



*Dr. Houston Johnson*

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*"Medicine is a great opportunity to help people and not just give them lip service. You can actually improve the lives of people."*

## This Strikes Us ...

### *A Sojourner's Truth Editorial*

The City of Toledo has a balanced budget and a crisis has been averted ... or at least postponed.

Otto von Bismarck, the great chancellor of Germany who brought, forced actually, that nation into the modern age, once famously said that if one admires sausage and the law, he should not be allowed to see how either is made.

But even Bismarck would have been shocked to observe the contortions that City Council underwent to reach agreement, or at least a majority vote, on the budget for fiscal 2007.

But we have some serious doubts about the almost-finished product.

Council basically went along with Mayor Carty Finkbeiner's request for a garbage fee to raise almost \$3 million in tax revenues.

But neither the fire nor the police department will suffer any cuts in the proposed budget agreement and council gave only a cursory glance to the many budget cuts that were put forward by the ad hoc group of fiscal conservatives.

There are two major difficulties with this agreement. First, the revenue projections are based upon a very unrealistic assumption that tax income will increase by 3.25 percent. Second, and once again, no one has had the temerity to step forward and suggest that it's time to take a serious look at making cuts in the safety departments. The combined police and fire departments account for about 65 percent of the total city budget and we have struggled to maintain these operations as if we were still a city with a population of almost 400,000.

The mayor said he did not want to take a look at cutting fire and police and just about everyone who was part of the decision-making process echoed that line. But there is no doubt that the administration has, behind closed doors, taken a close look at exactly that issue and has acknowledged that it's only a matter of time before downsizing, particularly in the police department, has to be addressed.

What citizens fear, of course, is that fewer policemen on the streets will mean an increase in crime. Fewer jobs, however, may be more directly the cause of an increase in crime and there is no indication, unfortunately, that the City of Toledo is on the path to increasing the job pool. Certainly raising taxes will not make this city any more attractive to either individuals or to companies who are seeking to relocate.

As for the revenue projections, regrettably only the budget itself has to be balanced, not the actual performance during the year. If there is a shortfall in revenue, and we can assume there certainly will be, that deficit will carry over into the next fiscal year.

The fiscal conservatives, Michael Ashford, Mike Craig, Ellen Grachek, Joe McNamara and Frank Szollosi, sought ways to decrease spending rather than to raise taxes, but at the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour, they were deserted in these efforts by Republican Joe Birmingham who joined the tax-and-spenders who are mainly Republican.

According to this particular Republican, he could not find anything to cut in the budget. Nothing to cut in a \$247.6 million-dollar budget? It's going to be very interesting to see if the Lucas County Democratic Party endorses a candidate in District 6 to oppose Birmingham, especially if they can find folks to oppose fellow Democrats Ashford and Craig.

So that's what we have come to here in Toledo ... Democrats as fiscal conservatives and Republicans as the tax-and-spenders supporting a Democratic mayor in his effort to avoid a stand off with the unions representing the members of the safety departments. That's the part that would have Herr Bismarck choking on his favorite sausage.

Interestingly, "B" teamer Mark Sobczak, and a vice president of the Teamsters Local 20, which represents employees primarily in refuse and waste collection, and who had abstained from previous votes involving the garbage tax issue, received advice at the last minute – he would not say from whom – that a conflict of interest was indeed not a conflict of interest. Timing is so critical, isn't it?

But the overriding problem with this so-called balanced budget is that it relies on smoke and mirrors – a number of far-fetched assumptions – to achieve that balance. The pension pickup, for example, that was negotiated earlier has absolutely placed totally out of reach any hope of ending the fiscal year without a deficit.

We can pretend that the problem has been solved, but the guess here is that in less than a year, we will be going through a much worse budget situation. Instead of a projected deficit of about \$12 million, we can expect at that time to be dealing with one of more than \$18 million.

We will have brought that upon ourselves through our current failure to look realistically at the condition of the city's finances.

## The Sojourner's Truth

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## Community Calendar

### April 4-6

• Pre-Easter Revival: Church of the Living God; 7 pm nightly; Guest evangelist Bishop F.D. Turley

### April 5

• EOPA/Toledo-Lucas County Head Start: Family Movie Night (featuring "Happy Feet"); 525 Hamilton, Second Floor; 5:30 to 7:30 pm; 419-259-1195 ext 104  
• Fish Fry: Amazon Lodge Hall; 11 am to 5 pm; 419-531-7079

### April 7

• Mt Zion Baptist Church 525 Team: "All Occasion Tea;" Tables depicting each season: 419-246-1850  
• First Church of God's Drama Ministry: "Not Just Another Story;" Contemporary gospel play; Genesis Dreamplex; 7 pm; 419-531-1599  
• Phillips Temple CME Church: "Tapestry;" 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Gospelfest; 5 to 7 pm  
• Easter Dinner: Zenobia Shrine; Featuring Calvin's Easter Show – the Chicken, the Pig, the Wolf, the Easter Duck along with the Rabbit; 4:30 to 10:30 pm, dinner starts at 5:30; Free giveaways – toys, paintings, gift cards for the kids, etc; Open to the public: 419-578-2454 or 419-754-9984 or 419-917-2413

### April 9-13

• Spring Break Mini Camp: For third through six graders; Art projects, cooking lessons, games; Crossroads Family Resource Center: 419-475-3258

### April 10-11

• American Red Cross Babysitter's Training: Crossroads Family Resource Center; For youths aged 11 to 15; Knowledge, skills and confidence to care for infants and school-aged children; Noon to 3 pm each day: 419-475-3258

### April 14

• Toledo Interfaith Mass Choir: "Yesterday;" Stranahan Theater: 7 pm; 419-241-7332 or 419-241-3330  
• Scott High School Alumni Association: "Scholarship Reunion Dance;" Civic Center Promenade; 7 pm to midnight: 419-349-2125  
• Church of the New Covenant: "Authors and Poets Spring Rally;" 10 am to 2 pm; Guest Illustrator Wil Clay; Results of essay contest announced: 419-536-3954

### April 15

• Indiana Avenue MBC: 42<sup>nd</sup> Pastoral Appreciation for Rev. Dr. John Roberts and First Lady Bernice Roberts; Guests are Rev. Dr. John Heckard and the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church of Mansfield, OH

### April 17

• "Poetry Live & Out Loud;" Toledo Main Library; Evening of poetry and spoken word; 7 to 8:30 pm; McMaster Center lobby: 419-259-5333

### April 17-19

• Mt. Zion Baptist Church: Prayer Conference; "Takin' It by Force;" Featured speakers and instructors: 419-246-1850

### April 18

• Free Community Fair: 4 to 7 pm; Free health screenings, informational booths, cooking demonstrations; OSU extension, Presenters include - Pampered Chef, Move 2 Improve, Life Styles and American Red Cross

### April 19

• Fish Fry: Amazon Lodge Hall; 11 am to 5 pm; 419-531-7079

### April 21

• Pilgrim Church: Benefit concert to raise funds for mission work in Central America and the Caribbean; 6:30 pm; 419-478-6012  
• A Kite Day!: Monroe Street Neighborhood Center; Non-competitive family fun; 1:30 to 3 pm; Bring your favorite kite: 419-973-1167

### April 27-29

• Calvary Baptist Church Women's Retreat: Deadline for registration is March 11: 419-865-0019 or 419-531-9443

## The Sojourner's Truth

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My View

By Jack Ford  
The Truth's Political Columnist

We continue to appreciate the smart moves which the new governor of Ohio is making on many fronts.

Gov. Ted Strickland continues to appoint Toledoans to high rank in his administration and to visit northwest Ohio on a regular schedule. And the fact that the Lucas County Democratic Party "B" team owes the Ohio Democratic Party a bunch of cash, with no payment in sight, seemingly has not altered the governor's good feelings for Toledoans in general.

In days past, the refusal by the local party to pay back party loans would result in retribution. Strickland merely ignored the local party recently and attended a fundraiser on his behalf at Ray Medlin's home. John Irish, local party chairman, did not attend.

Mayor Carty Finkbeiner's off the wall or, should we say, "off the bridge" idea of placing eating tables on the MLK Bridge during renovations was amusing. Be careful,

Carty, or you will end up on another card in trivial pursuit along with your infamous airport suggestion for the deaf.

Actually, the mayor's suggestion for eating arrangements on the King bridge fits in with the vision of one of his competitors from the last election. I think it was Opal Covey who suggested that a ferris wheel be placed in downtown Toledo.

Finkbeiner's idea might work if you provide each patron with a strap on seat welded to the floor of the bridge. That way, Carty, when the bridge opens, the patrons would not slide into the river but rather be taken for one helluva ride up into the air just as in Opal's vision. Great minds think alike, it seems.

Say what you will, the mayor did make lemonade out of lemons with the garbage fee. He got what he wanted even if it was not really necessary. This was a case of fooling all the people some of the time.

Now that the fee is in

place, we can expect incremental increases to the garbage tax every time the city comes up a few million dollars short, starting later this year.

