



United Way Staff: CEO Bill Kitson (seated) with Jason Daniels, Stephen Vasquez and Robin Reeves

“I joined the United Way because it’s my passion. I’m always looking to make a positive impact on the lives of people and the United Way’s mission is changing lives.” – Jason Daniels

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This Strikes Us ...

A Sojourner's Truth Editorial

Barack Hussein Obama, U.S. Senator from Illinois, a possible – make that probable – candidate for president of the United States, the son of a Nigerian father and a white American mother and, above all, rock star, is soon to undergo more scrutiny than he could have imagined, or desired, not very many years ago.

Obama, who is currently examining the wisdom of announcing his candidacy, will undoubtedly be swayed by the crowds and adulation he draws wherever he goes. He is a galvanizing force in American politics. Not since 1968 and the brief campaign waged by Bobby Kennedy has a politician inspired such excitement.

But underneath the excitement lies a dose of harsh reality about the potential ugliness that an Obama campaign will also inspire among less-savory elements.

Barack Hussein Obama, after all, is African-American with an Arabic/Muslim-sounding name. As we approach 2008 one has to wonder if his timing could be any better ... or any worse?

Recall if you will what Tennessee's Harold Ford was subjected to when he ran for the U.S. Senate in November. One scurrilous ad pictured a white, blonde woman who insinuated that she and Ford had, well ... that insinuation was fairly easy to glean. That was an ad placed by the national Republican Party, by the way, not some local, backwater county organization.

And Ford is merely black.

Barack Obama is black, has a white mother and has a last name that rhymes – as Rush Limbaugh eagerly points out – with Osama and a middle name that is as Middle Eastern-sounding as just about anything this side of Muhammad.

And already conservatives and Republicans are taking opportunity to introduce the American public to the fact of Obama's middle name.

And what of the candidate himself?

Obama has a terrific chance to gain the Democratic Party's nomination. His primary opponent, U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton, has the name recognition, has the money, has the connections, has the political IOU's but she also has the baggage. So many people dislike the New York senator, primarily because they feel she cannot win a general election, especially against someone such as U.S. Senator John McCain of Arizona.

The rest of the Democratic field consists of no names. And that makes Obama a very hot commodity indeed. He has no money and he has no organization, but all of that can be corrected in a hurry if he decides to make his move, as announced, at the beginning of the 2007.

Then the ugliness will begin in earnest.

We hope that Obama does not shy away from the race because he is eager to avoid the scrutiny. If he decides not to run, we hope it is because of family considerations – he has two small children – or because he has determined that he cannot win and a campaign will do damage to the party's chances of capturing the presidency in 2008.

If those considerations are not show stoppers, bring it on, Obama. Let's get it all out on the table. The black thing, the name thing ... let's take a good, hard, national look at what we have here.

The opposition will point to Obama's relative inexperience in national, elective office. That's a fair comment, indeed. He has only been in the Senate since 2004.

But you have to wonder about experience on the national level. President George Bush ran a baseball team and dabbled in oil before he was elected as governor of Texas. When he was making his run for president, he famously told his advisors, especially Condoleezza Rice, that he knew nothing about foreign policy so he would have to be tutored on such matters. Apparently, he either didn't pay a whole lot of attention during class or his tutors were somewhat less than stellar.

But while Obama has not been on the national scene for very long, he did compile an admirable record as an Illinois legislator, displaying an ability to get laws passed and to work with members of both parties in order to be effective.

His speaking ability has become legendary in a very short while and his willingness to appeal to folks of all stripes as a man of faith will not make him an easy target for the religious right.

As he gathers strength, particularly is he earns his party's nomination, the easy target for his opponents will be his name and his color.

Make the run, Senator Barack Hussein Obama.

And, everyone else, fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

Community Calendar

December 8-Jan 19

• Bagley Housing Art Gallery: Divrse and United; Multi-media Christmas exhibit featuring 40 Detroit-area artists; 2715 Bagley, Detroit; M-F 9 to 5; Sat 1 to 5 pm: 313-964-5942

December 15

• Faith Friday Program: St Paul MBC; 7 pm

• Toledo City Councilman Michael Ashford's Christmas Party and Fundraiser: Radisson Hotel; 7 pm

December 16

• Baker's Keyboard Lounge in Detroit: Featuring Toledo's Ramona Collins; 9:30 pm; With Bobby Jones, Glen Oliver, Bobby Welch and Allan Barnes formerly of the Blackbirds
• Greater Harvest MBC: Choir Director and Musicians' Musical; "Let Everything that Has Breath Praise the Lord;" 6 pm: 419-474-3811

• Women in Ministry: First Seminar; "Can You Hear the Bell;" Warren AME; 9 am to 1 pm: 419-345-8602 OR 419-944-0973

• NOBMA/Sojourner's Truth/Committee of the Whole Christmas Party and Scholarship Fundraiser: Peacock Café; 8 pm: 419-243-0007

• African Cultural Initiative for Peace and Development Fundraising Celebration: MarSyl's; Noon to 3 pm; Live entertainment, drumming, dancing, storytelling; Proceeds help to fund ACIPD projects in Africa: 419-205-1334 or 419-478-6120 or 419-474-0006

December 17

• Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church: 53rd Anniversary Program; "A Look at Islam;" 10:30 am; Guest Speaker Dr. S. Zahaar Hassin of the Islamic Center

• Ziegler Christmas Party: F.O.P.; Food, entertainment, dancing and Santa; 3 to 8 pm

December 20

• Xmas Gifts for Children aged 2 to 12; Good News Bible Chapel: 419-241-2728

December 25

Merry Christmas!!

December 26 to January 1

• KWANZAA!! Wayman Palmer YMCA; 5 pm each day; sponsored by the Toledo Kwanzaa House Committee; 40th Anniversary

January 1

Happy New Year!!

A Few Events that Make a Very Merry Holiday Season!!

Nothing to do this weekend?

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You can eat, greet and meet all kinds of fabulous folks, dance the night away and, above all, contribute to some very worthy causes.

Toledo City Councilman Michael Ashford continues to collaborate to host the second annual Headliners Holiday Party at the newly re-

modeled Peacock Café at 2007 Monroe Street. Once again, there will be food, lots of meeting and greeting and entertainment provided by DJ Keith Success.

Then on Saturday evening, The Truth, the Northwest Ohio Black Media Association and the Committee of the Whole will collaborate to host the second annual Headliners Holiday Party at the newly re-

All proceeds from the Headliners Holiday Party go into the NOBMA scholarship fund for area college students.

If you have any questions about either event, dial 419-243-0007.

The Sojourner's Truth

Toledo's Truthful African-American Owned and Operated Newspaper

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My View

By Jack Ford
The Truth's Political Columnist

Anita Lopez is probably highly perplexed over the union organizing effort in her new shop—the Lucas County Auditor's office. Obviously this is a parting Christmas gift from Larry Kaczala. Lopez can not really fight it without appearing to be blatantly anti-union and any such posture by Lopez will reverberate for years to come.

Given that she has a bright statewide or judicial future, Lopez must tread lightly in this matter. As to the organizing effort, people have a right to protect their jobs. That is why workers organize.

Speaking of organizing, the latest maneuvering on Toledo City Council is over whether Joe McNamara changes the dynamics of the presidency of that body. Wilma Brown is talking to Mayor Carty Finkbeiner regarding the presidency and looking to see where Mark Sobczak is with his support. Michael Ashford and Frank Szollosi want to elect a Democrat to the presidency and strip Republicans of the chairmanship of committees.

Some Republicans would like to see Rob Ludeman

toppled because it opens up the opportunity to criticize the Finkbeiner regime. You cannot easily do that with Ludeman as president and George Sarantou as finance chairman.

As long as the two top positions on council are held by Republicans, they are part and parcel of the process and get credit for success and blame for failure alike. After a certain amount of time, it will alter any meaningful opportunity to run a credible campaign as a GOP candidate for mayor.

Sarantou wounded himself with the labor pay raise as it busted the budget with no place to go short of layoffs or a tax increase. There is absolutely no way the city budget can grow \$10 million in a few months. By the way, someone should introduce an ordinance precluding any submission of a budget-busting ordinance without an explanation of how it will be paid for. The trip to Wall Street this year to explain the city budget to underwriters will be interesting.

By press time, City Council will have indicated its fa-

vor or non favor on the assessments increase. Stuck inside this tax increase are new jobs for forestry positions even though the city had claimed to be catching up on trimming backlogs in the past several years. What happened to the special contracts to catch up on that backlog? This is a real problem of accountability.

Last week during a meeting of the Spanish Speaking Affairs Committee, a request was made for more financial support from the city. It was denied with a cavalier comment that "now is not the time for Hispanics."

I disagree. I believe the commission should be fully funded even if the mayor and council have to raise the money privately.

As to the pending judicial appointments, will Gov. Bob Taft appoint any candidates to the bench who have accepted donations in the past from Tom Noe? Is a connection with Noe a political death sentence, at least in the short run? If so, this knocks out Kaczala and Judge Gene Zmuda from a Taft last-minute appointment.



Jack Ford

Northwest Ohioans on the A-list with governor-elect Ted Strickland include County engineer Keith Earley and local health-care executive Doni Miller. Statewide minority Democrats include Senator C.J. Prentice, Representatives Barbara Sykes, Catherine Barrett and Columbus City Councilwoman Charleta Tavares. Former Cincinnati Mayor Dwight Tilley is on board as is Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman who is chairman of the transition committee for Strickland.

Look for Representative Edna Brown to land somewhere local pretty soon as she is term limited at the end of this next term.

