

R E S I D E N T S '

Journal

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Our Mission

This publication is committed to the journalistic principles of fair representation and free speech. Above all else, this publication will strive to fairly and accurately represent all sides of the issues that the editorial staff chooses to investigate. In maintaining an unwavering guarantee of editorial independence, this publication will contribute to the American media's mission of faithfully providing balanced, truthful accounts and information.

Residents' Journal strives to be accessible to all communities, regardless of income, ethnicity or disability.

We The People Media is committed to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which protects the Freedom of the Press.

The views expressed in this publication do not reflect the views of We The People Media or its staff.

Our Readership

In January 2001, Target Market News Service, national experts on African American media markets, conducted a readership study for **We The People Media** sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Below are findings of this study:

* **Residents' Journal** is the unique source of critical information for Chicago public housing residents. Nearly every respondent (92 percent) said they wanted to see **Residents' Journal** printed more often.

* **Residents' Journal** readers are actively involved in the transformation of their communities. Respondents ranked "Neighborhood News" (80 percent) and "CHA Stories" (75 percent) as their favorite sections, closely followed by "Citywide News" (61 percent) and "Health Stories" (52 percent).

* **Residents' Journal**'s readers are active citizens. 84 percent of the respon-

dents voted in the last election while 67 percent attend religious services regularly.

* **Residents' Journal**'s readers shop at large chain stores such as Walgreen's (73 percent), Jewel (70 percent) and Aldi's (67 percent). Readers also eat monthly at restaurants such as McDonald's (69 percent), Popeye's (39 percent), White Castle (34 percent) and KFC (39 percent).

* Readers spend a large share of their income on groceries. Fifty-five (55) percent spend between \$100 and \$299 on groceries monthly; 22 percent spend between \$300 and \$499 on groceries monthly.

* Readers are extremely interested in enhancing their skills: 52 percent are interested in computer training, 41 percent are interested in job training and 20 percent would like to receive nursing or health care training.

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Publisher's Box

by Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

On Wednesday, June 21, 2006, Residents' Journal Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns and Assistant Editor Beauty Turner were mistreated by Chicago police officers. On that day, Johns and Turner were among many reporters from multiple media outlets covering a massive police operation in the Dearborn Homes public housing development.

Officers from several local and federal law enforcement agencies were in Dearborn Homes that day after a number of people died from using heroin which had a potentially fatal additive, and reports indicated that the heroin was purchased in Dearborn Homes.

Johns and Turner were invited to the development by Chicago Housing Authority spokesperson Derrick Hill, who called Turner earlier in the day and informed her about the police action.

Once they were at the development, they met Casey Sanchez, another journalist who works for the Chicago Reporter, and Ulysses Floyd, a community resident. All four were observing the police action, writing notes and taking photographs. Johns then noticed a woman lieutenant with the Chicago Police Department, and asked her if they were allowed to enter any of the buildings.

The lieutenant asked who Johns was, and Johns explained that she was reporting for

The right of public housing tenants to work as journalists must be enforced. City officials must not be allowed to abridge freedom of speech.

the Residents' Journal, presenting her police-issued media identification for confirmation.

The lieutenant explained that since police were still conducting operations inside the buildings, no one could enter. Johns, Turner, Sanchez and Floyd indicated they understood and remained outside talking to residents, and taking notes and pictures.

Several minutes later, the four were approached by a male Chicago Police lieutenant, later identified as Lt. Danny Dugan. Dugan asked what the four were doing there. Johns, Sanchez and Turner said they were reporters.

Dugan demanded to see their press passes.

Johns and Turner produced theirs. Sanchez said he did have a police-issued press pass but showed Dugan some form of identification. Floyd told Dugan who he was and why he was there.

Upon seeing that Johns and Turner's press passes were issued by the police, the lieutenant then demanded that Johns and Turner give him their press passes.

Turner gave him her pass but Johns refused, saying that she knew the rules of use for the press passes and was not violating those rules. She started backing away from Dugan slowly.

Dugan followed Johns, continuing to demand that she surrender her press pass. Johns at this point was nearby to other police officers at the scene.

Dugan ordered one of these officers, later identified as Sgt. Landon Wade, to place Johns in handcuffs.

Dugan continued to demand Johns' press pass even after she was in handcuffs. Johns told him he could take the press pass, which was hanging around her neck, but that she was not volunteering it.



Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

At this point, the group was joined by Derrick Hill, the CHA's spokesperson who had earlier notified Residents' Journal about the police raid.

Dugan asked Hill if he knew Johns, to which Hill replied that he did. Dugan alleged that Johns was trespassing and asked Hill, as the representative of the CHA, if he wanted to press charges.

Hill said he did not.

Wade then released one of Johns' wrists from the handcuffs but Lt. Dugan nevertheless threatened to send Johns to jail unless she gave him her press pass. Wade placed Johns' wrists back in the handcuffs.

After several minutes of debate over the press pass, Sgt. Wade urged Johns to give Dugan the press pass. Johns agreed.

Wade released her from the handcuffs and she gave the pass to Dugan.

Dugan then ordered Johns, Turner, Sanchez and Floyd to leave the development, and followed them as they walked away.

The entire incident was witnessed by a large number of law enforcement personnel and public housing residents.

Johns and Turner immediately went to the Office of Professional Standards, where they filed a complaint against the officers involved.

In September, officials from the police department's News Affairs office notified Residents' Journal that the press passes could be picked up.

A Residents' Journal staffer went to the office and retrieved Johns and Turner's press passes.

On October 5, the Office of Professional Standards notified Johns and Turner with a letter that their complaint was "UNFOUNDED. A finding of unfounded means the evidence indicates that this incident did not occur as you alleged in your complaint."

We The People Media's staff and board of directors are unanimous in demanding that Mayor Richard M. Daley, police Superintendent Phil Cline and city leaders take responsibility for this unacceptable obstruction on the freedom of the press.

To provide objective information to the public, journalists must be allowed to operate without being hampered by law enforcement or government in any way.

Johns and Turner are both national-award-winning reporters who have been recognized by the National Society of Professional Journalists, the Chicago Headline Club, the Chicago Association of Black Journalists and other organizations.

It is incumbent on the mayor, police superintendent and other city officials to explain why Johns, Turner and Sanchez were singled out among all the journalists covering the police operations in Dearborn Homes and apologize for the inappropriate actions of ranking officers.

This incident is particularly egregious because it took place on Chicago Housing Authority property. CHA developments are funded by taxpayer dollars and operated according to policies set by local, state and federal legislators. American citizens must therefore have full and unimpeded access to activities that take place within the housing developments.

Arresting Johns and Turner prevented them from covering a press conference about the police raid later in the day, and therefore from informing our readers about what transpired at the press conference.

Failure to respond appropriately to this incident will send the message to residents and the broader public that public housing residents are subject to police state rules.

As a population which has suffered disproportionate discrimination, public housing tenants are often under the impression that they do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as other Americans.

Many residents saw Johns, who is well known throughout the city's inner-city communities, in handcuffs and may have received the impression that she was being arrested for her journalistic activity.

The right of public housing tenants to work as journalists must be enforced. City officials must not be allowed to abridge freedom of speech.

D.A.R.E Graduates Bring Holiday Cheer To CHA Seniors



These fifth grade students were among the 40 graduates from Dvorak Elementary School and Academy who took time to sing holiday carols, play bingo and other games with Chicago Housing Authority senior residents of 3030 W. 21st St., on Dec. 7, 2006. The youths were participants in the Police Department's youth Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, (D.A.R.E.).

photos by Mary C. Johns

News Briefs

Ruling to Sue for Utility Calculations

In a new ruling made by the U.S. Court of Appeals 5th Circuit, public housing voucher holders can now sue over their utility allowances.

In the case Johnson v. Housing Authority of Jefferson Parish, the court held that under 42 U.S.C. Sect. 1983, residents may sue over the totals of their utility allowances made by public housing authorities.

The court found in adopting the voucher program that there was "absolutely no indication in the statute that Congress intended for exclusive enforcement authority to be invested in HUD," states the March 2006 report by Lawyers Weekly USA.

Ill. Leads War on Drugs

A new study finds that Illinois has the "dubious distinction" of leading the nation in many racial aspects of the War on Drugs. The report, "Intersecting Voices: Impacts of Illinois Drug Policies," from the Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy at Roosevelt University, found that the state ranked first in the rate of incarceration of African Americans convicted of drug possession.

Researchers Kathleen Kane-Willis, Jennifer Janicke and Daniel Clark also found that Illinois spent \$280 million to incarcerate drug offenders in 2002, the latest year for which data was available.

The researchers recommended increasing access to on-demand drug treatment, education, job training and parenting services, and claimed that if Illinois spent \$2.3 million on treatment, taxpayers would save about \$40 million by reducing the number of addicts who return to prison.

Improved Neighborhoods Don't Raise Academic Achievement

"Improved Neighborhoods Don't Raise Academic Achievement" according to a recent report from the National Bureau of Economic Research on the educational progress of children from three groupings of low-income families in New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Baltimore and Chicago. Families were selected by lottery to receive housing assistance.

"The results of this very large scale experiment indicate no evidence of improvement in reading scores, math scores, behavior problems or school engagement overall for any age group... Interventions focused exclusively on neighborhoods, rather than on factors directly related to the child, families and school, are unable to solve the myriad problems of children growing up in poverty," their September report states.

The Bureau's assessment of the more than 5,000 children ranging from pre-schoolers to high schoolers was collected in 2002, arising out of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's experimental Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing program.

Chicago Poverty Highest in Five Years

Even though income is climbing nationally and the poverty rate is stabilizing in America, the rate of people without health insurance is increasing overall and poverty in Chicago is rising, according to estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau on August 29.

"The poverty rate in Chicago has increased more than four percent in five years, from 17.2 percent in 2000 to 21.3 percent in 2005. Half a million Illinois children live in poverty, over one and a half million Illinoisans are uninsured and hundreds of thousands struggle in extreme poverty, with family incomes well below \$10,000 a year," according to an analysis by the Illinois Poverty Summit.

According to the Summit data, "the newly released Census data paint a vivid picture of hardship for many people all around the country."

To All CHA relocated residents with Housing Vouchers or Those Residing in Temporary CHA Replacement Units!!!

If you and your family have or do not have any relocation issues of concern such as, utility, unit, rent, or safety, *Residents' Journal* would like to know.

We The People Media, the publishers of *RJ*, are currently tracking where everyone is going to find out if they are living in a safe, affordable and decent replacement unit as promised by the Chicago Housing Authority. Call Beauty Turner at (312)-745-2686.

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House of Screams

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

For over two decades, up to 200 African American men were tortured and abused at the hands of former Chicago Police Detective Jon Burge and other law enforcers, according to a recently released criminal report by special federal investigators.

Like something out of a bad, scary movie, one former prisoner after another told their horror stories in the 292-page Burge report. They told investigators how they were tortured and humiliated at the Chicago Police Department's Area 2 lockup, then located at 91st Street and Cottage Grove Avenue, from the 1970s through the 1980s.

After a four-year investigation which cost millions of dollars, the special federal prosecutors handling the case announced the results on a hot day in mid-July. They confirmed reports that actual torture of inmates occurred at the hands of Burge and other police officers at the time.

The special prosecutors stated that no criminal charges could be filed against Burge or any of the other police officers who tortured people because the statute of limitations had expired.

Burge was fired from the police force for misconduct in 1991.

But the special prosecutors stated at a press conference when they released the report that no criminal charges could be filed against Burge or any of the other police officers who tortured people because the statute of limitations had expired.

There is no justice in this case, according to Ulysses "U.S." Floyd, one of Burge's torture victims. Over a two-month period, I talked to Floyd and another former inmate who were listed as victims in the Burge report. Both said they suffered abuse at the hands of Burge and his "lynch mob" of police officers during their stay at the jailhouse they both labeled "The House of Screams."

"They should be prosecuted and held accountable for



Beauty Turner

what they did, and there shouldn't be no limitations on what they did," Floyd said in August. "They violated people's rights. How can there be a statute of limitations on that? They let the time lapse."

The prior month, Floyd recounted his story as being one of the victims of Burge in the early 80s.

At the time, Floyd was a South Side gang leader whose criminal activities stemmed from 90th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue, to 95th and Halsted Streets, which sometimes spilled over to 111th Street.

"I remember Jon Burge because no matter what seemed to happen in those areas, he came to get me," Floyd said.

Floyd currently works with Ceasefire, a Chicago-based violence prevention program that counsels current gang members 15 to 24 years old at the Woodlawn Organization.

He said that

Burge, "a short, stubby little white man," made up for his height by using his position as a police detective to torture young and old Black men, making them confess to crimes they didn't commit.

"He had me handcuffed for 72 hours trying to get me to confess to a triple murder that I didn't commit. He would take me to Area 2 Criminal Homicide Division and torture me by handcuffing me to a chair and putting a Jewel [grocery store] plastic bag over my head and laughing as I gagged for air to catch my breath," Floyd said in a raised voice during a June 8 phone interview.

"That wasn't all he did. He had two guns. One was a real big gun, maybe a .357 Magnum. He said to me, 'this is for shooting n---s,' and he showed me the other gun that was much smaller. 'This one is for shooting white folks,'" Floyd went on to say.

"He would sometimes come and get me in the depths of winter when it was freezing cold outside and handcuff my hands to the bars on the outside of a window in one of those interrogation rooms," Floyd exclaimed.

While in lockup at Area 2, Floyd added that on one occasion, Burge took his clothes from him and left him buck-naked with a window wide open, exposing him to the cold air, which he said woke him up every time he tried to go to sleep.

"He left me that way for 72 hours," Floyd said.

I could hear in his voice that I was bringing back painful memories of his encounters with Burge.

"The report will show that they didn't even begin to scratch the surface of the torture that Jon Burge inflicted on African-American men," Floyd added.

When you talk about justice being blind, in Black communities, I think that is an understatement. What do you think?

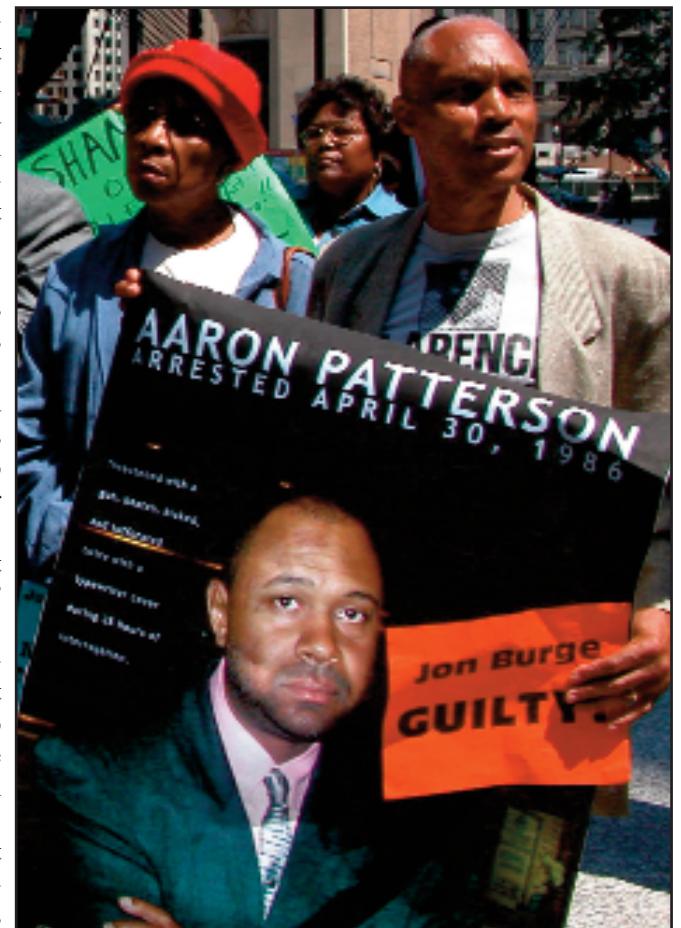
Mayor Richard M. Daley was Cook County state's attorney at the time of the alleged torture of the prisoners by Burge and other law enforcers.

These allegations were brought to his attention Feb. 25, 1982, by former Police Superintendent Richard Brzeczek.

Yet nothing ever became of the allegations under Daley's watch.

David Bates, listed as another torture victim in the Burge report, told me in June that he was a teenager at the time he encountered Burge in October 1983.

Bates said he and Gregory Banks, a former resident of the Chicago Housing Authority's Trumbull Lowden Homes, were picked up and charged with a murder that they were later exonerated for in November 1996. Bates described to me how he suffered at Burge's hands.



A protester holds a sign of Aaron Patterson, a documented torture victim of former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge, during a rally at the Daley Plaza, against a recently released report on the investigation of the charges against Burge and other CPD officers.

photo by Beauty Turner

"Jon Burge gave out five sections of torture. First of all, it began with a series of slaps, kicks and name calling, and the last two that he did was put a plastic bag over my head all while threatening me with death along with hitting me in my chest until I passed out," Bates said.

Bates also said that Banks, who was 20-years old at the time, told him while they were incarcerated together that Burge threatened him with death if Banks didn't confess to the crime.

"Banks told me that Burge put a loaded gun in his mouth and drove him around the station ordering him to confess," Bates said.

Bates said the Burge report shows that aldermen as well as other city officials in addition to Mayor Daley, knew for over four decades what Burge was doing to African-American men in Area 2 headquarters, but did nothing.

"Instead of doing something about it, they would rather hide this scandal from public view," Bates said. "How could they continue to sweep this corruption under the rug and hide it for over four decades totaling over 2 to 3 million dollars, if not more?"