Deborah Barnett is the current, and outgoing, president of the Toledo Board of Education and she has done a very credible job under very trying circumstances. Most corporate executives would have told the community to "drop dead" long ago. She receives little support, even from her home constituency.

Now she faces a real dilemma. Her company, Huntington Bank, is merging with Sky Bank. Barnett will be taking on new responsibilities at the newly formed company.

Most executives would use this as a real excuse to exit early so they could tend to business on their daytime jobs. And we would not be surprised if this occurs as it makes sense and is the way of the business world if you want to survive and thrive in it. And we do want Barnett to

thrive. She has helped the community far too often and far too long and has touched so many lives.

By the way, do not be surprised if the negotiations with the superintendent-select, William Harner, do not click. Toledo Public Schools cannot pay him what the market is worth for someone in his position. The board's hands

are tied because of an earlier agreement with Eugene Sanders, former superintendent.

The Harner would be foolish to come here for 50 grand less than his peers would earn elsewhere, plus there are those who want the talks to collapse in hopes that John Foley is resurrected as a superintendent hopeful.

Stay tuned.



Jack Ford

Contact Jack Ford at jack@thetruthtoledo.com

Dear Editor:

Well it's come around again, the budget is tight and the mayor and city council are looking for ways to cut corners and to tighten the belt. In the midst of this tumult the mayor proclaims that the Erie Street Market has made a profit in excess of \$40,000! Well as the former general manager of the Erie Street Market let me assure you, the Erie Street Market cannot make a profit, ever.

The Erie Street Market was opened in 1997 based on two research studies. The first study dated 1993, and a refreshed study in 1997; both of these studies were based on the premise that the market could charge \$33 per square foot, per year, for retail space. Call any real estate agent in town; this is a pipe dream of the first order! The highest rents in Downtown Toledo, for any space, are in the \$20 per square foot range.

The year end budget for the Erie Street Market does show a profit in excess of \$44,000. However, this omits the majority of the expenses, namely the electricity bill. The cost of electricity, which heats, cools, and lights the building, is in excess of \$14,000 per month. Now let us, for sake of argument, accept the mayor's premise that without the electricity bill the market made \$44,000. Let us add in the expense of the electricity, being conservative, at \$168,000 for the year shall we? If we look at the reality the market has lost in excess of \$124,000!

Now on top of the utility bills let's look at the general operating and improvement funds that have been allocated. The market was given, by way of a federal grant, in excess of \$600,000; add to that another \$100,000 that the city council gave the market for operating capital. A cursory examination shows that the taxpayers have invested over \$824,000 on the Erie Street Market in 2006 alone.

I am deeply concerned to know that the future of our city is in the hands of a man, a so-called "strong mayor", that considers a combined loss and expenditure of \$824,000 a success story.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Kepler  
Former General Manager - Erie Street Market

Dear Editor:

In order to view what is happening in the Toledo Public School education system, we must look historically at the cause of charter schools coming into this area. In 1998, one of the first charter schools in the area, Toledo Village Shlue, was opened. It gave parents another option besides Toledo public or private schools. An option, which many parents, primarily black, took to heart. So much so, that TPR took notice and under Superintendent Grant's initiative, Grove Patterson Academy was initiated.

In September 1999, parents dropped off two classrooms each of first through fourth graders at the extended day Toledo Public School. The district had succeeded in bringing back several children who had attended charter and private schools in the area. The successes at GPA encouraged the district to expand the academy philosophy and the Old West End Academy was initiated. Eventually, the district broadened its potential with an all girls academy (Stewart) and an all boys academy (Lincoln).

Since 1998 several more charter schools have come into existence and, now the voucher system has come into play. The public school system has been put on notice that the majority of parents want their children to be successfully educated. And to do so entails the following:

- Parents who are involved and willing to assist their children in succeeding;
- Teachers who are invested in children;
- Children who are engaged in the education learning process.

Instead of lamenting about the children who are leaving the public school system, the system should be asking the community and those who are involved in the system: "What can we do to make it better?" and give each student the feeling that he or she can succeed in the public school arena. Because without an effective public school system we all lose - children, parents and society.

Sincerely,

Twila Renee Ferguson, R.N., J.D.

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## City Council Balances Budget and Performs a Temporary Juggling Act

By John Dorsey  
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

On Friday, March 30, Toledo City Council, by a vote of seven-to-five, handed Mayor Carty Finkbeiner the garbage fee he had requested and resolved a standoff that might have lost Council the authority to spend money.

And while the monthly collection fee was less than the mayor had requested - \$5.50 and \$3 for those who recycle - the passage eliminated the need to make more serious cuts in city services.

"Every time these highly-trained professionals go out, they take their lives into their own hands," said Councilwoman Wilma Brown at the start of a City Council meeting on March 27 speaking of the firemen and paramedics who had recently saved the lives of two young girls at 401 W. Bancroft Street.

The resolution to honor these local heroes, which was presented by Brown at that council meeting, passed quickly and without controversy. This was one of the last times in the final days leading up to the recently adopted budget that this would be the case.

It was Brown, who also fought to make sure that at least five pools were kept open this summer. The end result, being that all city residents will now have to pay \$1 admission charge.

But the big issue in council chambers was the proposed garbage and rubbish fee. This tax is being used to offset the budget deficit put forth by the Finkbeiner administration, which was originally around \$12 million in an overall budget of \$247 million. The tax underwent a number of variations before taking its current form,

including a proposed per-garbage charge, where area resi-

dents would also be responsible for the disposal of debris such as leaves.

Perhaps the two most ardent opponents of the tax were councilmen at large Frank Szollosi and Joe McNamara.

It was McNamara, who would force a role call vote late in the proceedings on March 27.

On number of occasions, he stated that he strongly believed the garbage tax had little chance of passing, and that his fellow council members should push forward with an extensive series of proposed departmental budget cuts.

"Stay away from my grandmother's social security check," said Szollosi, speaking about the affect the tax would have on those on a fixed income.

Szollosi went on to stress the importance of putting the breaks on city spending.

One of the questions posed by opponents of the tax, which initially included McNamara, Szollosi, Michael Ashford, Mike Craig, Ellen Gracsek - all Democrats - and Republican Joe Birmingham, was how does the city propose to monitor of the actions of residents who choose to recycle? The answer was that the city intends on having those who choose to recycle fill out regular cards regarding their monthly disposal activity.

Of the cuts proposed by McNamara and Szollosi, those that passed include an \$80,000 cut in the city's mounted patrol forces, the elimination of Safety City, which teaches safety to four and five year olds, as well as a \$50,000 cut in funding for Toledo's Sister Cities' program. This cut will effec-

tively mean the end of the program, which recently lost Director John Henry Fullen, and had an operating budget of just \$71,000.

Thirteen-year council veteran Betty Shultz warned against the negative impact that passage of this cut might mean for the city.

"If we want to do business in growing global economies such as China, which is certainly where our current economic market is headed, then we would be doing our city a great disservice by cutting programs such as Sister Cities, which fosters a board exchange of ideas in terms of where our economic base is headed," Shultz said.

One of the proposed cuts that didn't pass was one that would limit police overtime.

"If we get a call about a case, we just can't wait until the next shift to begin our investigation. Any cut in our overtime would downgrade of service we currently offer the community," said Chief of Police Michael Navarre.

Chief Navarre went on to state that while the current budget doesn't provide for a new class, it would take about a year to prepare one anyway, making that an issue that would be best resolved as a matter in next year's budget. Wages for policemen and women went up two percent this year, meaning that overtime will also go up in that amount.

It was at the meeting on Thursday, March 29, that Shultz discussed another matter that will play a very important part in the city's economic future, our bond rating. Shultz discussed this in relation to the city's consistent borrowing from its stabilization fund, otherwise known as the rainy-day fund,

which a decade ago stood at \$14.8 million, and currently has a balance \$5.4 million. It's this fund that allows our city to borrow from outside banking institutions.

"Our population has decreased since the 1990's, and as a result our city government needs to be downsized, but this can only be done through a longer more well-thought out process," Shultz said.

At Thursday's meeting it was announced that the United Labor Committee was voicing its support for the garbage tax, which may have had a lot of to do with its last-minute passage.

It was also at this meeting that it was determined

that the Youth Commission will now report to the Board of Community Relations, which is now under the direction of Juanita Green.

In order to reach agreement on Friday afternoon, Birmingham changed his stance opposing the garbage fee stating that there were no more cuts to be made in the

## A Massive Insult To The Intelligence of the Masses

By Jan Scotland  
Guest Columnist

Toledo City Council and the mayor must believe as the great American 20th Century journalist H. L. Mencken once wrote: "no one in this world has ever lost money by underestimating the intelligence of the great masses of plain people. Nor has anyone ever lost public office

thereby."

They clearly believe that the public does not remember the Mayor's shower, the ¼ percent tax levy; the police tow lot take over or the most recent takeover of emergency services.