Contact Jack Ford at jack@thetruthtoledo.com

Dear Editor,

On behalf of Save Our Children, Inc., its Board, members and supporters and the children that it serves, I want to thank Sojourner's Truth, and its reporter, Geneva Chatman, for your coverage of our first annual "Tribute to Rosa."

Your description of the December 1, 2006 event was compelling, and inspiring, reading. I am sure that your readers who were not at Warren Church that night will not want to miss next year's program.

The mayor was gracious in accepting our recommendation and Juanita Greene, and those who worked with her, put it all together. And, as indicated in your article, the Clarence Smith Community Choir's renditions were appropriate for the occasion and so were the other presentations, music, and speeches accented by pictures which said "you should have been here."

Pastor Otis Gordon, not only opened his heart, but also the doors of Warren Church, and made us all feel welcomed. I was especially proud of the ministers who were there to support the awardees, and of Pastor Robert Culp of First Church of God and the accommodations that he provided for our guests at the Dreamplex.

Pastor Phillip Battles, the new minister of the Church Without Walls, who kindly consented to play for Bonita's mini-concert the following Sunday night, hosted by Pastor Roberts and the Indiana Baptist Church, has been gracious.

Rev. Roberts invited me to preach Sunday morning and raised an offering for Save Our Children, a kind act, one which was typical of the "dean of preachers in Toledo."

Thanks to all of you, and I love you all.

Floyd Rose

Valdosta, GA

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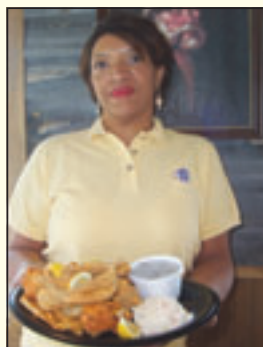
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The Keystone Kops Live on in Toledo

By Jan Scotland
Guest Columnist

The Keystone Kops (Kops) were a fictional police department in a series of short comedic films during the early 1900's. Their antics were typified by hilarious confusion and slapstick pranks. Their movies started off with a phone call to the chief of police, followed by 10 officers fighting to get into a tiny police car. This was followed by a crazy car chase, pies in the face, prop falls in mud, etc... It was so funny you lost track of whether they got the crook in the end.

Even though their short films only ran for five years, they are memorable enough that today activities in disarray are still referred to as Keystone Kops action.

I hate to say it but Keystone Kops come to mind when reviewing the economic development projects in the city of Toledo. For years we have followed the same old reactionary method of economic development. When we hear of a business potentially coming to or leaving Toledo (the call to the chief), we launch into action in what appears to be

a confused and disorganized fashion. These actions are typified by bickering between governmental units (**fighting to get in the car**); a myriad of special interest groups coming out for and against the project (**the car chase**); and individual politicians positioning themselves for the best voter count (**pies in the face and prop falls**).

You only have to look at the most recent economic activity to see my point. The exit of Owens Illinois, the Costco project at Westgate, the Southwyck Mall development, and last but not least the downtown Sports Arena project.

Owens Illinois, a company that received over 20 years of tax abatement with the promise of keeping thousands of jobs in Toledo, is now down to zero jobs in Toledo. Costco had to suffer through countless community complaints along with an administration change for the right to bring hundreds of jobs to Toledo. Southwyck Mall is no more than a future promise and the downtown Sports Arena is a circus way before they are able to rent out to one.

Of all the Keystone Kops economic development ef-



Jan Scotland

forts in the world, we seem to be the Keystone Kopsiest. What happen to the good old fashion idea of setting up a comprehensive economic development plan for the city of Toledo? Such a plan would allow us to create as well as react to our business environment. It would require commitment from all government entities as part of its creation as well as allow community and special interest to express and have their concerns' addressed. Politicians trying to maneuver for votes will be more transparent. City resources would be committed for the plan. Small and large business will have what they like – the appearance of commitment direction and stability.

Arrow Head Park in Maumee is a good example
(Continued on Page 6)



Toledo City Councilmen Joe McNamara, Michael Ashford and Wilma Brown

Wilma Brown's Last Campaign for City Council

Sojourner's Truth Staff

Last week, as Toledo City Councilwoman Wilma Brown was preparing to start her next political campaign, she was asked what her major project would be after she secured her victory in next November's general election.

"I can't have but one," she said referring to her efforts to bring change to the major corridors of her district, especially Dorr Street.

During a night of celebrating, reminiscing and mingling with friends, colleagues and supporters at the Sullivan Center at Gesu, Brown kicked off her campaign, her last campaign, for elective office.

"After 21 years of service, this is the kickoff of my final campaign," said Brown, "and a lot of neat things are happening."

The long-awaited financing for Brown's pet project — the Brownstones on Dorr

Street — seems to be finally in place. That project which she conceived — and elicited the support of developer Jackson McDaniel of the Four Seasons Housing Corp. — will provide flats and two-story housing units for low-income families that will sell for prices ranging from \$87,000 to \$95,000.

Future plans for that site at Door and Smead (on the east end) include the possible construction of 36 to 50 such units.

In addition to bringing the first new homes to Dorr Street since the 1930's, Brown also envisions making similar strides in enticing minority-owned businesses to move back to the corridor, and reviving the kind of commercial activity that Dorr Street has not seen since the 1960's.

Brown has served as the District 1 representative on Toledo City Council for nine years. Prior to that, she was on the Toledo Board of Education for 12 years.



This summer's groundbreaking ceremony at Brownstones on Dorr Street

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Food for Thought:

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-Tony Brown

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Teresa Fedor Sworn In for Second Senate Term

Sojourner's Truth Staff

State Senator Teresa Fedor was sworn in for a second term on Monday in a Lucas County Commissioners' chamber packed with family, friends and supporters. Fedor and her audience took the occasion to also celebrate her unanimous election, by her Senate colleagues, as the next leader of that body's Minority (Democratic) Caucus.

"When the governor and other leaders are in that proverbial little room where deals are cut, she will be there," said former Mayor Jack Ford who was responsible, when he was the leader of the Minority Caucus in the State House, for recruiting Fedor to run for statewide office in 2000. She served one term as representative before running for the Senate in 2002. Fedor



Senator Fedor with family being sworn in

will move up to the leader's chair from her most recent position as Democratic whip.

"She will be one of only a few people in that room," said Ford marveling at Fedor's "almost miraculous" rise in Ohio politics. "You are going to be a great leader," Ford told Fedor.

Mayor Carty Finkbeiner, former State Senator Linda Furney (whose seat Fedor claimed in 2002), U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur and Lucas County Commissioner Tina Skeldon Wozniak also praised Fedor's work ethic, skills and knowledge.

"What a day for us to celebrate," said Kaptur, "as the new minority leader is sworn in."

"She has worked harder than I could have imagined," said Furney, "and she has only just begun."

"I know we are going to make great progress," said Fedor after being sworn in by Lucas County Court of Common Pleas Judge (and judge-elect to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals) Thomas Osowik. "We are going to make a difference. My goal is to make Toledo a city that inspires greatness."



Jack Ford

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United Way: Connecting with the Community and Changing Lives

By Fletcher Word

Sojourner's Truth Editor

Are you absolutely sure you know what the United Way is up to these days?

Last week the United Way of Greater Toledo announced the results of its 2006 fundraising campaign – an increase for the second year in a row, by the way.

But the popular misconception about the organization is that these folks spend a few months of the year raising a huge bundle of money and then spend a few more months deciding who should receive the funds. And then, of course, they disappear until it's time to kick off the next fundraising campaign.



Bill Kitson

That's a misconception that the staffers of the United Way of Greater Toledo are eager to clear up. The United Way, they point out, is not merely a pass through for charitable donations. The United Way's mission, says Bill Kitson, president and CEO of the local agency, is about changing lives. And the key way to changing those lives, he says, is to point people who need help in the right direction.

"People don't know where to get help," Kitson says as he references a United Way 2004 needs assessment study that documented that particular issue as the number one problem for inner-city residents. "The number one need is [the lack of knowledge of] where to go for help for such things as child care and health care and our number one priority is to connect people to help."

To succeed in this mission, the United Way focuses its attention throughout the year on ensuring that the dollars it raises and dispenses are made available to resi-

dents through the auspices of family resource centers located in the neighborhoods they serve.

"We want neighborhood resource centers in every neighborhood and they cannot be a neighborhood resource center without a neighbor advisory committee," says Kitson rattling off the nine such centers in Toledo that the United Way funds and monitors year-round to make sure the members of the communities are getting connected to the help they need: the East Toledo Family Center, the Friendly Center, the Caldwell Community Center, the Grace Community Center, the Frederick Douglass Community Center, Aurora Gonzalez Community Center, the Monroe Street Community Center, Open Door Family Resource Center and Crossroads Family Resource Center.

The philosophy of working with neighborhood groups, rather than those that serve particular ethnic or racial groups, precludes some local agencies from receiving

substantial United Way dollars. "It is more important for us that people have access where they live rather than through a cultural connection," says Kitson.

For Kitson, a Rhode Island native and an 18-year United Way veteran who arrived in Toledo in May 2005, there is no casual relationship between dollars dispensed and services provided because "it's about changing lives" not just about raising money.

"Of course we want to raise lots of money and we are going to continue to be very aggressive in doing so," he says. But the money goes to those agencies who believe in the United Way's vision of how to connect people to help in their neighborhoods. In short, you don't do it the United Way's way, you don't get the funds.

And speaking of funds, there is more money to spread around since Kitson arrived in town. Last week, the local chapter announced that the 2006 campaign raised \$13,601,520, up from 2005's



The United Way staff celebrates the 2006 fundraising campaign results

\$13,345,262, an increase for the second straight year and the first time the United Way of Greater Toledo has had two consecutive increased campaigns since the 1990's.