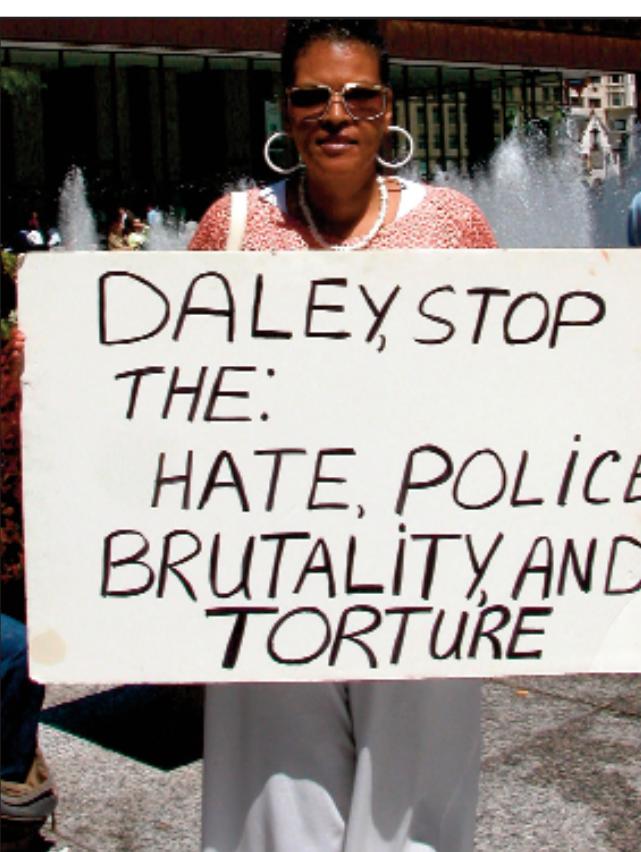
Bates added that the aldermen should have acted earlier in handling these cases by calling on investigations, stopping the pensions of the police officers charged, and stopping the payments of their attorneys.

"Not just in the interest of the victims of the Burge case, but in the interest of the taxpayers, period. The police are protected by the Fraternal Order of Police and the City Council.

"Those two entities have always paid for the attorneys for the police who are accused of torturing the 192 African American men," Bates said during a phone interview in August.

Bates, a community activist working with the Chicago Committee to Defend the Bills of Rights, said the group introduced an ordinance to the City Council over a year ago that could protect citizens from police brutality and make police accountable.

(Continued on pg. 18)



A protester holds a sign encouraging Mayor Richard M. Daley to do something about the police abuse by officers of the Chicago Police Department during the August rally at the Daley Plaza against a recently released report on the investigation of former Commander Jon Burge and other officers.

Photo by Beauty Turner

Transforming CHA

Checking Chicago's War on Drugs

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Relocated and current Chicago public housing residents as well as their private market neighbors in poverty-stricken areas want to know what the city police force is doing about their safety.

They also want to know what the federal government has been doing to stop the flow of illegal drugs and weapons from ending up in their communities.

A Climate of Fear

According to data provided to **RJ** from the Chicago Housing Authority via e-mail in early April, 3,838 residents relocated with housing vouchers under the CHA's \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation between Oct. 1, 1999 and Sept. 30, 2005.

A large number have relocated into other high poverty areas in predominantly African-American communities ridden with drug and gang activity.

Of them, 431 relocated to Englewood, 258 moved into the South Shore area, 212 into apartments in the Roseland community, and 211 relocated to the Greater Grand Crossing area.

The CHA currently contracts the Chicago Police Department to provide "above baseline" services to its residents and relocatees at a rate of \$16 million annually.

The housing agency first contracted with the police in 2000 after dismantling the CHA's own police force. In March 2004, Mayor Richard M. Daley and the police superintendent



Mary C. Johns

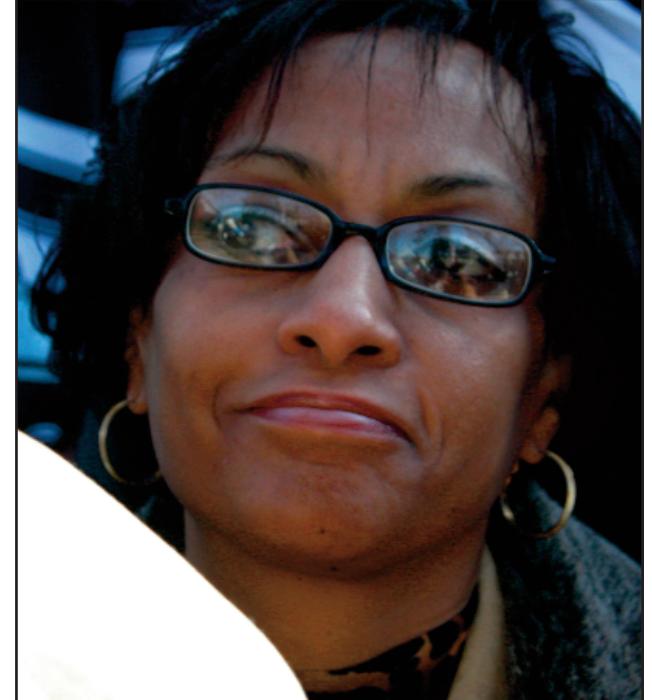
February/March 2006 issue of **RJ**, Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th) and Ald. Freddrenna Lyle (6th) both claimed their wards still had dire need of more police resources.

In March of this year, residents of the Englewood community, which is shared by six aldermen and U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush (D-1), marched and rallied against the gun violence and illegal drug activity after the shooting deaths of two young girls in March.

"This drug market created a climate of fear and intimidation and spurred much of the gang-related violence we saw in the area," Englewood Police Commander Joseph Patterson proclaimed at a gathering of ministers, community leaders and police officials shortly after the shooting death of 14-year-old Starkesia Reed and 10-year-old Siretha White.

Reed, the unintended victim of gang violence, died instantly from a gunshot wound to the head after a stray bullet penetrated her front window in the 6700 block of South Honore Street while she was waiting to go to school.

Eight days later and a few blocks away, White, another unintended victim, was struck dead from a stray bullet fired by a gang member that entered the front window of her aunt's apartment in the 2000 block of West 70th Place while she attended her own surprise birthday party.



The mother of 14-year-old gang shooting victim Starkesia Reed listens to the prayers and speeches made by protesters who stopped by her house to pay their respects for her loss in March.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

On June 20, more than 400 law enforcement officers from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Marshals and the Chicago Police raided the 800-unit CHA Dearborn Homes public housing development.

They arrested 47 members of a street gang who were later charged with "conspiracy to possess and distribute heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana and Fentanyl from 1999 to the present," according to a June 23 Chicago Police press release.

Those charged allegedly "sold heroin 24 hours a day, seven days a week, generating a total of \$20,000 to \$25,000 a day, with shifts of workers, including some as young as 13."

The Chicago Police reported in January that members of another street gang allegedly sold "crack cocaine and white heroin...24 hours a day, seven days a week, generating an estimated \$5,000 to \$10,000 in daily revenues" inside the lobbies of several of the 16 mid-rise CHA Dearborn Homes buildings.

In February, the police reported the outbreak of the tainted heroin circulating around that same public housing site located along the State Street Corridor.

The following month, police reported 10 fatalities near that CHA site.

The overdose victims whose ages ranged from 17 to 73 years old, lived outside Chicago in communities as far away as LaSalle, Channahon and Braidwood, Illinois, and traveled to the city to get the drugs, according to the April data from the police.

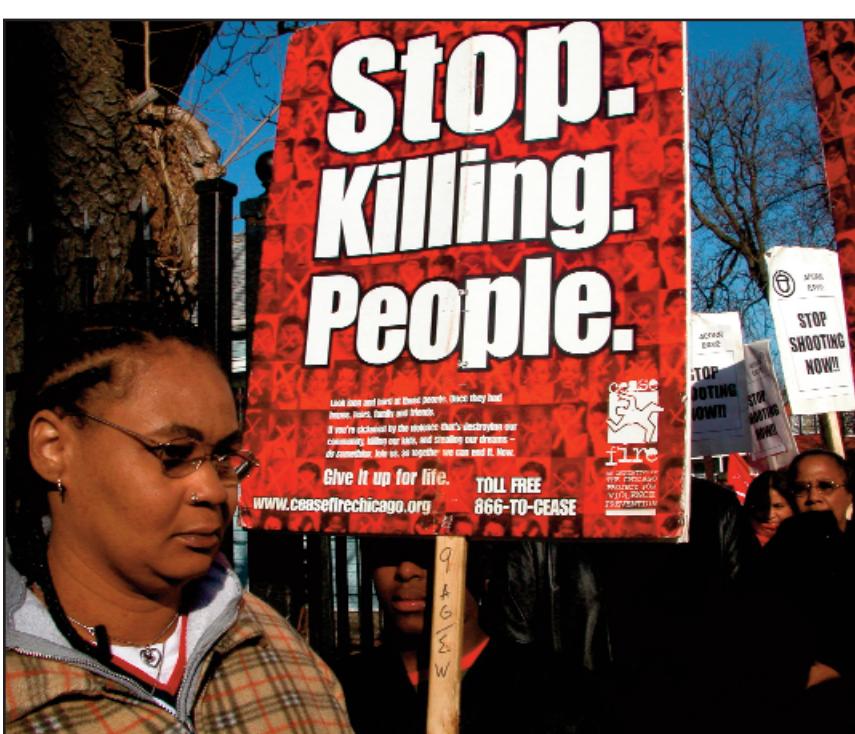
In a press release after the overdosed deaths, Police Superintendent Philip J. Cline warned the distributors, buyers and users of the illegal drugs about the dire consequences of their actions.

"The message should be clear: To sellers, if you get caught selling or passing out illegal drugs, you're going to jail," Cline stated. "To buyers and users: if you accept or buy illegal drugs, you have two choices, death or jail."

DEA and ATF Report on Crime

The police's reported efforts to stop criminal activity by gang members and others involved months of monitoring by federal, state and local law enforcement groups working together and officers posing as drug addicts buying heroin.

(Continued on pg. 23)



The aunt of 10-year-old gang shooting victim Siretha White listens to encouragement of Englewood area protesters and others shortly after the death of her niece in March.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Transforming CHA

Security Problems Continue for Residents

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

Crime continues to weigh on the minds of many families in the Bronzeville, Auburn Gresham and Englewood areas, where many public housing residents have relocated under the Chicago Housing Authority's \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation.

They are continuing to complain about shootings, the tainted heroin and other illegal drugs circulating in their neighborhoods, as well as the general level of criminal activity in the remaining Chicago public housing complexes and at other crime 'hot spot' areas.

CHA is currently paying the Chicago Police Department \$16 million annually to provide "above baseline services" to residents under the Plan for Transformation. However, current and former CHA residents are still complaining about the lack of a police presence in their communities to deter crime.

Most recently, at the Aug. 9 Tenant Services meeting, Gladys McKinney, the building president of 3983 S. Lake Park Place and another resident of that building complained to CHA CEO Terry Peterson about the continuing cluster of non-residents standing around the building and harassing the legal tenants.

CHA residents also were upset about the lack of police presence at their building. At the same meeting, as well as at the Sept. 13 Tenants Services meeting, residents of the Bridgeport Homes also complained about their problems with other residents who they claimed to be gang members

"The violence is bad. It is worse here than it was in the projects. Because at least there we knew each other," Leonard said.

Keshia Rhyme, a single young mother of five who relocated out of the Robert Taylor "A" development in 2002, claimed to have moved over three times before moving to the Auburn Gresham community, where she now lives.

Rhyme told **RJ** recently that she was also concerned about the recent shootings on her block.

"I heard the gun shots and I heard somebody say 'Get down,'" Rhyme said.

Earlier this year, community residents, advocates for the poor and city officials challenged the gun violence head on after a rash of recent shootings of children in the Englewood community.

Fourteen-year-old honor student Starkesia Reed was shot in her head on March 3 while looking out of her window waiting for a ride to school.

Eight days later, 10-year-old Siretha White was shot in the head while trying desperately to escape a hail of bullets sprayed into her aunt's house during her surprise birthday party, not far from where Reed was killed.

Killings such as those sparked marches and demonstrations in Englewood and Auburn Gresham.

Ongoing meetings have been set up to address the issues of violence and to put a stop to it.

At a march and a demonstration held on Easter in Englewood, the Rev. Paul Hall attributed much of the surge in violence to the CHA Plan for Transformation.

"The problem is that the Chicago Housing Authority has emptied out their buildings and their residents are relocating into this area," Hall told reporters at the protest. "There's an

Regina Leonard, a single mother of three and relocatee of the CHA's Robert Taylor Homes: "My children can't even go to the corner store. My children and I have to lie down on the floor so that we will not get shot."

and they asked CHA to investigate and provide police protection.

In May, Regina Leonard, a single mother of three who relocated out of the CHA's Robert Taylor Homes in 2002, complained to **RJ** about her children not being able to go to the neighborhood grocery store in peace because of the recent shootings in her relocated area.

"My children can't even go to the corner store," she said during a telephone interview. "My children and I have to lie down on the floor so that we will not get shot."

Leonard, who now lives in a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-subsidized apartment in Vincennes Plaza, located at 47th Street and Vincennes Avenue, said there has been shooting every day on her block since she moved out of the Robert Taylor Homes.



Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley talks about violence prevention measures after the shooting death of two unintended victims of gang violence in the Englewood community in March, along with other state and federal officials and area leaders.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

influx of gang members coming into this area fighting for the same territory."

Chicago Police spokesperson Pat Camden told **RJ** in early June that at least 25 murders involving guns occurred in the Auburn Gresham community since the beginning of this year. Camden added that as of June 7, there had been 640 aggravated batteries citywide with a firearm since the beginning of this year.

As of that same date, Camden reported there being three shooting deaths in the Bronzeville community, compared to four the same time last year.

In response to a reporter's question of whether the recent shootings in the Bronzeville, Englewood and Auburn Gresham community were because of an influx of former CHA residents into these areas, Camden replied:

"As for the shootings, we can't really pin point that and say it is because of any one thing. As I said before, there are cases of domestic violence, gang related as well as other reasons," he said.

In a recent **RJ** interview, Mark Donoghue, the president of the Fraternal Order of Police, gave his opinion about Chicago gangs, guns and drugs in the city's most vulnerable communities.

RJ: What do you think should be done about the gangs, guns and drugs in the CHA communities?

MD: The reaction of the police department typically is that the police or law enforcement all over the country will address the problem by throwing more manpower at the problem.

RJ: Why are there more drugs in those communities if there is more manpower there?

MD: In large part in my perspective, the policy makers don't want to let the police do the thing that is necessary to get rid of the drugs, guns and gangs.

RJ: What do you mean by that statement?

MD: We need to allow a police officer to use his discretion when it comes to getting these guns off of the streets.

RJ: What do you think should be done to combat



U.S. Marshals standing about during a day-long occupation of the CHA Dearborn Homes, after an earlier drug raid at the public housing site.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

the violence in those communities?

MD: I think that the necessary resources should be put in those communities, whether those resources are more police officers or job training.

Tainted heroin deaths soar

Like a deadly vulture circling its prey, tainted heroin has been causing a soaring number of deaths in Chicago lately. As of Aug. 15, there have been 180 deaths due to the tainted heroin, according to Dr. Edmund R. Donoghue, Chief Medical Examiner of Cook County.

On August 15 alone, six suspected overdoses from the tainted heroin took place at the Harold Ickes public housing site, according to a CHA official who asked to be unnamed.

The CHA source told **RJ** that eyewitnesses said the victims collapsed after being given "free \$3 bags" from alleged drug dealers. Community sources say the tainted drugs first surfaced in January.

Residents that **RJ** interviewed in late May said they thought the tainted drug death toll had soared in the CHA public housing developments since the first reported death at the site.

In a phone interview with **RJ**, Donoghue explained that the heroin was laced with the pain killer Fentanyl. Young and old, Black, Hispanic and white alike are dying from the deadly drug.

The deaths have taken place not only here in the Windy City but around the country.

The Chicago Police Department, along with Chicago-based federal drug agents, raided the CHA Dearborn Homes development on June 23, where many tainted heroin deaths occurred.

Despite the raids and the presence of the police department's blue flickering surveillance cameras at CHA sites, the sale of tainted heroin and other illegal drugs continues.

Deaths related to tainted heroin were reported at the Ida B. Wells public housing site as well.

Joseph Watkins, a Wells resident and founder of Saving our Seeds, a non-for-profit organization which advocates on behalf of ex-felons and provide services to youths, said the circulation of tainted drugs throughout the poor and low-income communities is a conspiracy by the American government to harm poor people.

"I think that it was put in our communities intentionally," Watkins said.

"Just like when they put the crack cocaine in our communities."

"The saga continues. They are testing those drop dead drugs on us," he said.

Transforming CHA

Last Days at Ogden Courts

by Cenabeth Cross

I recently moved out of Ogden Courts after living there for 10 years. Ogden Courts consisted of two buildings. Each one was seven stories high and there were 10 apartments on each floor. The one I lived in was 2710 W. Ogden Ave. The second one was 2650 W. Ogden. We lived across the street from Mt. Sinai Hospital.

In 1995, I was allowed to move into Ogden Courts after a long wait. I got to know the manager because I had to speak to her on the phone many times. She kept telling me there were problems on the premises that she had to deal with and that therefore, my moving in wasn't her priority. The harassment stepped up a notch after she met me. But I soon found that she hadn't picked me out to be mean to. She was that way with everyone. She was, however, the only manager that stayed as long as she did.

Because I was a photographer, the tenants started coming to me to take pictures of their apartments, hoping that I could help in some way. In 1996, I joined the staff of *Residents' Journal*. After I wrote about the children that had lead poisoning in their system, a specially equipped truck came to the parking lot with staff to test all the children. The board of health came by a couple of times as well.

I got to know most of the tenants personally. We were

My service connector also hinted that people who are in Section 8 homes may not be there for long. They have to find employment, the ones that are employable. The people who can't find work may find themselves homeless.

like a family. We had to help each other out. We all got together to talk about moving. After complaining for such a long time and getting no service, most of us were happy to hear this news, but we were also afraid. We heard some horrible stories of the people who had moved before us from other projects, like the Robert Taylor Homes. I assured my friend Ruby Davis that we had to believe that whatever happened, it would be better than this. Ruby and I talked all the time, almost every day.

