Blacks don’t have the same view on same-sex marriage

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ELECTION ‘BRIBERY’

Sen. Smith charged in mayoral election scheme

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Assembly passes family friendly 3rd state budget

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(See Story On Page 3)
City Council approves sick pay leave at last but Bloomberg vows to veto it

By J. Zamgba Browne
Special to NY Beacon

The City Council has given its approval to a proposal to pay sick leave to New York City workers. But Mayor Bloomberg has vowed to veto the plan. Speaker Christine Quinn was among those who negotiated the deal.

The bill guarantees that no New Yorker will face the threat of losing his or her job or livelihood for taking for taking a day off work because of illness. The bill also mandates paid sick time be provided by employers with more than 15 workers.

Speaker Quinn said the bill fully recognizes the importance of protecting the city’s economy and provides protections to ensure that implementation is pegged to continued recovery. Under the bill, all New Yorkers will receive full protections that will allow them to take time to care for themselves and their families when ill, without fear or threat of losing their jobs. An estimated one million will benefit from the bill.

“We have a good, strong, and sensible piece of legislation that recognizes the needs of every day New Yorkers and the realities that our struggling businesses face,” said Speaker Quinn.

After three years of non-stop advocacy and coalition building, Speaker Quinn said she was pleased and grateful that an agreement was reached for paid sick leave.

According to Speaker Quinn, the bill includes vital protections for the city’s economy, including a reverse trigger that will ensure the mandate is only enacted if the city’s economy can sustain it. “If the economy unexpectedly worsens, the bill will be delayed from taking effect until conditions improve,” said Quinn. “Additionally, an effectively date one year in the future to give businesses time to plan and also allow for future economic recovery to take root,” she added.

Councilmember Letitia James said with the passage of this milestone legislation “our city’s working families will no longer have to fear the loss of jobs for taking a sick day or caring for a loved one who is ill.”

Juana Sanchez, a mother of three who was full time in school before becoming a working mother, said “a tremendous step forward for New York’s working families.” She said workers and families will now have to choose between their jobs and their health or their children’s health.

“I am incredibly proud to be a part of this historic and progressive moment here in New York City when so many New York workers without paid sick days can now have some economic peace of mind,” said Sanchez. Robert Bookman of New York City Hospitality Alliance a million New Yorkers will face a choice between taking care of a sick child and a day’s pay. “And it is now illegal for any worker to be fired for missing a few days work because they are sick,” he added.

Bill Lipton of the Working Families Party said the changes spearheaded by Speaker Quinn is a “sensible set of improvements. “Although our members provide benefits such as paid sick leave, we have always been concerned about the impact of our original proposal on the city’s business community,” said Lipton.

By J. Zamgba Browne
Special to NY Beacon

City Council approves sick pay leave at last but Bloomberg vows to veto it

New York State United Teachers last week launched a state-wide public campaign asking parents to join teachers in opposing the state’s use of newly hastily implemented standardized tests for high-stakes decisions affecting students and teachers.

For months, the statewide union has been pressing the State Education Department to acknowledge teachers’ growing concerns with the state’s rocky implementation of new Common Core learning standards and new standardized tests that students must take in April.

While NYSUT supports the “potential” of the new Common Core learning standards and fully embraces the principle of accountability for students and educators, two-thirds of teachers said in a poll that their students lacked textbooks and materials aligned with the state’s new standards. Even worse, many teachers say students will be tested next month on material that has not yet been taught, with the state still distributing materials and guidance to teachers as late as last month. Education Commissioner John King Jr. and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, among others, have acknowledged student test scores will plummet—likely up to 30 percent—yet New York is still permitting the scores to be used to unfairly label students and measure teacher effectiveness.

“Teachers have repeatedly urged the State Education Department and Regents to use this year’s tests to measure the state’s progress in implementing the Common Core, not for high-stakes decisions affecting students and teachers,” said NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi. “They aren’t listening.”

Iannuzzi said that, after months of intense efforts to get State Education Department leaders to acknowledge the specific and documented concerns voiced by teachers statewide, the union decided to take the issue public. NYSUT is taking out full-page print and on-line ads in leading up state newspapers this week calling on parents to unite in a strong push-back against the state’s over-reliance on standardized testing.

The print and on-line ads link to a parent petition that will also be shared locally and via social media. Both the ads and petition can be found at www.nysut.org.

Thousands of teachers have already written letters to the commission and Board of Regents detailing implementation problems and the tremendous stress placed on students by unrelenting standardized testing. NYSUT is delivering the letters to policymakers on a daily basis as part of a Tell it “like it is” campaign.

“Teachers are speaking forcefully and eloquently on the harmful impact of too many tests, given too frequently and without giving teachers and schools adequate time to prepare students,” said NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira. “We know parents share teachers’ concerns about the pressure of over-reliance on standardized testing. This petition gives parents a way to add their voices to the concerns teachers have been voicing since early fall. Students and teachers feel they are being set up for failure.”

In the union’s open letter to parents, Iannuzzi said, “No experienced teacher would test students on material before it’s been taught—and yet that’s the scenario the state has created in its rush to roll out new standardized tests.” The letter adds, “Too many students have not been taught the material for a whole new set of challenging standardized tests in math and English language arts.”

Neira said NYSUT has pressed the State Education Department and Regents for time for school districts and teachers to thoughtfully implement the Common Core and for a reduction in the number and length of standardized tests; and for the (CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)
By J. Zamgba Browne

Sen. Malcolm Smith charged with mayoral election scheme

An alleged political scheme by Democratic State Sen. Malcolm Smith to place himself on the mayoral ballot as a Republican has backfired. The Senate was arrested at his home in Queens early Tuesday morning.

Sen. Smith was arrested along with five political accomplices including the Mayor of Spring Valley, Noramie F. Jasmin, New York City Councilman Dan Halloran, who represents northern Queens, and a host of other co-conspirators.

For the plot to succeed, an alliance was formed. They also needed the support of three boroughs to get the Republican nod without having to change party affiliation. The plan was already in progress.

FBI Assistant Director George Venzielos said Sen. Smith and company built a corridor of corruption and greed from Queens and The Bronx to Rockland County and all the way to Albany. “Public service is not supposed to be a shortcut to self-enrichment,” said Venzielos.

Halloran’s main task in the plot was to set up meetings with representatives and hand out bribes totaling thousands of dollars. The bribes were masked as legal accounting services. Halloran has also been accused of pocketing bribes from a consultant in exchange for $80,000 in City Council funding.

“After all the public corruption scandals we have charged, the sad truth may be the most powerful special interest in politics is self-interest,” said Preet Bharara, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District who is handling the case.

By J. Zamgba Browne
Special to NY Beacon

African Americans don’t have same views on same-sex marriage issue

By Maya Rihan
Washington Correspondent

Rev. Amos Brown, pastor of the Third Baptist Church of San Francisco and Rev. Anthony Evans, president of the National Black Church Initiative in Washington, D.C., are brothers of the cloth. Though they share a love for Christ and the Bible, they do not share the same views on same-sex marriage.

“Are you more than who you think you are,” the Minister continued, “but because of who you are, you are in danger! So tonight, I want to expose the danger and by God’s grace give you the guidance to be exactly what I said you are—the seminal fluid of the Kingdom of God.”

Minister Farrakhan thanked his teacher, “the Eternal Leader of the Nation of Islam,” the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad for leading him to “the infinite wisdom of God.” He surprised many in the audience by sharing how the Hon. Elijah Muhammad wanted to bring Tuskegee University in the early 1960s, even at one time meeting with city and university officials. His desire was to return the institution to the principles of thrift and

By Ashaheed M.Muhammad
Special to the NNPA from The Final Call

Minister Farrakhan speaks March 22 at Tuskegee University to wrap up three days of activity on the campus.

FARRAKHAN SPEAKS — Minister Farrakhan speaks March 22 at Tuskegee University to wrap up three days of activity on the campus.

Sen. Malcolm Smith

BEACON, April 4, 2013 - April 10, 2013
newyorkbeacon.net

Dr. Amos C. Brown

BEACON, April 4, 2013 - April 10, 2013
newyorkbeacon.net

Farrakhan tells students: You are chosen to build new world

By Ashaheed M. Muhammad
Special to the NNPA from The Final Call

TUSKIGEE, Ala. (FinalCall.com) — Though days were unhappy with the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan’s presence, their efforts and weak protestations were drowned out by overwhelming support from student organizations, and prominent religious and political leaders here.

Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford set the tone for the evening March 22, speaking to over 2,500 in the Gen. Daniel “Chappie” James Center, and leaving no doubt as to whether the Minister was welcome.

“They even say that not only is he welcome, with the power invested in me by the people of Tuskegee, Alabama, I hereby proclaim this night as ‘Minister Louis Farrakhan Night’ in the city of Tuskegee,” said Mayor Ford. “Not only do I present to him the key to the city of Tuskegee. I’m proud to say that he is honorary mayor of Tuskegee for life!”

The crowd cheered loudly as Minister Farrakhan stepped to the rostrum and got right down to business declaring Tuskegee University is not simply an educational institution, but an entity that could play a key role in launching unlimited progress for the Black nation.

“Tuskegee is more than just a university,” Minister Farrakhan said. “Tuskegee contains the seminal fluid of the Kingdom of God.”

“Are you more than who you think you are,” the Minister continued, “but because of who you are, you are in danger! So tonight, I want to expose the danger and by God’s grace give you the guidance to be exactly what I said you are—the seminal fluid of the Kingdom of God.”

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Assembly passes ‘family friendly’ third state budget

By J. Zamgba Browne
Special to NY Beacon

Gov. Andrew Cuomo may have every reason to put himself on the back for successfully producing three consecutive early state budgets. He was able to pull it off days before the April 1, by working with the legislature.

The early passage of the 2013-14 budgets continues the Cuomo administration’s focus on economic growth through a series of initiatives to create jobs and grow the economy, including new tax cuts for small businesses.

Also tax cuts for middle class families, major education reforms and investments, and an increase in the minimum wage to $9 per hour. The budget passed both houses of the Legislature with a hitch.

Gov. Cuomo said when he took office more than two years ago, New York was at crossroads, with families and businesses leaving the Empire State and a government that had lost the trust and confidence of the people.

Year after year the budgets were late and the entire process had become a symbol for the dysfunction and chaos of Albany. “We promised to build a New York and the 2013-14 Budgets continues to deliver on this promise,” said Gov. Cuomo.

With this budget, Cuomo said the Empire State is continuing to create good jobs, cut taxes for the middle class, lead the nation in education and civil rights reforms, and provide a model for a government that works.

“Our annual expenses are a $133 billion state. In this state, we can and we must have an on-time budget that holds spending growth under two percent,” said Gov. Cuomo. “This is a budget that all New Yorkers can be proud of,” he added.

Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos called the new budget business and family friendly that keeps spending within a self-imposed two percent cap, and emphasizes Senate Republican priorities to help businesses create new jobs provide tax relief to struggling middle-class families.

“Tax relief and tax reduction for middle-class families make significant progress on our agenda to grow our economy. This budget funds our jobs initiative and middle-class tax relief,” said Skelos.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said the new budget addresses what have always been the Assembly majority’s core priorities and makes the critical investments in public education, public health and affordable housing while honoring the moral obligation to preserve the social safety net,” said Silver.

Recognizing that New York’s minimum wage is unlivable and 19 other states have higher minimum wages than New York, the budget raises the minimum wage from $7.25 to $9 an hour over three years, beginning with $8.00 by the end of 2013, $8.25 by the end of 2014, and $9 by the end of 2015.

The budget maintains the Medicare spending cap enacted in 2011-2012 and recommends funding consistent with its provisions.

(Continued on page 15)
OraQuick launches campaign to promote need to know HIV status

Black woman who walked for peace now walking for education

By Edith Billups
Special to the Afro-American Newspaper

Audri Scott Williams walked thousands of miles of peace, now she’s on the move again, this time to bring attention to the environment.

Williams, 57, is a little more than two weeks into a six-week walk from Washington D.C. to Tuskegee, Ala., her home. She struck out with a group of supporters March 1 from the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Northeast Washington. She expects to conclude the walk on April 13. She is collaborating with the Heal the Atmosphere Association, a Tuskegee-based organization, to raise environmental awareness.

“We want to raise awareness of the damage being done to the planet through pollution. We also want to shift the consciousness about Mother Earth so that all realize that we are in relationship with her and all things,” Williams said.

From 2005-2009, Williams, a former Maryland resident, led seven others in a walk around the world in the Trail of Dreams. World Peace Walk. They traveled to 17 countries. The current walk, dubbed the Our World, Our Home, Our Respect (Real Environmentally Safely Practiced) Changing Habits (Everywhere) Walk. Two members of The Trail of Dreams, Karen Watson, 62, and Tonya Shina, 51, are joining Williams.

Other walkers include Charles and Harriet Davis, founders of The Heal the Atmosphere Association; students from Tuskegee University. The youngest walker is 6-year-old Elijah Sims.

A grandmother of 12 who holds a bachelor’s degree in criminology and a master’s in indigenous science, Williams resigned as dean of counseling education and community services from Charles Young Community College in 1998. That still a greater calling — walk for peace, healing, reconciliation.

“In 1993, I had a heart attack,” she said. “The cardiologist said I was lucky. He said I was here to do something and I needed to figure out what that was if I wanted to be here. I knew what I meant. After the heart attack, I made a commitment to follow the path of my dreams. My dreams led me to work to affect peace and healing in our relationships, because we are in relationship to ourselves, our families, our communities and mother earth will determine the fate of humankind,” she added.

Williams noted that in 12 years, she estimates that she has walked more than 50,000 miles. Because of the young walkers accompanying the group, the walkers are covering 4½ miles a day. The group is having a goal of 40 miles a day, she said.

Along the way, the group will stop to give talks on peace and the need to protect the environment. “We are walking in solidarity and bringing attention to environmental issues that impact poor and indigenous people around the world,” she said.

Her experiences have taken her on four life-changing journeys, including The Trail of Dreams World Peace Walk for Peace on six continents where she visited sacred sites, engaged in sacred ceremo- nies, and connected with commun- ities, regardless of gender or race.

Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in July 2012, the OraQuick In-Home HIV Test, OraSure offers live support and referral for one of the “Best Inventions of 2012” by TIME and was also named a "Top Health Breakthrough" of 2012 by Men’s Health magazine. It is also the only OraQuick ADVANCE, an oral swab rapid test with more than 25 million units sold in the pro- fessional market, including doctors, hospitals, clinics and other trained professionals.

To ensure optimal support for individuals using the OraQuick® In- Home HIV Test, OraSure offers live support and referral services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year, through a toll-free center support and comprehensive consumer website at www.oraquick.com.

Earvin “Magic” Johnson helps kick off HIV/AIDS awareness campaign

OraQuick® In-Home HIV Test, which empowers people to test in the comfort of their own home.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are approximately 1.2 million people in the U.S. that have HIV and approxi- mately 240,000 of them are un- der 25 years of age. Those who do not know they are HIV positive are disproportionately affected by the 50,000 new HIV infections that occur each year.

Black woman who walked for peace now walking for education

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Supreme Court determined to kill affirmative action

By George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist

A decade after carefully ruling in favor of University of Michigan, the court is expected to hand down a ruling in late June or early July. Rather than await the outcome of a ruling the Supreme Court decided to accept the case brought by a White student who was denied admission to the University of Michigan's undergraduate program had not been in place, according to the University's brief.

"Race is only one modest factor among many others weighed; "Race is only one modest factor among many others weighed; among the University of Michigan's undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Michigan had dropped from 6.7 percent in 2006 to 4.5 percent in 2010 as a result of Proposal 2, the Michigan voters in 1996.

The permissible use of affirmative action was thought to be de- nied for good in 2003. In Gratz v. Bollinger, the court ruled that the University of Michigan's undergraduate admissions program violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment when it assigned 20 points to minority applicants. The permissible use of affirma tive action was thought to be de nost in 2003. In Gratz v. Bollinger, the court ruled that the University of Michigan's undergraduate program had not been in place, according to the University's brief.

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The fact that the court accepted the Texas and Michigan cases, rather than defer to the lower courts, is not a surprise to anyone. Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin is the case the court is ex pected to hand down a ruling in late June or early July. Rather than await the outcome of a ruling the Supreme Court decided to accept the case brought by a White student who was denied admission to the University of Michigan's undergraduate program had not been in place, according to the University's brief.

