



John C. Jones
President/CEO of the Greater Toledo Urban League

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“Once I got involved and found out what the Urban League was all about, it became a passion. It was about changing lives of people and their families; it was a whole lot bigger than I thought.”

This Strikes Us...

A Sojourner's Truth Editorial

It's time for Senator Barack Obama to redefine his strategy.

Just when we thought that the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination might come to a close with results from Texas and Ohio, the race took another turn.

Had Obama won either state, his opponent might have cashed in her chips. Certainly, a victory by Obama in either state would have caused a number of super delegates to flock to his campaign once they were confronted with the inevitability of his victory.

But Senator Hillary Clinton won both big states and even though she made scarcely a dent in Obama's delegate lead, she solidified the impression that she is winning the big states that a Democratic nominee must win in the fall in order to top the Republican candidate.

That's an argument the Clinton campaign is pushing in order to convince super delegates that she would be the stronger of the two in a fall match up against Senator John McCain. It's an argument that makes little sense in reality. One of the most interesting aspects of this Democratic campaign is that the voters, in large measure, like both candidates. Unless the ongoing campaign creates such bitterness that voters are eventually appalled by the actions of their second choice they will, in just large measure, support the other in the fall.

Both Democratic candidates have an advantage in California, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Illinois against the Republican opponent. Both Democratic candidates have an equal chance in Ohio and Texas.

But this is politics and politics virtually always involves redefining logic.

As nearly every count of delegates notes, Obama has about a 100 delegate lead and there is no chance that Clinton can overtake him. She can scarcely close the gap even if she wins in Pennsylvania. There are a half dozen contests after Pennsylvania and most of them will prove more favorable to Obama.

On the other hand, he can't win the nomination if he relies strictly on entering the convention in Denver with a lead. He has to be able to urge a number of super delegates – about 300 or so are sitting on the fence and will remain firmly on that fence until they feel that one candidate or the other holds a decisive edge when it comes to facing McCain – to move over to his side.

The challenge facing Obama is the issue of his relative inexperience. Clinton started pouncing on that before the Texas and Ohio primaries last week and it appears to have gained some traction.

So Obama has two choices now. He can go on the offense and attack the vulnerable Clintons where it hurts the most – their scandal-ridden past. Or he can maintain the high ground but move quickly to shore up his defenses. We urge the latter.

As we have said time and time again, Obama's political office experience – eight years in the Ohio legislature and three years in the U.S. Senate – is augmented by years of experience in public service as a community organizer. Clinton touts her 35 years of experience. But somehow she finds some comfort in adding into that total her years as counsel with the Rose Law Firm and her years as a First Lady hearing the telephone ring at 3 AM. ("Bill, it's for you")

Neither in reality has had to make any executive decisions, neither has run anything. Then again, neither has McCain. These are senators here. And there is a reason that no one has moved from the Senate to the White House since John Kennedy in 1960 – voters prefer governors.

Still, Obama's opportunity to win this thing cleanly and keep the Democratic Party united and optimistic about his chances in November against McCain depend on his convincing folks that he is experienced enough to run the Oval Office.

He has to get that message out there. He has to take control of the overall breadth of the issues discussion and stop answering the Clinton lack of experience charge with the one-note reference to his speech against the War in Iraq. He has to broaden the discussion to include how his experience will help him deal with the very real problem of the economy that is going to be uppermost in the minds of the voters come November.

And given the fact that Obama's message has been that he is about change and not politics as usual, emphasizing his strengths, as opposed to the Clintons' weaknesses, keeps him on track and maintains his consistency.

And he can do that. Obama has quite a track record in the Illinois Senate. He proposed hundreds of bills during his stint there, some of which have made quite a difference in the way Illinois conducts business.

It's time for Obama to put plan B into operation. We hope he has a plan B.

Community Calendar

March 15

Opening of The Truth Art Gallery: 1811 Adams Street; 6 to 10 pm: 419-243-0007
"Fashion Extravaganza" Spring Style Show: Sponsored by the music department of Indiana Avenue MBC; Stephenson-Roberts Fellowship Hall; 2 to 4 pm: 419-246-3850

March 16

Consecration Service: "Lord, Keep Me Day by Day;" Toledo Interfaith Mass Choir; 6 pm; Calvary Bible Chapel
St. Paul MBC Annual Men's Day Program: "Men Maintaining a Relationship with Christ;" Guest Speakers Rev. Arthur Battle (AM) of Calvary Baptist and Rev. Otis Gordon (PM) of Warren AME

43rd Anniversary: Rev. John and Mother Bernice Roberts of Indiana Avenue MBC; Guest speaker Rev. Robert Wormely of Southern MBC; 4 pm: 419-246-3850

March 18

Board of Community Relations: Open, public focus group session; Reynolds Corner Library; 6 to 7:30 pm: 419-245-1565

Moving On: What to Do when Credit Problems or Criminal Records Get in the Way of Finding New Housing or Jobs: Sponsored by Toledo Lucas County Public Library, Legal Aid of Western Ohio and Advocates for Basic Legal Equality; Presented by attorneys Ed Marks and Veronica Zoltowski; 6:30 to 8:30 pm; Kent Branch: 419-259-5207

March 19

2008 Diversity Symposium: "Diversity Makes the World Go Round;" 7:30 am to noon; The Pinnacle; Keynote speaker Matt Roloff of "Little People, Little World;" 419-885-8505 ext. 12

March 21

Good Friday Service: Beulah Baptist Church; Noon

March 22

20 Annual Black History Banquet: Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Clarion Westgate; 6 pm Social hour; Keynote speaker William Lucy; "Bridging Labor and our Community

March 24

Board of Community Relations: Open, public focus group session; Sanger Branch Library; 6 to 7:30 pm: 419-245-1565

March 28-29

"Old Fashioned, Holy Ghost, God Sent, Soul Saving Devil Hatin' Evangelical Crusade:" New Beginning Community Church; Speakers Pastor Marilyn Wilson – host, Min. James Brooks, Evang. Ric Trench; 6 to 10 pm:

March 29

Style Show Luncheon: "Swing into Spring;" Upton United Methodist; 1 to 4 pm: 419-244-4420

Breakthrough Deliverance Service: Presented by Women of Virtue Ministries; The Salvation Army at 2727 Moorish St; Noon: 419-531-1862

April 6

43rd Anniversary: Rev. John and Mother Bernice Roberts of Indiana Avenue MBC; Guest speaker Rev. John Williams of Eastern Star MBC; 3:30 pm: 419-246-3850

April 18-20

Calvary Baptist Women's Ministry Spring Retreat: 419-531-9443

The Sojourner's Truth

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My View

By Jack Ford
The Truth's Political Columnist



I ran into State Senator Teresa Fedor over the weekend and she seemed to be back in full spirits nearly five weeks after the "coup" which toppled her from leadership of the minority caucus.