The building was always having problems. The heat, the water, mice and roaches, and the elevator. The elevator was broken more days than it ever worked. We all stayed in our apartments most of the time because the lobby was always full of drug dealers 24/7. The management had evicted quite a few families after they put the One Strike policy into effect. One Strike states that whenever someone was arrested for selling drugs in the building, the entire family could be thrown out.

Despite the problems, some residents couldn't stand to leave Ogden Courts. A friend of Ruby's, an older lady named Evelyn Cole, had lived there, like Ruby, most of her life. She had lived there when it was a 'nice place,' as Ruby would always tell me. Ogden Courts once was. Evelyn told Ruby that a friend of hers took the news of the building's closure in a very different way. She was so upset that she took a chair and climbed up on it to throw her leg out of the window. As Evelyn attempted to grab her, she threw herself out of the fifth floor window, hit the concrete pavement and died.

Our first notice came on February 22, 2005. The letter, mailed to each of us, came from the Chicago Housing Authority. It said that Ogden Courts was closing and that we had only 90 days to vacate. We had meetings when they explained the procedures we would have to follow and where we could get help. The last meeting was at Mt. Sinai Hospital, at 2653 W. Ogden Ave., on March 29, 2005,



Cenabeth Cross

In attendance was Duwain Bailey, CHA's director of operations, Janet Abrahams, director of asset management, Sharon Glenn, director of housing choice vouchers (section 8), Rayne Martin, director of relocation, and Jerlean Paul-Maggitt, West Side Future, one of the firms contracted for CHA's Service Connector program. They told us if we had any legal questions, we could contact one of two attorneys: Nicki Bazer or Renai Rodney, members of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago.

The move went pretty fast. They had workers take each one of us to view three apartments. When we found the one we liked, they sent a moving truck to pick up all the furniture, hauled it to our new place, and placed it where ever we told them. During the closure of the building, some of the residents had to have their furniture carried down the stairs because the elevators failed - as usual.

I was shown two houses. I told the driver that I didn't need to see any more. I had fallen in love with the first one I saw. Sean L. Drumgoole, our property manager at this

time, was a lot of help to many of the female residents. But I was short changed with my security deposit when I went to the office July 6 to pick it up.

While I was in the office, my friend Jessie came to me with her story about the extra rent they were charging her, and told me about the bill she had received from Commonwealth-Edison, the electric utility. Both bills were inaccurate, and she couldn't find any of the people

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who swore they could help us with everything. CHA officials had told the both of us that if we needed lawyers, we could talk to one. This I found to be false because when I tried to get one, they refused. One of the legal clinics wanted to charge me \$30 just to talk to me.

The day I moved, May 4, I was told by the movers that I had to catch the bus. One of the movers that was upstairs with me during the entire move talked about God and how the world was fine, and how it was the people in it that made things so bad. He never moved one box or piece of furniture and he was sitting in one of the chairs on the gallery when I left the building. The mover told me to ask the driver if I could ride in the front with him. He also told me that I would have to give him "something." Since I had nothing to give him, I locked up, went and borrowed some carfare, and left before they did.

My new apartment seems like heaven to me. The apartment is on the first floor and it took me a while to get used to staying there at night. There was no one else in the building at the time. This took me back to the time in my life before I moved into Ogden Courts. I moved into public housing after I became 'homeless.'

Before I became 'homeless,' I was buying a house that looked almost just like my new place. There is a back yard and a full lot on the side for the children. The tenants who in moved upstairs have two youngsters.



This building at 2650 W. Ogden Ave. was part of the Chicago Housing Authority's Ogden Courts public housing complex that was totally demolished in 2005.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

My friend Ruby got a little house. As luck would have it, she lives within walking distance from me. Now I call that an act of God.

I've been at my apartment a year already. The only problem I currently have is that I have to walk at least four blocks to public transportation for the bus or the 'el' train.

I thought I would complain but when I thought about it, I realized that it is a great form of exercise. After a year, my thighs have tightened up a bit. I breathe a lot better too. Everyone needs exercise.

Soon after I moved, a service connector from the Metropolitan Family Services, located in the South Chicago Center, at 3062 E 91st Street, came to my home to find out if I needed any help since relocation. My worker's name is Christi Chandler. She assists with getting the landlord to do the required unit repairs and the return of security deposits, getting CHA relocatees' utility bills paid, job searches, school enrollment and help for drug problems. The service connectors also teach you to own your own home and offer many other services to help make relocation easier to bear.

Everything seemed like it was going well. But some people told me to be cautious about writing that the relocation was a success for everyone. A few insinuated that the Section 8 program isn't working as well as expected.

On April 21, 2006, I read an article that caught my attention. The article, "CHA Aiming at Section 8," by Antonio Olivo, a Tribune staff reporter, states that over the last 16 months, the Chicago Housing Authority has stopped paying Section 8 landlords for failing to bring their houses up to code. They have stopped payments to landlords who repeatedly fail to make the necessary repairs.

CHA officials said they are the toughest guidelines in the nation. Lead paint, rotting porches and bad plumbing are the biggest problems. They're refusing landlords who have homes in a block with more than three vacant lots, or three boarded up houses. If they find that the drug traffic is too heavy, they can refuse to pay the landlord.

My service connector also hinted that people who are in Section 8 homes may not be there for long. They have to find employment, the ones that are employable. The people who can't find work may find themselves homeless. Employment is a hard thing to find for us, even if we're not ex-cons or addicts. It sounds like the number of foster kids will be on the rise again. The children are the ones who really suffer.

Transforming CHA

Ickes And Other CHA News

by Jacqueline Thompson

Once again, the residents of Harold Ickes Homes have been rewarded with a new manager. Her name is Renell Caint. Once again, we are faced with a new person not familiar with the residents, a person unknown to the residents. The reasons for the successive changes have never been fully revealed.

However, some things remain constant. Late rent statements that sometimes carry new charges or incorrect charges that take months to unravel. But the latest blow touches every lease holder occupying an apartment within CHA properties. I learned of a new \$20 "Surprise and Demand Blanket" when I overheard one resident talking to another.

Resident #1: Chile', did they tell you about the \$20 attached to your rent?

Resident #2: No.

Resident #1: Well, they didn't tell me a thing either. Here I am at the office to pay my regular rent and they tell me I'm \$20 short. I say, 'What? How am I \$20 short?' They didn't tell me they raised my rent. 'When did this happen?' I asked the lady at the desk.

'Everybody has to pay \$20 more for excess utilities across all the developments,' the lady said. I stood there dumfounded because I couldn't believe it. How am I going to get an extra \$20 I don't know nothing about before I pay my rent and even before the rent statements have come out, which they come past the fifth of the month. You paid what you remember you should pay before that. It makes you feel a little crazy having to try and find extra money to pay something we don't know about.

It is true. The residents were notified that they were to be charged with excess utility payments. This notice came about six to seven months ago, and sure enough my rent statement had \$1.87 on it for excess utilities. That was no sweat. The problem is, there have been no other excess utility charges on successive rent statements, late though they have been.

Two weeks after the news of the utility charges came out, we all received a flyer in our door apologizing for the late rent statement issue - the first one ever in five years. It read: "We are consistently working with the Chicago Housing Authority and Work Flow Inc. to expedite the statements." The letter was signed by Sandra Harris, vice president of real estate for WCDC, the management company for the Ickes development. Even with the apology, seniors and very low income residents still face a new challenge to find an extra \$20.

The True Blues

The new blinking blue surveillance cameras placed around Harold Ickes Homes have left many residents feeling that we have been publicly labeled as a high crime area. Many Ickes residents feel that we inherited the constant traffic of drug seekers from Robert Taylor Homes, Stateway Gardens and all the other demolished developments that have fallen under the hammer of gentrification.

True, the fancy, flashing 'Blue Light District' cameras are designed to stop crime, but many residents want the world to know that most of Ickes' residents are not criminals. The majority of the population is children, 90 percent who attend school each day. Others are infants and toddlers.

Ten percent of the residents are seniors with no ties to criminal activity. Many residents are asking if the blue



Jacqueline Thompson

lights are making it official that Ickes needs gentrification too.

Rare Visitors

Earlier this year, the Nation of Islam graced our lives with a small army of straight-laced, upstanding men.

Each took to the buildings to meet the residents and to invite them to answer the call of perhaps a better way of life by attending the annual Saviors Day, taking place the same weekend of their visit. The Nation of Islam representatives were very polite and eager to share their religious messages.

Continuing Unrest at Altgeld Gardens

Altgeld Gardens is experiencing a whirlwind of disbelief.

I talked to a resident named Unique who I had spoken with before the actual redevelopment of residences began last year. She said she was frustrated and couldn't find anywhere to go for relief.

RJ: Hello Unique. What is happening with the revitalizing program for Altgeld Gardens?

Boyd said that management employees were also spotted wheeling a washing machine that another resident was forced to leave behind. Since residents aren't allowed to move the machines into the new units, the machines are treated as abandoned property.

Unique: A whole lot of nothing. I don't understand the whole change. Everything has been downgraded instead of upgraded. Just yesterday, I saw seven or eight of my neighbors who were talking about the results from the work to improve the quality of life promised by the CHA. Well, it wasn't good. One lady, who lives in the first block of homes to be finished, reported her floors were so



CHA Harold Ickes LAC President Gloria Williams (seated) and other residents during their annual Family Fun Day at the public housing complex.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

be unattended. You are away just washing 8 or 9 hours. You wait for the bus to leave at 8 am to come back at 4 pm or 5 pm. Being away for so many hours is frustrating because you may be finished long before others but you still have to wait for the bus. Meanwhile, your kids are

back in the development running buck wild because the buses are so small, there is no room for them to travel to the Laundromat with you.

RJ: Tell me, how close are they to being on schedule to finish the improvements in the homes?

Unique: Block one, two and three were to be finished by January 2006, but it's now April and block one is not even finished. There was a couple who were ready to move into a finished unit with a March 20 date but even the leasing agent found things wrong and promised them they could move in April 10. It's still not ready. So, as you can see, we are completely under stress.

Unique finished off the interview with her hope that residents do in fact organize and try to get CHA to make a change for better treatment for themselves and their children.

Martha Boyd from Altgeld Gardens reported blanket frustration too.

In an e-mail to **RJ**, she alleged that Altgeld's Eastlake managers are charging the residents certain sums of money without providing evidence for it and threatening them with eviction if they don't simply "just pay it." Then they charge \$281 for "court costs," even if they never submit any paperwork.

"In the past, Eastlake has been fined thousands of dollars for defrauding residents out of legal fees, which by law you can't recover in the state of Illinois," Boyd wrote.

Boyd added that Eastlake Management employees were seen by many residents loaded on the bus to the Laundromat.

Boyd said that management employees were also spotted wheeling a washing machine that another resident was forced to leave behind. Since residents aren't allowed to move the machines into the new units, the machines are treated as abandoned property.

Boyd wrote that residents were suspicious that re-

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unleveled her furniture was sliding all the time. One other person said the handle fell off the toilet. I had to get rid of my new refrigerator and stove, and I had to get rid of my chandelier my mother had given me. CHA issued no blinds. You can't put up curtains. There were no blinds in stock. People are using newspaper to cover windows.

RJ: Unique, tell me, have all the residents there been charged \$20 for utilities?

Unique: Yes. However, what happened to me was on last month's rent statements. I had a paid credit but the next month, the credit was gone. The next month I owed \$20 but I found out by a late rent statement only after my rent was paid. We were issued no forms for the \$20, when I was charged with a 15-day notice because I couldn't pay it all and when I tried to pay it, they wouldn't take it and threatened to take me to court.

RJ: Remembering the huge hassle over washing equipment in the residences, what happened to the new facilities that were promised?

Unique: They removed block 17, the largest block here that had 500 units in the midst of Altgeld, to put in the laundry. They have not put it in yet. So CHA supplied buses to take people to other suburbs to wash. To places like Lansing, 171st and Torrence behind Calumet City and Homewood. It didn't work. Those places were too far.

They don't realize how much time it wasted, how much time is taken away from being with kids who may

Transforming CHA

Altgeld Gardens News

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

I toured the Altgeld Gardens public housing development on the far South Side following the June 20, 2006 Chicago Housing Authority Board of Commissioners meeting after several residents strongly encouraged me to talk to tenants they said had some concerns about their rehabbed units.

My tour guides, current Altgeld resident Gail Jackson and former Altgeld resident Renae Wilkins - who relocated out the public housing development with a housing voucher - led the way and introduced me to several residents who recently moved into refurbished apartments at the site and were concerned about the quality of the construction.

I interviewed several residents who occupied rehabbed units. They all wanted to remain anonymous for fear of retribution from the management company.

Their units' problems ranged from a broken bathroom tissue holder to an improperly placed closet sliding door to an improperly placed kitchen counter - which the resident dealt with by placing bricks on top to hold the counter down.

The most outstanding concern was about not being able to bring their washers and dryers into the newly refurbished units. Altgeld residents moving into the rehabbed apartments are forbidden by the CHA to take their washing machines or dryers with them to any of the rehabbed units.

Myrtle Davis, who lived at the public housing site since 1992, said she was happy overall with the newly remodeled three-bedroom unit she moved into this past April with her 14-year-old son and 17-year-old daughter.

She said she had really no complaints other than the unit being smaller in space, having no back door—some but not all of the rehabbed units have front and back doors—and not being able to bring her washing machine and dryer into the replacement unit, which she said she left in the old unit.

"Other than that, I have no complaints. I just hate that I don't have the washer," she said.

In response to how she washes her laundry, Davis

said, "Sometimes I wash on my hands or go to a friend's house."

During the tour, some residents claimed to have witnessed employees of Altgeld's management company removing washers and dryers that had been left in residents' old units, loading them up on trucks, and taking the machines to unknown destinations.

I spoke to Gertie Smith, who manages Altgeld for the Eastlake Management company, on Sept. 7 to find out whether any of her employees had in fact taken any washers and dryers left by residents in their former units.

"That's a lie," Smith said. "We have not removed or disposed of anyone's washing machine and dryer. What has happened in the past is that people who were getting ready to move to the new units, they have disposed of them before they moved, and the residents out here know that. We have not disposed of any. The residents either sold them to somebody or gave them to somebody before they moved."

Altgeld Gardens Local Advisory Council President Bernadette Williams backed up what Smith said about what happened to washers and dryers that were left in old units.

"No. That's not true," Williams said. "Whenever any of the residents moved out, some sold theirs or some just signed waivers that they would leave whatever they wanted in the unit...the management ain't sold nobody's

thing," she said.

Williams wrapped up the interview by saying that she was still speaking with CHA about cable television hookups for residents, and she was also waiting to see when CHA would approve the Request for Proposal for the construction of a laundry facility on site.

"That is my main concern, when the facility is going to be built. They said we can't have them [washers and dryers in the new units]. So when are the new facilities going to be built?" she said.

Currently, every Saturday, Eastlake Management pays for a bus to come and pick up the residents who have moved into the rehabbed units along with others needing their laundry done, according to Williams. She expected a total of seven laundry facilities would be built at the public housing complex in the near future, one for every block of the development.

A few of the residents told me that they have received little help from their elected resident leaders on these issues of concerns. One woman said Altgeld's Local Advisory Council can't work effectively for the benefit of the residents because the total resident leadership at Altgeld works for Eastlake Management Company, a construction company doing the rehab work at the development, the CHA and a Service Connector. The resident, who asked that her name not be used, deemed the employment of the resident leaders a conflict of interest.

"The Local Advisory Council president works for Eastlake Management. Debra, our vice president, works for Holabird & Root (which oversees the rehab process). The secretary works for a Service Connector and the treasurer works for CHA as a clerk down in LeClaire Courts. So even when we say the voices of the people are telling them that we are going to fight for the washer and dryer hookups, one of them gets up in the meeting and says, 'That's old,'" the resident said.

Williams, who was the LAC vice president and working for Eastlake Management before she became LAC president, suggested that all residents come to her with any and all complaints or concerns.

"The only people who I see saying that are the people who work with the people who ran against me. A lot of residents do come to me. This is my third term as the LAC president. So the residents voted me in. So, if it was an issue with them, I wouldn't be in office," she said.



The resident of this recently rehabbed apartment in the Altgeld Gardens public housing complex uses two bricks from outside to hold down the improperly placed kitchen countertop left by the CHA contractors hired for reconstruction of many of the old units.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Referring to the woman whose counter top was held down with bricks, Williams said, "But I didn't see anything like that. So, if something was wrong with her apartment, she shouldn't have even accepted that apartment when she moved in."

stuff."

I also talked to Williams after the Sept. 13 Tenant Services meeting about the residents' concerns about their rehabbed units.

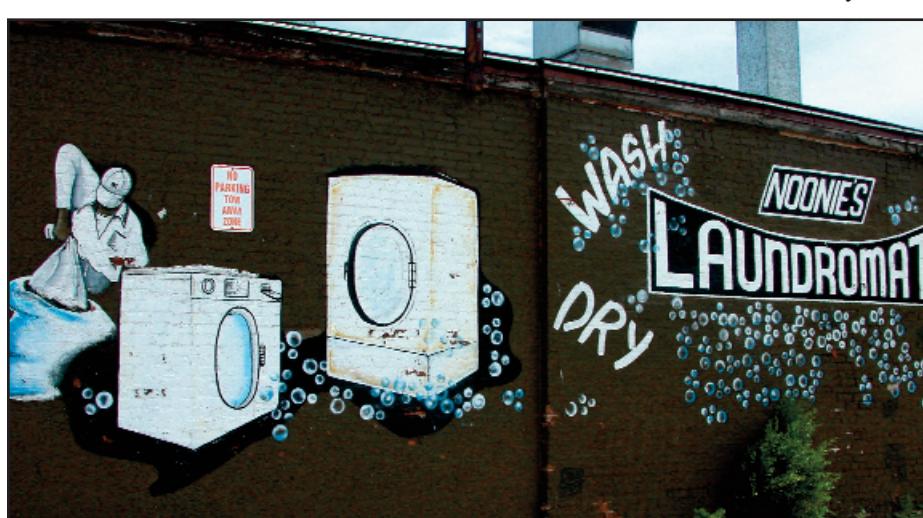
Williams said no one informed her of any problems with their newly rehabbed units after moving in. She added that she had done "a walk through" of rehabbed units with many residents before they moved in.