"The most exciting news is that United Way's campaign has increased 10 percent over the last two years," says Kitson.

This year's increase, he says, is evidence that "the United Way is reconnecting with the community."

So since he came to Toledo, Kitson has placed the fundraising activities back on track and he has re-focused United Way's mission to bring help to those through their neighborhood resource centers. But there is another part of the equation that

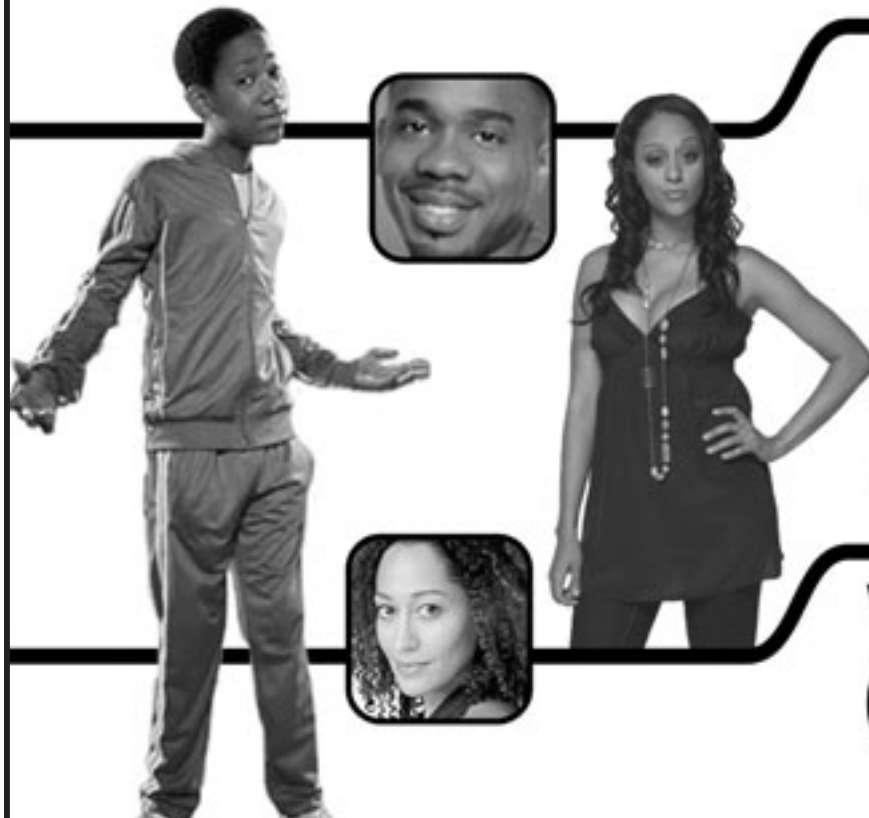
Kitson has sought to solve in his leadership role of this particular office – that of diversity among those who are also committed to changing lives.

"The United Way, in the past, got itself in different situations," says Kitson. "As it evolved, it ended up with an older, less diverse workforce. We can't do this work without looking like the community we are in."

"We absolutely are purposeful in making sure that we are a diverse organization," he says recalling that when he arrived, there were only six employees of color in his office – of the almost 50 full and part-time staffers. That number has doubled in

(Continued on Page 6)

FREE TO BE FUNNY



MONDAY

8pm **EVERYBODY HATES CHRIS**

8:30 **ALL OF US**

9pm **GIRLFRIENDS**

9:30 **THE GAME**

WT05-TOLEDO
THE CW

United Way: Connecting with the Community and Changing Lives

(Continued from Page 5)

18 months and now includes eight African-Americans and four Latinos. "More significantly are the leadership roles they have taken," he notes.

Three of those with significant leadership roles within the organization are Jason Daniels, director, Community Impact; Robin Reeves, development officer and Stephen Vasquez, development officer.

Daniels, a Toledo native and graduate of The University of Toledo, has been with United Way since August 2005. He is also a board member of the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo and the Interfaith Hospitality Network.

"I joined because it's my passion," Daniels says in response to a question from The Truth about why he became part of the agency. "I'm always looking to make a positive impact on the lives of people and the United Way's mission is changing lives."

Daniels' mission with the agency is to "make sure we are supporting quality programs and making sure we are spending donor's dollars appropriately." Recently he took on a new challenge — that of directing the United Way's African-American Initiative. The initiative is an outreach designed to "provide our people with the opportunity to give to an organization that supports our people," says Daniels.

As the agency's internal guiding force for the initia-



Jason Daniels

tive, Daniels plans to continue to bring African-American leaders and "the community to the table to have their input heard and to create new strategies."

During a recent visit to Robinson Junior High School, Daniels had the chance to speak with a dozen at-risk African-American male students in connection with a program that focuses on such youth. Recalling the impact that United Way and the Frederick Douglass Center had on his own life, that's the kind of impact Daniels intends to have with the agency. "I get to come back into the community and use United Way to help plan how to assist African-American males in our community."

Reeves joined United Way in March of 2006 although she has had a connection with the agency for quite a while. A Toledo native who attended Toledo Public Schools and Lourdes College, Reeves was an employee of the UAW for a number of years and worked with United Way's Impact Committees. She also was loaned to the agency during two of its previous campaigns. The agency and helping others had been part of her life for as long as she can remember.

"My parents had a lot to do with it," she says of her calling to help in the mission to change lives. "I've always seen them giving. They always said 'if someone needs help, you should help.'"

And, as she realizes, had United Way and the Frederick Douglass Center not been there for her as a child, "my life would have turned out differently."

As a development officer, Reeves duties include building relationships, bringing awareness to the community of the agency and raising funds.

Reeves speaks to the misconception that so many in the community have that all the agency does is raise money and hand it out. "A lot



Steve Vasquez

of people think that programs are [in place] because the government made it happen." She says. "I don't think people realize that the programs they use every day are made possible by donors who see the needs of the community."

Part of her responsibilities, therefore, is to let those in the community, particularly small minority-owned businesses, know that donors give, in part, to build networks — networks that have benefits for the businesses.

Vasquez, also a development officer, has been with United Way since February 2006. A Toledo native, graduate of St. Francis and Ohio University, Vasquez comes by his involvement in such non-profit organizations naturally. His father, Bob Vasquez, erstwhile candidate for Toledo City Council, is a licensed social worker and a director of The Twelve, Inc. a statewide non-profit agency that is involved with child welfare and mental health issues.

"Getting into non-profits was something I grew up with," says Stephen Vasquez.

Vasquez worked at Lourdes College after graduation especially with the college's efforts at recruitment in the Latino community. He was instrumental in starting the Latino Student Union there. He has also been involved in events such as the Diamante Awards, the Latino Youth Summit and the FLOC March for Justice.

Vasquez's fundraising efforts include the insurance and health care segments of

the community. He is also the agency lead for the Latino Leadership Initiative that will be constructed along the lines of the three-year-old African-American Initiative.

"We are trying to get together a big mix of community people, a group with a cross section of everybody," says Vasquez of that effort.

One of his primary tasks will be trying to overcome the skepticism of the community about United Way's commitment. "We'll be trying to show the [Latino] community that this won't be the typical lip service they've heard in the past," he says.

The United Way is above all striving to re-connect to the community on a year-round basis. In addition to the community resource centers the agency helps to fund, the staff also takes on the task of working with community institutions in order to complete its goal of changing lives.

Education, for example, is a matter of great concern. The Women's Initiative of the agency recently started a program — Caring Connections — at East Side Central Elemen-

tary School where 97 percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch. The goal of Caring Connections is to create "a safe, caring learning environment in each classroom and hallway," says Cindy Rimmelin, director of the Women's Initiative.

The program involves working with teachers and students in order to change the emotional climate that inhibits empathy and active listening. A vital component of the program entails getting parents involved in their children's education in a way in which current staffing levels at public schools do not permit.

"We believe that the integration of parents into the school environment is critical," says Kitson.

Education is clearly a hot-button item for Kitson. His agency has sought out numerous ways in which to have an impact in the community ... some of those ideas meeting with less success than others. "We know that after-school is a critical time [for students]," he says.



Cindy Rimmelin

"But [Toledo Public Schools] won't let us into the schools during that time."

We asked Kitson if he had seen a November 26 article in the New York Times Magazine by Paul Tough titled "What It Takes to Make a Student" in which the author writes of the research that shows how important it is for parents to talk to their children from the years zero to three in order for their offspring to develop both an adequate vocabulary and self-esteem.

The article further examines why the educational gap between the poor and the rich, between black and white children, is so difficult to close in a typical educational setting.

(Continued on Page 16)

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The Keystone Kops Live on in Toledo

(Continued from Page 3)

of having a plan. The city developed an industrial park. They marketed the park to area and national businesses and it used government monies to prepare the site for the targeted purposes. The result has been an overwhelming success with area businesses (including many Toledo businesses) flocking to

Maumee. To top it off, most of these businesses went to Maumee with no tax abatement.

Nothing about economic development is simple. There are no sure fire fixes to Toledo's economic woes. What has taken years to get where we are, will take years to turn around. But one thing seems certain, without a com-

prehensive plan, the Keystone Kops will remain alive and well in Toledo Economic development.

Ed. Note: Jan Scotland, owner of a State Farm Insurance Agency, was the co-chairman of the Lucas County Kan Blackwell for Governor campaign.