That is the right step – just do your job as state senator and let things play themselves out over time.

Fedor will resurface – in leadership – in another time under new circumstances.

The state senate job will be up for grabs once Fedor's present term ends. Watch out for Ben Konop

to run for that seat.

Konop, increasingly, the odd man out on the three-member Lucas County Board of Commissioners, may be thinking as Ray Kest did when he opted to leave the commissioner's office for the County Treasurer's post.

Konop will have to elbow out State Representatives Peter Ujvagi and Edna Brown for the state senate role but if Konop keeps his "favorite son" status with The Blade, he will remain the top contender.

Brown has the most seniority but that only carries one so far in politics. Ujvagi, one of the shrewdest pols in Ohio will contend hard but he also wanted a commissioner's job at one point. All three are very good public servants.

COSI is dead. Citifest is dead. The Erie Street Market is closed. Seven restaurants have left the down-

town area. Let's hope the new downtown arena picks things up in 2009.

Warning to the mostly black folks who work in the City of Toledo's Streets division. The city's move to automate will cost your jobs over the next few years. This is an idea the city has toyed with for years now.

The new president/CEO of the Greater Toledo Urban League is John Jones, a long-time board member. John is the grandson of the late Daisy Huff, founding pastor of Christian Temple Baptist. I remember watching John kneel in his grandmother's church as a young boy in short pants. Good luck to you, John.

I am told that \$79,000 that I tucked into the state budget for the J. Frank Troy Center back in 2000 is still there. Hope it can be retrieved and used at the Center. I will be speaking at the Troy Center on "Men's

Day" this week.

Boy, The Blade came down front and center to Gov. Ted Strickland by asking him to save the Seneca County Courthouse. The Blade reminded Strickland

just who pushed the Noe scandal and essentially threatened Strickland not to forget the power of The Blade. We shall see.

To Howard Cross ... stop crying over Carty call-

ing you a few choice names when you were housing czar. You are talented. Why don't you run for mayor of City Council and be constructive.

Commissioners, The Sources Announce \$650 for Youth Employment Grants

Special to The Truth

The Lucas County Commissioners, joined by the operators of The SOURCE, announced the award of \$650,000 in Workforce Investment Act grants targeting Youth Employment Opportunities at a news conference on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 in the Commissioners Chambers.

Lucas County's The SOURCE and its one-stop operator, Network, a division of the Zepf Center, will be the lead agency for the 400 youth planned to be enrolled in the project.

The young people will receive assessment, job readiness, and job placement services. The target youth population of 16 – 21 years of ages will receive job placement services in the following demand occupations/clusters: health care, high-tech manufacturing, construction, warehousing & distribution, and leadership in the service industry.

Thanks for the Wisdom

What a wonderful article written by Dr. Anita Lewis-Sewell. Her words are so true. As I read the article, I thought...do I really live in a world like that...sad but true...yes I do. Although she reminded us of our sad state of affairs, she also offered a solution...Jesus Christ. How impressive!

I do hope you continue to allow Dr. Anita Lewis-Sewell to share her wisdom with us from time to time. Oh by the way, did I mention...she is my big sister.
Blessings

Cynthia Hickman



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INTERESTED BIDDERS: TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS – LARCHMONT K – 8

Sealed bids will be accepted by the Board of Education of the Toledo Public School District until **1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 8th, 2008**, 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 **Larchmont K – 8 School Bid**, as more fully described in the drawings and specifications for the project prepared by Munger and Munger 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, and The Plan Room in Ann Arbor, Construction Association of Michigan, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce and Ohio Construction News.

Bidders may obtain copies of the documents starting **Wednesday, March 12th, 2008 which can be purchased from Becker Impressions, 4646 Angola Road, 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 **Monday, March 24th, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.** at Toledo Public Schools' Board Room, 420 E. Manhattan Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43608

If you have any questions or a need for additional information, please direct all questions in writing to Jeannene.Hill@lgb-llc.com, by phone at (419) 776-5600, or (fax) (877) 281-0784.

Bid Item No. 1 Site Work	\$	665,400.00
Bid Item No. 2 General Trades	\$	5,299,500.00
Bid Item No. 3 Fire Protection	\$	139,900.00
Bid Item No. 4 Plumbing	\$	521,800.00
Bid Item No. 5 HVAC	\$	1,785,000.00
Bid Item No. 6 Electrical	\$	1,100,200.00
Bid Item No. 7 Technology	\$	663,368.00
Total Estimate:		\$10,175,168.00

Clinton Defies the Oddsmakers and Battles On

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

Hillary Clinton entered Super Tuesday II as a long shot to continue her campaign to be the Democratic Party's nominee past that eventful day. But at the end of that day, she had won primaries in Texas and Ohio and vowed to continue her quest to become the nation's first woman president.

As the March 4 primaries approached, Clinton managed to stem the Barack Obama momentum that had closed the huge gaps in both states over the previous two weeks. Attacking the younger senator's lack of experience appeared to bear fruit as the large number of undecided voters in both states, two thirds of them according to polling data, chose the New York senator as they entered their polling places.

Clinton finished with a 10-point edge in Ohio and a nar-



The question for both campaigns now is how much have the recent hard-hitting campaign ads that Clinton has been running and her verbal attacks on his experience been the direct cause for his losses in Tuesday's two big states. If the Clinton camp determines that such attacks have been effective, voters in upcoming states can expect a lot more such tactics.

Conversely, if the Obama

delegates, including super delegates who have expressed a preference. The nominee will need 2025 to win.

Major states on the horizon are: Mississippi on March 11 (33 delegates); Pennsylvania on April 22 (158); and North Carolina, Indiana, West Virginia, Oregon and Kentucky in May with a total of 318 delegates.

Clinton holds an advantage in Pennsylvania, but the rest of the states would appear to be Obama territory on balance. The challenge for Obama, as the convention approaches in the summer, is to convince the party faithful, including those who are super delegates, that he can win the general election even though Clinton will have topped him in virtually all of the big states. A win in Pennsylvania would certainly help in that respect.

The challenge for Clinton, is to wrest control of the lead without employing a scorched earth strategy towards Obama that might tear apart the Democratic Party in the process and embitter possible Obama supporters who would then sit out the general election.



row two-point win in Texas. And even though it appears that Obama's 100-plus delegate lead will not change drastically, certainly the momentum he gained with his string of 11 consecutive victories since Super Tuesday has been checked.

camp reaches the same conclusion, they may decide that they have to strengthen their own attack game. Within days, the name calling could intensify dramatically.