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Are we winning the clean v. dirty energy battle?

By Ted Glick

“I put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! We hope we don’t have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.” — Thomas Edison, 1931

I’ve been doing just about all I can for the last 10 years to help build the climate movement. For virtually all of that time I’ve done so without much hope that we can defeat Dirty Coal, Oil and Gas in enough time to prevent massive climate disruption.

In all honesty, many times I’ve felt that I was doing this work mainly to review my own history, to stabilize the earth’s unraveling climate and the extreme, catastrophic weather that would come with that unraveling.

But over the last month or two, for very specific reasons, I’m coming to see things differently. I’m seeing that we are in a human race has a fighting chance of running away from catastrophic climate change and, in doing so, open the way for a fixing the climate movement. For much more just, peaceful and sustainable future. That is the change we need to spread by 2012. And I’ve been saying that we need 50% more climate change, provided a deeper understanding of how much and the people are more determined and high-spirited awareness of good news as far as the development economic and social shift from dirty fossil fuels to clean renewable energy, particularly wind and solar.

As the national Stop the Frack Attack conference in Dallas, TX, there is the on-going development of the No Keystone XL pipeline, from the Mr. Obama's signature wind, that law instant criminal background checks will lead to a freeze on gun injury prevention research. And as Drs. Arthur Kellermann, details both this economic and social shift from dirty fossil fuels to clean renewable energy, particularly wind and solar.

As of March 17 column, 49% of new electrical power capacity, 100% of it, was renewable. “The year in the New York Times Week column, 49% of new electrical power capacity, 100% of it, was renewable.” (p. 102)

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Are we winning the clean v. dirty energy battle?

The NRAs are afraid of the truth

By Marian Wright Edelman

Why is the National Rifle Association so afraid of the truth?

There are many misconceptions about guns and gun violence swirling around in Americas’ minds—and in many cases, this misinformation is no accident. For years the NRA has blocked the truth and actively fought against and prevented research in the causes and costs of gun violence because they don’t want Americans to know the truth about guns. They don’t want to know how many gun owners even or the majority of its members. For example, polling data shows that 83 percent of gun owners and 74 percent of NRAs members support universal background checks as 2012 was from renewables, prima-

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There are many misconceptions about guns and gun violence swirling around in Americas’ minds—and in many cases, this misinformation is no accident. For years the NRA has blocked the truth and actively fought against and prevented research in the causes and costs of gun violence because they don’t want Americans to know the truth about guns. They don’t want to know how many gun owners even or the majority of its members. For example, polling data shows that 83 percent of gun owners and 74 percent of NRAs members support universal background checks as 2012 was from renewables, prima-

As of March 17 column, 49% of new electrical power capacity, 100% of it, was renewable. “The year in the New York Times Week column, 49% of new electrical power capacity, 100% of it, was renewable.” (p. 102)

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In all honesty, many times I’ve felt that I was doing this work mainly to review my own history, to stabilize the earth’s unraveling climate and the extreme, catastrophic weather that would come with that unraveling.

But over the last month or two, for very specific reasons, I’m coming to see things differently. I’m seeing that we are in a

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Our Right To Vote was won on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

Don’t let this sacrifice be for naught!
Don’t allow a few insensitive politicians to take your rights away
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Sponsored by Northeast Publishers Association
Over 300 attend Shared Interest 19th anniversary awards gala

By Audrey J. Bernard  
Lifestyles & Society Editor

Once again, Shared Interest welcomed some 300 distinguished U.S. and African leaders and top diplomats for a wonderful evening of merriment and awards presentation at its nineteenth anniversary awards gala on Monday, March 18, 2013 at the beauteously Gothic Hall in Herald Square, New York City. The annual celebratory event is a special time for nonprofit social investment fund serving Southern Africa to honor outstanding individuals and institutions for their commitment and ongoing work to promote economic democracy and development in Southern Africa.

The stellar black tie affair included an evening of cocktails, dinner, awards program, silent auction and dancing. The high-light of the formal evening was the presentation of this year’s honorees including award-winning singer, actor and activist Harry Belafonte, South African pop band Freshlyground; and freedom fighter and social justice activist Father Michael Lapsley. J.P Morgan, a leading global financial services firm, received the coveted corporate award.

The annual fundraising event for Shared Interest to provide Black South African entrepreneurs with access to credit and technical support to launch small businesses, create jobs and build secure new communities.

Donna Katzin, executive director of Shared Interest, told gala attendees that Shared Interest has built a $14 million guarantee fund, benefiting nearly 2.2 million “hard working, hopeful South Africans.”

Tonight, we celebrate this progress, and invite you – campaign builders, investors and donors – to enable us to reach the next 500,000 beneficiaries. We shrink the gap between Southern Africa’s banks and impoverished communities; and lay the foundations for the next generation of our work,” said Katzin, in a challenge to guests. “Help South Africa finish the job,” she emphasized.

Legendary artist and activist Harry Belafonte, one of the life-time of social justice and leadership awards for his pioneering leadership in supporting African liberation, civil rights and anti-apartheid movements, and rallying people worldwide to the cause of economic justice in Africa and the world.

Dr. Susan Johnson Cook (presenter), Father Michael Lapsley (honoree)  
South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool (presenter), Harry Belafonte (honoree)  
Paul Bernstein (presenter), John Coulter accepts award on behalf of J.P. Morgan

U.S. The award was presented by H.E. Ebrahim Rasool, South African Ambassador to the United States. In accepting his award, Belafonte recalled his mentors in the pursuit of justice who helped shape his social activism, including Dr. Martin Luther King and actor Paul Robeson. Belafonte said one of the joys of being an artist was understanding his responsibility of being a “gatekeeper of truth.”

The 86-year-old said as South Africa transforms itself into a democratic nation, the country must exercise patience and work at perfecting democracy, noting that the U.S. is still perfecting its democracy. Offering inspiring words of hope, Belafonte said: “One has to be grounded in the belief that there’s nothing wrong that can’t be fixed.”

Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest and freedom fighter, received the promoting healing, reconciliation and hope award for his life’s work in the healing of memories of South Africans affected by apartheid – enabling victims and perpetrators to reconcile and reclaim their humanity. The Honorable Susan Johnson Cook, U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom presented the award.

Eddie Bergman, executive director, Africa Travel Association, presented Freshlyground with the voices of the next generation award for their ongoing efforts to give back to the community through its social outreach programs and concerts. The chart-topping multicultural South African band performed their pulsating Afropop beats for guests and had them grooving to their funky beats on the dance floor as well as in their seats.

Joseph Coulter, J.P. Morgan’s senior country officer for Sub-Saharan Africa, accepted the visionary investment in South Africa’s communities award on behalf of J.P. Morgan presented by Paul Bernstein, CEP Pershing Square Foundation. J.P. Morgan was recognized for its focus on investments towards the most vulnerable people in Africa through strategic partnerships, and support for sustainable programs with measurable impact.

J.P. Morgan has had a long-standing relationship with Shared Interest and Thembani International Guarantee Fund. Most recently, the organizations have worked together to provide a mentorship program to develop successful and scalable small business enterprises, ultimately to create jobs and strengthen South Africa’s economic and social sector.

Caroline Clarke, executive editor of Black Enterprise and host of BE Business Report, was the evening host. This year’s major corporate sponsors were South African Airways, Menck and Black Entertainment Television. Gala corporate partners were Nielsen and Johnson & Johnson.

Shared Interest’s board chair Timothy Smith, senior vice president at Walden Asset Management, and Eddie Bergman served as event chairs. The gala’s chairs were: The Honorable David and Mrs. Joyce Dinkins, consul general and Mrs. George Monyemangenje; and H.E. Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool and Ms. Rosieda Shabodien. Sarah Leshner and Jehiel Oliver were the after party co-chairs.