The Sojourner's Truth Education

Education Section • Education Section • Education Section • Education Section • Education Section • Education Section

Guest Editorial: Retaining the Best Teachers and Staff at TPS

By Larry Sykes

Toledo Board of Education

As a member of the Toledo Board of Education, I would like to clarify a few points made in a recent Blade editorial. Let me start by saying that the school district is made up of more than just teachers. Let's not forget the principals, the secretaries, the food service workers, the building operators, the administrators and the other employees who operate our schools.

With that said, it is not only the hardworking teachers from Toledo Public Schools who have not received pay raises in five years, no district employee has been given a salary increase during that timeframe. This is a reality

our employees live with everyday. While that fact hangs over our heads, I am proud to report that our employees' dedication to the district has not wavered nor have they lost sight of our mission to provide the best possible education to area young people.

It's true that some teachers have received incremental salary increases because of the years of service they have given to the district or because they have completed a higher education degree or professional certification. Don't kid yourself; this level of commitment to further their career came at a price. As the district does not offer a tuition reimbursement plan, teachers and other district

employees who choose to go back to school must pay for their educational accomplishments out of their own pockets. Many take out second mortgages, borrow money from family or work additional jobs to attain their educational goals.

I found the teacher salary comparisons made by The Blade between TPS and Ottawa Hills or Washington Township school systems totally unfair. A true comparison would have matched Toledo against another large urban school district, not a smaller suburban system.

Teaching is not merely a profession; it's much more than that. Teaching is a spirit, a passion, a challenge and a commitment that those who

work to educate our future leaders choose to fulfill. As we move toward the New Year, we realize that the district is facing a large deficit. It will take everyone to make concessions in an effort to move forward. The threat of a strike by our teachers is an obstacle we don't need to have standing in the way of progress.

Now is the time, more than ever, that we all need to come together in support of our students. I have been involved with TPS for more than 30 years. When I first ran for the school board in 1997 I made a promise to the community that I would work tirelessly to make Toledo's public school system better. Part of that commitment is true yet

today and to me that means standing by our teachers, our principals, our parents and most importantly our students. If we turn our backs on the children when times get tough, what kind of message are we sending? I am reaffirming my promise to make TPS the best it can be and that includes paying all of our employees a competitive salary.

In closing, in my role as a TPS Board member I may not have always said or done what some would believe is right. I ask you to blame my head and not my heart. One thing that I know is right is that our Board must come together and do what's right for the children in our community. Everyone is aware



Larry Sykes

that Toledo's economic and overall well-being cannot be separated from the level of success that the school system achieves. That means we need to work as a team so our school district can remain a competitive and viable asset to our city. If the school system fails so will the community and the city.

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INTERESTED BIDDERS: TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS – WESTFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sealed bids will be accepted by the Board of Education of the Toledo Public School District until **1:00 p.m. on January 10, 2007**, at the Toledo Public Schools Treasurers' Room 3, 420 E. Manhattan Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43608, for all labor material and supervision necessary for the Westfield Elementary School Bid, as more fully described in the drawings and specifications for the project prepared by The Collaborative., and will be opened publicly and read immediately thereafter.

Bid Documents for the project may be examined at the F.W. Dodge plan rooms in Maumee and Columbus, Builders Exchange in Toledo, University of Toledo – Capacity Building, E.O.P.A. – Hamilton Building, Northwest Ohio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, The Plan Room in Ann Arbor, Construction Association of Michigan, and Ohio Construction News.

Bidders may obtain copies of the documents starting **December 13, 2006** which can be purchased from **Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Rd., Toledo Ohio 43615** Phone: **419-385-5303**. Drawings may be obtained on **CD-ROM for no cost with the purchase of the specifications**.

A PREBID CONFERENCE is scheduled for **December 28, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.** at Toledo Public Schools' Board Room, 420 E. Manhattan Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43608

If you have any questions, or if you need additional information, please direct all questions in writing to **Don Hill, LGB-LLC** fax (877) 281-0784 or by phone at (419) 776-5600.

Bid Item No. 1 Site Work	\$	447,070.
Bid Item No. 2 General Trades	\$	3,345,704.
Bid Item No. 3 Fire Protection	\$	96,500.
Bid Item No. 4 Plumbing	\$	312,700.
Bid Item No. 5 HVAC	\$	1,068,800.
Bid Item No. 6 Electrical	\$	750,200.
Total Estimate:	\$	6,020,974.

Hundreds of Toledo's Most Prominent African-American Leaders, Business Men and Professionals Prepare for Centennial Celebration

Members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, the Nation's Oldest Predominantly Black Fraternity Celebrates 100 Years of Service

The Northwest Ohio chapters of the United States' oldest, black, inter-collegiate fraternity is proud to announce its Centennial Celebration taking place December 16 and 17 at the downtown Park Inn (Formerly the Radisson Hotel), located on

101 N. Summit St.

To commemorate 100 years of service, local members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity invite the entire community to join them for two days of special events and festivities. Highlights of the weekend include a public program highlighting the fraternity's social service efforts as well as

the extravagant and highly anticipated, Centennial Black and Gold Ball.

The complete schedule of events includes the following:

DECEMBER 16, 2006

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Public Program – A View of Alpha Phi Alpha Community Involvement

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Black and Gold Reception - at the Park Inn (Former Radisson Hotel)

9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Centennial Black and Gold Ball – at the Park Inn (black tie)

DECEMBER 17, 2006

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Gospel Luncheon featuring vocalist, Anita Sanders – at the Park Inn

The Public Program is free however tickets for the ball and luncheon can be purchased by contacting Rich-

ard Brown III via email at robrown974@aol.com or by phone at 419-290-1569.

Nationally, the fraternity boasts a membership comprised of some of America's most influential men. These men include: Lionel Richie, Judge Joe Brown, Dennis Archer, Cornel West and Marc Morial. Locally, members continue in the fraternity's rich tradition. Some of the area's most known members of Alpha Phi Alpha include active members: Richard Jackson, long-time Toledo Public School Administrator; Judge Charles Doneghy; Lancelot Thompson, PhD; Dr. Fred Guy, DDS; Eric Stockard and others. Honored deceased members are include Lucas County Commissioner William Copeland, Waymon Usher and Dr. Michael Shaw.

Don't Let Your Child Be Left Behind

Sojourner's Truth Staff

Jonas Education and Mt. Nebo Missionary Baptist Church have joined forces to offer parents and students a tutorial assistance program in math, reading and writing.

The community outreach program will utilize the federal government's "No Child Left Behind" monies to help tutor kindergartners through 12th graders with proficiency tests and with the "basic skills of reading, writing and math," said Rev. Cedric Brock, pastor of Mt. Nebo.

"We are trying to reach into the schools and benefit the students," said Brock last week.

"We have to really fight illiteracy, state by state, district by district in order to increase vocabulary and math skills," said Quinton



Rev. Cedric Brock (seated) with Keith Agdanowski of Jonas Education and church member and volunteer David Jones.

Washington, co-director of Jonas Education. "We are operating as a Third World country [in education]. And we have kids who are at the bottom of the barrel."

The free tutorial program will use the services of certified teachers and other professionals from the commu-

nity in an after-school timeframe at Mt. Nebo. Brock said that they are preparing to assist between 30 and 40 students. For more information, call 419-243-1474 or contact through the website at www.blacktoledo.net/mountnebo.html.

Fresh Start Academy Offers Free Tutoring

Students and parents are now able to sign up for free tutoring services by the Fresh Start Academy in math and reading for grades K-8. Parents can register their students for January sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays or on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Mt. Pilgrim Church. Call Chris Stewart at 419-490-8438 for more information.

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Toledo Federation of Teachers Hosts National Board Recruitment Drive

By Sojourner's Truth Staff

The Toledo Federation of Teachers (TFT) and the Committee of the Whole for the Quality of Life in the Black Community (COW) collaborated to host a recruitment reception for prospective candidates for National Board certification on the evening of Thursday, Nov. 30 at the Toledo Hilton Hotel.

"National Board certification is very significant and very valued by TFT," said TFT President Francine Lawrence as she opened the program. "Our mission is focusing on what matters most – student achievement – and nothing matters more in defining teacher quality. This program allows our profession to set very high standards. I know that we as a union need to aggressively pursue and recruit and retain high-quality teachers for our schools."

National Board Certification is a joint project of the American Federation of Teachers and the National

Education Association which takes candidates through a rigorous, year-long testing and demonstration of teaching skills. According to the program's literature, the standards "describe the highest level in teaching in different disciplines and with students at different development levels." The standards represent a consensus among teaching professionals about those matters that teachers should know and be able to do.

For those who pass the NBC requirements, local and state school districts generally provide for an increase in salary. There are over 40,000 NBC teachers in the nation.

But in Toledo, there is a dearth of minority and male NBC teachers and the purpose of last week's reception was to begin a recruitment drive to correct that situation. All of the NBC teachers in the Toledo Public Schools district were invited and they were asked to bring a minor-

ity or male teacher with them to the reception. About 20 such prospective candidates were on hand.

"We want to place special emphasis on the recruitment to the national board process among minority and male teachers, both of whom are underrepresented," said Lawrence.

"The Committee of the Whole would like to extend a salute to all of you who are certified and to all of those who may become certified," said Bernard "Pete" Culp, chairman of the COW, as he recognized the evening's visitors. Culp emphasized the importance of the COW assisting "TFT and the school board" in their mission of improving the educational achievement of the district's students.

There are a number of reasons for the COW's participation in such a collaborative effort such as recruiting minority teachers to become national board certified, said Culp, but the number one reason is the importance of education itself.

Nancy Schwartz, a staff person with the National Board, was also on hand to brief the audience on the process for applying for the procedure.