According to some counts, Obama is still leading Clinton by 1520 to 1424

City Tax Levy Passes in Spite of Widespread Opposition

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

"I am deeply disappointed but not surprised," said Rev. Floyd Rose in the aftermath of the March 4 primary during which the .75 percent temporary tax levy was given new life by Toledo voters. The measure was approved by a 20-point margin despite a concerted effort by Rose supporters in the central city and by several right-wing radio talk show hosts to defeat the tax renewal.

"When you appeal to the fears of people," said Rose, "you do something to change [the equation]. And I think the people who voted for the levy did so out of fear."

Rose was referring to the claims by city leaders that 200 police officers and 200 fire fighters would have to be laid off if the measure was defeated at the polls. That's a claim that Rose and other opponents of the levy have said was an exaggeration.

But Rose has not taken the renewal as a personal defeat.

"It's not about me ... it's not about Floyd Rose," he

said. "It should be about the people. I believe the levy should have been defeated because that's what we did when I was here. You interfere or interrupt the flow of money. If it had been defeated, people would have taken a second look at the problems."

Rose first took up the issue of the levy in January during a visit to Toledo and took the city administration, and particularly Mayor Carty Finkbeiner, to task for a series of slights to the black community. During that January rally at Braden United Methodist, Rose spoke of the elimination of the City of Toledo's Department of Affirmative Action/Contract Compliance (the office was downgraded), the discrimination and unfair treatment of minorities who have been employed by the City of Toledo, the mayor's refusal to honor pledges made to black ministers to restore the department to its previous status, the proposal to cut funds to the public defender's office, a proposal to shrink the

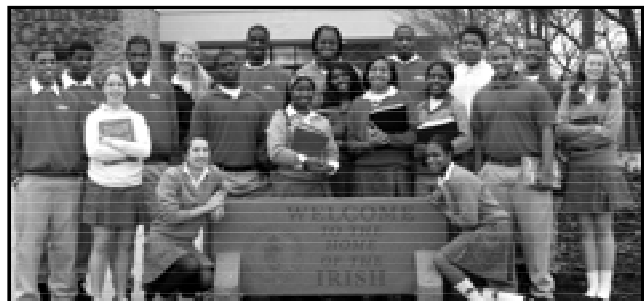
size of city council, a reference to former Fire Chief Mike Bell as "King Kong," the imposition of the garbage fee, the attempt to de-fund CareNet, the appropriation of thousands of dollars for beautification projects and the installation of the \$10,000 shower in the mayor's office.

The mayor responded by enlisting the aid of some African-American ministers and city employees to drum up support for the levy in the central city.

For his part, Rose does not believe that his call for change has been defeated even though the levy passed so easily.

"I don't confuse the war with a battle," said Rose. "Rosa Parks lost the battle, but got the victory; in Selma Dr. Martin Luther King lost the battle but got the victory when President John signed the Voting Rights Act. I don't confuse votes with victories."

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Ohio Treasurer Richard Cordray Urges Senior Citizens to Protect Their Financial Health

Special to The Truth

Senior citizens around the Toledo area are invited to learn about protecting their financial health at a free Seniors & Money workshop presented by Ohio Treasurer Richard Cordray.

The workshop was created in partnership with the Ohio Department of Aging and is open to the public. Instructors will focus on personal finance issues specific to seniors including identity theft and tips to avoid financial scams.

The two-hour financial education workshop will be held March 13, from 9:00 a.m. to

11:00 a.m. at the Erie Street Market, 237 South



Erie Street, Toledo, Ohio. Senior citizens interested in attending can learn more in-

formation by contacting the Ohio Treasury at 800-228-1102 or visiting www.youmoneynowonline.org.

Additionally, with tax season coming up Treasurer Cordray would like to remind senior citizens that they must file a tax return in order to receive an economic stimulus check. Seniors can call 1-800-906-9887 to find a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) location, or 1-800-AARP-NOW to receive assistance from the AARP.

Urban League's Keynote Speaker Believes in Creating Opportunity

Special to The Truth



Gloria Pace King, who will serve as the keynote speaker for the Greater Toledo Urban League's annual banquet on Thursday, March 13, has been the president and CEO of United Way of Central Carolinas for 14 years, helping raise more than \$466 million for the Charlotte, North Carolina area in that time. In 2007, she led the community in raising a record-setting \$45.3 million through the nonprofit's annual fundraising campaign. Under her leadership, the organization has built stronger community relationships so that

real, lasting change occurs through United Way of Central Carolinas' 98-member agencies and the 200-plus programs it supports. By sharing with the community her passion to improve lives, King has helped United Way of Central Carolinas obtain the second largest Tocqueville Society in the nation, increasing the number of loyal contributors each year.

Before transplanting to North Carolina, King hailed from Ohio as the senior vice president of Community Investment and Resource Management for United Way in Cleveland.

King has earned a number of awards, including the 2006 Whitney M. Young, Jr. Award from the Urban League of the Central Carolinas. In 2005, she also earned the La Familia Award, given by Chief Volunteer Officers/Chief Professional Officers Alliance to an individual who has consistently demonstrated commitment to the United Way movement. Additionally, King was honored with

a 2005 Women in Business Achievement Award by the Charlotte Business Journal.

King is one of a handful of employees at United Way who holds a Six Sigma Green Belt Certification, having completed a rigorous program through Bank of America. Additionally, she is the host of United Way of Central Carolinas' United Way and You television program, which addresses critical issues in the community on a monthly basis. In the past year, the program has touched on topics such as childhood obesity, the importance of volunteerism and the best way to manage your money.

In the community, King fills many roles, including having served on the executive committee for the Wachovia PGA Championship for the past five consecutive years.

She is a staunch supporter of the Arts and Science Council and serves as outreach committee chair and a member of the Board of Trustees for the North Carolina Dance Theatre.

As a member of the Charlotte Chapter of The Links, Inc., King is a part of one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of women dedicated to enriching the culture and economic survival of African Americans.

King, among many other things, is a member of the Charlotte Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the largest African-American Greek-lettered sorority in the world.

King is also the proud mother of two children, Kara Cathryn King, who holds a Ph.D. in biology and Leslie Charles King, J.D., LL.M.