The Gala host committee included: Alan Altschuler; Penny Andrews; Michael Armstrong; Karen & Philip Berry; Jean Carey Bond; Alan Bonilla; Sharon Davidson; Rev. Canon Alan Dennis; Jenny & Mark Hannegan; Anne Hess & Craig Kaplan; Daniel Leader; Sylvia & Byron Lewis; Don Lowery; Anne & Vincent Mai; Pamela Palanque North; Ruby Sprott; Situ Zangwu; and Susan Taylor & Kephra Burns. Kudos to Compass Events and Shanta Bryant-Gyan of SBG Communications for a wonderfully produced event. (Photo Credit: Donald Bowers/ Getty Images for Shared Interest)

About Shared Interest

Shared Interest’s mission is to mobilize the resources for Southern Africa’s economically disenfranchised communities to sustain themselves and build equitable nations. Since Shared Interest began in 1994, its loan guarantees and technical support have benefited more than two million black South Africans – the majority of them women. Shared Interest has never lost a cent of its investors’ interest or principal.
Forum examines why 12-year-olds are being charged as adults

Cornelius Ricks, community advocate and founder of “Stop The Urban Violence,” recently hosted a Black History Month event at the Harlem Branch Library 9 West 124th Street, with the evening topic: “Why are our youth at the age of 12 being charged as adults in America?”

The event’s master of ceremony was Ibn Bashir, author of Raw Jim Crow,” as minority mass arrest, and Atty. General Schneiderman and Apartheid System of Justice and that concluded NYS is running an important factor to eliminating future health risks brought upon by hypertension,” says Registered Nurse Elizabeth Almanzar-Wright, a nurse care manager with VNSNY CHOICE, a managed long-term care health plan that supports individuals on Medicaid who have been diagnosed with multiple chronic illnesses. “Our health professionals work to ensure that patients with hypertension learn to manage their medications, use a home blood pressure monitor, maintain healthy lifestyles and are aware of the signs and symptoms that they may need emergency care.”

Nurse Almanzar-Wright offers these four tips to manage hypertension at home:

1. Manage Your Medication
   - Per the above research, ask your doctor if prescribed diuretics may be helpful for you. he or she will help you weigh the benefits and potential side effects. It’s also important to keep an up-to-date list of all the medications you are taking, including over-the-counter or nonprescription medications or supplements. A medication container or pillbox can serve as a reminder of when to take the pills—
   - and can help you plan up to a week in advance. It is also important to try using one pharmacy for all of your medications as this fosters a good relationship between you and your pharmacist and decreases medication errors or interactions.

2. Change Your Diet Gradually
   - Gradually changing your diet will result in better long-term success. Slowly increase your use of fat free and low fat dairy products to reduce your intake of saturated fat, total fat, cholesterol, and calories. If you now eat one or two vegetables per day, add a serving at lunch and another at dinner.

3. Incorporate Exercise into a Daily Routine
   - Exercise is important in controlling blood pressure and preventing complications, but it doesn’t have to be boring!

4. Monitor Your Blood Pressure At Home
   - It’s important to monitor your blood pressure at home on an ongoing basis to monitor your blood pressure and reduce the risk of developing hypertension.

New study points to affordable strategy for keeping high blood pressure in check

Hypertension symptoms may be subtle or even non-existent, but high blood pressure boosts the risks of leading killers such as heart attack and stroke, as well as aneurysms, cognitive decline and kidney failure. As we know, the disease is highly prevalent in the African American community. In fact, more than 40 percent of blacks have the disease compared to whites and are also more likely to develop it at an early age and more prone to have substantially elevated blood pressure rates.

While high blood pressure can’t be cured, it’s important to manage it. Healthy lifestyle changes like weight loss, a healthy diet and exercise are very important factors.

What if a prescription drug that costs just pennies a day could help lower your blood pressure? That's what a recent study conducted by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) Center for Home Care Policy and Research and Weill Cornell Medical College revealed. The research study uncovered that less than half of African Americans were prescribed a diuretic drug with proven benefit that costs just pennies a day. A study, reported in the American Journal of Hypertension, found that the patients in the study who used the common diuretic drugs had, on average, lower blood pressure (both systolic and diastolic) than the patients who did not receive them.

Communicating effectively with patients’ physicians and persuading them to review the medications of patients with uncontrolled hypertension is an ongoing challenge for home care nurses,” says study co-author Dr. Penny Feldman, director of the VNSNY Center for Home Care Policy and Research and senior vice president for Research and Evaluation at VNSNY. “Our study shows that close monitoring of patient medications can help identify inconsistencies and divergent guidance from current approved medical guidelines and make inroads to help improve the health and quality of life of black patients with hypertension.”

The home health setting is an important factor to eliminating future health risks brought upon by hypertension,” says Registered Nurse Elizabeth Almanzar-Wright, a nurse care manager with VNSNY CHOICE, a managed long-term care health plan that supports individuals on Medicaid who have been diagnosed with multiple chronic illnesses. “Our health professionals work to ensure that patients with hypertension learn to manage their medications, use a home blood pressure monitor, maintain healthy lifestyles and are aware of the signs and symptoms that they may need emergency care.”

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By keeping track on an ongoing basis it enables you to partner with health care professionals to control your high blood pressure, reduces the need for frequent doctor’s appointments and improves self-care by identifying out-of-range blood pressure readings.

For more information about VNSNY CHOICE Health Plans from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, please call 1-855-AT-CHOICE (1-855-282-4642) or visit www.VNSNYCHOICE.org.

To learn more about recent research from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) Center for Home Care Policy and Research, visit researchnews.vnsny.org
FEMA extends TSA program in New York

Dr. Taffi Dollar (left), wife of Dr. Creflo Dollar

Oh, to be radical

By Tony Felton

The weekend of March 22 felt not only the blast of winter’s last days, but the spiritual fire of women everywhere, coming together to give life, a voice, to their minds, bodies, and souls. Taffi Dollar, world-renowned author, teacher, and conference speaker soars in New York. Her passion as co-pastor, along with her husband, Dr. Creflo Dollar, of World Changers Church International (WCCI), WCC-New York, and numerous satellite churches throughout this country, is evident in her native home town of (Atlanta) Georgia; but for some reason, New York seems to bring out the FIRE in her! RADICAL women’s meeting: Wisdom for life, love, and happiness, the first conference at the new found home of WCCI-New York (formerly the Paradise Drive-In Theater, 2417 Grand Concourse in the Bronx); that FIRE was none more visible as she led guest speakers Dr. Betty R. Price, Gwen Thompson, and Jade Bolton, engaging in round table discussions, stand-up presentations, that included subjects from being Single in the City to The Call to Motherhood. Climaxing on Saturday night, wearing the hat of Pastor, Taffi Dollar taught on the subject of Emotions: “When you give into negative emotions,” she preached, “you are engaging in spiritual intercourse with satan himself! And that is exactly what he wants you to do. Satan wants to see you upset, get angry with people, cursing like a sailor. Satan didn’t intend for us to be upset! I arrive and see fire trucks in front of the church. We get inside and the stage is dripping with water. Satan hates us. He hates to see us happy! He wants to see you broke, sick, and getting into ungodly affairs. But that is not what the Christian life is all about. JESUS came that we might have life and have it more abundantly! The Christian life is supposed to be full of happiness! Abundant life full of joy. Not being broke. Declare right now that you are never going to have another broke day ever again in your life! The Word of Deuteronomy says that he has given us the power to create wealth (Deut. 8:18). Get rid of fear! We are not supposed to be fearful! Fear has torment. The Word of GOD says that, we have not been given the spirit of fear, but we have been given the SPIRIT of Power and of Love and a Sound Mind! I feel like the Queen of Sheba what I come here! I just love it! Thank you to all of those who participated in our women’s meeting! See you next week for the church’s Dedication ceremony!” AMEN!

Audrey Adams

If this early Spring weather is an indication... spring is right around the corner!! That’s right, it is time to pull out all the warm weather clothing that we reluctantly packed away last September. Finally the opportunity to wear all the sexy sleeveless tops, flirty dresses, shorts and sandals. Warm weather means baring a bit more skin than usual, which means it is time to really think about looking your best. Face it, there isn’t a tan you can get or sexy dress you could wear that will make up for winters wear and tear on your body. If you have already prepared for summer then enjoy, but if you haven’t it is time to do a little housekeeping! Before you bare anything at all take a quick inventory of some of the things that bare (sorry, couldn’t resist) consideration:

Hair: Pouty Hair: Hair on your head is a good thing, but hair coming out of unexpected places like your ears, your Kini line, the top of your toes, legs, or cascading from your armpits is frightening! There are several methods of removal that you might want to think about using to get rid of it, shaving, depilatorizing, or waxing; choose a method that works best for you, but whatever you do, do something!