They don't think that the public knows that  
(Continued on Page 5)

budget without doing so in the police department. And Democrat Mark Sobczak, vice president of the Teamsters Local 20, which handles trash and refuse collection, who had abstained from previous votes out of a concern about a conflict of interest, decided he could, after all, vote on the entire budget. He said later he had been advised that there was no such conflict, but he declined to say who had provided such advice.

Voting for the budget were Birmingham, Shultz, Council

President Rob Ludeman and George Sarantou - all Republicans - and Democrats Sobczak, Brown and Phil Copeland.

So this year's budget is now balanced but the fiscal issues still loom. Next year's budget is already projected to have a deficit of more than \$18 million meaning more cuts in city services and more contentiousness about whether or not to take a serious look at the costs it takes to maintain police and fire department at their present levels.

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## A Massive Insult To The Intelligence of the Masses

(Continued from Page 4)

where there is money available for a \$9,996 shower for the mayor's office, there might be some fluff in the budget.

They seem shocked that the citizens who pay an increasing amount of their own healthcare costs are pissed that the administration does not show the guts to negotiate similar arrangements with city workers.

They think that the shell games of temporary levies are lost with the new taxes being proposed and ratified by this administration and council. Fees for police and fire runs, fines for garbage violations and now the additional fee for garbage pick up. They think that if they stretch it out overtime and call them different things that the public is too stupid to realize that we are being taxed twice for the same services.

They think we are unreasonable to hold them to our own limitations. We can't force people to give us money when we have overspent our

income.

They believe that we don't see the irony of their concerns about across the board cuts laying off 40 city workers. They think we forgot at least 40 taxpayers in the private sector lost their jobs when the city went into the tow lot business and an additional 40 taxpayers stand to lose their jobs because of the emergency services vote taken just a few weeks ago.

They think that no one will remember that despite the overwhelming sentiment of the public they pulled an 11th hour vote hoping the weekend will create cover for their actions.

No, it seems they have bought Mr. Mencken's sentiments hook line and sinker. They think the intelligence of the masses is no match for their rhetoric and slight of hand. They don't think that we are beginning to realize that this group has run out of ideas. They think we are comfortable with other people's hands in your pocket. What's



Jan Scotland

more, they think that their longevity on council will protect them when the elections come around.

Why do they believe this? Why do they show such moxie? Well history has been kind to them. In better times it was hard to see their inability to manage the city. Irresponsible legislation, practiced in cities like New York and Columbus, seemed OK for a struggling town like Toledo. But now the piper is knocking at the door for his pay and the cupboard seems void of the answers.

We have good people in city government who have the capability to rise to this occasion. But if they are not willing to roll up their sleeves and turn this city around, they may find that they have underestimated the intelligence of the plain people in a way they did not expect.

Contact Jan Scotland at [jan@thetruthtoledo.com](mailto:jan@thetruthtoledo.com)

## Dear Editor:

I have been following with great interest the continuing efforts by Mayor Finkbeiner to dismantle the Office of Affirmative Action. I am writing to express my strong and unwavering support for Perlean Griffin.

The mayor's actions are an affront to the civil and human rights of the African-American community as well as any right thinking individual. We must vigorously oppose him and his ilk. The community must demand 1) The Office of Affirmative Action be restored to its previous condition at the previous levels of staffing and funding, including Ms. Griffin 2) The Office of Affirmative Action remain autonomous and 3) the mayor diversify his cabinet.

It is shocking, outrageous and revealing that the mayor has no persons of color among his cabinet. These are his closest advisors. This tells me that when hundreds of millions of dollars are being considered and allocated, the African-American community's interests are not even being discussed, considered, or included.

We have all heard or read the statements made by Perlean Griffin and you have heard or read the counter claims put forth by the mayor. Who do you believe?

I have known Perlean for many years and during that time I have come to respect her integrity and character. She is exactly the kind of person needed to head the Office of Affirmative Action. I want to say clearly and emphatically to all the people who believe in my leadership, all the students and parents that I have helped, I am asking you to support Ms. Griffin in her quest for justice.

I called the mayor's office personally to see if I could talk to him in a spirit of reconciliation. He was unavailable and did not bother to return my call.

The mayor has shown poor leadership in allowing this matter to mushroom into the conflict that is brewing. A true leader is charged with maintaining the unity of the people he is leading. The mayor has utterly failed in this regard. Not only is this issue polarizing the city, it is causing divisions within the African-American community itself.

Why is it that every time a white politician is in trouble with the black community they run to the black preachers as if to say "Go out there and tell your people that I am OK and that they should support me." And dutifully, as if on cue, some of them do just that.

The time for mental slavery has long since passed. Some of us act as if we don't know we are no longer slaves.

I am issuing a call to my people to wake up and live. For how long are you going to be duped? Until further notice, I am calling on the African-American community to promise never to vote for Mayor Finkbeiner again.

We must hold him and the Democratic Party accountable for this brazen attack on the hopes and dreams of the African-American community.

As my dear late brother Malcolm X said, "You have been hoodwinked, you've been deceived, you been lied to, you've been bamboozled, and you've been had." Apparently the mayor's motto is "The ends justify the means." It seems that the mayor will say or do anything to achieve his objectives. But he and his cronies and servants can count votes and the only thing they understand is political power. With continuing white flight I estimate Toledo's population to be approximately 27 percent African-American, if not higher. If we stick together we are one of the most powerful voting blocks in the city. We must hold the leaders of this city accountable for the persistent perception and reality of racial tension. Is that what we want our city to be known for?

It seems to me every six months there is some incident that heightens racial tensions in this city. The need for a strong Office of Affirmative Action is more than obvious. I further propose that we stop blindly giving our votes to the Democratic Party and form our own independent black political party. Remember: others will treat you the way you treat yourself.

The mayor said Ms. Griffin was 24-hour news. Well, that shows how much he knows. We will continue to fight on all levels for our civil and human rights. We want to generate enough support to form a human chain surrounding One Government Center, just like Joshua in ancient times. How powerful!

Dr. King showed that with God all things are possible. All we need are the right leaders and the people willing to follow them. When words fail, action will follow. It is now time for action. Ms. Griffin is a woman who will stand up for what she believes. Please support Perlean Griffin. Don't let the mayor choose your leaders. He will choose the ones who will sell you out every time.

Rahwae Shuman

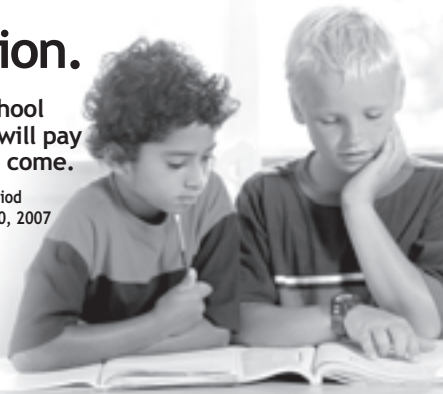
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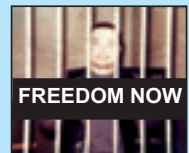
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## Jimmy Gaines Celebrates Birthday and Retirement in Grand Style

*Sojourner's Truth Staff*

Well over 100 friends and family members joined Jimmy L. Gaines, Sr. on March 24 to celebrate his birthday and to honor him for 27 years of service with the City of Toledo.

The birthday retirement celebration was held at the Stephenson-Roberts Fellowship Hall of the Indiana Avenue Baptist Church where Gaines and his family have long been members. Gaines is a deacon at Indiana Avenue.

Gaines, a graduate of Libbey High School, earned his undergraduate degree in business administration from The University of Toledo and his masters from the University of Dayton. He retired from the City of Toledo as director of Public Service



*Sharon Green-Gaines and Jimmy Gaines, Sr. (seated) with family members at birthday retirement celebration*

in early 2006 and prior to that had been in the administrative division in the Department of Public Utilities, had worked as assistant Chief Operating Office in the mayor's office and had been

operations manager during the former government system of City Manager.

Gaines has been married to Sharon Green-Gaines for the past 33 years and is father to Jimmy, Jr., a graduate of The Ohio State University and Andre, a graduate of Northwestern University who flew in from Los Angeles for the ceremony.

Gaines has received the Daisy L. Huff Humanitarian Award from the NAACP and has been inducted into the Libbey High School Hall of Fame.

The birthday retirement celebration featured tributes by a number of family members—brother Billy Earl Gaines,

sisters Mary Sargent and Denise Gaines, parent-in-laws Oscar and Leola Haynes, both sons and Rev. John Roberts, pastor of Indiana Avenue; a musical selection by Nate Gurley; a special video presentation starring Gaines himself and a proclamation from Toledo City Councilwoman Wilma Brown.

Sharon Green-Gaines served as the event's mistress of ceremonies.

## Elaine Brown to Speak at The University of Toledo

*By Tamir A. Shaw  
Sojourner's Truth Reporter*

In order to increase public awareness of the inhumanity and injustices that many U.S. prisoners are often subjected to, activist Elaine Brown, former chairman of the Black Panther Party, will speak at the University of Toledo on Thursday April 5, 2007 at 7:00 P.M.