If anything was wrong with the unit, Williams said the residents usually waited until workers came back and fixed the apartment.

Referring to the woman whose counter top was held down with bricks, Williams said, "But I didn't see anything like that. So, if something was wrong with her apartment, she shouldn't have even accepted that apartment when she moved in."

I also told Williams about the door that appeared to me to be improperly installed. It was off the sliding hinges in one woman's rehabbed apartment.

Williams said she believed it, "but it wasn't no major



This long-closed building, located in the midst of the CHA's Altgeld Gardens public housing complex on the far South Side, continues to remain dormant. It was once home to a grocery store and Noomie's Laundromat for residents' use. Residents are now being bused at the property management's expense to far distant laundromats to do their families' washing.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Transforming CHA

Guard Recklessly Shoots CHA Youth

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

Amid sizzling weather on May 30, tempers were blazing between tenants of the Chicago Housing Authority's LeClaire Courts complex and the development's security guards. A confrontation between residents and security guards left 12-year-old Marcus Finley shot and wounded.

According to dozens of witnesses to the incident, the security guard aimlessly fired his weapon into a crowd of people during a squabble with a few of the residents at the public housing site on the far Southwest Side.

According to residents, the shooting later resulted in several protests for the dismissal of the guard as well as for the security firm hired to serve and protect the residents and management.

Eyewitness accounts of the event said the day began with children playing a game, throwing buckets of ice cold water on each other trying to keep cool.

The guard shot the youth after shooting into a crowd of people that had gathered around him after he allegedly beat up three other people, according to onlookers at the scene.

"I saw the whole thing from beginning to end," Kevin Sutton told **Residents' Journal** at the public housing complex later that day.

According to Sutton, the incident occurred when 14-year-old Bianca McGee and another youth threw water on the security guard who shot Finley.

"He slammed that baby's face down to the pavement," said Sutton, a longtime resident of LeClaire Courts. The guard allegedly grabbed McGee, who was closest to him, and began "manhandling" her, Sutton said.

McGee's 20-year-old sister, Vanity McGee, told **RJ** the next day, after she was released from jail, that she got involved in the fight when she saw the security guard pushing her younger sister. Next, a crowd formed around the fight.

Then, someone broke a window of the security guard's car, which was nearby. The noise from the shattered glass made the guard stop fighting with the women. He grabbed his revolver and shot once in the air, and the crowd began to disperse, according to eyewitnesses.

"The guard pulled out a revolver," said one LeClaire Courts resident who asked to remain anonymous. "He shot one time into the air."

Then the guard lowered his gun and shot three more times into the crowd of children that was directly across from him, leaving young Finley shot in the arm and laying on the ground bleeding.

The unnamed security guard formerly worked for First Security, a firm hired by the PM 1, the private contractor which manages LeClaire Courts. The guard claimed to have accidentally shot the young man, according to Chicago Housing Authority officials.

"The guard was shot at and he returned fire, accidentally shooting the young man," said CHA spokesperson Derek Hill on a local televised news broadcast.

Hill's account of the incident was disputed, however, by LeClaire Court residents at the time that **RJ** interviewed the residents.



14-year-old Briannca McGee (pictured with hand to her face) was a victim of a beating by the security guard who later shot another youth at the CHA LeClaire Courts public housing complex on May 30. Here, she stands with other LeClaire Courts residents after a protest and rally outside the on-site private security company's office where the security officer was being questioned, as Chicago police officers stand guard.

Photo by Beauty Turner

The day after the incident, at 1 p.m., residents, activists, news reporters and police officers gathered in front of the security firm's office in LeClaire Courts, protesting the shooting of young Finley.

"The guard that shot that little baby is in there working," Paul McKinley, a member of Voices Of The Ex-Offenders (V.O.T.E), said over a bull horn. "We want this security firm out of this development," proclaimed community activist Fred Hampton Jr., chairman of Prisoners of Conscience Committee.

During the day's protest, Mark Carter, another member of V.O.T.E, said over a bull horn. "Let's whip the master slave," Carter added, directing the comment to CHA spokesperson Hill.

"He doesn't like Black people, nor does Terry Peterson," Carter said, referring to CHA CEO Peterson and Hill, both of whom are African-American men.

During the protest, Finley's sister, Iesha Finley, spoke about her concerns with her brother's condition. She said her brother was being treated for the gunshot wound at an area hospital.

"What about my brother?" Iesha Finley asked. "He didn't do anything, and he has to be hospitalized with a bullet still in his arm from an incompetent security guard's action," she said over a megaphone to the crowd of people gathered at the site.

Willie "JR" Fleming, an activist and organizer from the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, also poked fun at Hill during the protest.

"Hill wants to apologize about that lie he told on television last night, right Hill?" Fleming said over the megaphone.

Hill seemed to take the verbal attacks in stride and just smirked. Hill told **RJ** a few days later that two other guards other than the security guard who shot Finley had been hurt by Vanity McGee.

McGee allegedly hit them with a baseball bat, breaking the hand of one of the guards "in four different places," Hill said.

RJ asked Hill which hospital the injured guards were taken to confirm his report and try to talk to the guards about the shooting.

But Hill declined to tell **RJ** the location. Two days later on June 2, mayoral candidate Bill "Dock" Walls led a group of protesters to Mayor Richard M. Daley's office on the 5th floor of City Hall to ask that the security guard's actions and the security firm be investigated. Walls also wanted the mayor to terminate First Security's CHA contract.

"There are questionable connections to who this company that works in LeClaire Courts is attached to. It is allegedly connected to a CHA official as well as to this office," Walls said, alluding to the rumors about the mayor's brother's insurance company's dealings with CHA private contractors.

"The residents in LeClaire Courts fear for their safety. They want this security firm out of their development," Walls said.

In the three years that they have been at the public housing site, the private security company was allegedly linked to two other shootings of LeClaire Courts residents, according to the CHA tenants at the City Hall protest.

"What type of a message is CHA sending? Open season on poor black folks? Do the right thing," Walls said.

"The Mayor is not here but I will give him the letter and other materials that you gave to me to give him," said Lance T. Lewis, assistant press secretary to the mayor.

CHA spokesperson Hill later told **RJ** over the phone that the security guard had been fired.

"He is no longer working for CHA," Hill said.

CONDOLENCES

Condolences to family members of **We The People Media** board member Izora Davis who passed away in late August. Regards to **RJ** senior reporter Jacqueline Thompson on the loss of her nephew Malachi Thompson and also to CHA Robert Taylor Homes (B) Local Advisory President Mildred Dennis on the loss of her husband, who both passed away in July. Condolences also to the family of Terry Russo, local advisory council president for the Lathrop Homes, on his death in early October.



On the Front Lines



Is the Justice System Fair?

by Sheena Rhodes

I think the police department is extremely unfair in many situations and circumstances. One of the reasons why I am making this comment is because of the way I was treated by a group of police officers when I called them for help in August.

I was in a situation where I was attacked by a guy who lives in my building that I had no dealings with. This young man vandalized my car, and when I approached him about the matter, he started fighting with me, physically attacking me. When I called the police and told them I wanted to make a complaint against the guy, they told me that if I pressed charges, he would also have the right to press charges against me since it was a "mutual fight," in their words, even though I was only defending myself.

They told me that if I wanted him arrested, I could be arrested too and when the case went to court, it would probably be dropped. But I saw a similar situation happen a week later and only one party involved went to jail.

I think many police officers really don't care, especially when it's Black on Black crime. I say this because this guy threatened my family and said he was going to kill my entire family, and a police officer was actually standing right there and heard this young man make this comment and did absolutely nothing about it. The police act as if they don't care and they wait for something seri-

ous to happen before they take action.

I interviewed other Chicagoans at random about their experiences with police officers.

James Wright, 27, a stock worker, said, "I am glad you're writing about this issue because I don't think it's talked about and discussed enough. I was in a situation where the police tried to set me up. One of the officers tried to put some drugs in my pocket and stick me with the charges. But I screamed loud and got everyone's attention, telling them the police were trying to put some drugs on me and I yelled the exact hand the officer had it in. The cop dropped it and stepped on it and said that I was lying. But I'm just glad that I wasn't stuck with the case they were trying to put on me."

That's an interesting story; it's sad when you can't trust the authorities who are supposed to be protecting and serving you. Something needs to be done about these situations because if you let the small problems go by they only get bigger.

A 20-year-old woman working at a currency exchange who asked that her name not be used said, "I was treated unfairly by a couple of officers, something similar to your story. I was jumped by two girls and I was defending myself. I busted a girl's head on the concrete but it wasn't my fault. The girls came up to me and jumped me and I had no other choice or they could have possibly killed me or injured me very badly. The police officers took me to jail and charged me with a battery. There was no justice in the situation."

With this kind of justice system, some problems are just left unsolved and many are solved unfairly. Sometimes you have to go further than the police department to get justice. You have to make a complaint about

the police or go to the state's attorney's office for better results.

People have also had decent experiences with police.

Tommy Jackson, a 30-year-old real estate agent in Naperville, said, "For the most part, I think that the justice system is pretty fair. Don't get me wrong: You do have a few people that don't go by the rules but I think the number of fair people outweighs the unfair ones. I've personally never had a problem with the police department or anything so I really can't say they're unfair. Every time I had anything to do with them, justice was served."

Well, it's good to know that justice is served in some situations. It's true that justice is served and problems are solved in many situations and some officers do take their jobs seriously and go by the rule book. We need more people like that.

John Stockworth, a 24-year-old cashier, said, "I was in a situation where I was sitting in my car smoking a cigarette getting some fresh air in front of my house. The police rolled up to my car and they checked my plates and my license and said that they were suspended and I was under arrest for driving with a suspended license. I tried to explain to the officers that I wasn't driving but they didn't want to listen. They just took me to jail and charged me and I had to pay a fine. I knew it wasn't fair because they didn't even see me driving. They just wanted to charge me with something."

Some people get the short end of the stick like that. It's a good idea to isolate yourself from all wrongdoing but even so, you can get caught up in things.

That's why we need an improved and fair justice system.

A Letter for My Sister

by Chantell Suggs

From the Chicago Sun-Times, April 10, 2006 edition under the headline: "Cops: Woman hid heroin in crib." Bond was set at \$20,000 Sunday for a woman accused of hiding hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of heroin in a baby's crib. Judge Colleen Hyland set the bond for Victoria Pittmon, who was charged with possession of a controlled substance. At 8:45 p.m. Saturday, police saw Pittmon handing a man a foil packet in exchange for money in the 600 block of North Laramie, said Assistant Cook County State's Attorney Anthony Zecchin. When police confronted Pittmon, she told them she was only holding the packets for someone else, and she said there were more packets inside her residence, in her baby's crib, Zecchin said. Police went inside the Laramie residence and found a large plastic bag with 39 smaller plastic bags inside, Zecchin said. In those plastic bags were a total of 472 packets of heroin, Zecchin said. It's unclear whether there was a baby in the crib at the time.

Ethically speaking, the world is where we were positioned and life is not what we make it but what we take delivery of. If our voices really matter in society, then why is this world so messed up? Just as soon as you think things are improving, something else awful happens.

I do believe some choices you make on your own are things we have to deal with for the rest of our life. From the beginning of time, life has never been easy for blacks, women, single parents and poor people. It's true the decision you made was stupid. But as a mother, we

will do anything for our offspring. If no one else understands, I do. If no one else cares, I do. I know how hard it is. We are sisters of the same kind. Life is a struggle but you can't let it get the best of you. Life is similar to a game you just got to play to win. I know life has never been a silver spoon for us and this hurts so bad to see my loved one, my girl, my friend and my sister behind bars for one bad decision. I love you. We miss you. You will beat this through God's grace.

Now it's true you were wrong. Your decision was bad, I agree. But the police and media add their own twist. The police are trying to cover themselves for entering their house without a warrant and the papers are trying to make a juicy story. Victoria, I wish you could have made a smarter choice, but it's done and over. The only thing I can do is let the world understand and try to see where you were coming from.

What is it like for a young black woman with a child and another one on the way to do? No job. Going to interview to interview and never getting a call back. Trying to make a living for one and finding out you have another on the way when you're struggling with the first child. Feeling like there is no hope and you don't know what to do. The load is getting heavy and you don't know what to do. Because it's always "mother's baby, papa's maybe."

What do you do when you are in need of money? Not thinking about the harm you're putting yourself in and others in. Just thinking about what you can do with a little extra change. But that fast money is ghastly money. Now all this is on you and you were just holding a package for a so-called friend who is nowhere to be found, no kind of friend because a real friend wouldn't let a friend take the weight for something like this.

Jezebel

Searching for some heaven getting hell on up trying find some one to love her but, got now she got a baby

went in to the system the system turns away, it's a lonely night in a manly world, trying to make some extra money now you locked up, with another bay on the way...to be a strong woman you will have to struggle and you will see because it a lonely night in this cold world, keep your head above the water, it a lonely night trying to find your self, but sis, keep your head up because you can do it.

Urban Youth International Journalism Program

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Ethan Michaeli

Youth Instructor
Kari Lydersen

Participants

Dajanay Hunter, Sheena Rhodes, Chantell Suggs, Jovan Gathings, Ebony Williams, Terrance Jackson, Keith Tyrus, Adam Jones, Romeal Stephens, Kandice Black, Alicea Burton, Ariean Fox, Blake Boyd, Jamal Sangster, Jarell Rogers, Latrez McDade, Iesha Hughes, Chris Anderson, Dominique Benson, Jawan Tyler, Tracy Brandon, Jose Soto, Adam Rios, Roberto Del Toro, Twanda White

Improving Your School?

by Dajanay Hunter

As a student at Paul Robeson High School, I think students should start coming to school more often. I think there would be better attendance if the academic process was more interesting. Instead of teachers just put-

ting work on the board, they should teach the work to students. Ditching class is popular and students think it is cool, so they stop the learning process. If there were better guards or controls on school doors, students would have to stay in school all day.

Many students just don't go to school because they think the street is more important. One way to improve on that situation would be to have rules that kids can't be seen on the street during school hours. You know they don't want to stay at home, so instead they will go to school. Maybe if there were more activities after school and during school that were interesting, more students

would want to come.

Dominique Benson, 15, a student at Robeson, said that parents should get involved by making sure their children are going to school when they leave home.

"Nowadays, parents are just being their children's friends and not worrying about what they need but what they want," she said. "Maybe if for once a parent sat down and asked a child how was school and what did you learn, that could be very helpful."

I think students need to focus on the important things in life. If you don't have an education, you have nothing.

Stopping Drug Dealers

by Terrance Jackson

I still don't understand why drug dealers sell drugs. Maybe they need some quick cash in their pocket. Or maybe someone forced them to do it. But I don't understand why they want to harm our community. By them doing what they do, they are setting a bad example for the young people in the community.

Now me, living in a community in Englewood where these corrupt activities happen, I know the reason many young people are standing out on the street corner is that they see older people doing it, so they think it's cool for them to do it too. We need to crack down on these dope boys, another name for young dealers.

I had a discussion with "PJ," one of the dope boys from the block who didn't want his full name used. I asked him why he sells drugs. He said that is the only way he could make a living on the streets. I asked why he couldn't get a job. He said, "I've got too many felonies." So I guess that's why people sell drugs, because they feel like they want to succeed in life and that's the only way.

When I interviewed "Lil D," another young boy

outside, it was a different story. I asked him why he sells drugs. He said, "Man, I'm just trying to fit in with the guys." He said selling drugs makes him who he is, which is a cool person. I asked him how does selling drugs make you cool. He said, "Because all the people I know around the neighborhood who are cool mostly sell drugs."

I still don't know why people sell drugs. Maybe it is because they feel that no one loves them. Maybe because they think it is cool. But I feel if the older people stop setting a bad example, then we would have a better community. Or maybe if we had more activities in the community, we could keep the young people out of the streets and give them something to do. We need to help young people head in the right direction.

Revisiting the Congress Hotel Strike

by Keyonna James

On July 18, 2005, I interviewed Jose Albarado,

a member of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (H.E.R.E.) Union Local 1. Jose Albarado was a former worker at the Congress Hotel located at Congress and Michigan avenues. When I interviewed him, he said that he had been on strike for two years.

The reason he chose to go on strike is because the Congress Hotel cut many people's pay and benefits. When Albarado first started his strike at the Congress Hotel, he walked in front of the hotel with a sign seven days a week and 12 months a year. Last summer, he walked in front of the hotel five days a week for five hours. Many of Albarado's co-workers were angry about

the situation. They felt that the company didn't want to pay. Ninety-five percent of Albarado's co-workers went to work for other hotels where they were willing to pay more.

Albarado was working at the Congress Hotel for four years before he went on strike. He said that before going on strike, he and other workers with the union asked the company if they wanted to agree with the pay and benefits or fight. The company said fight. When I first walked up to the Congress Hotel, there were three people marching with signs. The strikers seemed to be very determined.

I said, "Imagine that you are the appropriate age to drive. What would you do if gas was \$5 to 6 a gallon?"

He said, "If gas costs that much, which it probably will, I'd just buy an electric car and save money."

I asked why he thinks gas prices are so high. "First of all, gas prices are so high because gas is not an unlimited resource, nor is it renewable," he said. "It's bound to run out sooner or later. Also it's so high because we are at war with the countries with substantial amounts of gas."

Increasing Prices

by Adam Jones

Over the years, gas prices have increased. Do you know how I feel about that? It's infuriating. By the time I'll be able to drive, gas will probably be \$6 a gallon

or more! I saw and heard that gas in L.A. is \$4 a gallon to \$4.50 per gallon. Every resource that we have is increasing in price. Bus rides are increasing. Now it costs \$2 for the bus in Chicago, when it used to be \$1.50. People are driving more SUVs and trucks, so they will pay even more for gas. It will cost a fortune to fill up the tank. I interviewed Jamal Sangster, 14, about gas prices. I asked how it makes him feel.