The process of becoming board certified has some costs attached to it for the candidates, however TFT has partnered with the University of Findlay to help defray substantial portions of that cost, explained Kay Shrewsbury, a retired national board certified teacher who serves as the coordina-



TFT National Board Certified teachers

tor of the TFT Support Group for candidates.

Three members of the district's school board were in attendance – President Darlene Fisher, Vice President Deborah Barnett and Steve Steel, Ph.D. – as was Acting Superintendent John Foley.

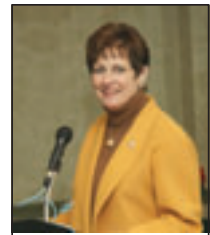
Much of the evening's presentation for the prospective candidates was spent in explaining not only how certification is achieved but also why a teacher would want to subject him or herself to such a rigorous ordeal. "If you are a good teacher, you want to do better all the time," summed up Misael Martinez, Spanish teacher at Rogers High School, who received his certification several years ago.



Deborah Carlisle, Kaye Cook, Sonya Liggins, and Jackie Flower



Pete Culp



Francine Lawrence

All Photos On This Page Courtesy of Shelly Stark



Francine Lawrence and Misael Martinez

HOMework HELP 2006-2007 Schedule

The Toledo-Lucas County Public Library offers FREE Homework Help assistance twice a week (except on Friday) to early elementary school-age children

through sixth grade.

Helpers assist young people during after-school hours. The Library does not provide Homework Help when school is not in session.

Below is the Homework Help Schedule for 2006-2007:

- Birmingham Branch Library, 203 Paine Avenue – Mon & Wed (3:30-5:30 p.m.)
- Kent Branch Library, 3101 Collingwood Avenue – Wed & Thurs (3:30-5:30 p.m.)
- Lagrange Branch Library, 3422 Lagrange Street – Mon & Tues (3:30-5:30

p.m.)

- Locke Branch Library, 806 Main Street – Mon & Wed (4-6 p.m.)
- Mott Branch Library, 1085 Dorr Street – Mon & Wed (4-5:30 p.m.)
- South Branch Library, 1736 Broadway – Tues & Thurs (4-5:30 p.m.)
- Toledo Heights Branch Library, 423 Shasta Drive – Mon & Tues (4-6 p.m.)
- Children's Library at Main Library, 325 Michigan Street – Mon & Wed (4-6 p.m.)

For more information, please call 419.259.5207.

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Advocating For Your Child Who Is Having Trouble Learning

By Sharman W. Dennis
Guest Columnist

I am an educator. When I began my quest to become an educator I was in high school and had volunteered at a facility that served children with special needs. That experience led me to pursue a degree in elementary education. I was going to teach elementary education but eventually zeroed in on those children who were developing differently. That pursuit led me to the best degree I could ever have obtained, a degree in special education.

This degree was and is still special to me because I was in a program that focused on teaching children not labels. I was taught to look at the child and observe his/her strengths and needs. Parents and teachers – but parents in particular – need to know that the field of special education is a very useful one if the teachers with degrees in special education are trained properly. By properly I mean that the teacher should be teaching children by focusing on their strengths first and by how to strengthen their needs second.

The teachers should also be teaching students who are diagnosed with a disability – developmental, educational or social/emotional needs. Again, they should not teach to a label. All too often I hear

teachers say “I am working with LD kids.” Kids are kids first.

So as a parent what should you expect if your child is in need of special education services? First you want to know from the regular classroom teacher and from those who evaluate your child exactly what the problems are that interfere with his/her learning. You also want to know the things your child does well. Often teachers focus on the needs without any knowledge of the strengths of the student or how to channel those strengths to help the student's needs.

You also want to make sure that no meetings or evaluations of your child have occurred without your consent and, if meetings or evaluations have occurred, you want to make sure the school followed established policy or law.

You want the information about your child to be presented in a manner that you can understand. The information should be understandable whether you have a GED or a Ph.D. in engineering. You should never sign anything at any meeting pertaining to your child's needs unless you fully understand all of the material presented. You can always ask for a copy of the information to review and sign at a later date.

As an educational advo-

cate I suggest that, if you have any concerns about such a meeting, you have an advocate attend with you. When choosing an advocate look for one who has knowledge related to education and who knows the law – not just the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act) 2004 – but other pieces of legislation as well that may help improve your child's developmental, emotional, educational and social development.

A good advocate will provide you, the parent, with information and will support you in the meeting, but will not speak for you. An appropriate advocate remembers that you are the parent and that he or she is supportive of your role.

Remember special education services can be as therapeutic as they should be but you as the parent have to know what to expect.

Ed. Note: Sharman W. Dennis is an educational advocate and the CEO of Global Enrichment Solutions, LLC a company that provides advocacy training, evaluations, therapeutic services and tutoring. She may be reached at 202-882-2533 or by email at global.enrichment@aol.com.

Owens Student Group Participates in Worldwide Initiative To Fight Hunger and Low Literacy Rates, Dec. 14

The Owens Community College student chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society is encouraging area residents to help in the fight against hunger and low literacy rates by donating a canned good or children's book as part of a worldwide initiative titled “Project Graduation: Feed a Body, Feed a Mind” on Thursday, Dec. 14.

Established in 2002, the civic engagement program is a global initiative collectively coordinated through more than 500 Phi Theta Kappa community college chapters located in the United States, Canada, Germany and Guam, among other countries. Since the program's founding, more than 190,000 food items and 190,000 books have been

collected and presented to needy organizations.

Canned goods and books will be accepted from 8:30-10 a.m. and 6-8 p.m.

on Dec. 14. The collection point will be located in the hallway outside

the Student Health and Activities Center gymnasium, where commencement ceremonies will occur later that evening starting at 7 p.m. All donations will be used to help local relief agencies and literacy organizations throughout Northwest Ohio.

Phi Theta Kappa was established in 1918 by the presidents of eight Missouri junior colleges for women. In 1924, the international organization was expanded to include all two-year colleges. To date, more than one million individuals have been inducted into the inter-

national honor society.

The overall mission of Phi Theta Kappa is to recognize academic excellence among two-year college students, provide opportunities for leadership training and an intellectual climate for the exchange of ideas and ideals. In addition, the society continues to promote among its members the four standard hallmarks: scholarship, leadership, service and fellowship. Owens' chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, which includes more than 350 members, is one of the largest honor societies in Ohio.

For more information about project graduation, call (567) 661-7209 or 1-800-GO-OWENS, Ext. 7209.



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"Nobody's Fault But Mine" Staged to Benefit 3-D Academy

By Geneva J. Chapman,
Sojourner's Truth Drama Critic

"3-D Academy is located on the campus of Braden United Methodist Church," says Royce Durden, director of the school. "3-D Academy is a high school. Our goal is to provide a private school in Toledo's inner city."

A benefit performance for 3-D Academy of Patrice Tolbert's "Nobody's Fault But Mine," a gospel play, was staged Saturday, December 2, 2006.

The play opened with a spirited rendition of the title song, then quickly shifted gears as a wannabe playa (Rob Andrews) in the guise of a successful business executive started sexually harassing his assistant, a Christian woman of high virtue (Tonya Davis). Mocking her beliefs, the arrogant black, upwardly mobile professional or B.U.M.P. had rejected God following the death of his father from a stroke.

His mother, played by Cynthia Drane-Valentine, provided comic relief and a reality check for "ol' boy" when she dropped by for a surprise visit.

"Paul Laurence Jensen, you've always been intelligent," she said. "I may not be educated or 'high society,' but I'm your mother and the Word of God says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be longer on the earth which the Lord thy God giveth you.' You keep this up and your days are going to end today!"

An experienced performer, Drane-Valentine picked up the slow pace that bogged down the first scene of the play when she entered in Scene Two.

Although he certainly looked the part of the up and coming executive, Andrews didn't seem to understand his character as the play began. There were definite sparks of brilliance when his character seemed to come alive (particularly at the close of Scene Two when he gets a 'booty call' from his femme du jour, "Alice," played by Stacey Mitchell), but there were too many moments when he spoke as if he was uncomfortable with the lines and didn't quite know what his character should be doing or feeling.

At one point, he even broke the fourth wall and spoke directly to the audience, a theatrical faux pas.

For a while, it seemed that another good play was going to be flawed by amateur performances (with the exception of Drane-Valentine's) until two more characters showed up in Scene Three. "Paul's" brother, "John" (Timothy Sherman) and his son played by Justin Blackshear fleshed out Tolbert's well-written script and gave her characters life.

Their scenes with Drane-Valentine elevated what started out as a mediocre production to a much higher level that included some moments of near perfection. Sherman's singing voice immediately captured the audience when he made his first entrance and he kept them captivated for the rest of the show, a feat not even some seasoned actors can accomplish very often.

Playing a single father, raising a 16 year-old son after his wife has left him, Sherman seemed to understand all of the difficulties

the parent of a troubled adolescent might face, although he doesn't look old enough to know this from personal experience.

Although Blackshear was only on the stage briefly during his first appearance in the play, it was evident that he knew his character, as well, portraying him as a sullen, resentful young man with a definite chip on his shoulder and unresolved issues with his father.

Then it was back to the mediocre as the action went back to the boring executive's boring office—neither the man nor the setting was scripted that way by the playwright—with his tedious pursuit of his uninterested secretary. From the moment "Paul" started 'chasing her around the desk' in Scene One, exchanges between him and his secretary, "Sharita," seemed stiff and forced, lacking the necessary tension that Tolbert's script dictated and that would have been there in more capable hands.

There was little friction between the two, however, and their interactions just seemed awkward. Their failure to grasp their characters distracted the audience from Tolbert's great dialog when they resorted to flippant delivery of important lines and much too much extraneous movement that just made them look uncomfortable.