Her visit coincides with a tour being conducted by the Ohio Chapter of the CEDP/Free Siddique Abdullah Hasan Campaign.

In a recent interview with The Sojourner's Truth Brown passionately explained her support for both obtaining new trials for five Lucasville inmates whom she believes were wrongfully convicted and for the grassroots organizational movement to abolish the death penalty.

The death row inmates, including Siddique Abdullah Hasan, Jason Robb and Namir



Abdul Mateen, were involved in the April 1993 prison uprising riot at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, Ohio, in which one guard, Robert Vanlandingham, and seven inmates were killed.

Brown asserts that the men are political prisoners because prior to the uprising they had objected to inhumane conditions within the institution and had attempted to exercise their basic human rights.

Brown is not the first to speak out on behalf of the inmates whose trials consisted largely of eyewitness testimony and a prosecution

*(Continued on Page 14)*



*Gaines with well-wishers*



### TOLEDO IDOL YOUTH TALENT SHOW



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**PLACE:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER  
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**TIME:** 10:00 TO NOON - Auditions  
Noon to 2:00 P.M. - Rehearsal

*(Other rehearsal dates to be announced on April 7<sup>th</sup>)*

#### TALENT SHOW

**WHEN:** Sunday, April 29, 2007 at 4:30 P.M.  
**WHERE:** Frederick Douglass Community Center  
1001 Indiana Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43602



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# Houston Johnson, Jr., M.D: Helping to Encourage Greater African-American Participation in Cancer Prevention Trials

By Alan Abrams  
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

Have we finally reached a turning point in the war against cancer?

News events of the past two weeks have put cancer very much in the forefront of the public consciousness. The diagnosis that cancer has returned to two high-profile public figures—Elizabeth Edwards and Tony Snow—and the determination of both individuals to fight and conquer the dreaded disease, has provided inspiration and hope to many. In addition, there has also been renewed and widespread hope in response to the news that a new cure for breast cancer may have been found.

And that was just on the national scene.

Locally, Toledo Community Hospitals Oncology Program (TCHOP) announced their "Reach Week" outreach effort to inform Toledo's African-American population about cancer treatment options as well as the availability and benefits of clinical and prevention trial participation. Although centered

on the week of Mar. 26-31, the organizers say that TCHOP's efforts to encourage trial participation amongst African-Americans will be an ongoing process.

Supported by the National Cancer Institute, TCHOP is one of only 27 clinical research programs in the entire nation administering Clinical and Prevention Oncology trials.

Clinical trials are research studies where participating patients along with their doctor have the opportunity to discover new and better ways for the treatment of cancer.

Prevention trials are conducted with people who do not currently have cancer but either once had it or may have a natural proclivity towards getting the disease.

After years of outreach to African-Americans, the statistics still remain grim. African-Americans are still 21 percent more likely to die from cancer than white Americans and have the highest cancer death rate of any U.S. racial or

ethnic group. According to the American Cancer Society, the primary reason for that disparity is that African-Americans have less access to health care and health information than whites.

A permanent result of efforts such as "Reach Week" is the creation of a monthly meeting of a minority-based advisory group comprised of a mix of medical professionals and interested community members. These group members will participate in outreach communications, conduct patient advocacy, review patient selection, progress and reaction to treatment.

Dr. Houston Johnson, Jr., a Harvard Medical School graduate and a general surgeon at Toledo Hospital is a trial investigator and will serve on the minority-based advisory group. Johnson underscores that "TCHOP clinical trials are a safe option for cancer treatment."

Johnson, who has co-authored a book on breast cancer and has had 45 articles published in presti-

gious medical journals, has been in private practice specializing in surgical oncology/general surgery in Toledo since Sept. 1992. He was the Medical Director of the Breast Care Center at Flower Hospital in Sylvania from 1992 to 1997.

Before coming to Toledo from New York, Johnson was an associate professor of surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and attending surgeon at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park, NY, from 1989 until Dec. 1993.

During the mid-1980s, Johnson served as chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology and as director of the Surgical Tumor Clinic of the University Hospital Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida.

Shortly after his graduation from Harvard Medical School in 1975, Johnson served a two-year stint with the United States Public Health Service, and is currently in the inactive reserves of the U.S.P.H.S.

Born in Morganton, North Carolina, he is the son of Houston Johnson Sr. and Elizabeth Johnson. He attended elementary school in Chesterfield, and junior high in Charlotte. But when it came time for high school, Johnson was sent to live with relatives in New York City because his parents were divorcing.

"Mother was a teacher, and she wanted her kids to get the best education for each of us—there were three of us at the time. I have two sisters who still live in New York State, Penelope, in New



Rochelle, and Yvonne in the Bronx.

"My mother knew there was another place with an improved school system, and that's how I attended and graduated from Andrew Jackson High School in Cambria Heights, N.Y.," says Johnson.

"My first thoughts of medicine as a career came from my uncle with whom I lived in New York. He had been hoping to study medicine all the way up to when he got to college, but he had no money to continue his education. I heard that story over and over again. Actually, as I grew past the wanting to be a fireman and policeman years, studying medicine always sounded like a good alternative. I just had to be encouraged to pursue it.

"When I was in school, I always did well in science and in math. This was in the middle of the 1960s, and more minorities were being integrated into higher education. So the timing was just about right.

"By the time I went into

the New York City public schools system, I had teachers who supported my ability and encouraged me to go as far as I could go," recalls Johnson.


So why did Johnson choose Harvard Medical School? "It wasn't originally my choice," explains Johnson. "A recruiter from Cornell told me I should try and go to Harvard. I did, and got in," says Johnson, who earned his B.A. from Cornell in 1971.

Eventually, Johnson says he was faced with making a vital career decision. After almost 10 years of working in surgical training programs in academic medicine, he found himself at a career crossroads.

"The choice was to either stay in academic medicine or do private practice. Whenever I had the chance to work in private practice, it seemed I started achieving the fulfillment that happens with the practice of medicine rather than from trying to teach it or doing research," recalls Johnson.

(Continued on Page 10)

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## Designing Toledoan Teams with Turkish Craftsmen

Sojourner's Truth Staff

Evan McKinney, a young Toledoan and Start High School graduate, had never set foot outside of the United States until February 11 of this year. On that date, he boarded a plane headed for Ankara in the Republic of Turkey, a plane that would follow his dream.

McKinney's dream was to find a way to convert his designs, many of which were still un-sketched at that point, into the finished product of leather outerwear.

He had, in surfing the Internet several months before, come upon just the craftsmen who could help him. The two Turkish brothers had perfected a pattern that McKinney dubs "croc-print" - short for crocodile.

And while the correspondents immediately recognized their kindred design spirits, communicating their ideas to one another, even in such an advanced medium as the Internet, had its handicaps. So just before this past Christmas, the brothers suggested that McKinney visit them in Turkey so they could

collaborate face-to-face on a variety of design projects.

"I don't know these guys," thought McKinney. But he knew within seconds that this was something he needed to pursue. So he made the arrangements. "I wanted to go, but I wanted to feel safe and comfortable."

Safe... maybe. Comfortable... certainly not at the outset.

"I got on a plane on February 11 for an 11-hour trip," the novice traveller recalled recently. "There was a little kid in front of me screaming the whole way, people in the back kicking my seat. Then they lost my luggage."

But it was worth every bit of the trouble. McKinney and his Turkish collaborators hit it off immediately. He began to spew out ideas, they worked the lamb and sheep leather into designs with which they had no familiarity and the results, he said, startled everyone who had a chance to view their work.

"They were real skeptical about my designs, but with



every piece, everyone was in awe," he said of that moment.

McKinney's use of collars, snaps, buttons with particular pieces of leather was a bit unknown to his new Turkish friends. Most of their

product had been designed for a Russian and Eastern European clientele, not American.

McKinney stayed in Turkey just over a week and has returned to Toledo with an armful of leather jackets in a

wide variety of colors and designs, ready to secure orders with stores. That will be the most difficult part of his labors. He's a designer, he admits, not a businessman.

But he's ready to take his

fledgling business to the next level, calling on stores and shops and seeking the big break that can help him continue to churn out his fashion dreams. Hard work, he said, will make up for any deficiencies in business skills.



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**“Reading Quilts” Presented as Part of TMA’s Symphonic Poem Exhibition**

By Geneva J. Chapman,  
Sojourner’s Truth Reporter

“This is in conjunction with our ‘Symphonic Poem Series,’ Toledo Museum of Art’s Program Coordinator Judy Weinberg said as she introduced a special presentation on quilts, Friday, March 9, 2007.

“Symphonic Poem,” the art of African-American artist Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson, is on display at TMA, February 23-May 20, 2007, with free exhibition admission. The artist, a Columbus, Ohio, native, will be appearing at TMA Sunday, April 15, to create a RagGonNon – a work of art that incorporates found objects to tell a personal story that evolves with every addition.

“Symphonic Poem” features more than 100 of Robinson’s paintings, works on paper, sculptures, journals and mixed media objects that span more than 50 years and range from the artist’s childhood drawings to recently completed work.