Ed. Note: The 11th Annual Urban League Dinner will be held this year at Gladioux Meadows. Doors open at 6:30 pm. For information call 419-243-3343

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Pre-Minority Health Month Events

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

"All About Diabetes"

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. The participants will learn about the different types of diabetes, treatment, risk factors, and diabetic complications. Upon completion of the presentation participants will be aware of strategies to control diabetes, prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Guest Speaker:
 Carilyn L. White, MSN, CNP
 Family Nurse Practitioner

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2008
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM (Dinner Provided)

"What Is The Healthiest Diet?"

Dietary factors are linked to coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. The participants will be provided with an overview of basic nutrition, the food pyramid, healthy eating habits, and meal-planning guidelines. The overall goal of this topic is to promote health and reduce diseases associated with dietary intake.

Guest Speaker:
 Michele Bahns, MS, R.D., L.D.
 Registered Dietitian
 ProMedica Health System
 Total Wellness

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2008
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Children Ages 5 - 12

"Learn Not To Burn"

This program is designed to teach elementary children about fire prevention and provide hands-on safety activities. The participants will learn what to do in the event of a fire, the importance of home fire drills, and how to escape in the event of a home fire.

Guest Speaker:
 Norla Long, Burn Educator
 St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center
 Burn Unit Department

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John C. Jones: A Passion for Helping People Change Their Lives

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

The search for a new president and CEO of the Greater Toledo Urban League concluded this week when the board of directors of the local organization approved the recommendation of the executive committee and voted to ask John Jones to take on the task.

That recommendation had also been seconded by the members of the national search committee who interviewed several candidates for the position. They noted Jones' "energy and enthusiasm" and his already extensive knowledge of Urban League activities and programs.

And now Jones – minister, accountant and current president of the Greater Toledo Urban League's Young Professionals – is about to undertake even more responsibility this month when he assumes the mantle of leader of the area Urban League office.

Jones, who has been an associate minister at Christian Temple Baptist Church for the past eight years, sees his new position leading the Urban League as an extension of that role.

"The Lord called me to the ministry eight years ago and the opportunity to join the preaching ministry was a God-ordained call," says Jones. "The Urban League is another ministry."

But while the call to Christian Temple came from God, Jones was called to join the Urban League in a more earthly manner. That call was placed by his predecessor, Johnny Mickler, a long-time Urban League professional who arrived in Toledo 11 years ago to open this local office and left last June to return to his native South Carolina and take over a branch of the Urban League there.

Mickler brought Jones into the Urban League and onto the board of directors in order to fill an opening on the finance committee. Jones, who is presently a senior reimbursement analyst with ProMedica Health System, and prior to that was a senior auditor with Ernst & Young LLP, was aptly suited for the finance committee. But he soon found out that his association with the Urban League would be never be limited to financial concerns.

"Once I got involved and found out what the Urban League was all about, it became a passion," says Jones. "It was about changing lives of people and their families; it

was a whole lot bigger than I thought.

"In 2004 I went to the National Urban League convention in Detroit as the Young Professionals were starting to get traction ... that really grabbed me. When I see a bunch of black people doing something so positive, I have to be a part of that."

Of course, Jones is about to become an even bigger part of changing lives as president and CEO of the local office. And since the Urban League has become his passion, or one of his passions, this rates as a real dream job ... or one of his dream jobs. Being able to serve full time in the ministry would be dream job number one. The Urban League is right up there, however, and presents him as he says, with the opportunity to share in seeing people's lives change.

Naturally we asked Jones what he wishes to accomplish as the second leader of the local Urban League.

"First, I want to build the presence of the Urban League in the city and the region," he responds. "Looking at all of the programs we provide, what bugs me the most is people asking 'what is it the Urban League does?' There's not been a concerted effort to get that out there.

"Second, I would like to

increase programming and broaden it. We do programs for jobs and seniors and youth, for example. But there's a component that we miss – home ownership, entrepreneurship. I want to keep the jobs component but we need to find a way to help increase wealth.

"And, third, I want to add to being the conscience of the city in being able to speak on issues ... but equitably and by removing the political part. We want to be even more in tune with the community in order to address the things that the ordinary brother and sister are most concerned with."

As a veteran of the Urban League, Jones has already been responsible for a great deal of programming growth within the organization. He has been the first and only leader of the Young Professionals and has seen membership in that branch increase dramatically during his three years at the helm.

There's not much, in fact, that Jones does by half measure. At Christian Temple, the church his grandmother – the first pastor – founded 36 years ago and that his father, Charles E. Jones, has led since the early 1990's, Jones has developed youth programs, has developed and implemented systems to track fi-



ancial activity and has been responsible for communications with governing agencies.

There is still a lot to do at the church, he says now, and he is committed to helping that process for as long as he can.

A Toledo native, Jones attended Emmanuel Baptist Christian School and earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from Central State University. He

will earn a master's of divinity from Anderson Theological Seminary later this year.

He has served on the boards of the Toledo Zoo Diversity Council, the Norwest Ohio Chapter of Healthcare Financial Management Association, the Public Broadcasting Foundation of NW Ohio, COSI, among others – all part of his commitment to the Toledo area community.

Jones and his wife

Shaundra have two daughters, Naomi, seven, and Cathryn, four.

And how long does the youthful Jones envision himself being the leader of the Urban League?

"Because it is such a passion, it depends only on what happens within the church," says Jones. "But it's not a steppingstone to anything, this is where I'm at."



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Bob Vasquez Selected to Toledo Board of Education

Sojourner's Truth Staff



Bob Vasquez, a two-time Democratic candidate, will accept a position with the city government of Canton, Ohio.

“The way the school system goes is the way our community goes,” ~ Bob Vasquez

date for the Toledo City Council, was voted onto the Toledo Board of Education last Friday to fill the vacancy created when member Robert Torres resigned to ac-

years of Torres' unexpired term.

Vasquez was one of 14 people who applied for the opening, 12 of whom were interviewed by board members two days before the selection was made. Board President Steve Steel, Ph.D., and members Jack Ford and Lisa Sobacki voted for Vasquez. Board member Darlene Fisher nominated and voted for Cheryl Catlin, who ran for a seat on the board in last November's general election and finished out of the running to Ford and Sobacki.

“The way the school system goes is the way our community goes,” said Vasquez later during the evening as he reflected on his selection. “I’ve been working with youth and families for years ... this fits in perfectly with what I’ve been doing and my run for City Council.”

In addition to his duties with The Twelve, Inc., Vasquez teaches at The University of Toledo and Owens Community College and has worked in the past for Lucas County Children's Services and the Ohio Youth Advocate Program.