"It makes me afraid of how things are going to be when I get older, and have to provide for a family," he said.



Other 2006 News Bulletin

In left photo, U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-IL, at podium) talks to the press in late August, about how the millions of dollars cutback proposed by President George W. Bush and members of the U. S. Congress in the 2007 federal budget for the federal Medicaid program, would weaken nation wide school-based health programs. Included in the photo with him are U. S. Sen. Richard Durbin, (D-IL) (front right), officials of the Chicago Public School and Illinois school superintendents. In the right photo, Illinois state and federal officials gathered together at the Metropolitan Apostolic Community Church to pay tribute to State Rep. Lovana S. "Lou" Jones who passed away this May.

Photos by Mary C. Johns

Starkesia Reed, A Real Angel

by Latrez McDade

It was a day I will never forget. It was March 3, 2006, a Friday morning at around 10 am. I was on my way to lunch at school and I got a call from Kenesha Anderson. She said, "I have some bad news to tell you." I knew it was something because my heart stopped. In the lowest voice, she said, "Starkesia died." I said, "What happened? Oh my god!"

She said Starkesia got shot in the head. Next thing I know, things started to rush to my head, my stomach hurt, and my feelings were really hurt. I started to walk around the school, I was so shook up. Finally, I just went to the lunchroom and sat there but didn't eat anything. I called Kenesha back so she could finish telling me what happened.

She said there was a drive-by on Starkesia's block. 'Star,' as I called her, was getting ready to leave for school and looking out the window waiting on two other friends to walk to school with her. Someone just started shooting and Star got caught directly in the middle of her forehead. Before she could hit the floor, her big sister

Armica caught her in her arms. Star died instantly in her sister's arms.

For the rest of the day in school, I couldn't concentrate and I couldn't do anything. Finally it was time to go home. I called almost everyone I knew, and they all told me the same thing. Most people I knew were at Star's house but for some reason I didn't go over there. I went to my grandma's and stayed there a while. While I was sitting on the living room floor, the news came on and I saw it all. They showed people crying and they showed them bringing her body out on a stretcher. When I saw that, my heart really started to hurt and I laid down for a while.

The next day, I went to buy a spray-painted shirt for the funeral. I bought a button-up Michael Jordan shirt with white, black, yellow and gray stripes on it, and the collar of the shirt said in black letters, "RIP Star." That was it for the day.

On the morning of the funeral, we left early because we knew there would be a lot of people there. When we finally saw the funeral home, I got this weird feeling in my stomach and throat and I couldn't stop shaking. When we sat down, I started to sweat in a way I never have in my life. It was packed with students and even all the teachers. It got real silent and next thing I know, there was a white and pink casket rolling right by me.

Then it was time to view the body. I got a good long look at her. She looked so nice but different. They did her up real nice. She had her nails done and with her little

curls in her head and an all-white gown on, she was a real angel.

Throughout the week, I just kept finding myself crying. To be honest with you, I'm crying right now! March 25, 2006, 1:21 a.m. But this all goes to show this can happen to anyone. I am talking about an intelligent, smart honor student who lived under the word of God.

But you know things happen for a reason. Maybe Star died to change the way the Englewood community thinks. Maybe it was to turn the shooter's life in another direction. I will never know but it does serve a purpose. I will tell you one thing, it sure did change the way I think.

I'm starting to realize now a lot of things I never realized about her. She really was a true angel, so beautiful and I will never forget all the memories. I regret that there were days I would ignore her for whatever reason and I regret not walking to her house with her when she would ask me to. I will never forget the little things she used to do with her eyebrows. I remember she would call me "Boosky" and I would call her "Short stop." She always had a smile on her face and that little old cute voice that's loud when she wanted it to be. I could go on and on. I tell you one thing, I can't wait to see Starkesia Marie Reed again. When that time comes, I'll hear her sweet old laugh again and see that cute smile. Until that time, rest in peace Starkesia Marie Reed. Thank you for being a part of my life.

Car Culture

by Chantell Suggs

Going into an exhibit on "Chicago Car Culture" at the Chicago Cultural Center, I did not know much about the history of cars in Chicago. It started with a description about how Chicago was the home of the high-rise parking garage. There were many of these in the Chicago area. One of the most famous was the LaSalle Garage, which opened in 1918 and was designed by the architects Holabird and Roche at 25 W. Washington.

These garages were the most popular spot to park your car. LaSalle had space for 1,000 cars. It was the most talked about hot spot for parking in the city. From looking at all the photos and old newspaper articles about parking

garages, I saw how much cheaper it was to park then. 10 hours was less than 75 cents and 5 cents for each hour!

Once automobiles became more affordable in the 1900s, residents soon had side-by-side garages at their homes in Chicago. Cars were made to be able to be left outside a long time. More people built their own garages.

The "garlow" was a popular new idea built around 80th Street and 82nd Street on the South Side. It was a combination of the words bungalow and garage created by Richard Cramer. The first "garlow" was created in 1922. It was meant to be a garage that someone could live in while they saved money to build a house; however, most people never ended up building the houses and just lived in the garages.

I also learned a lot about Preston Tucker. He had a dream of creating a new kind of car, which he did after 15 years of testing. He produced the first completely new

car to be made in 50 years, called the "Tucker 48." He is among the group of car executives most honored in Chicago history in the automotive industry.

The old Yellow Cab Company was started in 1907 in Chicago by John D. Hertz. He wanted the cabs to be bright yellow to attract attention. This became so popular that yellow cabs became nationwide. His cabs were convenient and affordable. He also established his own taxi cab factory on the Northwest Side, and he is also known as the father of international rental car business Hertz, started in 1924.

From the exhibit, I learned a lot about the history of cars and the starts of different popular inventions, and about the people who created these things we rely so heavily on today. "Chicago Car Culture" was at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, in the Chicago Rooms gallery through the end of August.

Chicago Talent

by Chantell Suggs

A lot of great talent has come out of Chicago. Many artists from Chicago have really accomplished a lot of amazing things in music, acting, writing and poetry. Musicians like R. Kelly, a Grammy-award winner and one of the best R&B singers; Kanye West, a producer-rapper and also a Grammy winner; and Twista, one of the fastest rappers in the world; and Common, Da Brat, Bump J, Shawna, 3 Piece, Psycho Drama, T-Rilla and many more. As for actors, Larenz Tate is from Chicago and he is doing a great job holding it down for the Chi.

There is also so much unsigned talent in Chicago. I believe they have the best talent because they don't have the fame, so they do what they do because they love it. They have the passion for the art. I interviewed a few Chicago rappers and other artists who are really talented and doing big things to try to make it in the music business.

Bone (Keene Rise) is a 26-year-old Chicago rapper who has been rapping since the age of 15. He believes what makes him unique is his different aspect of looking at negative and positive views of everything and always challenging. He said, "Look for my album this summer. My inspiration is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

Trajk is a 24-year-old rapper who's been into rapping for about 12 years. "In the beginning, it was hard to earn a living being an artist. But in the end, it will all

pay off," he said. "Also my album ('Produce of the Ghetto') is in stores now so please go pick up the album and support me. My inspiration is my family and my n—z."

Over-Dose is a 24-year-old, up-and-coming rapper. He has been involved with music since 1986. "I just picked up my microphone and that was it, as far as I can remember," he said. "My inspiration is my mother because she has always been a hard worker who motivated me."

Big Dawg is a 25-year-old hip hop artist who has been doing music since 1992. His brother introduced him to hip hop. "It's hard earning a living as an artist because right now, I just do it for free and the love of the game," he said. "My ambition to make it is very aggressive and I feel like I have a lot to lose if I don't make it. The industry has a lack of creativity and a lot of artists take it for granted. My inspiration is my daughter and my group. I am different because I have love for the art and loyalty to my team."

2-Way is a group with two young ladies named Ebony and Yorel who were featured in *RJ*. They picked their name because they rap and also sing and dance and write their own music. "What does it really take to get in the industry?" Ebony asked in a story she wrote for *RJ* called "Unsigned Talent." Her article shows how much talent is out there that just needs to be heard.

Hip hop and rap music really got started in Chicago along with several other major U.S. cities. It has been reported that the first synthesis of self-conscious poetry and music can be traced to the Black Nationalist

Last Poets. In the early days, rap was very focused on the deejay. They are the ones who make music popular and get it popping in the clubs.

Corey Averhart is a 27-year-old deejay I interviewed. He said, "I have been interested in what I do since I was 15 years old. Whenever we would go to parties, most of the time I would be trying to see what the deejay was doing, so it was something I was always interested in. Hell yeah, it's hard to earn a living as an artist because deejaying doesn't have financial benefits. My inspiration is my mother period. She is everything to me. I am different from others because I speak the truth and I rock the party."

I also interviewed Cheryl Corley, who has been a reporter for National Public Radio since college. She has and still is making great achievements. She is now doing a lot of reporting from New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. As a journalist, she is also an artist who is bringing pride to Chicago.

Entertaining is more than writing words or reading lines on paper. It is about telling a story and making people think. Rappers and poets are not just saying a lot of words that sound good but making a statement and getting a point across. A true artist has to feel what they spit to make listeners understand.

Many great artists are out there and are not getting the recognition they deserve. Everyone wants to earn a good living but a real artist is in it for the passion. I believe the saying that if you work hard for things, it will pay off in the end. Hopefully, this will be true for the great Chicago artists I interviewed.

A Questionable Connection Update

by Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

Terry Peterson was the head of the Chicago Housing Authority until earlier this year. Now he is the manager of Mayor Richard M. Daley's campaign for reelection.

But in the months preceding Peterson's departure from the helm of the CHA, a ward organization closely linked to him saw a sharp drop in contributions.

The 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in just \$12,000 in itemized contributions in the first six months of 2006, according to records filed with the Illinois Board of Election Commissioners.

That was far less than any other comparable period since the 17th Ward Organization was reconstituted. Contributions to the 17th Ward began a sharp decline after *Residents' Journal* and the Better Government Association published the results of an 8-month investigation into the connections between the ward organization and contractors to the Chicago Housing Authority.

Peterson was alderman of the 17th Ward from 1997 to May 2000, when he stepped down to become head of the CHA.

In an Aug. 30 press conference with Mayor Richard Daley and CHA Board Chairman Sharon Gist Gilliam, Peterson announced that he would resign from the CHA by the end of September after six years on the job. Peterson thanked Daley, Gist Gilliam and Michael Pfleger, a Catholic priest based on the South Side whom Peterson considers his mentor.

Daley said that Gist Gilliam would stand in as CEO until a permanent replacement could be found.

"We're building lives and building communities and, as I say it, we're building souls," Daley told the City Hall press corps.

Peterson became involved with Daley's campaign shortly after he left CHA and currently is the Mayor's campaign manager, according to campaign officials.

In 2004, *Residents' Journal* and BGA launched an 8-month investigation of possible connections between CHA contractors and the 17th Ward Democratic Organization. Contributions to the 17th Ward from CHA contractors inspired the investigation because the 17th Ward contains no public housing developments, redevelopment sites or other CHA initiatives.

The investigation, published in April 2005 as "A Questionable Connection," found 63 companies who

donated to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization and also received contracts from CHA.

From 2001 to 2004, the 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in a total of \$673,333.05, of which \$225,318.32 – 33.46 percent – came from contractors at the CHA.

Many companies gave to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization just before or just after they were awarded contracts from the CHA.

One firm gave a \$2,500 donation to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization the same day the firm was awarded a construction contract worth \$3,292,095.

In March 2006, *Residents' Journal* published "A Questionable Connection 2."

In that report, the investigative team found that over 60 percent of the itemized individual contributions to the

On Dec. 7, 2006, CDM issued a press release stating that the CHA selected CDM to "guide the removal of environmental impairments from the grounds" of the Cabrini-Green development and perform other duties.

Neither Robin Black nor other CDM officials returned calls from *Residents' Journal* asking if there was a connection between the award of the contract and the donations to the 17th Ward.

At least two of the individual contributors to the 17th Ward in the first six months of 2006 were CHA employees. Adrienne Minley, chief of staff at CHA, donated \$600 to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization on March 14. David Moore, listed as a manager at CHA, gave \$1,000 to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization on the same day.

In response to a *Residents' Journal* inquiry, CHA spokesperson Derrick Hill declined to comment on

"A Questionable Connection" is an ongoing investigation conducted by the Residents' Journal and the Better Government Association. Research, interviews, reporting and legal analysis by RJ staff Ethan Michaeli, Mary C. Johns, Beauty Turner and BGA staff Jay Stewart and Dan Sprehe

17th Ward Democratic Organization in 2005 came from CHA contractors and related sources, according to a comparison of records filed with the Illinois Board of Election Commissioners with lists of CHA contractors.

"A Questionable Connection 2" also found that the overall total of contributions to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization dropped dramatically in 2005 as compared with previous years after three straight years of increasing totals.

In the second one-half of 2005, for example, the ward organization took in \$35,550. In the same period of 2004, the 17th Ward received \$160,383.33. In the same period of 2003, the ward organization received \$140,830.

For this report, the *Residents' Journal*/BGA investigative team analyzed the latest available campaign contributions to the 17th Ward, for the period from Jan. 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006. Of the \$12,000 given to the 17th Ward in that time, only \$450 came from a corporate donor, Camp Dresser and McKee (CDM), a consulting, engineering and operations firm. CDM official Robin Black gave CDM another \$500.

Both the company's contributions and Black's donation were made on the same date, March 14, 2006. CDM received a contract from CHA worth \$750,000 on Jan. 1, 2006.

whether there was a connection between the CHA officials' employment and their contributions to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization.

Other contributors to the 17th Ward included individuals with long connections to the CHA.

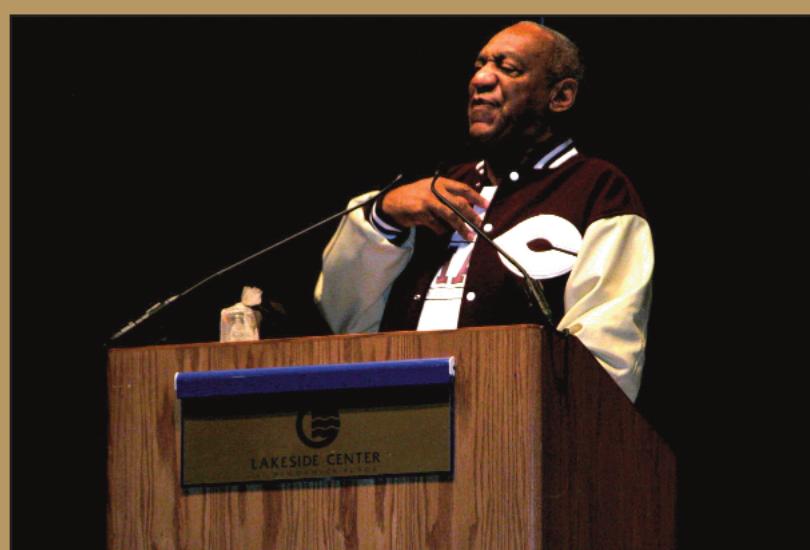
John Roberson gave \$1,000 to the 17th ward on March 14. Roberson is a former CHA employee who later became commissioner of buildings, commissioner of sewers and commissioner of aviation.

Currently, Robeson is executive director of the Target Group, which is listed by CHA as a "partner" on the agency's web site.

Robeson did not return *Residents' Journal*'s calls before press deadline.

R E S I D E N T S , J o u r n a l

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Actor/Comedian Bill Cosby talking to approximately 10,000 men of all ages about various issues facing men today, including the importance of education during the "Just for Men" segment of the two-day Chicago Public Schools Parenting Conference on Dec. 6, 2006 at McCormick Place Lakeside Center.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Last Name	First Name	
Title		
Organization		
Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Work Phone	Fax	

Illegal Immigration: Cries for Justice

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Around town and around the nation, many voices have been crying out for justice regarding the issues of illegal immigration.

At a massive march on May 1 in Chicago, hundreds of thousands of undocumented illegal aliens and their advocates marched and rallied demanding labor and civil rights, as well as to convince U.S. congressional leaders to give them amnesty for their illegal entries into America.

RJ attended the march and interviewed both leaders and marchers. Later, RJ also attended a rally held by a group of ex-offenders and others who protested against the legalization of the illegal immigrants.

Undocumented Workers and their Advocates for Civil Rights

"We didn't come to the United States for a vacation. We come here to work," a Hispanic man shouted out on a megaphone, to the massive crowd of illegal immigrants and their advocates holding signs, and symbols for their cause at the historical event.

During the Chicago rally in Union Park, the marchers and their advocates called for "immigration reform with dignity and justice." They also called for family reunifications, a pathway to citizenship, equal opportunity in education and equal opportunity of labor rights for everyone, including the estimated 12 million undocumented workers in the country.

"Almost ten years I'm suffering away from my children. I've been working, paying the taxes. I'm working and doing everything as Americans....I'm waiting in this country for nine years. And I'm still waiting for them to bring my children. So, we need justice. We need justice today," declared Arjuna Vallabhaneni, a lady from India seeking asylum since 1997. Vallabhaneni said she fled from her native land after being abused by her husband.

Roxanne Delgado, a young Mexican American protester, had this to say to *Residents' Journal* at the rally:

"I'm here because people have rights just like everyone else. I'm a citizen. My mother came here illegally, so did my father, so that's why I'm here supporting for my people. These are my people and I think it's more than immigrants. I think immigrants are being used as scapegoats, and I think that corporations should be held accountable, as well as lobbying should be outlawed. So, it's really a government thing, not really an immigrant thing. I think they pick on immigrants and women on welfare for the reasons that are bigger than us. So, we're the easiest to pick on, so they pick on us," she said.

Yolanda Delgado, Roxanne's mother, who became an American citizen "about six years ago," said she agreed with the protesters' demands because they could help people like her father, who migrated to the country with her and her siblings more than 65 years ago.

"Well, I'm all for it because my father came here as a guest worker back in 1940 and he brought us here. So, I'm all for it," she proclaimed.