Nail: Face it, if you want a “well manicured look” getting your nails manicured is essential. Nothing says more about you than your hands and feet; nothing will ruin your look faster than crusty heels, jagged cuticles, overgrown toe nails or peeling polish! Since Summer is an opportunity to expose those toes, take time to pamper your feet. Give your hands a break too. A week or professional manicure and bi-weekly pedicure is a must but if your budget can’t handle the expense do it yourself.

Protect and Buff: Nothing feels better in the summer than the smoothness of the skin. By now we all know how important it is to protect the skin we’re in by using sunscreen religiously but also important is moisturizing. Before you really expose your skin to the elements, be sure that you use an exfoliating scrub to remove any dry skin that may have accumulated under those heavy winter wraps. Pay special attention to your feet, elbows and knees and then apply your favorite moisturizer for a soft touch.

Eye: Eye: That’s right; your eyes deserve special attention too! Protect those peepers with a good and fashionable pair of sunglasses to protect them from the sun’s glare.

Caution: There is such a thing as too much exposure. Unless you are at a nude beach, baring it all isn’t necessary. Leaving a little something to the imagination has been known to inspire artists and poets throughout the ages. So instead of letting it all hang out this summer... Inspire someone instead. Think about it. See you next week.

Five beauty tips for warmer weather

The Adams Report©

By Audrey Adams

Fashion, Beauty . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. . . . . & Stuff

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, at the request of the State of New York, has approved a 21-day extension to the Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program, which allows eligible varies assistance to those displaced by hurricane Sandy who cannot return to their homes to stay in participating hotels.

The new checkout date for those remaining in the TSA program is April 14, 2013. FEMA is calling applicants eligible for the extension to notify them of the new checkout date.

The temporary Transitional Sheltering Assistance program allows eligible Hurricane Sandy survivors whose houses have been severely damaged or destroyed to stay in a hotel for a limited time. The

cost of the room and taxes are paid directly to the hotel by FEMA.

The extension was approved to help those applicants still eligible for the program to remain in hotels as FEMA and its state and local partners work to identify longer-term housing solutions. All TSA applicants in hotels are evaluated for continued eligibility.

FEMA continues to work in coordination with state, local and voluntary agency partners to assist applicants through an expansive caseworker to identify and transition them to more suitable temporary or long-term housing.

Meals, telephone calls and other personal items are not covered, and applicants are responsible for any lodging costs above the authorized allowance. The program does not cover previously incurred hotel expenses.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo

The mother of five (5), Taffi Dollar, world-renowned author, teacher, and conference speaker soars in New York. Her passion as co-pastor, along with her husband, Dr. Creflo Dollar, of World Changers Church International (WCCI), WCC-New York, and numerous satellite churches throughout this country, is evident in her native home town of (Atlanta) Georgia; but for some reason, New York seems to bring out the FIRE in her! RADICAL women’s meeting: Wisdom for life, love, and happiness, the first conference at the new found home of WCCI-New York (formerly the Paradise Drive-In Theater, 2417 Grand Concourse in the Bronx); that FIRE was none more visible as she led guest speakers Dr. Betty R. Price, Gwen Thompson, and Jade Bolton, engaging in round table discussions, stand-up presentations, that included subjects from being Single in the City to The Call to Motherhood. Climaxing on Saturday night, wearing the hat of Pastor, Taffi Dollar taught on the subject of Emotions: “When you give into negative emotions,” she preached, “you are engaging in spiritual intercourse with satan himself! And that is exactly what he wants you to do. Satan wants to see you upset, get angry with people, cursing like a sailor. Satan didn’t intend for us to be upset! I arrive and see fire trucks in front of the church. We get inside and the stage is dripping with water. Satan hates us. He hates to see us happy! He wants to see you broke, sick, and getting into ungodly affairs. But that is not what the Christian life is all about. JESUS came that we might have life and have it more abundantly! The Christian life is supposed to be full of happiness! Abundant life full of joy. Not being broke. Declare right now that you are never going to have another broke day ever again in your life! The Book of Deuteronomy says that he has given us the power to create wealth (Deut. 8:18). Get rid of fear! We are not supposed to be fearful! Fear has torment. The Word of GOD says that, we have not been given the spirit of fear, but we have been given the SPIRIT of Power and of Love and a Sound Mind! I feel like the Queen of Sheba what I come here! I just love it! Thank you to all of those who participated in our women’s meeting! See you next week for the church’s Dedication ceremony!” AMEN!

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo
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Go smoke-free.

today to learn more about how your building can

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It’s easier than you think.

and neighbors from the dangers of secondhand smoke at home.

Going smoke-free is the only way to protect your family

FACT: Smoke-free Homes are Healthier and Safer.
Let New York State help you rebuild.
Your home. Your business. Your life.

Superstorm Sandy hit New York State hard, but we are here to make sure your insurance company or bank is giving you all the help you deserve. Call our free hotline or log onto the website now and let our staff of New York State experts help you cut through the red tape – and get the benefits you paid for.

Call or log on now for Insurance Help
855-NYS-SANDY
nysandyhelp.ny.gov
On Saturday, March 23, 2013, a bevy of beautiful ladies attended a bridal shower for bride-to-be Bridget Gabrielle Bland at Revel Restaurant, 10Little West 12th Street in the chic Meatpacking District hosted by her bridesmaids and coordinated by her sister and maid of honor Audrey Bland who greeted them wearing afternoon sequins. Once seated in a private area — replete with rose petals, bridal table setting, balloons, flowers and individual cupcakes — cocktails were served. Guests had their choice of Bellinis, Mimosas or soft drinks.

While awaiting the arrival of the bride, these social butterflies admiringly engaged in conversation about the lucky couple and the upcoming nuptials including where they were staying, what they were wearing, who they were bringing (if any). They also played fun games and shared many photos of loved ones while glancing in conversation about Bridget’s stunning engagement ring — a cushion cut Sapphire surrounded by three unique cuts of diamonds (four diamonds surrounding as well as two bezels of diamonds and six channel set diamonds).

Finally, the always stylish bride arrived wearing Victor & Wolf’s champagne colored satin dress with a sexy back drape. Sidebar; she revealed to me that she chose a Vera Wang design for her wedding dress.

Lunch was served. Guests dined on Frittata (prosciutto mushroom, peas & truffle oil; and a choice of Garden Omelet (sautéed vegetables, pecorino, fresh arugula), or French Toast (challah bread, served with syrup), or Straight Up Burger (1/2 lb. beef patty on a roll with fries & fixings with either cheddar, gorgonzola or provolone), or Grilled Chicken Sandwich (mozzarella, tomato, arugula, basil mayonnaise) or Chopped Garden Omelet (sautéed vegetables, peas & truffle oil; and a choice of French Toast (challah bread, served with syrup), or Straight Up Burger (1/2 lb. beef patty on a roll with fries & fixings with either cheddar, gorgonzola or provolone), or Grilled Chicken Sandwich (mozzarella, tomato, arugula, basil mayonnaise) or Chopped Cobb Salad (chicken, avocado, gorgonzola, bacon, egg, tomato). During lunch, the bride’s handsome groom Lowery Mychal Bogee graced the affair bringing her a bouquet of gorgeous flowers. After kissing his blushing bride, the groom went around the table and individually greeted family and friends who came from near and far to be there for the couple. What a gentleman! Most of the guests were mutual friends of both the bride and groom as they also attended Spelman and knew him from there. But not his bride. She met him in New York.

Bridget’s mother Diane Bland and Mychal’s mom Saddie Smith held court at the other end of the table where they were joined by her aunt Beverly Thompson and his sister Krystin Bogee who is also a member of the bridal party. Other bridal party members in attendance included Natalie Beamer (matron of honor), Briana Brigham (bridesmaid), Nia Jones (bridesmaid), Robin Smith (bridesmaid), and Karu Daniels (groomsman) who brought his A-game to the event. The ladies love KFD who Diane calls her son.