Vasquez, the director of special projects for The Twelve, Inc., received three of four votes from the remaining board members and will complete the final two

Owens Toledo-area Campus Hosts Registration Rocks in March

Special to the Truth

Area high school seniors are invited to learn about Owens Community College's many educational opportunities during a fun, music-themed event as the College hosts Registration Rocks. The event will occur March 17-20 and 24-27.

High school seniors can sign up for any day of Registration Rocks which runs from 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. on the Toledo-area Campus. Owens is located on Oregon Road in Perrysburg Township. Attendees are required to RSVP prior to the event.

“Registration Rocks is a great opportunity for prospective students to re-

ceive academic advising, as well as register for summer and fall classes all in one fun-filled day,” said Jennifer Irelan, Owens Assistant Director of Enrollment Services. “Owens Community College is excited to once again host an event where students can take the first step toward their career aspirations by pursuing a quality college education.”

Throughout each day, students will be able to meet with faculty and staff members, take the Owens placement test and pick up important information about financial aid, clubs and student activities, local housing and academic program offerings. In addition, a

separate program on learning to support your children in college will be offered to parents who attend Registration Rocks.

Seniors will have the opportunity to win various raffle prizes during each day, including Owens baseball caps, T-shirts, sweatshirts and more. Additionally, attendees will be provided with a free lunch during their visit.

For more information, or to register, contact the College's Enrollment Services Office at (567) 661-7253 or 1-800-GO-OWENS, Ext. 7253. Or, check out the website at www.owens.edu and click on the Registration Rocks icon.

Third Baptist Church Hosts Collegiate Grammy Nominated Chorus

By Artisha Lawson
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

The sanctuary of Third Baptist Church on Pinewood was filled with community residents and members to hear the Grammy-nominated chorus from Central State University in celebration of the church's 140th anniversary. The concert featured selections from the full choir, women's chorus, men's chorus and men's quartet.

Traditionally, the concert opened with a prayer led by senior pastor of Third Baptist Church, Rev. Kevin Bedford, who asked the Lord to bless the choir that performed that night. “We're excited to hear this Central State University Chorus. Lord continue to place your loving arms around them, as they bless us tonight.”

The chorus opened their presentation by marching two-by-two down the church's aisles and singing a spiritual medley a *cappella*, which included the lyrics from: “I've Done What You Told Me to Do,” “Better Be Ready,” and “Guide My Feet.”



The chorus then marched into the stands in front of the church and continued to sing a variety of arrangements from four different composers which included Professor William Henry Caldwell's arrangement of “Amazing Grace,” which thoroughly excited the crowd who responded with hand waves and clapping. “It's good to be here at historic Third Baptist Church. I don't have to tell you the story of ‘Amazing Grace,’ If you're not a part of the frozen chosen then sing

along if it sounds good to you,” stated Professor Caldwell.

Before the first intermission, the chorus, in their school's maroon and gold robes sang a foreign selection called “Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft,” which tells the story of God's original angels fall from heaven into hell.

The concert also included three gospel songs composed by Third Baptist Church Musical Director

(Continued on Page 8)

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Scenes From BGSU's Annual Dinner Theatre



More on Page 9

Third Baptist

(Continued from Page 7)

Glenn L. Jones. The songs were "I'm a Witness, Lord," "Heaven Bound Soldier," and "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord."

Third Baptist Church pastor Rev. Bedford enjoyed the concert and noted that he is anticipating similar events.

"Wonderful, we're pleased to have them here. So looking forward to having this an annual event," said Bedford. "That last song sent this church through the roof. We, at Third Baptist Church, want the community to see and witness the best gospel talents in the area."

Before the concert's conclusion, four area high school students had the opportunity to network with the university and heard the resurrection of the male quartet. The four-member quartet opened their presentation with a song about pie which amused the audience.

"I wanted to resurrect the

pie quartet, just like the one I had when I was a student," said Professor Caldwell.

The Central State University Chorus has performed with international singers which include: Leontyne Price, Roberta Alexander and Nancy Wilson. For 28 years the chorus has been under the direction of William Henry

Caldwell, whose role is conductor, arranger and vocal coach.

Over the past 28 years, the chorus has performed also with The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and on several Telearc International CD recordings.



Glenn Jones - Music Director of Third Baptist (above)

Rev and First Lady William Bedford (below)



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Check Out TEEN SCENE on toledolibrary.org!

Special to The Truth

The Toledo-Lucas County Public Library is proud to announce the launch of TEEN SCENE, an exciting new section on toledolibrary.org designed with teens in mind.

You can find the exciting new Web site easily by clicking on the Teen Scene button on the right panel of toledolibrary.org's home page.

Once you visit, you'll find features that include links to e-zines, games, homework help, book suggestions, sports and entertainment sites. There's also links to a volunteer page, a teen health and wellness data-

base, and a section dedicated to college, careers and money.



"This site serves as an exciting place to visit for information of interest exclusively for teenagers. We believe that teens are looking for entertainment and information that is easy to access and that they know is accurate. By

adding this site to the Library's already exciting teen emphasis, we are connecting to an important population in our community," said Marilyn Zielinski, the Library's Youth Services Manager. She added, if you're a parent or guardian of a teen, Teen Scene is a safe place for your teen to visit and utilize.

Be sure to also look at the weekly poll, daily horoscope and the reading suggestions by Library staff in the section titled Cyber Picks. Log on!

For more details, please call 419.259.5207.

Annual Dinner Theatre

(Continued from Page 8)

Every year the Bowling Green State University's Center for Multicultural and Academic Initiatives (CMAI) presents its dinner theatre in honor of Black History Month.

This year's event ("The Best of Dinner Theatre"), directed as always by CMAI's Sheila Brown, featured the return of nationally-known comedian Jay Lamont.

All photographs compliments of Bob Midden



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BGSU's Africana Studies Program Welcomes Alumni on 10th Anniversary

Special to The Truth

It will be a homecoming and reunion when the Africana Studies Program at Bowling Green State University celebrates its 10th anniversary at its research colloquium and luncheon Friday (March 14) in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union. The annual event is designed to inspire student interest in archival and field research on Africana topics.

On hand to hear keynote speaker China Galland will be alumni of the program as well as faculty, staff and administrators who were among its co-founders in 1998. Lillian Ashcraft-Eason, Ph.D., a professor of history who with her late husband, Djisovi Eason, Ph.D., first envisioned an Africana studies program at BGSU, is back as its director for this anniversary year.