A Mexican-born protester from Texas, who came to town for a cousin's wedding, told RJ during the rally in the park that he and his family came across the border for solely employment purposes: "They want to treat us like criminals and we're not criminals. We come to work...Let us come in to work. That's it," he softly said.



These Mexican undocumented workers were among many other illegal immigrants who demanded better treatment from the U.S. government and their employers during a rally for immigration reform in Union Park on May 1.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Curly Cohen, a person of European descent working with Affordable Power to the People, disagreed with the proposal to build a wall or fence along the Mexican border.

"We're human beings," Cohen said. "First they tear down the Berlin Wall and everybody was for it, and now they want to build one? What kind of place is this? I think America should get on the justice track."

Shem Bad was protesting the U.S. House of Representatives' recent passage of a bill making it a federal crime to offer assistance or services to illegal immigrants.

Bad, an educator with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, said he didn't want to go to jail for doing his job helping students.

Bad, who is the progeny of an illegal Chinese immigrant, added that people need to stop defining an American "by skin color or by where they were born or by what language they speak." He also added that the country should

I think immigrants are being used as scapegoats... So, it's really a government thing, not really an immigrant thing....they pick on immigrants and women on welfare for the reasons that are bigger than us.

-Roxanne Delgado, a young Mexican American protester at the May 1st rally in Union Park on immigration reform

define citizenship by one's contributions to the nation.

A middle-aged white man who requested to remain anonymous told RJ during the rally that the event was a chance for him to strictly protest against the current U.S. administration.

"I'm protesting because I think that we need to get rid of George W. Bush, because he's dangerous. He lied us into the War with Iraq," the man said. "I protest every day against the Bush regime. I won't stop until he's in jail for the rest of his life."

Eugene Paxton, a 44-year-old African American Chicagoan who was among the marchers, told RJ at the rally that "even though the economy is messed up with them being here illegally...they're human beings just like we are."

"Let them work, and give them a green card. Even though I'm not working, I do work on the side...So, let them work," he added.

One Hispanic male speaker proclaimed over a loudspeaker during the rally, "We also are fighting for this nation...out there in Iraq, losing their lives for this nation," which he suggested legislators should remember in the upcoming elections because "Veterans do vote," he said.

People on both sides of the illegal immigration debate have blamed the North American Free Trade Agreement, enacted into law under the Clinton Administration, for the surge in illegal migration to the nation over the Mexican border.

Jessica Aranda, Executive Director for the Chicago based Latino Union, agreed with that notion during a May phone interview with RJ after the event: "I think a lot of times folks look to blame undocumented folks for bad conditions in the workplace, saying that they're lowering wages.

"But the way that we look at it, and something that hasn't been part of the debate a whole lot, is the fact that NAFTA, when it was passed in the early '90s, displaced so many jobs not only from this country going to South and Central America, but also displaced lots of workers in their own countries and kind of forced them to migrate to the United States,"

she said.

Aranda, whose group works with Chicago day laborers, said about 250 advocacy groups, including churches and other religious institutions, unions and community organizations, took part in organizing the May 1 march and rally.

She added that people from throughout the Midwest took part in the historic event, coming from Chicago and surrounding suburbs such as Elgin and Aurora, and from as far as Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa.

Aranda said about 700,000 people marched in Chicago on May 1. She said many were protesting U.S. House Bill 4437, which "basically would criminalize undocumented immigrants and any group who worked with those folks (if passed)."

In addition to the "lots of Mexican folks" who attended the march and rally, Aranda said that there were legal and illegal immigrants from Guatemala, Poland, Korea, the Palestinian territories, China, and Ireland.

Muslims reportedly joined the day's movement "to demand fairness, dignity and an end to the hypocrisy that ignores illegal immigration when it's convenient but chooses to crack down harshly on it when it's expedient," according to the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago in a document e-mailed to RJ prior to the event.

"This growing movement is no longer just about undocumented laborers. It is about all Americans, whether immigrants or their children and grandchildren," the council stated. The group represents 50 mosques, and Islamic centers, schools, and organizations with a cross-section of over 400,000 Muslim Americans throughout the Chicago area.

The Chicago Minuteman Project & Voices Of The Ex-offenders

On May 11, members of the Chicago Minuteman Project and Voices Of The Ex-offenders (VOTE) held a joint press conference at New Hope Lutheran Church, 64th Street and Washtenaw Avenue, to publicly announce their opposition to the legalization of the millions of undocumented aliens.

(Continue on pg. 16)

Illegal Immigration: Cries for Justice

(Continue from pg. 16)

Rick Biesada, who said he is the cofounder of the one-year-old Chicago Minuteman Project, told **RJ** just before the press conference that his organization "is a citizens-watch group, no different than a neighborhood CAPS program," whose mission he said was "to educate the public about illegal immigration."

Biesada said some of his group's biggest concerns about the illegal immigration debate were, free education for undocumented children, the prospect that many of the illegal aliens may have unchecked diseases, and the inequality of health care treatment between American veterans and some of the illegal immigrants needing medical assistance.

Biesada said that all illegal aliens should be sent back home with their children, and then try to come in the country the proper and lawful way with a Visa.

"The Visa guarantees a background check. It guarantees your health, so you don't come in here with a contagious disease. It guarantees a sponsor so you're not a burden on the American taxpayer. In other words, you won't just come over here and get on the welfare rolls because public funds in this country are meant for American citizens, not for illegal aliens," he said.

Rick Jones, a board member of the Chicago Minuteman Project, said his organization didn't protest against illegal immigration prior to that date because several congressional leaders led him and others to believe that the issue was being handled.

"I think many of us saw the problem brewing," Jones said. "But it kind of takes time for things to tell."

VOTE member Paul McKinley said illegal immigr-

right back to wherever they come from? Naw! You want to send us to the penitentiary and give them our jobs," he said.

McKinley also took offense to Mexican President Vicente Fox's comments last year that Mexicans "are doing the work that not even Blacks want to do in the United States."

"Let's get something straight," McKinley said. "President Fox said that the Mexican community takes jobs that Blacks wouldn't take. First of all, that is offensive and defiantly disrespectful and racist. Second of all, what jobs that poor Black folks won't take if not given a chance by not being discriminated against?" he said.

Oscar Worrill, founder of Concerned Citizens of Chicago, also attended the press conference. Worrill talked about the government's failure to enforce the law, unfair employment practices towards African American citizens, and inequalities in the treatment between African American citizens and working illegal immigrants.

"We have been locked out of the employment industry from the unions to the small businesses in the communities," Worrill said.

"And then, Arabs own and operate small grocery stores and disrespect our people. So, from a Black perspective, and from a human rights perspective, and from a United States Constitution perspective, the government is not enforcing their own law."

We don't want people in our country breaking the law and we'll go to jail if we break the law.

-Paul McKinley, Voices of the Ex-Offenders member

tion was not an ex-offender issue, nor a Minuteman issue, but "a national security issue." He also said American laws should be enforced and that people who break the law should be treated equally.

"We don't want people in our country breaking the law, and we'll go to jail if we break the law," McKinley said. "Don't you think that the law should be equal? This is the question that the media never ask. The media never ask 'Why shouldn't the law be equal?' If they break the law, shouldn't they do the five years instead of just going

RJ asked the groups at the press conference if illegal immigrant women should be separated from their children who are born in America and are therefore citizens.

VOTE member Paul McKinley replied, "Either they allow their children to stay in America because they are American citizens, or either they can take their children and go back to whatever country they come from. But don't try to make a double standard for Black women. When Black women are arrested, they take their children."

Minutes prior to the press conference, Biesada denied that children of illegal immigrants born on American soil were really American citizens, although the U.S. Constitution states that anyone born on American soil is automatically a citizen.

"That's disputable," Biesada said. "That's just a loose interpretation of an activist judge."

RJ asked the press conference attendees how the government would fund the groups' proposal to deport millions of illegal immigrants. One of the Minutemen, who identified himself only as 'Mike,' said, "If they don't have the employers hire them, they'll be forced to go back."

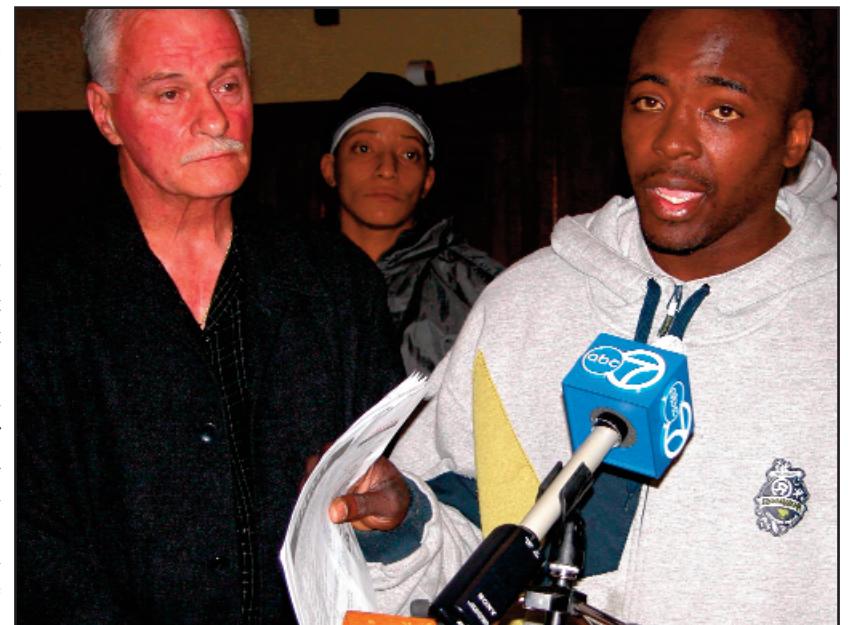
VOTE member Mark Carter expressed disdain for one African American leader who has supported the immigration rights marches.

"It's total disrespectful for Rev. [Jesse] Jackson, and the rest of those people, to come out and support an amnesty for the illegal aliens, and never come out and support amnesty for the ex-offender community," Carter said.

The host of the press conference, the Rev. Anthony Williams, a Libertarian

U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-4) strongly expressing his support for the undocumented workers and other illegal immigrants during the rally at Union Park on May 1, 2006, as U.S. Rep. Rahm Emmanuel (D-5) waits for his turn to speak.

Photo by Mary C. Johns



Voices of the Ex-Offenders member Mark Carter talks to news reporters in early May about his thoughts on the issue of illegal immigration as Rick Biesada of the Minuteman Project (left) and another concerned citizen look on and listen.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

candidate against incumbent Democrat U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-2) and the pastor at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, said that the anti-immigration groups would soon declare a mass march.

"But at the same time, we are not going to preach hate. We're not going to bash anyone," Williams said.

Congressional Backers of Legalization

At the rally in Union Park, U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-4) said he was in favor of legalization of the illegal immigrants and disputed the notion that illegal immigrants don't contribute to the country.

"They say that illegals don't pay taxes," Gutierrez said.

"Today in our Armed Services, there are tens of thousands of immigrants that are not citizens of the United States of America. The first casualties in the conflicts of Iraq were immigrants to this country. They were not citizens and they paid the highest tax that anyone can pay. They paid the tax of their life and their limbs to make this country better," Gutierrez declared to the enthusiastic crowd.

Gutierrez also told the marchers that "the eight million immigrants to this country that are legally registered with our government, we're going to turn them into citizens of the United States."

He encouraged his colleagues in Congress to either "put the resources forward to support" the 12 million undocumented immigrants or to "do the right thing and legalize them."

At the end of his speech, Gutierrez asked, "What would the city of Chicago be without the immigrants that are gathered here today?" He led the marchers in a chant "Today we march. Tomorrow we vote."

U.S. Rep. Rahm Emmanuel (D-5), a former Chicago Housing Authority Board member, and his federal colleague Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-9) also spoke at the rally.

"The debate about immigration was to honor our values, not to dehumanize and not to divide but to unite and to bring a common mission," said Emmanuel. The congressman said he has over 150,000 immigrants in his district. Emmanuel also announced that he was in favor of raising the minimum wage and universal health care for children and working people.

U.S. Sen. Barak Obama (D-IL) encouraged those in attendance seeking American citizenship to become loyal citizens, "where they too can share in supporting the American flag and pledge allegiance to that flag, and make sure that they are fighting on behalf of this country." He also pledged to the illegal immigrants "that we in Washington will continue to hear your voices."

Whose School Is It?

by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

The Little Village High School, 3120 S. Kostner Ave., opened in September 2005 after parents waited years for it to be built as promised by the Board of Education. But after just one semester, the school of four small schools located in the city's Latino community had already become the subject of debate.

According to Jaime De Leon, the new communities program director of the Little Village Community Development Corporation, a number of Latino parents solicited the help of state Sen. Martin Sandoval (D-12) to establish a referendum to re-draw the school's attendance boundaries. The boundaries are east of Pulaski, west of Kenneth near Cicero, north of 16th Street, and south of 33rd Street. The parents, who live in Little Village but outside the attendance boundaries, want their children to attend the beautiful new school, but say that African American students who live in the community of North Lawndale are taking up the space.

De Leon said the state senator was influencing the parents who asked for the referendum: "Because what Sandoval was saying was that kids from outside the community living in the North Lawndale area were attending the school, which wasn't true," De Leon declared.

"Originally, [the referendum] was with the intention of increasing the population of kids in Little Village," De Leon said.

These parents believe the school should "rightfully be for Little Village students because the Little Village community fought for that school."

"That was the sentiment of the spirit of the referendum," he explained.

De Leon said that his organization, along with parents from the school, felt that the referendum "was unjust and ...racist" even though it was worded with seemingly



Little Village High School, 3120 S. Kostner Ave., was a recent subject of debate between Little Village residents living outside the school's boundaries and those living in the predominantly African American North Lawndale community, whose children also attend the school. The school is home to four charter schools.

by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

"Instead, he took it as an issue that he could champion on because he was up for re-election in a couple of months," he said.

Since the referendum, Sandoval has teamed up with state Sen. Rickey Hendon (D-5), an African American who represents much of Chicago's West Side, and together they are trying to expand the boundaries to include both communities, De Leon told **RJ**.

"We contend that there are only so many that this high school can serve. And since this high school is under the small schools model, it's important to keep the school

According to De Leon, the Board of Education and then CPS Board President Michael Scott were well aware of the situation and in full support of the way the school opened.

"All new high schools open up this way. Whenever the Board builds a new high school, they fill it up one grade level at a time," said De Leon. "By 2009, the school will be filled to the capacity."

If the boundaries are expanded, De Leon is concerned that the students that live within the boundaries will have to be given the right to attend the school if they apply before the deadline, which could bring about another overcrowded Chicago public school. Little Village High School was promised to the community in the beginning of 1998, and according to an article published by Catalyst magazine, it is the Chicago's first high school built to accommodate small schools. It is also the city's most expensive new school with a budget of almost \$60 million.

Even though it had been promised, the community still had to fight to get the construction of the school in motion. In 2000 and 2001, De Leon said after a few months of meeting with school officials and getting petitions signed, the Board announced they had no money to build the school, even though the state had allocated \$30 million for the construction. On Mother's Day 2001, the Little Village Community Development Corporation and community residents staged a hunger strike that lasted 19 days. That made the difference.

Today, the new school consists of a Multicultural Arts High School, a World Language High School, a Social Justice School, and Infinity Math, Science, and Technology High School. The small schools share a library, swimming pool, dance studio, childcare center, auditorium, gyms, literacy center and learning labs.

Sen. Sandoval's office said he was unavailable for comment. Sen. Hendon did not respond to calls made by **RJ** by press time.

The referendum created a lot of tension because a lot of black families in the school assumed that people from the neighborhood didn't want them here... It was people outside the boundaries who got the support of the senator who happens to be up for re-election.

-Jaime De Leon, Little Village Community Development Corporation

good intentions.

"What they really meant was 'so that only Latino students from Little Village can attend Little Village High School,'" he said.

The four small schools' student body is currently made up of 70 percent Latinos and 30 percent African-Americans.

"(The referendum) created a lot of tension because a lot of black families in the school assumed that people from the neighborhood didn't want them here. People at the school want the diversity. It was people outside the boundaries who got the support of the senator who happens to be up for re-election."

De Leon said the senator only heard the opinions of the parents outside the boundaries but never sat with the principals and parents of the school to find out how they felt. And that the senator never responded to phone calls made by the committee.

at enrollment and not over-populated the way so many of our high schools are," he said. "That's the philosophy behind small schools.

"When you get more students, if you don't also get more teachers, you're going to be doing a disservice to those students. The school opened in September 2005 with freshmen so that the school could slowly build up its student body. At the end of this year, those freshmen become sophomores and new freshmen come in. And in four years, there will be a full student body. The school needs time to plan some values and culture instead of filling it all up at once," he said.

"Sandoval and Hendon are saying it's a waste to do it that way because what you're doing is not using up the entire school right away. We are going to use the entire school. We're just doing it slowly instead of cramming it full of students from the day it opens. Everything becomes much more chaotic that way," said De Leon.

insufficient evidence. Bates said that "the only evidence [provided in the new trial] was the forced confession to the police."

After release from prison, Bates said that he and his codefendant in the murder case took the police department to court and won their lawsuit for "wrongful imprisonment," which was settled in 1996 for "under \$100,000."

"We only had the wrongful conviction," Bates explained. "The issue of torture was denied to the major-

ity of victims because we had a lack of evidence that we were not able to bring the claim of torture," he said.

The Burge report didn't even scratch the surface of what was really taking place back then. Many advocates against police brutality are wondering why Jon Burge is still receiving a pension after being given a pink slip from his civil service job in 1991 for police misconduct. Flint Taylor, a civil rights lawyer, is investigating this matter, according to Standish Willis, another civil rights attorney.

After reading the Jon Burge report myself, I have come to the conclusion that the struggle in the African American community continues. What do you think?

House of Screams

(Continued from pg. 5)

But Bates said nothing had been done about it.

