AFRO essay contest winners cite proud black history

Niya Bowman and Jewel Griffin were the grand winners of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper's black history essay contest.

Both girls were weekly winners and shared a prize of $50 which was awarded to them at a special ceremony at the AFRO-AMERICAN office on North Eutaw St.

The contest's theme was "The importance of studying black history."

The contest was open to students in grades one through seven. Two of the best essay writers each week won a $10 prize.

Essays the AFRO received were about the contributions of black Americans and why we all should be proud of them. The writers addressed various topics and many credited their parents for their inspiration.

AFRO photo by P. A. Greene

CELEBRATION — All smiles and ready to celebrate their winning the AFRO's month-long February black history essay contest are Niya Bowman and Jewel Griffin. The two young essay winners are joined with their parents and other family members: Stevie Bowman, Cardrienne Griffin, Jim Griffin, Velma Lee and Cecelia Bowman.

READ THE AFRO

Emergency federal job bill not a cure-all

Ruth Massinga

Ruth Massinga, Maryland Secretary of Human Resources, said the emergency jobs legislation recently passed by Congress will not be a cure-all for either the unemployment situation or the severe social problems in Maryland it is designed to relieve.

Based on preliminary estimates, Massinga said, the amount of federal dollars coming into the state for jobs and social service programs administered by DHR (approximately 15 percent of the total to be allocated to Maryland through the legislation) for the victims of the current recession may total approximately $10 million.

According to the Secretary, however, most of this amount will have to be spent on relatively short-term projects, since it is one-time-only funding.

The federal legislation appropriates emergency funds to meet needs resulting from high unemployment and severe economic depression throughout the country. It provides money for jobs and humanitarian needs.

While allocations to specific programs differ in the House and Senate versions, according to DHR officials, rough estimates indicate that the largest portion of this amount (as much as $4.3 million) will come as an addition to the social services block grant.

Up to $1.6 million will go to generate summer jobs for young people and as much as $1.7 million is earmarked to create jobs through the weatherization of the homes of low-income households.

An additional $1.5 million is earmarked for the retraining of dislocated workers. And almost $475,000 may be channelled into the Community Services Block Grant.

A half-million dollars will be available to provide more assistance to persons seeking employment through expanded job search programs. And as much as $630,000 will be available for emergency food and shelter.

"While these measures will give some needed relief to the more than 190,000 unemployed persons in Maryland, the total effect of new DHR funds for employment will be less than 1,000 time-limited jobs," Ms. Massinga said.

"Therefore, while it is encouraging to see some movement within the Congress and, hopefully, from the Reagan Administration toward the provision of jobs and social services, we must caution that the amounts approved by the House and the Senate will provide only a minimal impact for a short period of time in Maryland", she said.

The Secretary said that her department will move quickly to plan for the implementation of this program, including consultation with interested citizen groups, as soon as the legislation is signed by the President, hopefully by Easter.

Abandoned auto program launched

In 1982 more than 5,692 vehicles in Baltimore were declared abandoned on the street. Although the owners of these cars may not care about them any longer...you should.

All abandoned vehicles quickly become eyesores on the neighborhood and they become health and safety hazards.

An automobile that has simply been forgotten by an insensitive owner soon becomes a target for vandalism. Missing parts, broken glass, and metal parts torn soon turn a once shiny and powerful new car into a rusting, ugly hulk. It becomes a monument to an uncaring neighborhood.

The vehicle can become a convenient place to deposit trash and garbage. They become homes and breeding places for stray dogs, cats and even worse, disease ridden rodents.

In some areas of the City these ugly blights on the community can, unfortunately, become playthings to our children. The child whose imagination sees the abandoned car as his castle, rocket ship to the moon or race car can easily be injured.

Broken glass, jagged metal, rodents or insects can leave the youngster scarred for life.

Jackson mounts third district council campaign

By Patricia Tatum
AFRO Staff Writer

The filing deadline is months away and so is the real heat that will be generated by the Baltimore City elections in November, but one Baltimore man's photo apparently is the earlier the better.

Leonard T. Jackson, 36, told the AFRO he began his campaign for a City Council Third District seat in early March. He said he could not wait until the warm weather arrived to do his door-to-door campaigning.

"I have to start early. I have an uphill battle," he said.

Jackson said his strategy in pursuing the northeast Baltimore council seat is to "hit every door in the area ... it will take time to get to all of" the people and the political organizations necessary to touch base with to get his message across.

Jackson presently is a health planner for the Maryland Health Resources Planning Commission.

He has involved himself in numerous community volunteer activities during the years:

Chairman, Regional Action Committee; chairman, Central Maryland Committee on Sickle Cell Anemia; member NAACP and the Morgan State University Alumni Association; and board member of the Park Heights Community Corp.