Zachary Williams, Ph.D., of the University of Akron; Robert Smith, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina; Babacar M'Baye, Ph.D., of Kent State, and Seneca Vaught, Ph.D., of Niagara University, former graduate students in the program, will be guests on a panel from 10:30-11:45 a.m. in 207 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

"BGSU's Africana Studies Program is a gem that contributes enormously to global understanding through classes, thought-provoking symposia, outstanding community engagement, and an undergraduate research conference that nurtures and showcases the work of our students," said Donald Nieman, Ph.D., dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "I am deeply indebted to Lillian Ashcraft-Eason for her vision and her dedication to making Africana Studies a reality at BGSU."

The development of the program has been a collaborative effort, Ashcraft-Eason emphasized, with strong participation from ethnic studies, history and other departments.

"We could not have had a beginning without everyone's support," she said. The program had one student when it became a minor in 1998, then grew to become a major (in 2001)

that now counts 15 students. It has also seen the campus add African specialists in various areas, from music to art and ethnic studies.

Eason's untimely death in 2005 was a blow to all who had benefited from his contribution to the study of African cultural arts. A master drummer, he founded the Olatunji Drum Circle for World Peace, and established the Odun Omo Eniyan Children's Festival that brought schoolchildren to BGSU to learn and perform African cultural arts, in addition to teaching in the program.

Nieman was a key figure in founding the program. "He's been so supportive, joining me in co-chairing the first Africana Studies Committee to arrange a slate of courses. His backing for the establishment of the major was crucial," Ashcraft-Eason said of the dean, whose own research has centered on African-American history and civil rights.

Mary Wrighten, multicultural services director in the University Libraries, has been "pivotal" in organizing the annual colloquium, Ashcraft-Eason said. And Rebecca Green, Ph.D., an associate professor of art history, "has been a mainstay in Africana Studies since its inception," she said. "She has added so much to this program."

The Africana Studies Program takes an international and interdisciplinary

approach to the study of the Africana peoples of the world, said Ashcraft-Eason, and the colloquia keynote speakers over the years have come from a range of disciplines. They have included Molefi Kete Asante, African-American studies faculty member from Temple University and founder of the first Ph.D. program in African-American studies; Distinguished Research Professor Paul Lovejoy of York University in Canada; African-American lawyer, activist and scholar Randall Robinson; Toyin Falola, Ph.D., a distinguished teaching professor at the University of Texas at Austin and a fellow of the Historical Society of Nigeria and the Nigerian Academy of Letters, and astronaut Dr. Mae Jemison, MD, the first African-American woman to enter space.

Religion and culture among African people will be the topic of this year's colloquium.

Presenting research papers will be students from as far away as Southwestern University in Texas, along with others from the University of Detroit Mercy, Ohio State University and Bowling Green. Their presentations will be held from 9:30-11:45 a.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m. in 207 Union.

China Galland, acclaimed author and professor-in-residence at the Center for the Arts, Religion and Education at the Graduate Theological

Union in Berkeley, Calif., will give the keynote address at the colloquium luncheon. Her work has been praised by the likes of Bill Moyers and author Sue Monk Kidd.

Her free, 12:15 p.m. talk, "The Black Madonna in Europe," will be held in 228 Union. Author of *Love Cemetery* and other books, the East Texas native teaches, lectures and leads retreats nationally and internationally on religion, race and reconciliation.

The cost of the 11:45 a.m. Greek-cuisine luncheon is \$8.75, or \$7.65 for the vegetarian option. R.S.V.P. by Monday (March 10) to Wrighten at 419-372-7897 or mwright@bgsu.edu.

For more information on Galland, visit www.chinagalland.com.

College Resource Night

Special to The Truth

Worried about finding the right college or missing out on the right scholarship? Want to know how to find the school that will provide the proper education on a tight budget? Come to the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library's **College Resource Night** on Wednesday, March 19, and learn how to make the right decision.

The program will be held from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the McMaster Center at Main Library, 325 Michigan St. Participants will learn about colleges, available resources, scholarships and other financial aid, and more. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms will be available to take home.

Join **Mary Plews**, Library Teen Specialist, as she provides Toledo area students and their parents or guardians with the information they need to prepare for their futures in higher education.

College Resource Night is free, but participants must register in advance.

For more details or to register for the event, please call 419.259.5297.

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The End Of Black History Month
The Start of Black History Year

The New Truth Art Gallery

By Warren Woodberry

The grand opening of the new Truth Art Gallery and Event Center at 1811 Adams Street heralds the end of the concept of Black History Month as we know it.

a White History Month, then maybe, just maybe there would be no complaint. But to have supported the thought that black contributions to the history of America only deserved 28 days in February was ridiculous.

The grand opening and reception of the Truth Art Gallery and Event Center on Saturday March 15, from 6-10 will finally put an end to this nonsense.

Black history and its contribution to the fiber of American history will now



be a 12-month a year celebration, as are the fruits of the contributions made by our people. May the concept of a Black History Month rest in peace.

We hope that you share our excitement on this journey to correct the mistakes of history and that you will share this moment with us at the grand opening.

For more information: Truth Art Gallery and Event Center (419)243-0007 Fletcher Word (419)243-0007 Email: thetruth@thetruthtoledo.com Warren Woodberry Curator (419)867-9733 Email: htccwarren@yahoo.com

NANBPWC Inc. Holds 44th Annual Founders' Day Luncheon

Sojourner's Truth Staff



The Toledo Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., held its 44th Annual Founders' Day Luncheon on Saturday, March 8, at Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church's Stephenson-Roberts Hall.

In spite of the dreadful, wintry conditions, the program proceeded on time to celebrate the contributions of founders Emma Odessa Young, Ollie Chin Porter, Effie Diton, Bertha Perry Rhodes, Josephine B. Keene, Adelaide Flemming and Pearl Flippen.

This year's luncheon buffet was provided by the members themselves. Lisa Hightower entertained the audience with her musical selections.

Celia Williamson, Ph.D., associate professor of social work at The University of Toledo and founder of the Second Chance program, was honored for her contributions to the community. Second Chance is an outreach program started by Williamson to reduce risk among women and girls who become the victims of prostitution. A member of the program, LeeAnn Campbell, spoke of the impact Williamson's work has had on her life.

Saturday's mistress of ceremony was Cerssandra McPherson, who also served as the chairman for the event.

Wanda Terrell is the president of NANBPWC, Inc.

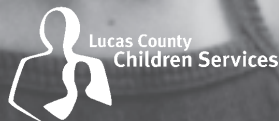


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ALMA Classes and Workshops

Below is a listing of upcoming classes and workshops being offered by ALMA Dance Experience...

Upcoming ALMA Classes:

Wednesday, March 19 @ 6pm – BGSU Campus
 (110 Eppler North, Studio #222, BGSU 43403)
 1 hour beginner class open to everyone – fun, fitness, art, and LIVE drumming! Sponsored by the University Dance Alliance. Class fee is \$3 for non-members; this class is open to the public.