A number of programs are being featured at TMA in conjunction with the exhibi-

tion of Robinson’s work, including making a “memory map,” manuscript memories, everyday objects, narrating the art of your life, personal poetry, heirloom appraisal, symphonic stories, storytelling with Odessa Rowan, creating your neighborhood, poetry in motion and reading quilts.

“Because quilts tell stories,” said Weinberg. “We need you to go out and tell everybody what a fun, exciting exhibition this is!” Many of the people who attended the quilting presentation came expecting to see Robinson, but were not disappointed when Nancy Villa Bryte, director of education at the Ann Arbor Hands-on Museum shared her vast knowledge of the subject with them.

“What you’ll see today are quilts from the Henry Ford Museum,” said Bryte. “Henry Ford’s collection is 220 quilts.” Formerly the curator of textiles for the museum, Bryte said she took the job because she loves clothes.

“In 1970, Henry Ford had

a devastating fire that destroyed 80 percent of the quilt collection,” she said. Bryte showed a photo of the most famous quilt in America, the Greenfield Quilt.

“Legend has it that it was made by a young lady named Liza who lived in Greenfield Connecticut,” said Bryte. “She created the quilt to commemorate her community.”

Later, in her presentation, Bryte showed photo of a story cloth made by Hmong refugees from Vietnam. “They didn’t have a written language,” she said. “Their stories were told in textiles. They were unbelievable textile workers. Young girls were expected to learn embroidery. When they fled, they went to refugee camps. They wanted to remember what their communities looked like. These story cloths were made in the refugee camps and brought to America.”

Bryte said one was sold to the Henry Ford museum to help a family resettle here. However, the history of American quilters is a history of American women, ac-

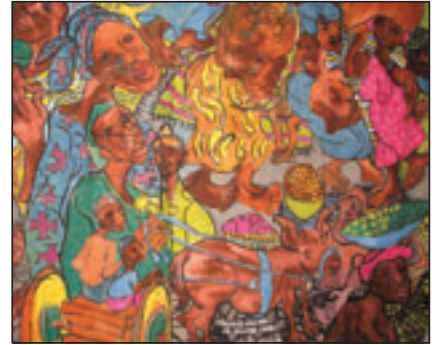
ording to Bryte. “I think what’s so great about quilts is that they are scraps of women’s lives,” she said, adding that some quilts span as much as sixty years of collecting pieces.

“These quilts are emblazoned with little strings that women weave from their souls,” said Bryte. “Quilts were something women did while they put together their trousseaus. We’ll talk about women who documented communities.”

Bryte proudly displayed quilt squares from her personal collection. “I’ve been collecting little scraps over the years,” she said. “I’ve collected a number of these quilt squares.” Some of the squares she displayed were made in Ohio in 1851, the same year Sojourner Truth gave her “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech at a conference on women’s rights in Akron, Ohio.

Bryte talked about different types of quilts, including chintz quilts that have a glazed look; pieced quilts made of juxtaposed scraps of fabric and appliqué quilts. “In order to talk about what quilts are, you have to talk about the women who made them,” Bryte explained. “Women learned at the feet of their mothers and grandmothers. One can only imagine the storytelling that went on there. Young girls were really expected to learn to make quilts.”

Bryte said that by the age of five, young girls had learned to make a quilt square. “On the fifth birthday, young girls were expected to present



a square and show how it was put together,” she said. “How did they learn to make them?”

She explained that each girl had her own sewing kit and her own quilt patterns and templates. “You could learn at home or at an academy,” she said. Bryte showed a number of examples of quilting from the 19th Century, including some from the South. “What’s very interesting about these southern quilts made in the antebellum South is they were probably made by African-American slaves,” she said. “Every time I look at these southern quilts, I can only imagine that African-American slaves, who were incredible needle workers, probably made them but were never mentioned.”

Among the dozens of illustrations of quilts and quilters, Bryte had a photo of an African-American woman with an appliqué pattern on the bottom of her apron. “At some point in her life she was probably enslaved and made quilts.”

She also showed a photo of a quilt made by former slave Harriet Powers that is on display at the Smithsonian, explaining that she did not know the meaning of the images in the squares, although

she believed that they were Bible stories.

“She made this quilt after the Civil War,” said Bryte, adding that a white woman wanted it, but Powers would not give it up at first. “When she came on hard times, she let go of it, much to her chagrin, and came back to visit it.”

Bryte, who admitted she is not a quilter herself, also admitted that although her knowledge of quilting is extensive, it is limited in one area. “I probably know the least about African-American quilts,” she said.

Bryte doesn’t have to go too far to learn more about African-American quilts.

“The Michigan State University Museum’s collection of African-American quilts grew out of an effort begun in 1985 to aggressively collect information on African-American quilting history in the state. The first wave of Quilt Discovery Days held in 1985 did not elicit much information about African-American or other non-European quilt making history. Working with local organizations in communities of predominantly black populations or historically impor-

(Continued on Page 10)

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Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson is organized by the Columbus Museum of Art and Arts Midwest in partnership with the Ohio Arts Council.

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# "Reading Quilts"

(Continued from Page 9)

tant black settlements, museum staff held a series of African-American Community Quilt Discovery Days in 1986. Quilters and quilt owners in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Lansing and Idlewild, were encouraged to share their quilts and stories. Due to the active involvement of African-American leaders in these communities, the African-American Quilt Discovery Days successfully identified many quilts and quilters. As examples, the work of more than thirty quilters was recorded at the first event held in Muskegon, and at a Quilt Discovery Day in Detroit, Rosa Parks brought her and her mother's quilts in to be registered.... The documentation project and the collection of quilts reveals a wide range of individual styles and traditions of quilting designs, construction techniques, and uses within Michigan's African-American communities. This breadth provided an opportunity to examine major controversies in African-American quilt scholarship — the issues of African survivals in African-American material culture and whether or not there exists a 'typical African-American' quilt. Most studies of African-American quilting or what Cuesta Benberry refers to as 'ethnic quilting,' have been based on quilts and quilters with strong ties to Southern, rural communities, the areas of the country where the majority of the African slave populations originally existed and where their descendants still live. It is not surprising then, that so many quilts containing the characteristics of African textiles are found in this

region. The Michigan data included 'typical African-American' quilts, generally made by women who had been born and raised in the South and who migrated north and/or who kept in close contact with relatives who lived in the South. However, research also documented quilts reflecting many other traditions rooted in a variety of other experiences, including urban, Northern, multi-ethnic, occupational, and African. Thus the collection does not reflect a 'typical African-American' quilt-type, but a diversity of styles, pattern names, techniques, and uses found within the Michigan African-American experience." (Marsha MacDowell [excerpt from Marsha MacDowell, ed., *Great Lakes, Great Quilts*. Concord, California: C&T Publishing, 2001]).

However, these quilts, according to some, may have been far more sophisticated and historically significant than once believed. According to Jacqueline Tobin and Raymond Dobard, "African textile motifs and indigenous writing symbols were integrated into African American quilts. Writing systems such as vai (Liberia) and nsibidi (Nigeria) converged with adinkra symbols (Ghana), nkisi charms (Congo) adire patterns (Yoruba) and kuba designs (Congo).

African-Americans' rich ancestral traditions include a long history of creating textiles, so it is only logical that these traditions would include quilting. Yet, as Bryte pointed out in her presentations, little mention has been made of the contributions of

African-American quilters to this art form.

However, thanks to efforts like those made at Michigan State, all of that is beginning to change. "Like much of African-American design, African-American quilts have been around for generations, but it has only been relatively recently that they have been considered collectible works of art. Made by black women using traditional techniques and from patterns memorized and shared among quilters, these coverlets—once considered crude and utilitarian—are now appreciated for their unique and powerful beauty. The transformation in thinking about African-American quilts has come slowly, and for many, including some of the black quilters themselves, it is still a surprise. In the realm of quilting, Anglo-American quilts have held center-stage with examples of recognizable styles such as Baltimore Album quilts, which hail from the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas, and Amish quilts, made by Amish women in the rural East—receiving most of the popular attention. Dramatic, contemporary art quilts, made by American, European and Asian quilters which bend the rules of "traditional" quilting, have also been the focus of much attention, both within the art world and in the broad field of quilting. But African-American quilts are a different story. They have been unknown to the art community, quilt community and general public for a number of reasons—not least of which is that they are often made by poor women in the rural South, intended only for the quilters' families. Add to that the long-held perception that because these quilts are not precisely made, with perfectly pieced blocks, tiny quilting stitches and elabo-

rate patterns, they are not as good as Anglo-American quilts. It is no wonder that like much of African-American culture, the world has been slow to discover the wonder of these quilts.

"Dr. Maude Southwell Wahlman, a professor of art and art history at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, was one of the first people to see that these quilts were an art form, not just a form of bed covering. In the 1970s, she traveled throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and other Southern states in search of quilts and their makers. 'Back then, [the quilters] didn't see themselves as artists,' Wahlman recalled. 'No one was interested in their work, and no one had ever talked to them about their quilts.'