While "Sharita" was adequately indignant (although lacking the quiet dignity of a woman of true class and virtue), "Paul's" 'smooth lines' came off as feeble attempts at the kind of coolness that really can't be faked, except by really good actors. A surprise call from his already forgotten fling from the night before inspired a great line from Tolbert. "She acts like we're in some kind of relationship. We're not even friends. I'm going to have to take her off my list."

Unfortunately, the delivery of that line was not as good as the line itself, but the audience got the idea. The bland proceedings got a sudden jolt of energy when "Paul"

got a surprise visit from his brother, "John." The contrast between the two brothers, aside from the obvious one written into the script, was so evident in this one scene when the actors playing those roles were both on stage.

Sherman's character connected with Davis' "Sharita" immediately, giving Davis, who had previously seemed ill-at-ease on stage, a new dimension to a character that could very well be played one-dimensionally. The chemistry between the two didn't just come from the script—it was natural and electric.

In Tolbert's skillful hands, flirtatious dialog between two characters who you know will end up together, is better than any of those plays that come to the Stranahan. Instead of heavy-handed, obvious and often crude lines that hint at sex and lust, Tolbert's characters always flirt with each other more subtly and with taste and good character, because after all, in gospel plays, it's always the virtuous characters that get to fall in love and live 'happily ever after.'

Following the 'love connection' moment in the script, Andrews had his big moment, a passionate monologue at the end of the scene. Monologues are difficult and not every actor can do them, not even some trained professionals. Needless to say, given Andrews' performance up to that point, the monologue was lacking in passion and energy. Instead of speaking quietly and emphatically, building to a crescendo of emotion and volume, Andrews started the short monologue yelling shrilly and continued this diatribe until he uttered his last line, much to my relief.

Luckily, the next scene featured the three actors who gave the best performances in the play: Drane-Valentine, Sherman and Blackshear. Real tension could be felt when father and son argued and real tenderness filled the

Maumee Theater auditorium when mother and son shared their feelings.

Although one of my "Top 10 Mistakes Made By Gospel Plays" is that the dialog is often too preachy, these plays are not just dramas, but also serve as ministry, so there has to be some preaching. Well, Drane-Valentine's character definitely did some preaching! However, Tolbert has a knack for giving us a 'sermon' without overdoing the preaching part.

There's a fine line between too much preachiness and just enough and Tolbert's plays are usually right on that line. While the two main female characters in "Nobody's Fault But Mine" were both given most of the task of giving the message of the play or 'preaching' to the audience, Drane-Valentine's character bore the bulk of that burden, just as mother's do in real life.

I actually felt like I was listening to my own mother on the telephone, quoting scripture and preaching to me (while I hold the phone away from my ear!) as Drane-Valentine spoke. Just as he had great chemistry with Davis in the previous scene, Sherman's chemistry with Drane-Valentine was great in the last scene of Act One.

They sang two songs together, harmonizing exquisitely. Their last number was a spirited number that had mother and son both filled with the Holy Ghost. Despair followed joy, however, and John's teenage son ran away from home as the curtain closed on Act One. Another exchange between boss and secretary that started out strained and stilted opened Act Two when she went to his penthouse digs in the middle of the night with an urgent message from his brother. After yet another preachment from "Sharita," the two actors finally seemed to settle into their characters and become comfortable with each other. Part of this was due to some unexpected

(Continued on Page 12)

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"Nobody's Fault But Mine" Staged to The Truth in Music Benefit 3-D Academy 2006

(Continued from Page 11)

comedic talent exhibited by Andrews. Who knew he had perfect comic timing!

His reaction to "Sharita's" spontaneous prayer of supplication and his deliver of Tolbert's witty dialog was the first glimpse of some sustained real acting talent he'd given the audience the whole evening. "Paul's" subsequent attempt to seduce "Sharita" was hysterical and the previously stiff Andrews' even managed to look desperate, like Casanova trying to get Mother Theresa into a compromising position. Perhaps Tolbert should have given him a few more funny lines earlier in the show!

As the actor finally seemed to relax in his role and own it, he became more and more believable and uproariously hilarious. His subsequent performance was so good, I wanted to yell "Do over!" and start the play again to see how Andrews would do those boring scenes now that he seemed to know who "Paul" was.

The best moment Andrews had in the performance, playing "Paul" as Tolbert wrote him, was when he reacted to a call from his nephew who asked him to pick him up at Oakwood and Detroit. "Not in the ghetto!" he screamed as if he'd just been diagnosed with SARS, bird flu and the bubonic plague.

Andrews' skill with comedy reminded me of Bill Cosby and I'd love to see him do more comedic roles in the future, rather than a dramatic leading role that he is ill-suited for. Andrews' grasp of his character didn't come a moment too soon, because "Paul's" life came to a tragic end at Oakwood and Detroit.

As a player in the passion play that is salvation, "Paul" was lost, but not before telling his adoring nephew not to follow his example. In a feat of vocal dexterity, Blackshear sang a plea to God that should have opened up the very heavens and echoed in the Court of the Most High.

Showing directorial mastery, Tolbert overlapped a reprieve of Blackshear's number with a mother's lament for her son, as Drane-Valentine's character learned of "Paul's" demise. The two actors sang the simple hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour," getting more applause than any song all evening up until that moment.

Taking a solo turn, her voice hoarse and cracked from overuse, Drane-Valentine transformed that simple

hymn into an aria worthy of an opera diva, wrought with all the grief and pain of a mother who has lost a child, emoting as only a seasoned professional can. Under Tolbert's careful direction, the actors did not overact, which often happens in those Gospel plays at the Stranahan, turning tragedy into slapstick comedy.

Blackshear and Drane-Valentine displayed the proper amount of pathos that such a devastating loss requires without letting their performance deteriorate into cheesy melodramatics.

However, the next scene, a funeral service, did start out as a kind of burlesque side show with way too much "a weepin' and a wailin'." This departure, which seemed intentional on Tolbert's part, provided some needed comic relief, which was well-placed since, for some reason, black audiences often seem uncomfortable with tragedy on stage and tend to laugh to ease the tension anyway. Giving them the opportunity to laugh appropriately was genius on Tolbert's part.

And laugh they did as several characters literally 'fell out' during the funeral, screaming and carrying on like paid mourners. Tolbert's true genius, however, is her theatrical instinct, which tells her exactly when to go for the dramatic jugular. She did just that with Neall Goodloe's portrayal of the pastor and eulogist, who brought the laughter to an abrupt end as he ministered to those in need, making characters that were moments before the objects of ridicule, the recipients of the audience's collective empathy.

Giving the final message of the play, a message of salvation and redemption that can only come through acceptance of Christ, Goodloe's character's words resonated with the audience, as well as the fictional characters onstage. This message was so powerful, Blackshear's character's acceptance of Christ at the close of the funeral seemed more like a natural response to

Goodloe's 'invitation to Christ,' rather than the predictable end of the play.

This is how Tolbert surpasses lesser writers: we know what's going to happen, but don't feel cheated by foreseeing that outcome because the journey getting to the inevitable conclusion is so delightful.

Speaking of conclusions, Blackshear pulled out all the stops singing "How Excellent Is Thy Name," showing a depth of emotion and a mastery of music far beyond his years. This young actor shows great potential and will be a major player on stages in Toledo and elsewhere if his performance in "Nobody's Fault But Mine" is any indication of his incredible talent.

In a show-stopping finale that rivaled Broadway's best, the cast sang and/or moved in rhythm to the music, creating one of the most electrifying and energized scenes I'd seen on a stage since the Waterville Playshop's production of "Ragtime" a few years ago.

On a nearly bare stage, the actors all dressed in funeral black, juxtaposed next to the red curtained backdrop, infused the emotions of their characters into a theatrical supernova that set the stage afire with spiritual radiance to send a final message to the audience: God loves you and all He wants is for you to accept Him and the salvation He gives so freely. There was joy and revelation on that stage, an anointing that I have never seen in any Gospel plays accept the ones written right here in Toledo by Tolbert, Bonita Adams, Beverly Lear and Denise Williams (and perhaps my own little effort with JUNETEENTH).

Productions like this need our support and our attention. We've got some of the best talent and writers right here, right now. I put them right up there with Tyler Perry for providing entertainment and "The Passion of the Christ" for providing a true Gospel message.

Next time you want to see a *real* gospel play, don't go to the Stranahan; go see

a play at Adams' ETM production or find out when Tolbert is doing another one of her productions. You'll spend less money, have a better time, get a scripturally-based message and give needed support to local artists.

Toledo could very well flourish as the gospel play capital of the nation with the reservoir of talent we have here, but your support is needed to make that happen.

Ed. Note: Geneva Chapman is a 30-year veteran of the theatre, having performed and acted in plays throughout the Midwest. Her work has been featured at the Chicago-Dramatist workshop, in numerous local and regional productions and in a national tour of plays about HIV/AIDS produced by her brother, James Chapman of Chapman's Spoken Word.

Her play, JUNETEENTH, has been performed at "Juneteenth" celebrations at The University of Toledo and The Toledo Museum of Art.

Year End Review Part II

By Michael Hayes
Minister of Culture

Yeah, I knew I'd get a few emails when I said that India.arie's latest joint wasn't all that I hoped it would be in last week's Part I of my year-end wrap up.

But even though I got a few responses from folks who were shocked, I got a few more from peeps who agreed.

That's the thing with entertainment, people evolve and their sound and their styles don't always offer the same appeal. Even though we might miss how India.arie usually puts it down, there's still great music being made by familiar and fresh faces. Of course, on the R&B front, we lost a true legend in Gerald Levert, ya'll.