West African Dance Class – Monclova Community Center
 Thursday Evenings in April, 7 pm-8 pm (April 3 thru April 24, 2008)

A 4-week series of West African dance classes offered by ALMA Dance Experience and held in Still Waters Yoga Studio in the Monclova Community Center (www.stillwatersyoga.com). \$10 per session ~ PRE-PAY & SAVE, 4 class for \$30.

Classes in this series will be led by ALMA Dancer, Ann Ritter, and live drumming from ALMA Drummers Pevely, Jim and John. No experience is necessary ~ everyone welcome!

ALMA Drums – Community Drumming:
THIS Sunday, March 16 @ 12:30pm
 Held in the Monclova Community Center (good directions @ www.stillwatersyoga.com)
3rd Sunday of the Month @ 12:30pm, March thru June 2008
 (March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15).
 No experience necessary ~ everyone welcome!

TPS Arts in Education Programs featuring ALMA Drum & Dance:
THURSDAY, MARCH 20 @ 1:30pm – Walbridge Elementary School
Thursday, May 15 @ 2pm – Grove Patterson Elementary

ALMA Modern Programming:
ALMA Modern – “Dance Making with ALMA Modern”
 @ the Toledo Museum of Art - Sunday, April 27 @ 3:30pm in The Great Gallery
 A 1 hour creative movement experience aimed at young people, but open to everyone! Free and open to the public.

“A Conversation with Dr. John Scott”

Special to The Truth



On Thursday, March 13, from 4 to 6 PM, John Scott, Ph.D., will address the topic of “Socio-Political-Cultural Strategies From the 1970’s & 1980’s for Black Students at BGSU (Useful In the New Millennium).”

The event is sponsored by the BGSU Black Student Union and will be held in Room 207 of the Bowen Thompson Student Union.

Scott will focus his remarks on the origination(s) and significance of the Ethnic Studies Program/Department, Third World Theatre, ECAP [The Ethnic Cultural Arts Program]; The Obsidian and Project Search, in the context of “creating a landscape and legacy for change.”

He was instrumental in

the beginnings of these important units, among others, that still exist today at BGSU and which reflect an emphasis on the culture and experience of peoples of color in general and black people in particular. Scott is a pioneer and significant Black individual in the history of Bowling Green State University.

Dr. Scott earned his masters and doctoral degrees from BGSU in 1966 and 1972, respectively. He was granted the rank of professor emeritus in 1996 and thereafter has taught at Benedict College, Florida Memorial College, Michigan State University and is presently a tenured professor and the chairman of the Department of Speech & Theatre at Jack-

son State University.

He is a nationally recognized playwright, consultant, guest lecturer, director, composer, poet and author. Among his most outstanding stage plays are Ride a Black Horse, Karma II and The Good Ship Credit. Dr. Scott’s teleplays on

Public television include Pieces of a Man; Currents: From the Rivers of our Fathers; and Hats, Handkerchiefs and Fans.

Among those appearing in works written/directed by Scott are Morgan Freeman, Mary Alice, Howard Rollins, JA Preston, Barbara Montgomery and author-mentor James Baldwin.

Douglas Turner Ward, Co-Founder of the Negro Ensemble Company/NEC, says this of Scott: “As someone who has produced and directed John Scott’s work, I consider him one of the best contemporary playwrights.” John Scott shares his educational philosophy with us: “To help young people and artists... ‘Prepare to become a star where you are’...to build a foundation for expanding outreach and assuming greater responsibility.”

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Album Review The Notorious B.I.G. - Biggie Duets

By Michael Hayes
Minister of Culture



I know, this joint came out last year – but it's B.I.G. ,yo.

And props to his mom Voletta Wallace and her supporters for their recent legal victory concerning the conspiracy cover-up by the L.A.P.D. She sued em and she got more than half of what she asked for.

In honor of all that, I had to go ahead and holla at this release.

As far as Bad Boy Records goes, Black Rob almost made some noise and Puff made crazy noise with the *Making The Band 3* series. But for the most part, things haven't been good. No doubt, a Biggie release in the fourth quarter is a no-brainer.

But you can't tell that Puff and his producers took their time to really do B.I.G. justice with this final album. Born Again was just a bunch of people on Biggie's songs and most of it didn't really go over too well.

First of all, those of us who love Biggie – we don't really wanna see a whole bunch of collaborations or re-worked clas-

sics that just lift his legendary vocals and put them over beats by the producer *de jour*.

But honestly, yo, the music on this piece is immaculate.

Even though Biggie's verses are just re-worked from joints we already memorized, the art of constructing a posthumous album featuring the game's hottest talent is perfected on *Biggie Duets*. Even Diddy (with some obvious ghost writing courtesy of Marshall Mathers) gets open on the first track and all the guest artists on the project bring their A game. I mean, they really had no choice to when you look at it.

This was Diddy's way of saying farewell to his partner by allowing artists who happen to be fans to get a chance to rock alongside the King of New York. In total there are 35 guest artists on this album (which

kinda negates the idea of the title cuz there's only one duet on here).

I been listening to it to try and tell ya'll what's hot and what's not, but right now it's playing and it's on the 10th track and it's been constant fire the whole way through.

I'm not being biased either.

The only true duet is Jay Z and Biggie's "Whatchu Want" and it's so hot that ... I mean, this is some next level ish right here yo. "1970 Something" features The Game and Faith Evans and the ridiculously insane "Living In Pain" with 2pac, Mary J. Blige and Nas – yo, just those two alone are worth the cost of this entire CD at full price!

Forget it yo, this album gets an A

Long Live The King – B.I.G. you changed the game forever.

glasscitytruth@yahoo.com



United Way Seeks Community Involvement in Addressing a Growing Need For Food

Special to The Truth

At a news conference last week, officials from United Way of Greater Toledo announced the United Way Family Food Fund campaign, a one month fundraising effort to help alleviate the emergency food needs of families in Lucas County.

United Way, in partnership with Toledo Area Ministries, Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank, and Toledo Seagate Food Bank, is introducing the Family Food Fund campaign in response to a food summit with emergency food providers and feeding sites held this past November.

The summit revealed:

□ Forty percent of requests to United Way 2-1-1 in 2007 were for food;

□ Toledo Area Ministries saw a 32 percent increase in requests over the past year;

□ The Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank experienced a 16 percent decrease in donations; and

□ Toledo Seagate Food Bank received 4.2 million pounds of donated food last year compared to 15 million three years ago.