"Wahlman organized an exhibit in 1979 at the Yale Art Gallery that was one of the earliest to exclusively feature African-American quilts. What she saw, and what others in the art and quilt communities began to see, was a singular aesthetic. 'They are unique because they are all different,' Wahlman explained. 'You can't find two alike. The quilters do innovations on traditional patterns; they improvise. They sort of take off like jazz or blues musicians. And that's what makes them interesting as collectible items. It's not just arts and crafts, there's a lot of thinking that goes into these quilts, but much of it is not even conscious. It comes from the aesthetic tradition of improvisation, and it's second nature to African-American quilters, since they have grown up in a culture that improvises everything.'

"Dr. Robert Cargo, a well-known quilt collector, historian and folk art dealer who owns Robert Cargo Folk Art Gallery in Tuscaloosa, Ala., was converted to a lover of African-American quilts by

# Houston Johnson, Jr., M.D

(Continued from Page 7)

"When I was approached about coming to Toledo, there was a lot of discussion of and apprehension over the role of managed care. Many people predicted that private practice would be changed forever, and that all doctors would be employees of HMOs. So I saw Toledo as providing a great opportunity for me to at least experience the private practice of medicine," says Johnson.

"I also saw an opportunity to develop something out of the breast care program at Flower Hospital. Actually, everything came together in a good way. It just seemed like the right thing.

"I was also getting sick and tired of the declining quality of life in New York. This was the era when benign neglect had finally caught up to New

York City, and there was human misery all around," adds Johnson.

"Once I came to Toledo, I was finally doing what I was intended to do. Private practice fits well with what I can do

"I believe the practice of medicine is one of the highest service callings one can have. It is a very fulfilling way to live out my life. I enjoy it, and I will continue to do it just as long as I am able to do it.

"Medicine is a great opportunity to help people and not just give them lip service. You can actually improve the lives of people," says Johnson.

Readers desiring to explore their eligibility for clinical or prevention trials can contact the Toledo Community Hospitals Oncology Program by calling (419) 843-6147.

Wahlman. 'I had collected Anglo-American quilts for years. I had seen African-American quilts, of course, but I always thought they seemed crudely made. But Maude made me value them. They are coming out of a totally different aesthetic than the aesthetic that informs Anglo quilts.'

"Interestingly, many African-American quilters use the jazz comparison to describe their work. Yvonne Wells, an Alabama quilter and retired schoolteacher whose work is marketed by Cargo, said, 'I still see other [Anglo] quilts as more refined and deliberate. Mine is like a jazz piece—it's very sporadic. I admire the quilts

the white community makes, but that's not me, it's not mine.'

"Cargo said that although every African-American quilt is different, typically, they have a few common qualities that define their look. He credits Wahlman with establishing a set of loose criteria that defines the African-American quilt, including the use of bright, vibrant colors, often in unusual combinations; the presence of large design elements; and the asymmetrical, improvisational look to the finished quilt." (Julie Keith, "African-American Quilts," *Art Business News*, January 2003.)

Contact Geneva Chapman at [atgeneva@thetruthtoledo.com](mailto:atgeneva@thetruthtoledo.com)

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# The Annual Black College Tour

By Ashley Moore  
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The Maumee Bay Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. black college tour mandatory student/parent meeting was held on Tuesday, March 20th at United Missionary Baptist Church.

The meeting was held to discuss this year's college tour that will take place from April 9 to April

14. On that Monday morning, April 9, high school sophomores, juniors and seniors from Toledo area schools will be departing for a week filled with excitement and great educational experiences.

This year 74 students will be in two buses to take what the organizers term the eastern tour. That tour includes the historical black colleges and universities on East

Coast – the tour alternates between the southern and the eastern swing.

The eastern universities include Winston-Salem University, North Carolina A&T Hampton University and Howard University.

Rev. Robert Bass, pastor of United Missionary, started the meeting by praying for the safe travel of the students and the chaperones. The meeting was led by Trevor Black, the president of Maumee Bay Club, and Gwendolyn Wilson-Banks.

The two discussed the various activities they have planned for this trip such as the visit to National Blacks in Wax museum in Baltimore, Maryland. The students will enjoy staying in first-rate hotels, and will be on campus for an average of two to three hours per visit.

Wilson-Banks and Black

decided to organize the tour several years ago – this is the fourth year of the tour – after they learned of a similar Cincinnati program that has been operating for more than two decades. In fact, they made contact with the Cincinnati organizers who not only shared information but also graciously gave their assistance in helping the local program to get underway.

As Wilson-Banks and black have acquired more expertise in the business of conducting tours, they have honed their message to the students about how to conduct themselves.

A dress code is enforced, for example. Students are representing themselves and their parents while they are on this tour, that's why there is a dress code enforced, said the ladies.

The gentlemen are not



Gwen Wilson-Banks (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) reads high school students for college tour

allowed to wear doo-rags while on campus nor allow their pants to sag, if they choose to they will be given a piece of rope by the chaperones to keep their pants up. The young-ladies are encouraged to wear shirts that are not too provocative or revealing. If they choose to they will be given an oversized t-shirt by one of the chaperones.

"The safety and appearance of these young adults is very important to us," said Black. A strict curfew will be enforced every night to ensure that the students get their proper rest. Parents are

equipped with cell phone numbers of chaperones in case of emergency.

The students will be expected to carry a portfolio onto every campus which contains paper pencil and data sheets. This will ensure that students are taking accurate notes.

They students will be on the tour for one week and they will be given the opportunity to apply to each college they tour. Many of those colleges will waive the application fee if the students apply while on campus for a tour.



Trevor Black (far r.) with future college students



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## The Minority Caucus/OLBC Chapter Changing Our World – One Vote At A Time Harambee!!

By Vickie Shurelds  
Special to the Truth

In these bizarre political times, each citizen is faced with the challenge of sorting through the extensive rhetoric of established parties and researching the background of candidates to divulge the true practices of their careers.

Too often in this arena, the quick change artistry boggles the mind. Conservative efforts in one area, liberal in another – searching for the true colors of each candidate and each issue has become, for too many potential voters – overwhelming.

Each party begins to spurn forth grassroots efforts that can explain on the most basic level the “standard” or core belief on which the party is based. There is then an attempt to break it down even further – cultural differences, social fractions and other considerations are developed to offer more fine tuning of ideas assuming the average human would rather take small bites of the political pie and move from morsel to morsel figuring out the pattern while determining the type ingredients making up their favorite kind of “pie.”

In Allen County, the political stronghold has “forever” been the Republican Party. Now it behooves all voters to recall that historically – there have been many changes in the philosophies of both parties since their origin. Last year’s November election was engulfed in innuendoes and partial truths designed to confuse uninformed and/or new voters in the hope of discouraging them from voting, or frustrating them to the point they felt their voting was a futile effort. The damage was apparent resulting in one bumper sticker which read “If voting was really fair it would have been made illegal by now”.

Since 1986, the Allen County Democratic Party has as one of its committees the Minority Caucus whose Principles and Objectives include:

- assisting the national, state and county Democratic Parties in the implementation of programs and achievement of objectives within the state of Ohio.
- encouraging all African-Americans, and other minority Democrats, to share and participate equally in the benefits of the Democratic Party.
- To encourage African-Americans to register, vote and exercise their rightful part in the political life of our local community, the state of Ohio and the nation.

The group itself is composed of public elected African-Americans and other minority Democrats and those appointees to public office and local community organizations and clubs pledged to support the Minority Caucus

To strengthen their influence and effectiveness, The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus established a partnership with the Minority Caucus June 6, 1996. This partnership has lead to a stronger tie to the state legislators. The group later changed its name to Black Elected

Democrats of Ohio. The basic philosophy however has not changed.

The organization was created as a mechanism to help educate blacks and other minorities about the importance of involvement in party politics in order to secure a fair share of government services for their communities. OLBC has a diversified membership which includes elected officials, business leaders, and community activists throughout Ohio.

Since developing the partnership, the Minority Caucus has displayed increasing success in turning prospective voters into registered voters then into actual voters. The results are apparent in that after each general election for the past four years, there has been a gain in the number of Democrats seated as presiding judges in their precincts. The make up of the team of poll workers is predicated on the governorship and voter turnout from the previous general election.

The November election again changed the face of the poll workers. When voters return to the polls for the next general election, they’ll see of 79 of Allen County’s 139 precincts with Democrats in presiding judge positions. Prior to the last gen-



Alberta Shurelds, Mary Mayes, Dollie Taylor, the Honorable Jesse Jackson, Linda Pugh, Vickie Shurelds

eral election there were only 13 Democratic-led precincts. It’s an historic morphing-created “one vote at a time.”

Another distinguishing characteristic of the caucus is its focus on education, and not just the education of students. A prominent member of the caucus brought to the attention of state employees that convicted felons – once their time has been served and full restitutions met – have a right to vote. Previously, most thought that right was lost forever once the mistake was made that landed offenders in the custody of the state.

