CELEBRITY LOOKOUT By Jason

All letters should be addressed to Jason, DAWN Magazine, 420 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201. All questions are welcome, but while Jason cannot provide individual answers, questions of general interest will be used in this column.

Q—I've heard rumors that at one time, Johnny Mathis was on drugs. I find this difficult to believe. Is this fact or just another rumor?

BETTY FOSTER
Rochester, NY

A—Singer Johnny Mathis, 48, who is perhaps best known for his hit record "Chances Are," freely admits that he was once hospitalized five times "when I was on dexedrines, hash, pot, and sniffing cocaine out of a dollar bill. I was lucky I escaped so easily." All this, of course is a thing of the past.

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Q—What is the real name of the character called Iceberg Slim, the fellow who wrote all those books about pimps and prostitutes. If it is possible, can you tell me where he is now?

A—Iceberg Slim, the author of the books "Mama Black Widow," "Pimp," and "Airtight Willie and Me," now lives in Los Angeles. His real name is Robert Beck.

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Q—With whom did Al Hibbler, the singer, begin his career. There have been varying reports, so can you set the record straight? Was it with Duke Ellington and his band, or with Jay McShann?

ETHEL COLE
Newport News, VA

A—Actually, neither is correct. After singing around Memphis, TN for a time with the Dub Jenkin's band, Hibbler joined the band of Botts and his Buddies. He made several recordings with Boots, prior to his joining the Kansas City music unit of Jay McShann. From there, of course, he wound up with the Duke Ellington orchestra, where his recording of the tune "When the Lights Go Down Low," launched him internationally.

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Q—I understand that one of the Spinks brothers' girlfriends died recently and whichever brother it was, was responsible for her death. Can you give me the lowdown?

RUSSELL OWINGS
Chicago, IL

A—Sandra Massey, 27, was the girlfriend of WBA light-heavyweight champion Michael Spinks, brother of Leon. Ms. Massey was pronounced dead of multiple injuries received in a car accident on the Schuylkill Expressway in Philadelphia. Reports say nothing about Mike even being in the car, so I would say that it is safe to assume that he had nothing to do with her death. What you may be referring to, is his recent arrest for carrying an illegal weapon. Police found a .45 caliber pistol in his Mercedes. He was stopped for running a red light when the gun was discovered.

Johnny Mathis

Freda Payne

Edmund Sylvers

Gladys Knight

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Q—What's this I hear about Freda Payne and Edmund Sylver going together? She's almost old enough to be...well maybe not his mother, but surely his older sister.

MINDIE WASHINGTON
Eastern Shore, MD

A—That affair is old hat now. Freda Payne, 30is, who recently split with 25-year-old Edmund Sylver, said that the breakup between them was not a bitter one, but that they had grown worlds apart in thinking. "God's not going to let me make the same mistake twice," she said, referring to her failed marriage with Gregory Abbott.

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Q—Was Gladys Knight ever married before her last one, and does she have other children besides her little boy? Also, how did she get started in show business?

AUDREY BELL
Wilmington, DE

A—Married to an elementary schoolmate, Jimmy Newman before her last mariage to Barry Hankerson in 1974. Her marriage to Newman produced two children, Jimmy. Jr., now 20, and a daughter, Kenya, 19. From her marriage to Hankerson, one son, Shanga Ali, 6. The Atlanta-born singer who has garnered more than a dozen gold and platinum albums and singles, got her start at the age of seven, when she sang Nat King Cole's "Too Young" on the Ted Mack Original Amateur Hour show, for which she won $2,000 and a trophy.

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