle Class America. You see, America's Middle Class is comprised of three levels:

upper middle class, middle middle class and lower middle class. You're either upper class or you're not. And no one wants to be lower class.

Therefore, increased middle class levels decrease the possibility of being lower class. Today, there is less to trickle down because the people at the top siphon off more in enormous salaries and increased profits designed to attract and reward stockholders. And more at the top means less at the bottom.

Personally, I am not politically inclined (drawn toward a course of action). I came to explore this topic by way of Wateka Kleinpeter, managing editor of *RJ*.

As a rule, I don't vote. When I tell people this, especially during an election year, I am often regarded as a person who is a menace to society. I don't abstain from voting out of apathy (lack of interest), because it's raining or I don't see what's in it for me.

I choose to exercise my right not to vote. I choose to exercise my right not to participate in the electoral process of our country - a country that has come far but has far to go in terms of equity (fairness) and equality (having the same rights, privileges, ability and rank) for all of its

I generally respond with the question, "Show me what has gotten better in our community in the last five years, 10 years or 15 years as the result of the election?"

Usually, there's no reply. And I don't see them again until next election year anyway with the city, county, state or federal job they got through their political connections. In my opinion, voting is the least of our civic duties, rights and privileges as citizens. Voting is not the answer to our problems as a community and I

'm not sure if I'm going to vote in this election yet. Not voting negates my responsibility for the failures of America

am due the same rights and privileges as an individual who votes by the virtue (right) of my being an American citizen.

The last time I voted, I was compelled to do so by the candidacy of the honorable Harold Washington. As for the rest of the candidates, while I may not vote for you...I don't vote against you either.

More importantly, I would like to share with you what I have concluded from exploring this topic. While voting may not be the answer to our problems as a community, voting may be the answer to our problems as a class.

The solutions to our problems as a community lie within every home, family and individual in our community striving to be a productive member of society. This, in my opinion, is our greatest civic responsibility.

We live together as a community. But in America, we must vote together as a class. Typically, lower class Americans live together in communities by race. This does not hold true for middle and upper class Americans.

We must vote collectively not by race, gender or religion. We must vote collectively not by the way we live as communities but by the way we live as a class.

Our vote is what makes us equal in the American class system. Because no matter who you are or are not, no matter what you have or have not; if you're upper, lower, middle or no class, unless you're a convicted felon in some states, you have the right to vote. In that booth, we all have the same power. But power is useless unless you use it.

As America looks to a new millennium, its back has turned on the problems of lower-class America unsolved in the old millennium. The old millennium solution of public housing leaves us homeless; the policy of social promotion leaves us uneducated; the need-based, government-funded programs that benefited those that provided service to us more than they did us leave us dependent.

Seemingly, America has learned to live with the unsolved problems of lower-class America. If we're not careful, they will teach us to live with them, too. If you wish to participate and prosper in America in the new millennium, you must vote and encourage everyone you know to vote because America only listens to those who vote.

I'm not sure if I'm going to vote in this election yet. Not voting negates my responsibility for the failures of America. But I don't want anyone else to use that as a reason. I don't want to stop anyone else from voting. I have my reason but that shouldn't be yours.

- Pat



A portrait of the Last Ghetto Poets, artist unknown, painted on and of public housing at Larrabee and Crosby Streets in Cabrini-Green. This masterpiece is as threatened as the public housing building it's painted on.

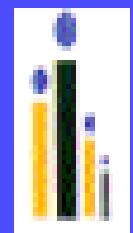
Photo by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

citizens.

Politics can leave a bad taste in your mouth if you couple the country's failure to produce equality with living in the "political state" of Chicago, where it's not who you know or what you know, but how you're politically connected. When you see people and their families and friends benefit from their political connections, it sours the process for many. They see no justice or benefit in the system for them.

Whenever I am approached about not voting, it is usually by way of the statement, "that's why Black people don't have anything now." Truly, we don't have anything in our community because we tear, excuse me, every d-- thing up. We have no respect for each other, can't get along and won't work together.

When people challenge me for not voting,



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