One of the Democratic Minority Caucus’ major events has as its purpose gathering the community together for networking, sharing and participating in social confab. This year the

**Harambee** features Edna Jones as keynote speaker, with the theme “Changing Our World One Vote At A Time”. The event takes place at the Civic Center in downtown Lima on Saturday, April 14. Social Hour begins at 6 p.m., dinner is offered at 7. Scholarships will be given, community enthusiasts will be honored and information will be abundantly displayed by service organizations, local media and performers.

Their efforts are appreciated by black elected officials on the state level, so much so they have been honored guests at dinners and receptions in major cities designed to disseminate vital information to voters. Their recent trek to the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati with special guest Jesse Jackson was

among one of those invitations.

As effective as they have been, the belief that they could be stronger, if there were more of them, prevails. Their effort to gain strength through numbers of community-minded individuals has been undertaken with enthusiasm.

There’s an open invitation to anyone with an interest to join them for a push toward establishing benchmarks for education for our children and a better Get-Out-And-Vote effort. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm at the UAW Hall, 1440 Bellefontaine Avenue. (There are no meetings in July and August.)

Change through voting. Interesting Concept.

  
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# D.J. Lyte N Rod Signs Major Record Deal

By Michael Hayes  
Minister of Culture

If you call yourself involved in hip-hop in Toledo, or in local urban entertainment in any way, if you don't know who D.J. Lyte N Rod is then you might as well pack up, leave town and come back when you get it right.

In this city there's plenty of competition among all the people doing music.

Producing music and running a small music company (U.G.E., ya'll) I have always seen the unity in some circles but the overall lack of unity between most crews who do music.

But even though we all may not be checkin' for whomever, one thing is a constant:

**WE ALL RESPECT D.J. LYTE N ROD.**

My label/crew focuses on conscious hip-hop and R&B, whereas some other crews might do gangsta rap - it doesn't matter. Across the whole scene, from every hood and over every dividing line - peeps know and have love for D.J. Lyte N Rod.

Back in the day, there was this club called Lodeana's.

I wasn't old enough to go to that joint but I used to always hear my older cousins talking about how that place was on point and D.J. Lyte N Rod was the official man on the wheels of steel. He had the city on lock as the most prominent D.J. that ev-

erybody was checkin' for. And that was like in the early 90's.

Then he started hittin' people with mixtapes.

Various styles. He had the hip-hop ones, the hustle ones, the R&B ones ... whatever.

By the time the new millennium rolled around, D.J. Lyte N Rod was much more than a local legend but he actually fathered a hip-hop scene here in the Glass City that boasts nearly a dozen big name D.J.'s. That's right. If you ever ask D.J. Keith Success, D.J. One Tyme, and the rest of our most well-respected D.J.'s, who paved the way for them... they will tell you themselves that it was big homie Rod.

The typical D.J. spins at parties on the weekend, probably puts out a few mix CD's and eventually makes his way into production or radio work.

D.J. Lyte N Rod put Toledo on his back when he decided to promote a yearly event called Flow From The Glass.

Instead of sectioning off certain affiliations to certain crews, Rod told every act who wanted a slot to perform that they could just get up there and rock.

He even had the video screens for peeps to show their video's while they performed.

That type of stuff doesn't even happen in Detroit and

Cleveland.

Oh yeah, please believe ya boy is innovative too.

The first time I ever saw a pair of C.D.J.'s was when Lyte N Rod was using them and he was doing tricks on those joints like they had been out forever - L.O.L.

I'm a fan of vinyl when its time for D.J. battles, but as much as I love those events I always found myself traveling out of town to see them.

Until ya boy Lyte N Rod locked down a club on Stickney Ave. and had an event that finally spoke to the real hip-hop heads in our city.

So what's left to do for a man that built a hip-hop scene from nothing, helped birth a few successful careers, promoted events and ultimately became one of very few music legends still working in a city like Toledo... well, hell, the only thing left to do is grind even harder. So D.J. Lyte N Rod began doing shows in other northwest Ohio cities and nearly a year ago at a show in Findlay he happened to impress an individual who could really take the whole movement even higher.

George Burtman is president and CEO of Primoris Records, an independent label boasting a roster of country, rock and urban artists all with major distribution through Universal Records.

George and I got a chance to chop it up last week and he put me down on the situation with Lyte N Rod. George is from Cleveland, but he spent the 90's blowing up as a music executive in Los Angeles. Recently he formed a new label and has spread his base of operations to include L.A. and also Findlay, Ohio.

He said he saw Lyte N Rod spin at a club in Findlay and he just peeped the whole vibe of how the crowd responded to him and he had a few conversations with him. He told Rod that he was going back out to L.A. but that when he did he was going to sign him to a record contract with his label. Rod admits that he was skeptical.

Being 40-years old and a veteran in this game, he's heard it all before.

But Burtman is official.

And Primoris Records is committed to having a multi-genre approach to music in terms of whom they sign and what music is made.

That's how Primoris can have a country artist named Woody Bradshaw sittin' on the top half of the current Country Billboard charts and still sign a middle-aged hip-hop D.J. at a time when hardly any D.J.'s are getting big label deals.

Hell, I've met a lot of execs doing what I do for my music company and I have to agree with Rod on this one... Burtman seems a lot more down to earth and genuine than most.

He and his whole staff treated me like a guest of honor at Lyte N Rod's signing party last week. Yeah, I know some of ya'll were expecting me to write some big long thing about the big concert. But since I didn't go, the most I know is that there was one fight that wasn't too serious and Fat Joe didn't show but everything else was great.

Good job, Toledo. I'm proud of ya'll for representing... maybe now some more shows will come here.

But yo - that night I was choppin' it up with a real CEO while most everyone else was at the Sports Arena watching Lil Wayne get open.

Burtman has a connection with all of the artists he signs.

He and Rod seem to genuinely respect each other and it's obvious that this is a business relationship both sides are happy with.

Primoris Records gave D.J. Lyte N Rod the opportunity to have his first mix CD compilation release receive a few good looks from established artists such as Lloyd or Lil Wayne. Rod turned that idea down choosing instead to focus solely on Toledo's talent pool.

So, far as things go right now...

D.J. Lyte N Rod is planning on picking 15 or so of the hottest artists in the To-



D.J. Lyte N Rod and George Burtman

ledo market and he's gonna put them on a mixtape to be released regionally and then nationally. After seeing how that goes, Burtman will offer a recording contract to whichever artist gets the biggest buzz from their contribution to the mixtape.

And the contract is real, ya'll, no joke.

I saw Lyte N Rod's show it was presented to him.

That was a slick-ass moment. Probably the most memorable since I've been writing for The Truth.

See, I still have to remind folks... I'm not a writer. Music is what I've always done and it's that mindset that I think with and that life I relate to.

Knowing how things can go when people spend their whole life chasing something, it just felt really good to see Lyte N Rod sign a major record deal right in front of me.

To see someone's hard work and dedication culminate in a happy new beginning, it was amazing. The crowd at Bijou that night may or may not have realized the importance of what they were witnessing but George and Rod made sure everyone could see that this was important.

So that's how it goes down, ya'll.

Local hip-hop legend gets signed by an indie/major and all seems right with the world.

But there's still those 15 or so slots to fill when it's time for Rod to take them national by including their music on his debut mix CD.

For the record, I'd be honored if Lyte N Rod picked one of the acts on my label

(Aye Dee, The Undergodz, Darron Scott, Mz. Johni etc.) to be one of the featured artists but honestly my talks with Burtman were more geared to U.G.E. joining Primoris as its own self-contained entity. Now you know it's serious.

Ya'll should know, I don't trust just anybody. As a CEO, George doesn't have to give his time or attention to anyone. But he took me seriously when I approached him about my company.

He understood the need for The Undergodz to continue our success as producers and start building recording careers by sticking to ORIGINAL and WELL-THOUGHT OUT concepts instead of the same watered-down garbage.

It meant a lot that his company is committed to allowing people to be themselves. Which means that Lyte N Rod and his Follow The Lyte fam are in good hands.

This a truly a great victory for a deserving person and also a victory for Toledo.

The Swagga Boyz hosted U.T.'s Rip The Runway Fashion Show this past weekend

and they took time out to celebrate the still growing legacy of D.J. Lyte N Rod and bring some light to a figure in our community that 18 year-old college students might easily overlook.

So once again, CONGRATULATIONS D.J. LYTE N ROD.

You deserve it, fam.

Get at me Toledo: glasscitytruth@yahoo.com or myspace.com/undergodzent



Burtman and the Minister

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# Elaine Brown

(Continued from Page 6)

theory that the events of the uprising were controlled by a pact between three prison gangs: the Sunni Muslims, the Aryan Brotherhood and the Black Gangster Disciples.

Brown maintains that crime is a political question that results in the poor being incarcerated while rich criminals remain free.

She further explained that the justice system has obvious flaws, exacerbated by President Clinton's three strikes bill in 1996.

Brown explained that in our nation where African-Americans make up only 13 percent of the total population, they account for half of U.S. prison population of approximately two million.