If you catch Tom Joyner's morning show, you might hear the tribute Keith Sweat recently put out to honor his big homie. Also big in 2006 was the return of Justin Timberlake as a pop/R&B force to be reckoned with. I read somewhere peeps were like "who gave J.T. his ghetto pass back?" - LOL. And honestly, I'm still not feelin' how he distanced

himself from Janet Jackson after HE caused her infamous wardrobe malfunction.

Ain't that crazy...one black person, one white person involved in the same exact "controversy," yet one person is vilified and another is completely untouched by the incident?

But aside from all the hoopla, Justin Timberlake had multiple formats on lock this year as everyone failed to resist liking his two blazing singles. When it comes to the hip-hop world, BEEF hit an all-time high in sheer absurdity this year.

Hold up—I can't even call it BEEF. A dis-song doesn't equate to actual beef.

But no one is even taking the time to sort through all the madness these days.

Cam'Ron goes against Jay Z, 50 Cent goes against Puff ...etc., etc.

And even though Jay Z was once trying to sign Lil Wayne when Cash Money looked as if it might be about

(Continued on Page 13)



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The Truth in Music 2006

Year End Review Part II

(Continued from Page 12)

to go under, Weezy has made Hov the target of a few recent criticisms even going so far as to say that he's just flat out better than Jigga.

In the words of Flava Flav: "Wowwwwww."

Crazy Industry Happenings in 2006: Popular Phrases of 2006:

"My Girl got a Girlfriend!"
"I'm Bringin' Sexy Back!"
"Put ya Stunna Shades on, Ghost Ride The Whip, Shake Dem Dreads" (all from ya boy E-40)

106 & Park on B.E.T.

As if things weren't bad enough when the number one most watched video countdown on Planet Earth loses its two original hosts a year ago, B.E.T. brings in Terrence J. and Rocsi just as Big Tigger and Julissa are finally starting to make it work.

This show is hard to watch sometimes because of how monotonous it can be, but it's damn near painful to see these two newbies fumble around trying to build chemistry when we've already seen what it's like when the show has some on-point talent on camera.

No Panties?

This isn't really even worth speaking on, but with Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, Paris Hilton making headlines every time they go out clubbin' and having their exposed crotches photographed to no end ... aren't you scared for the future of young women who idolize these idiots?

We already see how many young eyes were watching

when Britney kissed Madonna, now just imagine the backlash of not wearing underclothes becoming the next fad. Man, even more ill—imagine how very different the media would treat this if it were three black female celebrities out on the town commando style, showing the world... it would be an issue then, trust and believe.



Fat Joe

Major Labels, Major Changes

Fat Joe and Fabolous leave Atlantic Records

With New York Rappers struggling to go gold these days, two of the Big Apple's brightest talents jump ship from one of the most stable labels in the game.

Fat Joe goes the independent route (just like Ice Cube did this year and cleaned up) while Fabo heads over to Hova's house. Which should be interesting.

I've always felt like Fabolous had a better chance of succeeding President Carter than Memphis Bleek.

Speaking of Def Jam, DMX signed with Sony this year and even though the album had the loveliest set-up via his B.E.T. documentary airing dates up to its release it still flopped. *The Roots* actually left a comfy spot with Geffen to go to Def Jam, and still

another flop—even by underground standards.

And probably one of the illest moves around, ya boy *Irv Gotti* took his label to Universal with a lucrative new production deal and an interesting new addition to the Murder Inc. roster. A person I can completely understand why we would want even though it may seem strange to others: Vanessa Carlton! That's right, you might be just a few months away from hearing a song where the voice who once sang "A Thousand Miles" now screaming "...It's Murrdaaaaaa!"

Wait, that's really not funny. I love her music, I hope they don't mess it up.

And speaking of good music, no GREAT music.

These are my picks for the absolute best albums of 2006, and we'll start with some people who actually shocked the industry by bringing an unexpected quality of music during a time when... you, you get the point.



The Re-Invention of Busta Rhymes

No one expected this dude to come out as hard as he did on *The Big Bang*.

NO ONE!

Regardless of the fact that Dr. Dre was at the helm, it was

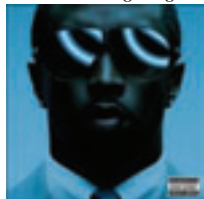
still unexpected to find a focused and introspective Busta Bus flowing over tracks like he's hungrier than ever.

Some heads hate on him expecting him to still wear bright colors and jump around in his videos, but I love this new approach. To have Raekwon and Q Tip on the album wasn't enough, he also had to have a new anthem for N.Y.C. with the legendary "New York S***" joint. On the East Coast alone, this album should be revered as his best work.

Add to that the fact he's got songs with Stevie Wonder, the late, great Rick James and Nas... yo, I can't imagine anyone not liking this album.

And let's not forget that "Touch It" and the "Touch It Remix" were the biggest songs of the first four months of 2006. The album didn't go platinum even after four videos or if you listen to this, you will know that this was an artistic crown jewel for Busta Rhymes.

One of the truest albums of 2006 — *The Big Bang*.



The Return of Diddy

I've always gotten the same complaint, if I'm a so-called conscious head or poetry night/back pack type—why do I like Puff Daddy/Bad Boy?

I've always had the same response—the singles might be commercial as hell, but almost every Bad Boy album possesses some true artistry and substance when it comes to production and writing.

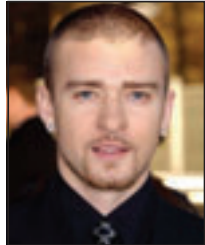
Press Play finds Sean Combs writing more rhymes

for himself, but still multi-tasking. When I did my review, I actually meant to include that this album is like a two in one. The first half of this joint is some of the best wordplay, cadence and passion you could ever even dream of hearing from Puffy as he pulls out all the stops.

I mean the first 10 tracks are all powerfully crafted and intended to make you think, make you dance and actually make you respect him as a rhyme-spitter even if he's not a rhyme-writer.

Then there's the last half of the album that reads like an open letter to Kim Porter as he deals openly with love, betrayal and all types of emotions other rappers never dare to address. Musically, this album is light years ahead of most hip-hop in its sheer musicality and futuristic melding of various sounds. Sometimes, yeah—Puff is in the way even on his own album because the music is just that great. But most of *Press Play* is actually interesting and surprisingly refreshing to listen to.

Whether you can handle it or not, *Press Play*—one of the truest albums of 2006.



Justin Timberlake Crosses Over

N'Sync was a pop boy band, but the one respectable thing about them was Justin's piercing vocals and talents as a writer/musician. On his own, maybe folks thought that his first album, *Justified* was so huge because of his chemistry with then-frequent collaborator Pharrell.

But this time out, *Future Love/Sex Sounds* was produced entirely by Timbaland except one Will.I.Am track (an industry standard right now) and it sounds nothing like pop or R&B when you really listen to it. By now, "I'm Bringin' Sexy Back" is a pop culture phrase for the ages and the actual song along with its follow up "My Love" have driven album sales above double platinum as they con-

tinue to dominate charts as far away as Switzerland and Austria.

But right here in the city, Justin gets just as much airplay as NeYo or whomever. And that's because his album feels genuine and familiar even though it's ahead of its time. "Love Stoned" is a song that Michael Jackson could've been known for 20 years ago. But anyone who's heard "Until The End of Time" understands that Justin's genius isn't about trying to pillage black music's sound.

This one song could dead any hateration simply because it's sweet and romantic... like R&B used to be. Just listen to it and you'll see why *FutureSex/LoveSounds* is one of the truest albums of 2006.

Notable Mention:



Amel Larrieux's *Morning*

An album so simple and perfect in its purpose, Amel speaks up for black women, true lovers and those of us who just sometimes think too much... and it all sounds sublime.

She is the best voice in music today. What she says, how she says it.

Pick it up if you can hang.

Also:

Corrine Bailey Rae, Gnarls Barkley, and something I bet most of ya'll forgot actually came out this year... *The Biggie Duets* from The Notorious B.I.G.

That's some of the truest music to come out in 2006 so tell ya bootleg hook up you'd rather spend your money on the real thing and go and cop some of them joints.

You'll be glad you did.

Next week.... We will get into the hottest singles of this past year.

Keep hitting me up Toledo, glasscitytruth@yahoo.com

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Associate Registrar

Requires bachelor's degree in art history or related discipline, with fifth-year college or university program certificate in art history or museum studies, and minimum of three years museum registration experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Full job description is available at: www.toledomuseum.org/Info_Employ.htm. To apply, e-mail resume with cover letter to: jobs@toledomuseum.org or mail to:

HR,
Toledo Museum of Art,
PO Box 1013,
Toledo, OH 43697.
EOE

**Clerical Specialist
Student Health Services****Bowling Green State University**

Nine-month, Part-time position (August - May). Approximately 20 hours per week Days/hours

will vary and will include some evening hours. This position works under the direction of the Business Services Supervisor and performs a variety of clerical duties related to registration, insurance billing, medical record management and invoicing patients.

Minimum qualifications; ability to calculate fractions, decimals and percentages. Ability to read and write common vocabulary plus; 3 mos. experience in office practices and procedures; or equivalent. Preferred qualifications; Associates degree in related field, experience with Microsoft Office Suite and PyraMED software, 6 mos. exp. working in a medical/clinical office care setting. Search#J-60538, \$12.77 per hour; no benefits package available.

To apply for this position an employment application must be completed and turned in to the Ofc. of Human Resources, 100 College Park Office Bldg., BGSU, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0201, by 1:00 p.m., Fri., Dec. 22, 2006. (<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr>) BGSU is an AA/E O educator/employer.