Bridget and Lowery will wed on Saturday, April 27, 2013 in Monterey Square, Savannah, Georgia with a brunch reception to follow at Bryson Hall. Arrangements have been made for guests to stay at some of Savannah’s historic district hotels: The Mansion on Forsyth Park on Drayton Street, Andaz Savannah on Barnard Street and The Marshall House on East Broughton. Well known wedding planner Morgan Gailo and her exceptional crew are handling the special day and surrounding events. One such event will take place on Friday, April 26, 2013, when Bridget and Mychal host a tapas and wine party at Rocks on the Roof at the Bohemian Hotel on West Bay Street.

About the Couple
Bridget Gabrielle Bland was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. She graduated from Spelman College and Rutgers Law School. She is currently a digital marketing manager for the Northeast Region of Chrysler Group LLC.

Lowery Mychal Bogee was born in Chicago, IL and raised in Westchester, New York. He attended Morehouse College and received his MBA from NYU’s Graduate School specializing in marketing. He works for Major League Baseball where he does licensing for men’s wear apparel.

The bride’s mother Diane Bland attended Spelman College where she was on the first line of AKAs (fraternity ‘81) at Spelman. She is a retired TWA flight attendant. She also ran Clark Atlanta University’s Art Gallery. One of the many things the mother has in common with her daughter (Audrey and Bridget) is that they are all proud AKAs. Bridget and Audrey pledged Mu Pi Chapter at Spelman College. The groom’s mother Saddie Smith is vice president of operations for Con Edison. The attorney attended Bowdoin and Columbia Law School.

Both Bridget and Mychal attended Historically Black colleges. She attended Spelman and he attended Morehouse which are located across the street from each other. However, these two lovebirds did not meet there. They met in New York and reside in Morningside Heights, Harlem, New York.
Civil Rights icon to lead King assassination march

(From Page 2)

courts, ensuring the victory of the Boycott!

"We pray Dr. King smiles with pride today at the school his mother, Ms. Claudette Colvin, one of the first to refuse to take a stand for justice with us," said a humbled, but enthusiastic Bill Kinney, the current chairman of the organization. The march and rally will call for jobs, peace and economic justice!

The People's Organization for Progress recently organized a 385 day protest for jobs, peace and economic justice inspired by the Montgomery Bus Boycott!

The People's Organization for Progress will hold its weekly general assembly meeting at 6:30 pm each Thursday at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, 224 West 138th St. in New York City.
church on a semi-regular basis. She says the issue of same-sex marriage pits her religious beliefs against so- cial trends.

"My interpretation of the Bible says being gay is wrong, it's constantly shown as a societal norm," Galloway explains. "The Bible says fornication is wrong. The fact that I live with my boyfriend right now is wrong." Galloway attributes her stance on same-sex marriage to her early school life; she attended Christian school in Maryland from first to 12th grade.

"I've had my activism, bring new people into this..." - Thus it's game on."
WHAT'S GOING ON

By Victoria Horsford

BREAKING NEWS

AMERICA AND THE WORLD

Don’t know which narrative is scarier, the one about that little bipolar Millennium, North Korean Kim Jong Un, who is threatening South Korea and the US which North Korea’s capacity to deliver a nuclear-tipped missile deep into the US heartland or the FBI investigation which alleges that NYS Senator Malcom Smith and NYC Councilman Dan Halloran planned to rig the November 2013 election in Malcolm Smith favor. Both were arrested on 4/2, charged with bribery and corruption.

Malcolm Smith, one-time Senate Majority leader, seems to have been off the deep end for awhile since he casted his lot with four renegade Democrat senators who caucused with the Senate GOP, giving it the chamber majority. It was all wishful thinking. Wonder who his backers are and about his psychiatric diagnosis.

Kim Jong Un is so scary that he makes Iranian President Ahmadinejad sound like the prince of peace. It is easy to ignore Kim’s claims, but not necessarily wise to dismiss them. The US government has been running test runs of B-2s bombers along the Korean Peninsula. What a crazy world!

AMERICA: Billionaire businessman Bob BET Johnson commissioned Zagby Analytics to conduct an African American Opinion Poll. On The Obama Presidency, Unemployment Opportunities and Social Issues. Who knew his real motivations. He did address the National Press Club last week to discuss the poll findings, which he admitted were enlightening and surprising to him. He learned that African Americans have a tremendous sense of pride in the Obama Presidency. Obama is liked unequivocally. 62% are optimistic about job prospects during the next four years. He talked candidly and at length about the Poll last week at a National Press Club luncheon.

He was surprised at African American sympathy towards immigrants. I caught a portion of it. He also added that his Doctor Ben Carson, a new so-called rising star in the Republican Party, has no serious intention of running for the US Presidency. Caron, a new so-called rising star in the Republican Party, has no serious intention of running for the US Presidency. He did address the National Press Club last week to discuss the poll findings, which he admitted were enlightening and surprising to him. He learned that African Americans have a tremendous sense of pride in the Obama Presidency. Obama is liked unequivocally. 62% are optimistic about job prospects during the next four years. He talked candidly and at length about the Poll last week at a National Press Club luncheon.

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By Victoria Horsford

Special Assignment

The 30th Anniversary Celebration of "Mama, I Want To Sing," (MIWTS) America’s longest running Black musical, was an Oh, What a Night gala! The multi-tiered festivities began at Harlem’s Dempsey Theater on West 127 Street. Mama 30° was a glamorous theater premiere, a throwback to the excitement that characterized the Harlem Renaissance and the Harlem 60s arts scene.

Yes, there were klieg lights, a red carpet, and a 500 plus audience filled with scores of celebrities. New York politicians, A-listers and paparazzi and an after party. Hosted by Vy Higginsen’s Mama Foundation for the Arts, the affair was equal parts joyful noises, family remembrances and church revival! The evening enthralled with the talents of the arts participants with the Mama Foundation for the Arts three franchises: MIWTS, "Sing Harlem Sing!" and Gospel For Teens.

Vy’s husband Ken Wydro MIWTS co-writer/co-producer welcomed the audience and talked about Mama’s origins. The Mama 30° prologue borrowed from the musical’s format with Vy Higgenson as the affable WBLS FM radio host who narrates the show’s multi-tiered contours, a mix of entertainment and acknowledgements.

Then Vy leads the way to the “joyful-noises” delivered in Gospel, Jazz, and R&B, with selections from "Mama I Want To Sing" the “Sing Harlem Sing!” and the Gospel For Teens by the cast of thousands. A chorus rendition of “Total Praise” was delivered with Sunday morning at Black-Baptist church fervor.

Vy and Ken’s daughter, Knoelle Higginson performs with the three productions and is a key Mama Foundation player/administrator. She represents The Next Generation appendage to the “Mama, I Want To Sing” brand. Vy presented a Vision Award to Leslie Stahl. CBS-TV 60 Minutes co-host, whose Gospel Teens segment bolstered the group’s national and international visibility which culminated with a feature film deal. The Mama, I Want To Sing book centers on a teenager who grew up as a soloist at her dad’s church, who wants to pursue a career as an R&B/pop vocalist, much to her widowed mother’s resistance and chagrin.

The play’s lead character Doris has been played by Tisha Campbell, Desirée Coleman and currently by Nkelle Higgenson. During its 30-year run, the award-winning musical has toured the United States and the World, with engagements in Asia, Europe, and the Caribbean.

Mama’s 30th handsome SRO audience was awash in minks, après-cinq ensembles and black-tie glitter, was in a trance all evening. Music divas like Cissy Houston, Sharice Scott, Stephen Burrows, Veronique Jones, Stanley Gleston, Jeff Burns, Joyce Davis, Rita Rodin, Hazel Dukes, Deborah Singletary, Judge Tanya Kennedy and lots of proud parents of the performers. Councilwoman Inez Dickens repeated her unwavering support for the Mama Foundation’s works.

The stage presentation was followed by an after party at Melba’s Restaurant, at the State Office Building on 125 Street, where an eclectic, movable feast of food items were proffered, courtesy of local restaurants including Jacob’s, Make My Cake, Red Rooster Harlem, Corner Social and Chez Lucienne.

Also present were Spoonbread’s Norma Darden who served jambalaya and Sylvia’s Bedelia Woods who served fried chicken, greens, and cornbread. Palettes were cleared with Chambord Vodka, Kr Royalies, and bottled water.