At the forum she will offer her suggestions to remedy the problem including placing a moratorium on the death penalty which she says is barbaric and has no place in civilized society.

Elaine Brown was declared the chairman of the Black Panther Party in 1974 when the prior leader Huey P. Newton had become exiled to Cuba. Her role took the party to a phenomenal pivotal point in which the party not only had to accept the unappealing reality of losing their leader, but also had to accept a woman as his replacement.

Her hard-hitting message will also include issues concerning the prison industry complex, racism, classism and the judicial system.

# My Journey Through KENYA: Its People, Culture and Beauty

Join **Dorcel Dowdell**, Main Library Manager, for an exciting pictorial presentation titled, **KENYA: Its People, Culture and Beauty**, scheduled from 7-8:30 p.m. on Monday, April 16 at the Mott Branch Library, 1085 Dorr Street.

Dowdell recently spent two weeks in Kenya, where she visited the capital city of Nairobi and went on a three-day safari through Amboseli and Lake Nakuru National Parks.

She also visited a beach resort in Mombasa, a city lying on the Indian Ocean, and visited an orphanage for children whose parents have died from complications due to AIDS.

Dowdell will offer attendees a geography lesson to learn about Kenyan culture and people. This event is free and open to the public.

For more information, please contact 419.259.5230.

# Words Matter: Rep. Brown Votes for Compassion in Ohio law books

State Representative Edna Brown, D-Toledo, voted today in support of legislation that would eliminate words such as "lunatic," "idiot" and "imbecile" from the Ohio Revised Code in favor of more modern, inclusive language.

The Ohio Revised Code is now sprinkled with such words, legacies of an earlier era when mental health and intellectual development were not as well understood.

House Bill 53, which passed the Ohio House of Representatives with a unanimous vote, removes from

Ohio law 10 instances of "idiot," 55 uses of the word "insane," two instances of "imbecile" and six uses of the word "lunatic." The words are replaced with more appropriate words and phrases, such as "a person with a mental illness."

"This bill is about respect and compassion. It shows the progress we have made as a society that values all citizens," said Rep. Brown. "The language in our law books should reflect that progress as well."

H.B. 53 will now be considered by the Ohio Senate.

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For Contact Call: Joe Love at (419)320-2056

### 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

### Executive Director

River East Economic Revitalization Corporation is looking for an experienced Executive Director. Requires Bachelors Degree & minimum 5 years experience in related field, knowledgeable in Economic Development. Excellent people, management, computer & budgeting skills, Business Planning, knowledgeable of public entities. Competitive Wage & Benefits. Resumes need to be submitted by April 17, 2007 to:

REERC  
c/o Executive Director Search Committee,  
117 Main St.,  
Ste. C,  
Toledo, OH 43605

## 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

**Telemarketing position** with one of the fastest-growing agencies in the area. Vince Davis Agency has telemarketing positions from \$8.00 to \$20.00 dollars per hour. Your income will depend on your productivity.

Sales position available. Income ranges vary and will depend on productivity. Income ranges in the \$25,000 to \$40,000 the first year.

Call (419) 244-2904

### Behavior Assistant

Seeking a dedicated professional to work in a partial-hospitalization setting with youth experiencing severe behavioral problems. Must have Bachelor’s degree in psychology, social work or related field; licensure preferred. Position requires valid driver’s license and good driving record, ability to perform therapeutic holds, and desire to work in a team setting. Experience working with troubled youth preferred. Duties include providing support to students, managing behaviors in the classroom, and implementing group and individual activities. Assists with transportation duties as needed. Must possess assessment and treatment skills and be proficient in computer use. Submit cover letter with salary expectations and resume by 4/11/07, to

Harbor Behavioral Healthcare (BA),  
4334 Secor Road,  
Toledo, OH 43623-4234  
or fax to 419-724-9425  
or e-mail to harborhr@harbor.org.

EOE.

### FREE TAX SERVICE DO YOU WANT FREE TAX SERVICE?

*Would you like help filing your taxes this year?*

*You can get free income tax assistance at any of the following locations:*

- Frederick Douglas Community Center at 1001 Indiana Avenue
- Aurora Gonzalez Community & Family Resource Center at 1949 Broadway Avenue
- Adelante, Inc at 520 Broadway Avenue
- Margaret L. Hunt Senior Center at 2121 Garden Lake Parkway
- Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union at 1339 Dorr Street
- Onyx Incorporated at 525 Hamilton Street
- Job and Family Services at 3210 Monroe Street

To set up an appointment or for more information, please call United Way at 2-1-1. Again, to set up an appointment or for more information regarding free volunteer income tax assistance this year, please call United Way at 2-1-1.

Board of Community Relations,  
110 N. Westwood Ave.,  
Toledo, Ohio 43607 USA  
Telephone 419-245-1565  
FAX: 419-245-1471  
www.ci.toledo.oh.us

One Government Center,  
Suite 2190 Toledo, Ohio  
43604 USA  
Telephone 419-245-1001  
Fax 419-245-1370  
www.ci.toledo.oh.us

### For Sale CROSSGATE AREA

1763 Wilshire – South Toledo

3 beds, 1.5 baths

Immediate occupancy  
\$149,500

Sulpher Springs Realty  
Barbara Jacobs  
419-865-7355

### Executive Director

ONYX, Inc. a non-profit community development corporation seeks an experienced professional to implement and administer the programs and policies of the development process for housing, economic and community revitalization.

This is a FULL-TIME position with benefits and a competitive salary.

Candidates MUST meet the following threshold requirements: 6 years of management experience, knowledge of governmental housing procedures, grant writing skills (provide writing sample), and strong desire to work in the community.

Please send cover letters with salary requirements and resume by Monday, April 30, 2007 to:

P.O. Box 323,  
Toledo, OH 43697  
or e-mail tgarner@onyxcdc.org.

No Phone Calls, please

## Who Are Toledo’s Best Dressed Women?

We promised you this one way back in the fall when we looked for Toledo’s Best Dressed Men. The announcement will come in May with a little help from our sponsors.

### GOT ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Call us at 419-243-0007 with your nominations or email [thetruth@thetruthtoledo.com](mailto:thetruth@thetruthtoledo.com)

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

### MS. JUNIOR TOLEDO

*Your Crown Awaits You if You Dare to Dream!! Interested in becoming a contestant?*

If you are between the ages of 12 and 18 (not turning 19 before July 2007); and possess a performing talent (e.g., singing, dancing, acrobatics, poetry, drama, musician, etc.), please complete the information below  
**Apply by May 5, 2007**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TALENT: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: MISS JUNIOR TOLEDO PAGEANT, 2124 CALUMET AVE,  
TOLEDO, OH 43607, (419) 450-7031



**Easter Lilies**  
In 6.5 Inch Pots

**5<sup>99</sup>**  
WITH

**Natural Juice**

**Cumberland Gap Whole Semi Boneless Ham**  
USDA Inspected

**96<sup>¢</sup>** lb

Limit 1 Total With \$10 Additional Food Purchase Excluding Alcohol, Tobacco Products, Fuel & Prescription

**California Strawberries**  
Red, Ripe 1 lb Pkg

**1<sup>88</sup>**

WITH

**Buy A Total of Two Pepsi or Aquafina 24 Packs in One Order and PAY ONLY**

**4<sup>44</sup>** each

Limit 1 Transaction Per Customer Purchases Less Than or Greater Than Two Will Be At \$5.99 each

**Full Line Butcher's Premium Angus® Sale**  
USDA Choice Angus Beef, Excludes Angus Ground Beef and Patties

**33% off\***

\*Kroger Plus Shopper's Card Price Reflects 33% off Savings.

**Florida Sweet Corn**  
In Husk Ear

**6\$2** Ears For

WITH

**12 Pack Coke**  
12 oz Cans or 6 Pack, 24 oz Btls All Varieties

**Final Cost 4\$10\*** for

\*Buy 4 Coke 12 Packs or 6 Pack, 24 oz Btls at 4 for \$12 in One Transaction and Get \$2 Off Instantly

Limit 1 Transaction Per Customer

**Private Selection Beef Prime Rib Roast**  
USDA Inspected Fully Cooked Beef Rib

**5<sup>99</sup>** lb

WITH

**Kroger Cheese**  
6-8 Bars or Shreds, 8 oz Cubes, 6 oz Deli Slices or 12 oz IWS Select Varieties

**10\$10** for

WITH

**12 Pack Pepsi**  
12 oz Cans or 6 Pack, 24 oz Btls All Varieties

**Final Cost 4\$10\*** for

\*Buy 4 Pepsi 12 Packs or 6 Pack, 24 oz Btls at 4 for \$12 in One Transaction and Get \$2 Off Instantly

Limit 1 Transaction Per Customer

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Each of these advertised items is required to be available for sale. If we run out of an advertised item, we will offer you your choice of a comparable item, when available, reflecting the same savings, or a raincheck which will entitle you to purchase the advertised item at the advertised price within 30 days. Only one vendor coupon will be accepted per item. Copyright 2007. The Kroger Company. No sales to dealers.