Single Family Home

**3 Beds, 1 bath,
full basement.**

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Buckingham,
43607**

**Reduced to
\$22K**

**phone
248-250-0179**

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAM
COORDINATOR**

Full time with benefits. Must be able to provide structured activities for children who are in the domestic violence shelter. Must be able to conduct assessments, work as part of a team, and make referrals to appropriate services. Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood, Social Work or related field. D.V. experience required. Salary range \$22,000 - \$24,000.

**Submit Resume:
BWS Children's Program / Personnel
YWCA
1018 JEFFERSON AVE.
TOLEDO, OHIO 43604
Equal Opportunity Employer/Provider**

The YWCA's One Imperative "To thrust our collective power towards the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary."

FREE TOWING

Attention Landlords or Property Owners, if you have abandoned cars (in any condition) Bad Boyz Towing will remove it for **FREE.**

Call 419-810-5879

**Place your classified ad in
The Sojourner's Truth
Call Aida at 419-243-0007**

INTERESTED BIDDERS:**TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS – TECHNOLOGY BID PACKAGE: NEW ARLINGTON E.S., NEW MARTIN LUTHER KING E.S., NEW RAYMER E.S. NEW SHERMAN E.S., NEW SPRING E.S., NEW WESTFIELD E.S., AND NEW WHITTIER E.S.,**

Sealed bids will be accepted by the Board of Education of the Toledo Public School District until **1:00p.m. on January 4, 2007**, at the Toledo Public Schools Treasurers' Room 3, 420 E. Manhattan Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43608, for all labor material and supervision necessary for the New Arlington E.S., New Martin Luther King E.S., New Raymer E.S., New Sherman E.S., New Spring E.S., New Westfield E.S. and the New Whittier E.S. Technology Bid Package, as more fully described in the drawings and specifications for the project prepared by TSI, and will be opened publicly and read immediately thereafter.

Bid Documents for the project may be examined at the F.W. Dodge plan rooms in Maumee and Columbus, Builders Exchange in Toledo, University of Toledo – Capacity Building, E.O.P.A. – Hamilton Building, Northwest Ohio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, The Plan Room in Ann Arbor, The Construction Association of Michigan and Ohio Construction News.

Bidders may obtain copies of the documents starting **December 6, 2006 which can be purchased from Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Rd., Toledo Ohio 43615 Phone: 419-385-5303. Drawings may be obtained on CD-ROM for no cost with the purchase of the specifications.**

A PREBID CONFERENCE is scheduled for **December 21, 2005, at 2:00pm** at the Toledo Public Schools Board Room, 420 E. Manhattan Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43608

If you have any questions, or if you need additional information, please direct all questions in writing to LeShay C. Hadley, LGB-LLC fax (877) 281-0784 or by phone at (419) 776-5600.

Bid Item No. 7A Arlington E.S. Technology	\$	546,096.00
Bid Item No. 7B Martin Luther King E.S. Technology	\$	540,984.00
Bid Item No. 7C Raymer E.S. Technology	\$	635,626.08
Bid Item No. 7D Sherman E.S. Technology	\$	560,430.80
Bid Item No. 7E Spring M.S. Technology	\$	560,430.80
Bid Item No. 7F Westfield E.S. Technology	\$	546,096.00
Bid Item No. 7G Whittier E.S. Technology	\$	558,073.48
Total Estimate	\$	3,947,737.16

**Social Work
CASE MANAGER**

Unison is seeking Case Managers to provide community support services to adults with serious mental illness. Responsibilities will include providing assistance with the social, vocational, economic, and environmental needs of assigned clients and assisting in their ability to live in the community. Valid driver's license required. Ohio counselor or social worker license and experience preferred.

Consideration will be given to candidates with four-year degrees in fields related to social work. Excellent salary and benefits package. Send or fax resume with cover letter to:



Human Resources - CSP
1425 Starr Avenue
Toledo, OH 43605
Fax 419.936.7574
Email: HR@UNISONBHG.ORG

EOE

Front Desk Scheduler/Records Clerk

Part time opportunity for a professional with a commitment to providing excellent customer service. Duties include assisting clients checking in and out, answering phones, scheduling appointments, and filing client paperwork in an accurate and timely manner. Must have two years recent office experience, professional phone skills, strong data entry/computer skills, and be available to work in the evening. Must be able to communicate clearly and effectively with a variety of people and have the ability to handle multiple tasks. Flexibility, dependability, and excellent organizational skills needed. Excellent customer service skills essential. Send resume with cover letter and salary requirements by 12/20/06 to

Harbor Behavioral Healthcare,
Attn: Human Resources (HR),
4334 Secor Rd.,
Toledo, OH 43623-4234,
or fax to 419-720-6103,
or e-mail harborhr@harbor.org.

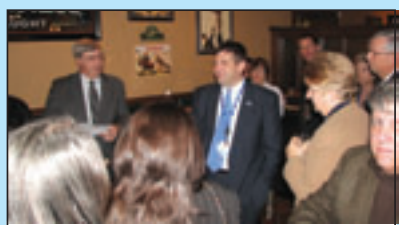
EOE.

**Human Resources
Assistant-Recruitment**

Growing behavioral health care organization searching for HR professional to assist with recruitment, relationship-building, and database management. Position requires recent experience in HR and familiarity with all aspects of recruitment and selection. Undergraduate degree in HR or related field, or professional certification in HR, preferred. Experience in computer databases, Microsoft Word and Excel, and accurate data entry skills required. Position demands excellent communication, judgment, and organizational skills, plus ability to maintain confidentiality. Selected candidate will possess energy and presentation skills to market Harbor at job fairs and develop key contacts for recruitment purposes. Must have transportation to attend various events. Send resume with cover letter and salary requirements by 12/20/06 to

Harbor Behavioral Healthcare,
Attn: Human Resources (HR),
4334 Secor Rd.,
Toledo, OH 43623-4234,
or fax to 419-720-6103,
or e-mail harborhr@harbor.org.

EOE.



Announcing the totals

United Way

(Continued from Page 5)

As we are asking our question, Kitson pulls a copy of the article from a stack on his desk and starts addressing this very subject as it relates to Toledo.

"I cannot believe that people in the community here don't scream and jump up and down about the achievement gap between African-American males and others," he says. "Why it's not an issue here, I don't understand. We are losing a generation of males and that is unacceptable."

It's not an issue he intends to ignore, he makes clear. In fact there are not a lot of important community issues Kitson and the United Way of Greater To-

ledo intend to ignore. And as he approaches year three of his tenure, Kitson feels that things will begin to take shape in terms of the agency's attempts to re-connect with the community and to manage its mission of changing lives more effectively.

That means involvement in any number of activities in and around Toledo.

"Sometimes we're going to jump into things we shouldn't be jumping into, but we're going to jump," says Kitson.

Obviously in order to change lives, you have to do a lot of jumping.

Contact Fletcher Word at fletcher@thetruthtoledo.com

Dear Ryan,

I have been doing so well with my eating and exercising that I want to thank you for all of your help. I look forward to reading your articles in The Truth. My question is that I want to take my workouts to the next level and I don't know what to do. I train three days a week, total body, but it's getting too easy for me to do. How can I make it more challenging?

Kim

Dear Kim,

I'm very glad that you are getting help from my articles and that you are making improvements in your physique. It's a great feeling to look in the mirror and see all your hard work is not in vain.

Well, there are a couple of ways that you can handle this. You can either increase the amount of work you do on the days you train or you can add another day of training. If you want to increase the workouts that you are doing now just simply increase your weight for a hard eight-15 reps or you can simply add another set to what you are doing. If it is still easy just keep adding weight until it is difficult for you to get your reps but with good form. NEVER sacrifice form for weight!

Your other option is to add another day. Train two on, one off, two on, two off. Start separating body parts, adding other exercises and stop doing total body workouts. This will give you more exercise per body part and give you a chance to work on lagging areas. Make sure that you don't work the same body part two days in a row. Keep your nutrition clean and stay on your water. I hope this helps you and if you are unclear about anything just e-mail me.

Here's a little nutrition tip for the holidays:

In stead of using cream cheeses in a recipe, take cottage cheese rinse it off and puree it in a blender with a LITTLE water. This decreases the calories and increases the protein in your food resulting in a lower insulin spike.

GIVE THE GIFT OF HEALTH THIS YEAR
STOP IN AND GET YOUR GIFT CERTIFICATES TODAY!!!

Ryan Rollison
Dream Bodies
1240 W. Sylvania Ave. Toledo Oh 43612
mydreambodies@aol.com



TRAFFIC ACCIDENT?

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1.888.KING.911



I Too Had A Dream

Eric Brian King, while a student at Keyser Elementary, dreamed of one day becoming a businessman. But like most teenage boys from a single parent home, it appeared his dream would never be realized. King states: "As a youth, I just did not understand the way the world operated (education, religion, and parenting) and I just didn't want to listen to those that did (my teachers, my pastor, and my mother)." King, the youngest of four siblings, could have never imagined the tragedy he would face in September 1996, when a reckless driver killed his mother Patricia Ann Sturdivant-King. This experience led King to become a personal injury lawyer, and that's why he states ***To Others It's Just Business at KING Law Offices— We Take Your Personal Injury... Personal!*** King continues: "My mother always told me: 'Son, as a black man, you must work three times as hard... be honest, have integrity and take pride in your work.'" "Later in my life, I realized these are the simple keys to success, as blacks, we must learn to despise the 'free lunch' and we need to understand the concept of 'delayed gratification', which includes planting seeds to harvest in another season (education, prayer, and investing). I now know nothing in life is immediate, and only by my faith in God, have I had the patience to make my childhood dream a reality."



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