After two appeals and the completion of his 11-year sentence, Bates won his appeal for a new trial, which resulted in his total conviction being overturned due to

Crystal Clear Views

by Crystal Medina
Editorial
Assistant

I was recently invited to speak at a panel discussion to talk about a scary incident I had with asthma last summer. I almost died because I didn't take care of myself the way I should have.

I spoke at an asthma summit sponsored by the Grand Boulevard Federation on August 22nd and 23rd at Lindblom High School. Other presenters at the event spoke about their concerns about what was triggering asthma attacks in their communities and the reports of increased cases of asthma throughout the city. After hearing the others speak and thinking about my own near-fatal account with asthma, I felt the need to share my story further with the public. I cannot stress enough the importance of taking care of yourself if you are asthmatic.

I have been asthmatic since the age of two. I am no stranger to different medications and have even been hospitalized because of asthma attacks. Last July, I was in Wisconsin visiting someone who lived in a little town of 250 people out in the countryside and forgot my prevention medicine.



Crystal Medina

This type of medicine will help keep your asthma under control and prevent attacks. With the proper use of prevention medicines, asthmatics can feel better and avoid the use of relief medications needed for an actual attack.

As soon as I got to the place where I was staying, I almost immediately felt sick. First, the weather changed and became more humid. Then I over-exerted myself by running around playing with my daughter Jelyssa, her little friend and others.

I started to wheeze and felt shortness of breath. My chest felt tight and I began coughing a lot, which caused me chest pain. This occurred because I didn't have my preventive medicine to stop the attack before it even started, which made it was easier for me to get sick.

I didn't take my symptoms seriously enough to go to the hospital sooner. So, I kept taking my relief medicine thinking I was going to be okay. But since I have the most severe type of asthma, my lungs were

not responding to the relief medicine the way they should have if I had taken my preventive medicine first.

After dealing with what felt like an all-day attack, my fingertips started to change color. They took on a purplish tint and so did my face, according to a friend of mine who was with me at the time. My body temperature dropped and I became really cold. I finally told my friend that I needed to go to the hospital and he drove me to another town, since the small town we were in didn't have a hospital.

In the car, my condition just kept getting worse and I felt like I could not get one good breath. The worse part came when I asked my friend how much longer it would take before we got to the emergency room and he told me to "Hold on. We're about to turn into the town."

"Not into the hospital parking lot, just into the town!" I thought to myself. I was panicking. I began thinking about my daughter and what would become of her if I died. Then everything went black. My friend told me later that minutes before arriving at the hospital, my eyes had widened, my mouth dropped and I was blue.

By the time I got to the emergency room, I was not breathing. I later learned that I was pronounced dead on arrival but hospital staff revived me. After I was breath-

ing again and stabilized, the hospital staff was waiting to see if I was going to have any type of brain damage because I had gone a long time without oxygen. I woke up with a doctor's hand down my throat taking a tube out. I was alive and there was nothing wrong with my brain.

After recuperating for a day, I recovered fully. The hospital staff told me they were surprised at how fast my health improved.

That life-threatening experience taught me a crucial lesson. It could have been avoided if I had only taken care of myself better and my health condition more seriously.

"Approximately 20 million Americans have asthma, and death rates from asthma are disproportionately high...The asthma death rate in Chicago has more than doubled in the past twenty years," according to recent data from the Safer Pest Control Project.

I wrote this in hope that the people caring for loved ones with asthma, and asthma sufferers themselves, will take care. Follow instructions for medication. Know when to call the doctor and what to do when an attack occurs. Most importantly, learn the "triggers."

Asthma is a respiratory system disease. During an attack, your airways become constricted, inflamed and become lined with more mucus than usual. Stay healthy and be aware of your surroundings. Keep our living spaces clean and most importantly, know and trust yourself. When your body lets you

A Special Tribute

by Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

The last time I saw Izora Davis, a We The People Media board member, neighborhood activist and my good friend, was during a black-out that left much of the South Side without power on the first day of August.

Izora was leaning on her walker in the heat in front of 3983 S. Lake Park, a high-rise public housing building that she had saved more than a decade before.

When the electricity failed the previous evening, Izora and her neighbors were evacuated from the building by the fire department.

They stood around in the dark for hours until city officials working with Commonwealth Edison decided that repairs would still be going on for some time, and offered to take all the blacked-out South Siders to a hotel where they would be given food and drink.

Izora joined everyone on the buses. But the residents were taken to McCormick Place instead of a downtown hotel. Instead of private rooms and meals, the evacuated building residents were put together in a large room with cots.

The only food available was apple chips and donuts. Izora took a look around and demanded to be taken back to her building. Once she got back, the building's security guard and manager refused to let her in, saying the building wasn't safe without any power.

They wouldn't give her a chair to sit in either, so Izora leaned on her walker in front of the building throughout the day, eyeing suspiciously the repair workers and police



Izora Davis

going in and out.

The power came back on a few hours later. Izora called me to report that her door had been broken in, and she was worried that some of her important documents had been taken.

For a second, I wondered if she was being paranoid. But Izora Davis was often right when almost everyone else was wrong, and I had learned that when her suspicions were piqued, it was a good thing to check it out.

I never got to find out whether some of her papers were really missing, though. Izora died just three weeks later, on Aug. 21, after suffering an epileptic seizure in her apartment.

The night she died, Beauty Turner, *Residents' Journal's* assistant editor and another of Izora's confidantes, called to let me know. I drove to the South Side and gathered in front of 3983 S. Lake Park among her family members and friends. A few of her neighbors sat on the bench in the lighted bus shelter, trading stories and reminiscences about Izora.

"Now y'all ain't got nobody to fight for you any more," came one lament in the darkness. No one responded to that one.

At her funeral on Aug. 28, I got to see first-hand what I always suspected: that I was just one of many people around Chicago that appreciated Izora as a tireless advocate for people who otherwise didn't have anyone to fight for them. The room was packed with family members, friends,

political leaders and scholars.

Many of the people there had been fellow residents of the Lakefront Properties, six high-rise buildings which used to stand on Lake Park Avenue between 39th Street and 45th Street.

In 1983, the Chicago Housing Authority announced that the buildings would be evacuated, rehabbed and reconstituted as a mixed-income community. The plan sounded good to the residents, who had suffered through years of mismanagement, gang warfare and decaying facilities. But the CHA refused to offer the residents a guarantee they would be able to return.

Out of the 700 families who lived in the Lakefront Properties, 160 decided to stay in the development until they had the CHA's promise in writing. The protesters holed up into one remaining high-rise, 4040 S. Oakenwald Blvd, organized work details and security patrols and prepared for a long struggle.

As the months went on, the numbers of protesters dwindled. In the end, Izora stayed in the building by herself, with no heat, electricity or hot water. After two months, she won a Memorandum of Accord from the CHA. And the CHA, the agency which has kept few promises to its tenants, did rehab two of the high-rises and did open the buildings up to former residents.

Today, Lake Parc Place is CHA's only successful mixed-income community. Her name does not appear on the buildings' bronze dedication plaque, but Lake Parc Place at least as much a product of her ideas and efforts as any of the mucky-mucks whose names are engraved there.

Izora's struggle did not end there. She founded a non-profit organization to represent the rights of the former residents of the

Lakefront Properties.

She continued to negotiate with the CHA over the fate of the four empty buildings and agreed in 1995 to allow their demolition in exchange for hundreds of replacement units throughout the neighborhood. When she died, she was still fighting for those replacement units.

She could be hard-headed and combative. But she fought so hard for so long because she had a vision for the community. She pushed the CHA to build a community center that was included in the Memorandum of Accord because it would have kept young people off the streets.

The center was never built, and when a fatal car accident in front of her building last summer turned into a fatal confrontation between the drivers and the people who were hanging out, her first thought was "If we had that community center, those kids would've never even been there."

I had followed Izora's battles for more than 15 years as a reporter, editor and her friend. At her funeral, though, I found out a lot about Izora that I didn't know. I didn't know how close she was to her family, or that her nickname was "Gin."

I didn't know she liked to gamble on the riverboats. I had known her daughter, Michelle, and knew that she had the same wit and intelligence as her mother. I had never met her son Durelle before, and was moved to discover that he had much of his mother's passion for justice.

Her brother, the Rev. Marlow Davis, kept the proceedings on track and gave a eulogy that left me with a smile as well as with tears in my eyes.

"A poor woman spread knowledge throughout the whole town," Davis said in a tone that made his words sound like scripture, even if it wasn't an exact quote. "Now are you going to use it?"

That question has been on my mind since that day.

Were Nubians First to Govern Nile Valley?

by Michael Ibrahim

Many people associated with the art world insist that nothing sparks interest in an exhibit like controversy.

Such was the case during the recent Nubian exhibition on display at the University of Chicago Oriental Institute Museum from February through May.

The exhibit sparked the question of whether the Nubians were first to govern the Nile Valley, which three curators of the exhibit provided diverse answers to.

The Exhibition

The exhibit marked the final re-installation of the Institute's collection of antiquities into its five separate galleries. The artifacts in the Nubian exhibit were divided and categorized into A, B, C, and D-groups related to specific periods of the Nubian civilization timeline.

The first indigenous Nubian culture, the A-Group (ca. 3500-3000 BC), lived in small villages between the first and second cataracts in the Nile.

Known only from some 75 regional cemeteries, these communities flourished primarily as middlemen in trade with Egypt and disappeared abruptly with the rise of the Egyptian First Dynasty.

After a hiatus of about 750 years (the possible period of the disputed B-Group), a new society of pastoral nomads, the C-Group (ca. 2250-1550 B.C.), settled in the former A-Group territory.

Circular homes and graves characterize these dispersed communities, which were subservient to Egyptian political control, reinforced by a series of prominent river fortresses built by Middle Kingdom pharaohs.

Another contemporary Nubian group fared better with its northern neighbor.

Members of the "Pan Grave" culture (ca. 2500-1500 B.C.), named for its shallow circular graves, served as bowmen and mercenaries in the Egyptian military and are attested in burials not only in Nubia but in Egypt itself.

Williams was convinced of the idea that Nubia was the first civilization to rule in the Nile Valley. However, Dr. Geoff Emberling... and Dr. Stephen Harvey...both assured me that further evidence does not as yet point conclusively in that direction.

Ancient Nubian royalty emerged from a matrilineal society which placed emphasis on the role of women. It was said that Nubian kings proudly and frequently mentioned their kinship to highly honored royal ladies. At times, Nubia was ruled by very powerful queens.

The foreign nature of Nubians in an Egyptian world is illustrated by the exhibit paintings discovered in the tomb of an Egyptian governor of Nubia during the reign of King Tut Ankh Amen, between 1336 and 1327 BC.

It shows Nubia bearing gifts as tribute to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Among them were Nubian women and children and other male figures, perhaps guards. The women were adorned in Egyptian dress, along with children and males dressed in Nubian clothing.

The paintings also showed a prince identified as Hekanefer, Prince of Miam, a region of Northern Nubia.

The placard accompanying the photographic representation of this painting informs us that the "exotic goods," ostrich feathers and panther's skins, typify Nubian dress.

The painting was discovered at Toshka in Northern Nubia.

Hekanefer's own tomb was discovered in the 1960s containing a traditional Egyptian servant figure placed in



Michael Ibrahim

tombs to perform labor for the deceased in the afterworld. Therefore, another caption tells us that despite being shown as a traditional Nubian in the tomb of Huy, governor of Nubia, Hekanefer's own tomb reveals that he was quite acculturated to Egyptian religious beliefs and customs.

The Nubians obviously had a notable sense of design, both in pattern arrangement and couture, or clothing style.

In one area of the exhibit, we see a color photo representation of an unbroken tile taken from the temple of Ramesses III in Egypt.

The fully clothed prisoner has short, curly hair and dark skin wearing what appears to be a large golden earring.

Their designs are comparable to modern fabric and clothing designs of today.

The ancient Nubian would be seen as someone accustomed to sporting very high fashions even in our day.

In other words, totally modern. Ramesses III ruled from 1184 to 1153 B.C.

Moving on to C Group, we find pottery to observe Kerma Beakers, said to be of classic design from a period around 1650 B.C. to 1550 B.C.

Three of the pottery pieces were dated from around 2000 BC to 1750 B.C.

There were two others dated from 2200 B.C.

to 2000 B.C. which all showed bolder geometric patterns, whereas the Karma Beakers showed fascinating abstract patterns and were thinner and seemed more delicate.

To me, they were exquisite examples of fine, sophis-

It is not known what the ancient Nubian civilization was called at the time but curator Dr. Bruce Williams, a research assistant at the museum, suspects it was Ta-Seti, a name known from early Egyptian and other hieroglyphics in Nubian, Egyptian or both and said to mean "Land of the Bow."

On display also from Qutsul Cemetery was a fragment of carpeting dated from 370 A.D. to 410 A.D. This rug rivals beautiful modern designs resembling Caucasian rugs of Eastern Europe.

The Controversy

It appears that a good deal of controversy surfaced after the 1962 discovery of the Qutsul Cemetery artifacts made by Keith Seele, then director of the University of Chicago Oriental Institute.

Years later and after intense analysis of the objects obtained from the Qutsul site, Williams was convinced of the idea that Nubia was the first civilization to rule in the Nile Valley.

However, Dr. Geoff Emberling, the current director of the museum, and Dr. Stephen Harvey, an assistant professor at the Institute, both assured me that further evidence does not as yet point conclusively in that direction.



Dr. Geoff Emberling

On April 17, Harvey conducted a lecture tour of the exhibit. At the time, many questions were asked regarding many popular notions about Atlantis and aliens, along with whose civilization was first to develop.

Straining to make his answers accessible and coherent, Harvey delivered what seemed to me a death blow to some common misconceptions about these matters.

Below are excerpts from his passionate and erudite lecture:

"The thing I don't like about the Atlantis concept is....it says that African people aren't African. It's almost as if they're like outer space aliens or from another word.

People are people. The pyramids weren't built by extra terrestrial knowledge.

They're built with human knowledge, African knowledge. Look at it that way. I'll tell you what is like Atlantis.

It's like the tip of the iceberg hanging out there. It's kind of like the deserts.

We know that Africans cultivated vegetables and plants.

They cultivated oxen and cattle. Their cattle culture and their caravans range across the Sahara desert. We know a lot of ideas like building monuments originated in the deserts.

If you watched 'The English Patient,' where they made discoveries in the desert, my feeling is that increasingly the desert is going to hold the secrets.

What you're going to see is that people were going early on, maybe across East and West Africa.

Maybe across North and South Africa and, the deserts are going to hold the key, the more exploration we do.

Egyptian culture didn't come out of Europe. It used to be that Europeans tried to say such things. Or, they tried to say there's no relation between Egypt and Africa and none of that's true.

Now that we've put aside the racism, now we have to say, what do we replace it with? It's hard.

It's hard. Because the hard work hasn't been done.

We know for example that the Nubians were in touch in Sudan with people called Puntites.

The people of Punt were from Ethiopia.

But we don't know one house, one town, one village or one temple from Punt. We know it was there. Some day we're going to find it. So it's like an Atlantis. Atlantis is an old story. People forgot what it was all about.

(Continued on pg.21)



**Dr. Stephen Harvey
Oriental Institute Assistant Professor**

Egyptian state.

The design displays in this exhibit takes pains to inform us that some of the finest pottery in Nubian history was fabricated during the Meroitic period, 270 B.C. to 370 A.D., coinciding with the rule of Ptolemaic Greeks and Romans in Egypt.

It was the military strength of the Meroitic kingdom and the difficult logistics of waging a war that kept the northerners from invading Nubia.

Were Nubians First to Govern Nile Valley?

(Continued from pg. 20)

People say, 'There used to be this wonderful rich time, a long time ago.' It's like 'Roots.'

People say, 'How did they remember in the fifth generation Kunta Kinte?' Well, they had these traditions.

People then give it a name, but they don't really know where it comes from any more. You lose track of your own tradition.

Then your family accentuates the Mayflower, but not the horse thief."

Harvey said he hoped his lecture would clear up erroneous ideas.

In summarizing his answer as to who was first, Harvey said, "The Koreans borrowed art They all borrowed from the other cultures.

"How much Mesopotamia came from Sumer?

The earliest people who were there and how much came from the Semitic?

"Did you see Henry Louis Gates' show on African identity? I recommend it. He took a number of more prominent African American people.

"He said to them, 'How do you view your own history?

"What do you know about your family?" And using academic genealogies, people found out things they didn't know. Oprah Winfrey, for instance, felt certain her people were Zulu. It turns out she was mistaken. The DNA evidence shows her ancestry to be Cameroonian. It's like that," said Harvey.

According to Williams, "Many archaeologists now seem to stress cultural 'contribution' and 'participation' or, ultimately, how cultures work together in the creation building of various civilizations."

When asked about the first civilization on earth, Williams replied, "In the earlier days of the Oriental Institute, people were starting to look at, let's say Mesopotamia as the starting point for quote, 'civilization.'

"The start. Well, along came someone by the name of Braidwood—a husband and wife team whose major contributions to world archaeology apparently centered on research problems related to agriculture and pastoralism.

"They were at the Oriental Institute and they said, 'Well, it's all due to the development of agriculture and that (civilization) couldn't have happened in the Mesopotamian plain. It had to happen on hilly flanks of the Fertile Crescent, to the north and to the east. And he looked there.

"And he found a lot of interesting things. And then along came some people after him, who studied with him and worked with him in Turkey.

"And they discovered that settlement and also some fairly complex and very interesting developments in art and architecture. And the whole thing occurred before agriculture.

"So what happened to this ideal of single origin? It sort of began to melt. You know.

"This business of a single origin began to melt. And it's not just a matter of uh....yeah politics has played a role in it. Sure, but you know reality turned out to be messy.

"I think that our looking for a single origin is probably our desire for a little neatness," said Williams.

Emberling had this to say on the subject of first civilizations: "That's a big question. If you wanted to make it a general question about who built the first monuments of the world, you would say Egypt and Mesopotamia. They are a thousand miles apart.

"They both developed monumental buildings but the specific styles they built them in, the forms and usage that they put them to, were distinct.