Politically Jackson said he has worked on the political campaigns of Rep. Parren J. Mitchell, 1970; Norman Reeves' City Council bid in 1975; and the successful bids of Pete Rawlings, 1978 and Clarence Davis, 1982 for the Maryland House of Delegates.

Leonard T. Jackson

Jackson said some of the issues and concerns facing him are lack of respect for City Council members; redistricting, especially how it affects the black voters of the third district; economic development and retraining programs for the unemployed.

He is a graduate of Morgan State University and served in the U. S. Air Force from 1962 until 1966. Jackson attends Bethel A.M.E. Church.

The Third District now is represented by Frank Gallagher, Mary Fitzgerald and Martin "Mike" Curran.

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Tony Brown's Comments

Vereen hurt by blackface act

Ben Vereen has been really hurt by the reaction of many Afro-Americans to his 1980 Presidential Inaugural blackface performance. "I went through a great deal of suffrage behind the Inaugural," he told me in a television interview on "Ben and Bert," to be aired this week.

He's respectfully remembered as Chicken George in the historic "Roots" television miniseries for which he received an Emmy nomination. For his performance in the Broadway musical hit "Pippin," Ben Vereen won the prestigious Tony Award.

His winning combination of musical, dramatic and comedic roles only resulted in unanimous acclaim until that night in January, 1980 at President Ronald Reagan's Inaugural Gala. Ben Vereen struck a sour note among many Blacks and created a furor when he presented his impersonation of the legendary vaudevillian black-faced comedian Bert Williams of the pre-WWI era.

Before you read why he did what he did and hear his explanations, think about these questions, none of which are ever going to be answered to everyone's satisfaction:

If another black behaves in a way you consider to be degrading, can it be a matter of legitimate difference, rather than the other person being a "Tom?"

Can you still regard another Black with whom you philosophically disagree as being legitimately concerned about the Black cause?

Do you believe that just because a Black is rich and famous, by White standards, that he or she has escaped racism—and is not being exploited by the system?

If you answered "yes," "yes," "no," you think on this subject as I do. The first two questions measure compassion, the kind of compassion that we are all too frequently willing to show to White people but not one another. The last question, in part, measures your ability to understand the economic and political facts of racism.

One writer to a Black newspaper, in measured disagreement, expressed a typical bewilderment about Ben Vereen's blackface act. "As one who always admired your work," Jeanne Brown of New York wrote to Vereene in an open letter. "What is crucial here, to me, is that any performer of high quality and great talent is not cannot be, by definition, unmindful of images, symbols, etc."

Jeanne Brown didn't know the impersonation was about Bert Williams. "I don't recall the artist your performance was in tribute to. Surely, this is indicative of the ignorance on the part of many, of the names and importance of early Black artists," she admitted.

And that is precisely one of Vereen's major points of defense. "A lot of people didn't know I was doing a Black man. I was doing Bert Williams. Well, who's Bert Williams? Lots of Black people will say to you, he's doing Al Jolson.

"Now we know of Al Jolson, but we don't know of Bert Williams and it's a shame because Al Jolson is a result of Bert Williams. Had we been praising our entertainers all along as well as we praised our White entertainers, it would have been no problem."

During Bert Williams' time, Black performers, in order to work, were required to appear in blackface, that is, wearing a so-called burnt cork mask. The caricature they were forced to create was a shiftless, watermelon-eating "coon" assassin of the English language. And Williams, an articulate and brilliant man, hated what he had to do.

There were even so-called "coon songs" performed by whites in blackface. One title was "You May Be Hawaiian On Old Broadway, But You're Just Another Nigger To Me." That's the era we're talking about—the late part of the last century and the early part of this one.

"I use Bert because Bert, to me, is the epitome of all that suffrage. He is the one who, in the whole blackface, the invisible man behind the blackface, the whole demeaning trip that they laid on us is perfect for what I was trying to say about that period of time.

"I think the reason why I've been misunderstood is because it didn't come off at the Inaugural the way we had intended it and had talked to the television producers about. I was guaranteed the full length portion of Bert Williams from beginning to end. Unfortunately, the television audience only saw the buffooney.

"They never saw the reason why and it wasn't set up very well. Had I had the time to come out and explain what I was doing, possibly it would have been accepted a little bit better, but I don't think everyone would have accepted it anyway," Vereen explained to me on television.

The segment that was left out of his Inaugural Gala performance was when he, as Bert Williams, sat down at the end of his act and sang "Nobody," a political statement reminding the president and whites that racism is still an unjust part of American life.

"I'm proud of my heritage. I'm proud of what my people had to go through, the suffering. I'm not ashamed of my Blackness. No parts of it. No parts. To me, Black is something to shout about! Is something to wave flags about! And my people have suffered so long and so hard for us to turn around and say that we're ashamed of anything," Vereen wants everybody to know. That's a lot more than many Black celebrities will concede.