Vy was generous with thanks to Myrna and Freddie Gershon, who supported the 30th Anniversary and made a $30,000 donation to the Foundation that night, saying that it just a “lubricant” for future gifts. She also cited other event sponsors and partners such as Kenneth Fox, the ELMA Music Foundation; AARP; Don Coleman; 5 Towns Community Center; Walt Frazier; Bernard Hunter; Joselyn Johnson and Yamaha Music Company, Rosebrand, and WBLS Radio. Need less to say, Oh What A Night… and a great time was had by all! Mama’ at 30 event generated $100,000.
Black is beautiful! Just ask “cut above the rest” designer Nicole Miller whose Fall/Winter 2013 fashion presentation was almost a total blackout! The show began with everything black and beautiful with some touches of grey. Miller’s look was more masculine than usual and different from her signature fitted ruched dresses and mermaid hem gowns. The inspiration for the show was taken from a man’s perspective – great looking male-inspired pieces that could be ripped out of your man’s closet. Highlights included fedoras, tuxedos blazers, vests, tattoo-print tops, wallpaper-patterned coats with trenchcoat lapels. Also cigarette pants, fabulous knitted sweaters, leather leggings, motorcycle jackets and ruched knee-length skirts. Miller’s use of prints was interestingly innovative. Uptown glam meets downtown chic.
Angela Bassett and Antoine Fuqua deliver in ‘Olympus Has Fallen’

By Marie Moore

It’s been a banner year for Black filmmakers thus far beginning with the great film “Broken City” directed by Allen Hughes from a story written by Brian Tucker, then “Stoker,” written by Wentworth Miller and now “Olympus Has Fallen” directed by Antoine Fuqua. Other movies released this month are “The Sapphires,” written by Tony Briggs that tells the story of Australia’s Blacks and Mishca Webley’s “The Kill Hole.” Still to be released is Jeymes Samuel’s “Black Westen,” “They Die At Dawn.”

The acclaimed actress Angela Bassett is always a pleasure to see onscreen and off. She was at the Waldoorf Astoria recently promoting her latest project, Antoine Fuqua’s gripping and engaging film, “Olympus Has Fallen.” With such a serious movie, I thought I would kick the interview off with a humorous, silly question.

So Angela, what is harder being an actress and convincing an audience or actually being the head of the nation’s Secret Service agency? “Surely the head of the Secret Service, surely. I was very honored to play Lynn Jacobs” because historically we have not been in that position. This is the first time on film that a woman is portrayed in that particular role. So it’s a real honor and I was very thankful to Antoine and his vision of changing the way that we look at that position—and this has happened before.

“Sometimes entertainment leads the way. It’s about creativity and opening up what the world can look like; it doesn’t have to be one particular thing, you know. We saw that in ‘Deep Impact’ with Morgan Freeman as our president and someonenone said, ‘oh, what do you think about that?’ A president could look like this! So the director of Secret Service can look like this.”

Did any woman come to mind while portraying a powerful female?

“Women who have a strong voice and step out when they weren’t seen very much were an inspiration. It might be Shirley Chisholm, who ran for president, Barbara Jordan, yeah, strong but smart women.”

What was your first reaction to the script?

“Well, what drew me initially and foremost was to work with Antoine [Fuqua] and then that he was going to turn this character and make it a woman. It was one of those page-turners. If it doesn’t get me by 50 as we say, it’s not going to do it. But this one kept me to the end.”

“I don’t know if it’s my history of growing up or whatever but usually going through something and then being resilient, fighting back with your back against the wall, that’s what I’m drawn to and not so much about blowing up and make believe. I like stories about people, the humanity in us, and challenges.”

Of course this is a Hollywood movie, do you think something like this could ever happen?

“Hope not [laughs]. Hope not! Wow, oh my god! But with the tech crew that we had on the set I think we’re in good hands. Just sitting around having conversations and hearing about some of places they’ve been and things that they’ve done or are required of them, it went a long way to make me feel secure that this would not happen.”

After Bassett departed, a jubilant Antoine Fuqua enters the room saying before he evens sits down, “Anything Gerald Butler said is a lie.” Butler, who was also doing interviews for the film, had heaped a ton of praise on his director. And Butler is not the only one—all the cast members that preceded Fuqua hailed him as a director. Screenwriters Creighton Rothenberger and Katrin Benedikt also told me that Fuqua made the story more plausible by changing the day of the attack from July 4th to the 5th because security would be more lack on that day.

It goes without saying a film about terrorists who blow up the White House is no joke but Fuqua did have a blast. What was it like having to build a White House set and then blowing it up? “Of course the White House set had to be built. We made the phone call and they didn’t like that idea. Obama said, ‘I don’t think so.’ It was a complex operation. There wasn’t a lot of green screen; we built all those fences, all that stuff is real. People had to actually be on those fences; there was running, gunning and bullets flying.”

“It was complex but a lot of fun to do. Walking down those beautiful hallways was incredible. Some of the tech guys that had worked in the White House got chills. They were like, ‘this is amazing,’ and then I was like, ‘I can’t wait to blow it up!’ [laughs]. I was like a kid in a sandbox.”

Was it a conscious decision to have two very powerful women in this?

“I wanted great actors in the movie, period. But I never thought about it in the sense I wanted them to be women, if that makes any sense. Who are the best people for these roles? With Angela, I’ve wanted to work with her for years and Melissa Leo as well.

“I think the head of the Secret Service was written as a man and I thought why does it have to be a guy. Let’s get Angela but like in my mind I didn’t sit back and think, ‘oh they never did have the head of Secret Service as a woman in a movie. I just wanted to work with Angela.”

“I understand you had something to do with the final outcome of the script?” It was a little different. It wasn’t as grounded and as real and I said if you make it more real, if you make a version than I want to make then I’ll do it. They did and I got excited about the idea to attack the White House in a movie for fun, that’s a big event, why not?”

At what time did you hear about White House Down and what was your reaction? “First time I heard about it was actually after I read this script and they said there’s another movie being made, ‘White House Down,’” and it had Jamie Foxx and Channing Tatum in it. My reaction was, ‘great.’ Again, if you’re going to let me make a grittier version, my version of this film, then there’s room for both of us because Roland is a different director and you can give a director the exact same script and cause our visions are different and our approach is different and our life experiences are different, it’s just going to be different movies.”

“So it didn’t, sway me in any way. I didn’t think about it much. I wasn’t thinking about, I’m gonna beat Roland.” Was gun violence on your mind while making this film? “Always. Always on my mind. I have chil­dren. Always in my mind but you have to separate reality and movies, that’s our job and be responsible adults about the decision process of weapons in this country. There’s a process that needs to happen. It’s a tricky question because the bigger question is a bigger answer or dis­cussion rather than that but I don’t like guns as an individual personally ‘cause they’re built to do what you see in movies. Luckily in movies everybody gets to go home and be with their families but I think about it all the time.”
**THEATER** with Second Night Reviewer Audrey J. Bernard

Emilia Clarke & Cory Michael Smith make their B’way debut in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*

The world premiere of Tony Award winning playwright Richard Greenberg’s new play, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, opened on Wednesday, March 20, 2013 at the Cort Theatre (138 West 48th Street). Based on Truman Capote’s iconic masterwork, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, this stage adaption was directed by Sean Mathias stars Emilia Clarke (Holly Golightly), Cory Michael Smith (Fred) and George Wendl (Joe Bell).

The story is set in New York City in 1945. Fred, a young writer from Louisiana, meets the flirtatious Holly Golightly who is a man magnet. Everyone falls in love with Holly – including Fred. Herein lies the problem as he’s poor, and Holly is attracted to big spenders. As war rages on in Europe, Holly begins to fall in love with Fred – just as her past catches up with her.