"The materials they used were different. The Egyptians built mainly in stone. Mesopotamians built in mud brick and then baked bricks. I think when you're thinking of modern western neo-classical architecture, those are specific styles of columns that really go back to the classical world.

"They don't have direct parallels in Mesopotamian or Egyptian architecture. The Egyptians had big columns in their temples.

"They used them for very different kinds of purposes.

"Well, for the kind of neo-classical period that you're thinking of in the west, that's sort of a usage of columns to demarcate the entrance of a building.

"That's sort of a Greek and Roman thing. In an Egyptian temple, they'd have entire halls in which there were 10, 20 columns in the interior of the building. It's to hold up the roof but there are different ways you can do that," Emberling said.

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Letters to the Editor

Where Did All the Parents Go?

Dear Editor:

Over 20 years ago, I joined the Chicago Public School system and was assigned a large elementary school located in the inner city. As a new teacher, I marveled at the future educational experiences that awaited me. The students were somewhat cooperative and eager to participate in the instructional program. Those students that wanted to engage in folly were soon dissuaded with a telephone call to their homes. This was during the day when parents implemented strong parenting skills. It was also reassuring to pass the auditorium and see an impressive attendance of parents at a PTA meeting.

Recently, I passed the auditorium during a PTA meeting and to my dismay, I saw two parents. Many of the parents in the inner city are grandparents or single parents, working up to two minimum wage jobs. Parents living in shelters with their children cannot be overlooked. Neither can the young parents or the foster parents who have children placed in their care. The parent population in the inner city

has changed over the last two decades.

Research shows us that parent involvement is a valuable resource for schools struggling to provide state-of-the-art instruction with diminishing funds. I certainly agree with the research that cites parent involvement as a way to instill pride and interest in schooling, increase student achievement and enhance a sense of community and commitment. I also realize that there is an overall lack of respect and interest on behalf of many parents in the inner city for their children's academic achievement. This lack of respect extends to the school personnel and the school building itself. Coupled with demanding jobs, these factors can prove to be reasons not to attend the PTA meetings.

We are living in stressful times. Our communities are infested with gangs and drugs. Parents today have a different attitude toward schools and teachers. Several years ago, it was an honor to be a member of the PTA. Today, in many urban setting schools, the PTA membership is embarrassing and the parent participation is null.

A major educational issue since the last decade has been the effect of parent involvement in education. The quality of education in this country has become an increasing concern. States are taking a prominent role in monitoring and maintaining academic standards. Local schools are concerned about providing high quality teaching and other services with limited resources.

Most parents want assurance that their children will receive adequate preparation in school to lead rewarding adult lives. From my observation, many inner-city parents today exhibit traits of parental indifference. This indifference may be caused by certain factors mentioned earlier such as stress, demanding jobs and poor child-rearing skills. Furthermore, many young parents do not possess the strategies to deal with their children's various issues.

Where did all the parents go? I'm not sure but hopefully it is not to a sea of parental withdrawal or an ocean of parental apathy.

-Joan A. Crawford

The author is a student in the doctoral program at Argosy University/Chicago

Visual Screening versus Vision Therapy

Dear Editor:

Each school year, children are required to have visual screenings. Dr. Stephanie Johnson-Brown, a behavioral optometrist of the Plano Vision Development Center states, "Visual Screening is not the same as a comprehensive visual eye exam by an eye doctor." In fact, when enrolling you children in school, the screening takes only a few minutes to complete, which will inform you of how well or poorly your child sees at distance measures of about 20 feet.

As a parent, teacher, and an advocate for children, I sought for clarity and assistance for my child and others who may be experiencing similar learning difficulties due to visual problems. Dr. Johnson-Brown, a specialist in the identification, evaluation, and treatment of individuals with learning related visual skilled problems, shared with me in depth the distinct differences between visual screening - which is a comprehension eye exam that determines the need for vision therapy - and visual therapy - a treatment program which improves the visual skills needed to learn.

It is my opinion that all learning institutions should

make visual therapy a part of, if not a component to, specialized services since it affects the domains of learning. I was told by a school district that the Board of Education does not address Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) or Visual Therapy. My question as a parent to Illinois State Board of Education is 'Why not if it relates to the child's education?'

Crucial information shared by Dr. Johnson-Brown is: "Problems with near vision, eye coordination and focusing ability as well as other vision problems are not discovered in the vision screening test. These problems can cause learning disabilities, headaches and other visual discomforts."

"The examination will allow your eye doctor to detect eye health vision problems such as nearsightedness - where near objects are seen more clearly than objects at a distance - farsightedness - where the child has to use greater effort to focus at a near distance - crossed eyes, astigmatism - where images at all distances may be blurred or difficult to see - and lazy eye, known as amblyopia. A behavioral optometrist will also check to see if your child is developing the visual skills

needed for academic achievement, determining how well your child's vision capabilities are geared for the changing demands in the classroom, and other close work situations. Because children's eyes change very quickly, continue scheduling periodic professional vision examinations. On the basis of the initial assessment, your eye doctor will discuss your child's future vision care program with you."

A note from Dr. Johnson-Brown:

"Many children exhibit the following symptoms or behaviors at some stage of childhood. This does not necessarily mean that child has a problem. However, if these symptoms persist, it is suggested that the child be given a thorough preschool vision and physical examination to determine the exact cause. Some signs of possible visual readiness problems are: Squirminess, fidgeting and hyperactivity. Other visual behavioral is squinting, frowning and scowling."

Get the service to your child. They don't need a label for life.

-Debra Foster

The author is a student in the doctoral program at Argosy University/Chicago

The Need for Financial Literacy

Dear Editor:

Chicago public elementary schools students are introduced to the concept of money based on the Illinois State Board of Education Standard-Based Mathematics Curriculum - nickels, dimes, quarters, pennies and dollars.

Additionally, students visit the downtown Chicago Federal Reserve and have local bank representatives come to their school for "Bank Days."

Students learn the financial terms of deposits, passbook and compound interest. At the high school level, high school students take consumer education, accounting and economic courses to identify time management, personal budget and small or large individual or corporate types of business.

Moreover, most high school students start their employment between their junior and senior years. Teens spend more than \$150 billion a year on clothing, food, and entertainment.

Teens today have "grown up" faster than previous generations. They live in the information age, an age that sometimes tells them more than they should know. They have money, for the most part, and have grown up in a boom econ-

omy. They know something about the stock market and some may follow it because grandma and grandpa have given them some stock. They know about ATMs, and certainly advertisers have told them about pleasures and conveniences of credit cards. Yet, with all this information and spending power, today's teens are sadly ignorant of the basics of money management and how money works.

What then is the problem?

Ownership, independence, and access to wealth are the hopes of every American and financial education is an essential tool to make that hope a reality. The truth, however, is that adult Americans have an inadequate knowledge of personal finance. The average American was able to answer only 42% of the questions on a personal finance quiz correctly with just 8% correctly answering at least three quarters of the questions.

Four in ten Americans admit they are living beyond their means primarily because of their misuse and misunderstanding of credit. America's youths, who are estimated to spend roughly \$150 billion annually, display a similar lack of financial knowledge and skills. Juliet B. Schor writes in *Overspent*

American and the Overworked Americans, "Financial management is neglected by the U.S. education system."

A closer look reveals prior financial literacy involves identifying the "culture of money - cash - creation of money - certificates of deposits, mutual funds, stocks and bonds - accumulation of wealth - interest, dividend, jewelry, art, coins," which are considered assets and the "culture of spending" - home, car, food, entertainment, utilities and furniture, which are considered liabilities. The mathematical formula is "assets minus liabilities," which is considered your "net worth". $A (\text{assets}) - (\text{minus}) L (\text{liabilities}) = \text{net worth}$. The question then becomes why is "net worth" important?

Simply stated, net worth determines how you will live in your retirement years when you will no longer work. Students need financial literacy education to understand cash management, banking, credit, investing, taxes and insurance-preparation for sound financial retirement.

The author is a student in the doctoral program at Argosy University/Chicago

-Leonne Caillouet

The author is a student in the doctoral program at Argosy University/Chicago

Residents' Journal welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents. Please send all letters to our address: 4859 S. Wabash Ave. Chicago, IL 60615. You may also call our office at (312) 745-2682 to discuss your ideas for submission.

Lathrop Homes Residents' New Vision

Commentary by The Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Residents Win Critical Support of Alderman Manny Flores

In the middle of a surging sea of luxury condos and million-dollar homes, the Chicago Housing Authority's Lathrop Homes complex is an island of affordability for working families.

It is here, along the river at Diversey Avenue, that residents like Sandra Cornwell have planted trees and raised their children now in college.

It is also here that residents are changing the face of public housing by forging their own unique vision for neighborhood transformation.

The residents' vision, once seen as David to CHA's Goliath, is gaining momentum. The residents' plan, "Transformation without Displacement: Our Vision for the Lathrop Homes," includes a vibrant mix of public housing, affordable rentals and homeownership opportunities, parks, community institutions such as the Boys and Girls Club, and no market rate units.

On the evening of July 25, Lathrop residents past and present joined with a host of elected officials to rally for their vision and celebrate the strength of the Lathrop community. Standing with the residents in the Lathrop athletic field, Ald. Manny Flores (1st) spoke strongly in favor of the residents' vision—a plan without market-rate homes. Also in attendance

was state Sen. Iris Martinez (D-20).

Congressman Luis Gutierrez sent a letter.

"I'm committing to no market rate, 100% affordability," said Ald. Flores. "This is a new model that CHA should adopt....There is a need for homeownership opportunities for working families, for teachers, for firemen."

Lathrop Homes consists of 925 units in a low-rise CHA development made up of row houses and three-story walk-ups.

For the past seven years, the CHA's annual "Plan for Transformation" reports have listed the Lathrop Homes as "TBD" (to be determined).

To date, the city's Plan for Transformation has demolished 18,997 public housing units but only constructed 1,937 units.

Lathrop residents are fighting to make sure the trend does not continue at their expense.

In 2003, residents formed a transformation "working group" and forged their own vision, "Transformation without Displacement." Through this vision, the area's last outpost of affordability would be improved, not wiped out. The most notable difference between the residents' plan and CHA's plan is the lack of market-rate units and the diversity of stakeholders.

"It doesn't make sense to put market rate units at Lathrop Homes," says resident Ruby Mann.

"Developers are building luxury condos all around Lathrop."

The median home price in the adjacent Hamlin Park neighborhood was a staggering \$426,000 in 2004, far above the citywide average.

The fight to maintain and strengthen the community has not been easy. Over the past seven years of uncertainty, residents note that Lathrop's management office did not respond to many basic service and repair requests.

Discouraged, tenants began moving out.

Stepped-up enforcement of CHA lease compliance poli-

cies hastened the exodus. And as apartments became vacant, management left them vacant. As a result, more than 500 apartments are now vacant.

"The city has experienced a significant loss of affordable rental housing," wrote Congressman Gutierrez in a letter read at Tuesday's rally. "Keeping Lathrop affordable is about finding ways to work together."

Lathrop Homes—one of the oldest as well as most racially diverse public housing developments—has long been an important part of its community. "My family members lived in Lathrop when they moved from Puerto Rico," noted state Sen. Martinez.

"What our Working Group is after is an ethnically and economically integrated community that supports working people and seniors while helping unemployed residents access education and job training," said Edie Lenz, pastor of Church of the Good News.

At its core, the vision for the Lathrop Homes is to:

- Preserve an affordable, diverse community in an area with access to strong and growing job, educational and cultural resources.

- Target new residents who wish to live in a diverse community. Study models for resident management and participation, including traditions from intentional communities.

- Preserve and strengthen key social service institutions on the Lathrop campus.

- Integrate job training, industrial retention and business development into the Lathrop transformation plan in cooperation with local companies.

- Transform the "transformation" itself – from a top-down, bureaucratic process into a broad-based civic effort.

In addition to resident seats assigned by the Lathrop Local Advisory Council, the Working Group includes representatives of the Church of the Good News, Schneider School,

common means traffickers use to transport drugs into Chicago."

Chicago is also unique among American cities, according to the DEA data, in that heroin from all four source areas - South America, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia and Mexico - is available on a consistent basis from year to year.

Until recently, they also reported that "virtually all of the white heroin available in the Chicago area was smuggled in by Nigerian/West African criminal groups."

DEA also reported that "most law enforcement agencies in Illinois cite the violent crime associated with gang-related drug trafficking as the most serious criminal threat to the state."

Violent crime associated with street gangs, while declining in some major urban areas, is increasing in suburban and rural areas as these gangs expand their drug markets."

At the retail level, DEA states that "heroin is distributed at numerous open-air drug markets, predominantly on the West Side of the city, that are controlled by street gangs."

The U.S. Department of Justice 2006 National Drug Threat Assessment states that "Drug trafficking and drug abuse continue to pose a significant threat to the citizens of the United States and an ever-increasing challenge to law enforcement and drug treatment personnel."

"Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups are the most influential drug traffickers in the United States, and their influence is increasing."

They are the predominant smugglers, transporters and wholesale distributors of cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and Mexico-produced heroin in the United States.

They are expanding their control over the distribution of these drugs in areas long controlled by Colombian and Dominican criminal groups, including areas of New York and Florida," according to the Department of Justice report.

The shooting deaths of the two young girls in the Englewood community involved gang members with high-powered guns, "including an AK-47 and a Tech 9, which are illegal to possess or sell in Chicago," according to a Chicago Police press release from March 17, 2006.

The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives stated in their 2005 annual report that there has been "significant decreases in violent firearms crime over the last several years," through "the collaborative efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies nationwide."

RJ called ATF's Chicago office to find out the situation with their efforts to stop trafficking in illegal firearms. But no one returned RJ's calls by press time.

Checking Chicago's War on Drugs

(Continued from pg. 6)

The police department also has placed surveillance cameras with flashing blue lights in crime-ridden neighborhoods around town, including various CHA developments.

But residents in these low-income areas told *RJ* they see no reduction of gang violence and illicit drug sales in their communities. Many of those at the recent Englewood marches wanted to know what the federal government is doing about the influx of illegal drugs and weapons into their poverty-stricken communities.

The Rev. Robin Hood, the leader of a March 17 rally in front of the home where 10-year-old Siretha White was slain, told *RJ* at the event that the news of the day shouldn't be about whether the increase in crime in Englewood was due to CHA relocation.

Rather, Hood said the focus should be on what the U.S. government was doing about the illegal weapons that are a constant threat to the community.

"It's more than just the gun violence," Hood said. "It's even illegal guns that come into our community, assault rifles.

Guns have gotten into children's hands even before they tore down the CHA. So it's a bigger picture than that and all we want to focus on today is to keep guns out of our community now.

Everybody's got a right to live in a place. So we're not going there today. Somebody lived in the projects and came over here. This has been a battleground for over 30 years," Hood said.

In early June, *RJ* spoke with Special Agent Christopher Hoyt from the Chicago-based federal Drug Enforcement Administration about the tainted heroin and the current status with the War on Drugs in the city.

As it relates to the heroin and heroin tainted with Fentanyl, Hoyt said the DEA is taking samples of the heroin from the Chicago Police.

"We're analyzing them in our lab in an attempt to identify the source of the Fentanyl," he said during a May phone interview.

Residents in low-income areas have said they see increases in drug-related activity.

However, Hoyt disagreed and said he knows there has

been a significant decrease in the illegal drug trafficking because of the large drug busts and court convictions from the DEA investigations.

"Our organization is designed to target the major drug trafficking organizations and dismantle them. I think if you check on a regular basis, you'll see that the federal government—beyond what the Chicago Police Department does with their arrests and convictions—the federal government, the DEA specifically, we have many cases that are tried in the federal courts. And when the members of those drug organizations are convicted, they get longer sentences.

"So we have several cases across the street in the court system right now and we have some ongoing investigations. I don't have specific numbers for the quantities," he said.

Hoyt also believes there has been a large reduction in illegal drug trafficking because of the money they seize from smugglers.

He also thinks that things will continue to improve.

"We're hitting them where it hurts the most," he said.

"We're hitting them in the pocketbook. We target the large bulk quantities and on a regular basis, we're seizing those quantities from the streets. And we measure a lot of our success on the money that we seize."

By taking their money, it shuts down their operation and each year we seize more and more of their assets. So each year, it is harder and harder for them to basically stay in business.

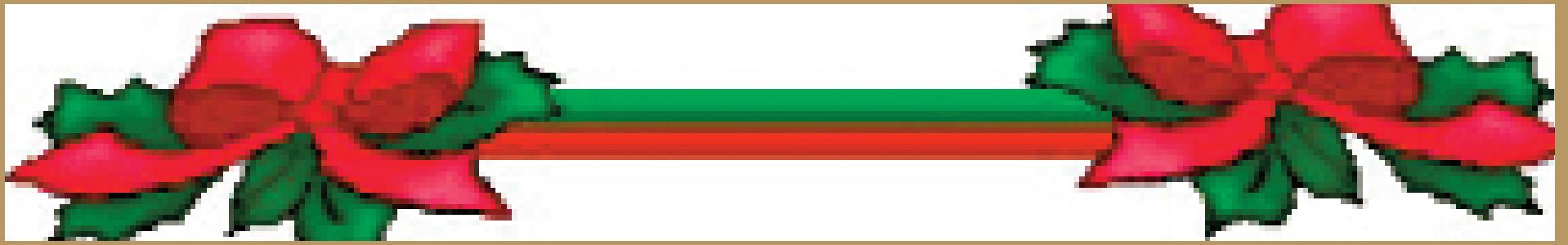
"So over a period of time, it's going to be increasingly more difficult for them to operate because we've taken so many of their assets away."

Additional information from the federal government shows that the drug problem in Chicago remains a large problem.

The DEA's web site states "there were more estimated heroin related emergency department mentions in Chicago during 2002 than in any other U.S. city."

They also list Chicago as being "the major transportation hub and distribution center for illegal drugs throughout the Midwest due to its geographic location and multi-faceted transportation infrastructure.

Commercial trucks, passenger vehicles, package delivery services, air packages or couriers, and railways are the most



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