He does admit, however, to being exploited by the tenor of that left out his true meaning and Bert Williams' anguished soul and rebellious lyrics. He also admits that in the future he needs to explain what he is doing more thoroughly.

"And I hope this time you understand that I'm not trying to put us down, because if I'm putting us down, I'm putting me down. I'm not out here trying to say or do something to demean us, or anything like that," the man of great talent pleaded.

Our brother wants our love. Our rich and famous brother has been just as damaged by racism and hatred as the poorest amongst us.

Ben Vereen

You watch him on television and you decide if he's sincere. I decided that he is. And he's my brother. I also sensed from him that he needs our love.

If you write him, in care of Tony Brown at 1501 Broadway, Suite 2014, New York, NY 10036, I'll see that he gets your message.

TONY BROWN'S COMMENTS TV series can be seen on public television Thursday, on Channel 22, at 11:30 p.m. It also can be seen on Channel 67, Thursday at 11:30 p.m. Please consult listings.

HUD-census survey in Baltimore area

About 470 housing units in the Baltimore metropolitan area will be visited this month by Census Bureau interviewers as part of the Annual Housing Survey, according to James F. Holmes, Acting Director of the Bureau's Regional Office in Philadelphia.

Approximately the same number of units will be canvassed each month through December 1983. When the survey is completed, interviewers will have visited about 4,250 housing units.

The area is one of the 13 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) in this year's survey. It was last surveyed in 1979-80.

The Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development planned the survey in response to a need for current data on housing, a major indicator of the nation's economic condition.

The agencies will issue joint releases about 15 months after all interviews have been completed, showing data for the total SMSA, central city, and suburbs.

Information obtained in these surveys is confidential by law and is used to compile statistical totals in which no person, household or housing unit is identified.

Interviewers are local residents. Each carries an official identification card with the bearer's photograph and signature.

Work Experience positions available!

Low income Senior Citizens, age 55 years or over, are offered an opportunity to enter a work experience training program with the Baltimore City Health Department Senior Aides Program.

They will receive hourly wages of not less than the prevailing minimum wage rate and work 20 hours per week.

Those interested are asked to call Mrs. Grace Weber at 396-4486.

Community Calendar

GED program offered at CCB

Many employers and most colleges and universities today accept only those applicants who have a high school diploma or its equivalent, the GED. For those who need a high school diploma, the Community College of Baltimore offers an intensive GED program.

Staffed by fully qualified and experienced instructors, this program is based on the philosophy that every student has potential for success. Registered students are entitled to unlimited tutoring until they reach their goal.

Classes will begin Monday, April 18 and meet Monday through Thursday. Five sessions are available: 8:30 a.m. and noon at CCB's Harbor Campus, Lombard St. at Market Place; 9 a.m., 12:30 and 6:30 p.m. at the Liberty Campus, 2901 Liberty Heights Ave.

Students will receive 60 hours of classroom instruction in five subject areas including math, science, social studies, English grammar, and literature. The one-time tuition fee of $75 covers all books and materials.

For more information call Lois Esterson at CCB at 396-0380.

Urban Services sponsors Energy Fair

Mayor William Donald Schaefer will crown a king and queen at the Energy Education Fair, sponsored by Urban Services, Saturday, April 9.

The extravaganza, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., at 1114 N. Mount Street, features a parade, over 29 exhibits, entertainment, refreshments, and the appearance of local media personalities.

Fellowship of Lights

The Fellowship of Lights shelter and counseling service is recruiting volunteers. Do you enjoy working with teenagers? Are you a fix-it type person, or a recreation-type? If so, we can use your skills and give you a chance to help some young people. Call us at 385-1200 for more information.

Summer and Fall Classes at CCB

The Community College of Baltimore will have early registration for its summer and fall, day and evening classes, April 4-29; at the Harbor Campus Bard Building, Lombard Street at Market Place; and the Liberty Campus Administration Building, 2901 Liberty Heights Ave.; from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m., Monday - Thursday; and 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Fridays.

New and current students who register during this period can take advantage of the wide selection of available classes on and off campus.

Academic advisors will be on hand to help students plan their course schedules. Staff from CCB's Financial Aid Office will also be present to assist students interested in applying for financial aid.

For more information call the College at 396-1804 (Harbor Campus) or at 396-0537 (Liberty Campus).

Senior Aides Wanted

The Baltimore City Senior Aides Program is seeking eligible applicants to establish an active waiting list to fill vacancies in the program as soon as they occur rather then seeking applicants only when a vacancy occurs.

The Baltimore City Senior Aides Program is a federally funded training and employement program for residents of Baltimore City who are 55 years of age or older (no upward age limitation), with little or no income.