The cast of *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* also includes Suzanne Bertish, Danny Binstock, Pedro Carmona, Elizabeth Anthony Gray, Murphy Guyer, Eddie Korbich, Paolo Montalban, Kate Cullen, Amanda Green, and bahçe. Breakfast at Tiffany’ s is produced on Broadway by Tony Long, John & Claire Caudwell, Off The Aisle Productions/Freitag-Mishkin, and Dominic Ianno in association with Robert L. Hutt, Michael Fong/John Schmidt, May Chu and Ilene Starger. (Photos courtesy Broadway.com)

The cast of *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* includes Derek (creative team for Breakfast at Tiffany’s)

**Director Neil Pepe’s Hands on a Hardbody revs up Broadway audiences**

Opening Night revelers trucked on over to the Brooks Atkinson Theatre (256 West 47th Street, NYC) to attend the new Broadway musical *Hands on a Hardbody* followed by a celebratory party at Roseland Ballroom.

Directed by Neil Pepe with musical staging by Sergio Trujillo, Hands on a Hardbody based on a book by Doug Wright, lyrics by Amanda Green, and music by Trey Anastasio and Amanda Green. The musical has revved up Broadway audiences who mightily cheer for an underdog to win a brand new truck that will hopefully give the winner a brand new lease on life.

In order to win the truck, the ten hard-luck Texans must keep at least one hand on the truck in order to win it knowing that only one of them will drive away with the American Dream. *Hands on a Hardbody* stars Keith Carradine, Allison Case, Hunter Foster, Jay Armstrong Johnson, David Larsen, Jacob Ming-Trent, Ronald McGowan, Hayley Dunmond, Keith Carradine, and Hillery (costume design), Kevin Adams (lighting design), Steve Canyon Kennedy (sound design), Trey Anastasio and Don Hart (orchestration), and Carmel Dean (vocal arrangements/musical direction). The La Jolla Playhouse production of *Hands on a Hardbody* is produced on Broadway by Broadway Across America – Beth Williams, Barbara Whitman/Latitude Link, Dede Harris/Sharon Karmo, Howard & Janet Kagan, and John & Claire Caudwell, Rough Edged Souls, Joyce Primm Schweickert, Paula Black/Bruce Long, and Off The Aisle Productions/Freitag-Mishkin. (Photos courtesy Broadway.com)
Great Performance

Co-creators Norman and Karpman brings Langston Hughes’ poetry to life

By Ernee B. Kelly  Drama Critic

It was startling to hear the distinctive voice of poet/playwright Langston Hughes opening the recent one-night-only performance of his poem, “Ask Your Mama” at Harlem’s handsomely refurbished Apollo Theatre. The epic poem it consists of twelve parts and is grounded in playing the Dozens (as in “Ask yo’ Mama”) was portrayed in several ways: the Manhattan School of Music’s Chamber Sinfonia, readings by spoken word artist, Roger Guenveur Smith, and the vocalizing of both mezzo-soprano Tesia Kwarteng and soprano Erin McGlover. But the headliners were the renowned Jessye Norman and jazz vocalist, Nnenna Freelon probably the main reason an enthusiastic audience filled the theatre from balcony to orchestra level. And we were rewarded with Norman’s thrilling harmonic leaps and Freelon’s inventive scatting! Fleshing out the music it ranged from cha-cha to opera to blues and jazz was the extraordinary visual landscape created by Kate Hackett. The back of the stage became a screen for a non-stop show of videos and stills, both color and black and white. Famous faces—such as Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and Sojourner Truth vied with clips of civil rights marchers or energetic break dancers and with stills of lunch counter sit-ins.

The two hour program was an evocative adaptation of one of Hughes’ lesser known works despite the frequent difficulty of understanding the poetry as sung overlapped and the orchestra played in full-throat. Kudos to co-creators Jessye Norman and composer Laura Karpman for bringing Langston Hughes’ poetry to life.

FOOTNOTE: Internationally renowned artist Michelle N’Degecillo was listed on the flyer with the other performers, but I did not see/hear her. She came from behind the curtain at the end of the show, so perhaps she was playing backstage or some such...[Dunno].

Off-Broadway

‘HONKY’ is all about race and racism

By Ernee B. Kelly  Drama Critic

Playwright Greg Kalleres’ biting, brilliant satire, “Honky” is all about race and racism. The n***** word and m***f*** are thrown around like confetti, but it’s effective, not overdone. Set in an unnamed city, “Honky” explores what happens when a Black youngster is shot dead. Because his sneakers are missing, it’s thought he was killed for his shoes. While this shocks some, it raises the marketing profile for those sneakers—SKYMAX15—in the eyes of Davis (Philip Callen), president of the company. He’s been looking for ways to make those sneakers as desirable to whites as they are to Blacks!

“Whites have to have things legitimized by Blacks,” Davis seriously insists to the shoe designer, Thomas (Anthony Gaskins) who is African-American and shocked to learn the ubiquitous ad for his invention was created by a white man using “ghetto slang.” Threatening to quit, Thomas shares his dilemma with his sister, Emika (Arie Bianca Thompson) who’s dealing with her own negative feelings about whites she works with as a psychotherapist. Complications abound—as they always do in satire—and the guilt feelings of both whites and Blacks are on full view here, as is the fear that keeps both races locked into stereotypes of the Other. Andie (Danielle Faitelson), a white woman, is asked by her African-American lover, “Is this a Black thing?” While a white man challenges a Black man, asking, “Is the n***** word yours too?” Even the most innocent-sounding phrases blow up in the speaker’s face, as Peter (Dave Droxler) administers, “I feel for your people.” Matters get hilariously surreal when Abe Lincoln and Frederick Douglass show up!

Throughout, playwright Greg Kalleres keeps the humor perking, and director Luke Harlan’s choreography even extends to the numerous scenery changes—actors enter and leave “in character”, holding hands in one instance. Roman Tataraowicz’ set made up of handsome rectangular floor-to-ceiling panels which silently open and close, facilitates the swift scene changes and the sound design of Brandon Wolcott keeps an upbeat rhythm going. All of one piece, “Honky” is a refreshing, funny, sometimes startling look at race and how it impacts the lives of contemporary Black and white folk. “Honky” is at Urban Stages on West 30th Street, Manhattan, closing April 15th.

*HONKY* cast (L-R) Phillip Callen and Anthony Gaskins

211 Community Impact Welcome to the Move for the City Program was held at the Newark Museum on Thursday, March 21. (PICTURED) Dr. Lauren Wells (Co-Founder/Executive Director), Dupre L. Kelly (Co-Founder/Chairman Board of Trustees), Reggie Nobles (Board Trustee/Move for the City Chair). Honorees included Dr. Larry Levert, Councilmember at Large Mildred Crump and WBLS air personality/Hip Hop Pioneer DJ Marley Marl (Photo: Ronnie Wright)
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Beacon April 4, 2013 - April 10, 2013 newyorkbeacon.net
Knicks and Pacers battle for second seed

By Derrel “Jazz” Johnson

With the Miami Heat going on a 27-game winning streak that was ended last week by the Chicago Bulls, the New York Knicks and the Indiana Pacers are battling for the second seed in the Eastern Conference.

The difference between the two and the three seed, if both teams advance in the first round of the 2013 NBA Playoffs, which begin on April 20th, will be where the series starts, and, more importantly, where it ends if there is a decisive game seven.

If you look at the schedule, the Pacers certainly have the easier one.

Of their remaining seven games, four are against playoff teams, including back-to-back games against the Brooklyn Nets in the Hoosier state and at Madison Square Garden versus the Knicks.

New York has two tough road games against playoff teams this week, versus Miami and Atlanta, and two next week, versus Oklahoma City and Chicago.

With three of those four teams still battling for playoff positioning, the Knicks can expect maximum effort.

Both the Pacers and the Knicks have played well without key components.

The Pacers are missing former All-Star Danny Granger, who only played five games this season, and will miss the rest of the season and undergo knee surgery.

The Knicks, meanwhile, have lost former All-Star Amar’e Stoudemire until at least the playoffs, and have played 10 straight games without All-Star Center Tyson Chandler.

Both Indiana head coach Frank Vogel and New York coach Mike Woodson deserve a great deal of credit for being able to keep their teams pushing ahead despite major injuries.

The New York Knicks have regained their winning ways, and are on an eight-game winning streak as of press time, and will have to keep that up if they want to secure the two seed in the conference.

The Pacers, winners themselves of five straight, including a huge road win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Monday, do not appear to be slowing down.

It may come down to their matchup at the World’s Most Famous Arena next Sunday, which will be a national game on ABC that Knicks and Pacers fans alike will watch closely.