Bill Kitson, president and CEO of United Way said, "It is obvious the demand for food is growing while supply is decreasing. United

Way, through the Family Food Fund, is seeking the help of the community to respond to this pressing issue."

People interested in contributing can donate securely online at www.unitedwaytoledo.org or mail a check to United Way Family Food Fund, One Stranahan Sq., Toledo, Ohio 43604.

Money raised will be used to support additional case management services in area soup kitchens, to provide emergency food providers with funding to purchase food and fill food requests, and to establish an emergency food fund.

The Toledo Chapter of The Links, Incorporated Presents "Stomp It Skinny" – Childhood Obesity, Nutrition and Fun Exercises

The Toledo Chapter of The Links, Incorporated presents its annual Health and Wellness Series coordinated by the chapter's National Trends Committee. This year's theme is entitled "Stomp It Skinny" – Childhood Obesity, Nutrition and Fun Exercises!

The free and open to the public event is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 15 at the Ella P. Stewart Academy for Girls, 707 Avondale Ave., Toledo. An RSVP is required for all to partici-

pate. (See details below).

Buckeye CableSystem and ProMedica Health System proudly join the Toledo Links to present this important and fun event filled with valuable information.

The "Stomp It Skinny"

series is open to school-age children and their parents or guardians. Informational sessions are planned where both adults and youth can learn the dangers of childhood obesity and the value of good nutrition and fun exercises.

A luncheon, raffle for great prizes and community vendors are scheduled for this fun day of activities.

To participate, please RSVP to either the Family House at 419.242.5505, Frederick Douglass Center at 419.244.6722 or Ella P. Stewart Academy for Girls at 419.671.5350.





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The successful candidate must possess a Doctorate in Counseling Psychology, Educational Psychology, Clinical Psychology, or Counselor Education and Supervision; licensure in the State of Ohio (or license eligible) by the State Board of Psychology or Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Family Therapist Board (PCC-S required); five years experience at a college counseling center or comparable professional setting and a minimum of three years of experience in counseling and mental health services administration, including personnel and budgetary supervision and decision-making is required. Desired qualifications include experience in university counseling center; demonstrated strong collaborative skills with other student support departments, in particular Residence Life and Dean of Students type of operations; experience with the college population and understanding the value of diversity in a campus community is important; ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing and ability to relate personally and professionally to diverse students and university staff. Full Time. The salary is commensurate with education and experience.

To apply, submit a cover letter (include position title and job #), a resume, as well as the names and contact information for three professional references to The University of Toledo, Human Resources Department, Toledo, Ohio 43606-3390; Fax (419) 530-1490; or email recruit@utoledo.edu, which is preferred. Use only one method of application. **Review of applications will begin April 15th and the position will remain open until filled. The University of Toledo is an Equal Access, Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer and Educator.**



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The Lion King: A Roaring Good Spectacle

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

The opening scene of *The Lion King* may just be the grandest spectacle one will ever see on stage. But make no mistake, the opening is merely prelude to two of the best hours one will ever have the opportunity to spend in a theatre.

The most impressive sight in the opening scene is an elephant strolling down the aisle and climbing the stage steps. That's right, an elephant. Well

... it's several actors in costume, actually, as are the other replicas of animals. But the stage is certainly more than set.

The costumes are truly the stars of *The Lion King*. Julie Taymor, who designed the costumes and also directed the musical and received Tony awards for both, has employed all manner of costumes to portray jungle animals. Some animals are brought to life by a

puppet and its handler, some by adding limbs to human actors, some animals are simply actors with elaborate masks that sit atop their heads.

Some of the animals, as in the case of the young Simba and Nala, are played with just a wisp of makeup here and there.

But while the costumes are a breathtaking excursion into creativity, there is so much more to *The Lion King* than the

myriad bolts of colorful cloth.

The Lion King is based upon the Disney animated feature (1994) of the same name. The Pridelands of Africa is a region ruled by Mufasa (Dionne Randolph), a wise, kind lion. The birth of his son Simba (Christopher Borger, Jeremy Gumbs), however, means that Mufasa's brother Scar (Timothy Carter), neither wise nor kind, is no longer next in line to

inherit the kingdom.

We see Simba as a lion cub frolicking with his friend Nala (Georgette Francois, Chantylla Johnson) and learning at the feet of his father. We also see Scar plotting to destroy the young Simba in order to restore his future claim to the throne.

He entices the young Simba and Nala to the elephant graveyard where the cubs are threatened by hyenas, but his plot is

foiled when Mufasa shows up in just the nick of time.

He then arranges a stampede of hyenas to endanger Simba and sends word to Mufasa to come save his son.

The first act of the musical ends with Scar killing Mufasa and convincing Simba that his father's death is the youngster's fault. He prods Simba into running away.

In the second act, we see the grown Simba (Dashaun Young), who has been raised in a very unlionlike manner by Timon the meerkat (Mark Shunock) and Pumbaa the warthog (Ben Lipitz).

Meanwhile Scar, now the unchallenged ruler... and despot, has laid waste to the Pridelands. Food has disappeared, animals are starving and Scar has turned his lustful eye towards a now-grown Nala (Erika Ash). She rejects his advances and leaves the kingdom. Alone in the jungle, she eventually ends up chasing Pumbaa the warthog. Who should come to his aid... Simba.

Simba and Nala confront each other and, during the course of their tussle, recognition dawns. As does love.

Nala convinces Simba to return home to claim his inheritance. He does and, naturally, the climax of the play is a fierce battle between Simba and Scar and their allies – the lionesses on behalf of Simba, the hyenas for Scar. If you don't know who wins this battle, you just don't know Disney.

The costumes are spectacular throughout, the songs – primarily by Elton John and Tim Rice with additional music by Lebo M, Hans Zimmer and Jay Rifkin – are enjoyable, if not particularly memorable, and the acting is a delight.

Phindile Mkhize plays Rafiki, the shaman mandrill, magnificently. Mark Cameron Pow is a wonderful Zazu. As Zazu – a character more than reminiscent of *King Lear*'s Fool – Pow has to be both actor and puppet master and he does both beautifully.

Dionne Randolph is captivating with the right physical presence as Mufasa and just the perfect voice as well.

Timothy Carter is wonderfully evil as Scar although he is perhaps not as scary as one would have envisioned.

Young and Ash are perfect – terrific voices, attractive couple – as the adult Simba and Nala in the second act but the first act's young Simba, played on press night by Christopher Borger, was an absolute scene stealer.

The whole production is a feast for the eyes. The dialogue is as turns both witty and charmingly corny.

Kids will love it, of course. In fact kids of all ages will love it.



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