The purpose of the program is to place Seniors in community service assignments which will provide training and experience to prepare participants to mainstream back into the unsubsidized job market.

For more information call 396-4486.

Group Dynamics Workshop at Coppin

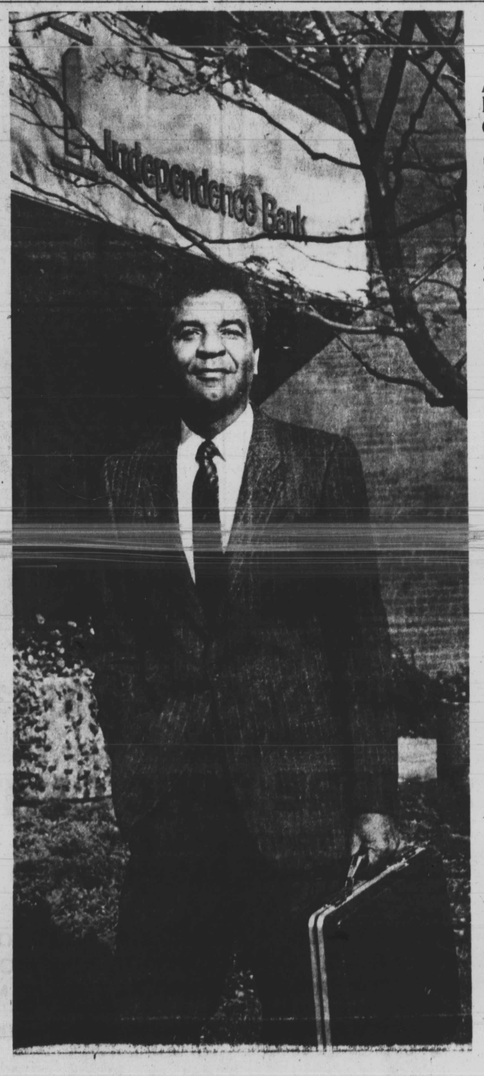
Coppin State College will offer a workshop on "How to be Effective in Groups" to be held Saturday, April 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Members of the community who work with church, social, and civic groups are invited to participate.

The workshop will be led by Dr. W. Sherod Williams and Professor Judith D. Willner, who are faculty members at Coppin. Dr. Williams is an experienced group facilitator who received his training at George Washington University.

Professor Willner teaches Communication Arts and has received training in Applied Behavioral Science at Johns Hopkins University. This workshop is designed to assist people who now work with groups or in group settings to become more effective group members and to sharpen their perceptions of what a group is and how it can function most effectively.

Registration forms may be obtained from the Division of Continuing Education, Coppin State College, 2500 West North Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21216. A fee of $25 will be charged.



Al Boutte has a dream. It's Anheuser-Busch's dream, too.

There's a loan desk on the second floor of Chicago's Independence Bank that doesn't expect to make a dime on any investment. But for bank chairman Al Boutte the returns it brings back are infinitely greater. Because they represent the dreams of an entire community.

That community is Chatham, located on Chicago's Southeast side. And the loan desk? It's a student-loan desk, set up to afford any son or daughter of Chatham residents the opportunity for a college education.

For Al Boutte, the loan desk is only the latest chapter of a dream, a dream not for himself but for the bank he heads and the community it serves.

The story begins in 1964. At that time, Chatham was on the verge of collapse. White businesses were leaving. And, more important, white banks were leaving. Without capital, Chatham could have turned into a ghetto. Instead, the Independence Bank and other neighborhood minority financial institutions helped turn things around. Today, Chatham is a thriving community with an average family income of over $20,000.

And the Independence Bank has grown right along with it. From less than a million dollars in assets in 1964, it has grown to $98,000,000 in 1982, making it not only the biggest minority-owned bank in Chicago, but in the country, as well. And the list of corporate clients is just as impressive: Borg-Warner, Illinois Bell, Commonwealth Edison, Kraft, Inland Steel, People's Gas and Anheuser-Busch.

Through the Anheuser-Busch Minority Banking Program, we've established a $5 million line-of-credit with the Independence Bank and other minority-owned banks throughout the country.

These and other banking relationships provide the banks with funds for reinvestment in their local areas. That's good for the community.

And community growth and development mean a better future. That's good for everyone, including Anheuser-Busch.

We're proud to be involved with minority banks like the Independence Bank of Chicago. And know that by working together, we can help build a brighter tomorrow. One where we all profit and grow.

Building a future. Dream by dream.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH COMPANIES

Anheuser-Busch Companies is the parent company of Anheuser-Busch Inc., Busch of Baltimore, Michelob, Michelob Light, Budweiser, Light, Natural Light and Busch Bavarian.