NEWS CLIPS

COMPTON BANS ALCOHOL, TOBACCO BILLBOARDS

The Compton City Council passed an ordinance last month banning alcohol and tobacco advertising in most publicly visible locations, making it the first city in California to take such an action. Seven other communities, including Long Beach, Inglewood and Los Angeles county, have either passed or are considering passage of less restrictive ordinances which limited outdoor ads to within 500 to 1,500 feet of schools and churches. Compton's ordinance is the first to follow Baltimore and Chicago's action in actually banning such billboard advertising. Studies conducted by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Science in the Public Interest show that the tobacco and alcohol industries not only target African-American and Latino communities, but the ads are more provocative and there are more of them than in White communities. The Black Women's Media Project launched the campaign to restrict the billboards in April 1996. It included several presentations to the Compton City Council, organizing a letter writing campaign with allied women's organizations, working with community volunteers and through churches to collect 500 letters of support from citizens.

SCLC CO-FOUNDER'S SON ELECTED FOURTH PRESIDENT


King founded the SCLC

Martin Luther King, III, born months after his father was chosen as the founding president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), was unanimously elected president of the civil rights organization by the voting delegates from across the nation. King will succeed Dr. Joseph Lowery on Jan. 15th, his slain father's 69th birthday. Lowery, a co-founder who has directed the organization for half its existence, succeeded Dr. Ralph Abernathy in 1977. In accepting his new role King said he was "honored and humbled" by the great task before him and that he does not stand alone but "on the shoulders of two incredible parents." He also praised Lowery for having provided "tenacious and resilient leadership" for 20 years as president.

REDESIGNED U.S. $50 BILL MORE SECURE, VISIBLE

On Monday, Oct. 27 the Federal Reserve began issuing redesigned Series 1996 $50 notes. The new bills, which will be widely available in banks and other depository institutions around the world in the coming weeks, incorporate new features to protect against counterfeiting and make U.S. currency easily identifiable to people with low vision. The Series 1996 $50 note follow the March 1996 introduction of the redesigned $100 note, and is part of an ongoing program to maintain the security of the nation's currency. The redesigned $20 bill will be introduced next year. The redesigned $50 bill and subsequent denominations will also include a large dark numeral on a light background on the back of the note. This will make it easier for the more than 3.7 million Americans with milder forms of visual impairment as well as users in low-light situations to identify the currency.

3RD NATIONAL PENNY RECYCLING CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

The Third Annual National Penny Recycling Campaign began Oct. 1 and continues through Dec. 31. Penny Lovers of America, Inc., a non-profit education and charitable organization, was formed in 1984 "to promote character, scholarship and patriotism among the nation's young people." The organization conducts the penny recycling campaign to raise scholarship funds for underprivileged and disadvantaged students struggling to get a college education. Grea Neverson and Teresa Jones are two students from Washington, D.C. public schools who were recently selected the first scholarship recipients. Each received an award of 610 pounds of pennies or $1000. Secondly, pennies are collected to help alleviate the "penny shortage" plaguing many financial institutions, merchants and retail establishments. A national goal of one million pounds of pennies has been established for this campaign. For more information call (732) 873-3827.

GM driving black auto dealers out of business

By Linn Washington, Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A White accounting supervisor for General Motors walked into a Kansas City GM dealership, then owned by Richard Wallace and boldly declared that this "nigger won't be around much longer."

Wallace no longer owns the GM dealership and he blames discriminatory practices by officials at America's largest automobile manufacturer for the demise of his business.

Dan Barnes had owned a Ford automobile dealership when he headed off to Detroit a few years ago with high hopes of fulfilling his dream of landing a General Motors auto dealership. With the experience in retail car sales management and available cash required for GM's Minority Dealer Development Program, Barnes seemed like a qualified candidate.

But during his Motor City meeting, Barnes said he was "cursed out and shouted at" by a top GM executive who constantly referred to "you people." Dan Barnes was denied a dealership.

One Black GM executive was beaten bloody by a white GM counterpart a few years ago after he objected to racist treatment meted out to a black dealer. This beating took place in the back seat of a car as three GM executives, including the black man, were returning from a corporate meeting.

Other Blacks who have participated in GM's Minority Dealer Development Program have been driven into bankruptcy by what they contend is GM's discriminatory financing support and racist consumer credit practices.

"This is a story about racism, intimidation, coercion and abuse," said Richard Wallace, a leading critic of GM's Minority Dealer Development Program.

"GM puts Black dealers in poor locations with too much debt. You're bound to fail," Wallace said. "GM is a vicious beast ... what they do to us is immoral at best."

GM spokesman Ed Lechtzin disagreed. He said the the company has a number of "successful [Black] dealers who are comfortable with the program."

Though GM was the first auto maker to institute a Minority Dealer Development Program, minorities have been slow to benefit. A Gannett-owned newspaper recently reported that GM has the smallest percentage of Black dealerships among the 'Big Three' manufacturers that include Ford and Chrysler. Only 1.3 percent of GM's 8,234 dealerships are Black-owned.

The story, by Gannett Suburban newspapers in West Chester County, N.Y., detailed problems with the 25-year-old program. It says top GM executives used the 'N-word' liberally and treated many black GM dealers in a discriminatory manner that included "an uneven level of financial support."

The story was written by Demetrius Patterson, the reporter who exposed the corporate racism at Texaco, including the infamous 'N-word' tape recording.

Patterson's taps black dealers like Charles Bell, a former Alabama dealer who won a multi-million dollar lawsuit after proving that GM's consumer credit financing arm discriminated against his customers. Also reported on is the $357 million lawsuit filed last year by suburban New York City dealer Dick Gidron who alleges that GM did not provide him with subsidies comparable to the assistance given to White Cadillac dealers in his market area.

GM's Minority Dealer Development Program is "littered with financial failures" Patterson wrote. "Dealers" grievances take many forms, ranging from an overall fear of retribution to an outright resentment of isolated racial epithets uttered by GM managers."

Lechtzin called the Gannett story "very one-sided [and] not reflective of the relationship we have with minority dealers."

In August, the auto giant retained a law firm in Washington, D.C., to conduct a comprehensive review of the program. Sheila Vaden-Williams said the review is a step in the right direction.

"I congratulate GM on the effort to look at the program and make it the best it can be," said Vaden-Williams, executive director of the National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers. The association is working with the law firm on the GM audit. "No one in the industry wants a revolving door type of situation."

Despite the review, Wallace said GM is unlikely to change its treatment of black dealers until it feels "the heat of a Black community threat to not buy GM cars and GM parts."

Linn Washington, Jr., a graduate of the Yale Law Journalism Fellowship Program, is writing a book on police brutality in Philadelphia.

Poor

(Continued from Page 1)

well as their own parents has doubled since 1970, reaching 2.5 million in 1995, the last year data was available. The study's finding also confirms that without the benefit of this "re-extended" family, the majority of these young families who returned home (59 percent) would have been living below the poverty line based on their incomes alone.

"All sectors of society will share the long-term cost of this early poverty," Sherman said. "The private economy, in particular, is likely to suffer substantial productivity losses —reflected in lower quality of work, fewer goods and services produced and a loss of wages — as children grow to become less educated, less effective workers as a result of the poverty they experienced while living in a struggling family."

Although divorced and single parent families contribute to children living in poverty, their role is overstated, according to the report.

Five-out-of-six poor children who live in young families would still be poor if American's marriage rates were as high as 20 years ago, it said. Moreover, the report cites evidence that rising economic distress contributes to broken families.

Herbert L. White writes for The Charlotte Post.