

NEWS CLIPS

JUDICIAL COURT TO CONSIDER SUIT INVOLVING ILLEGALLY EVICTED TENANTS

The Court will consider whether to approve a landmark class action settlement involving claims of hundreds of tenants who were illegally evicted from their apartments. The lawsuit was filed by tenants who lived at Blue Harbor Club, Harbor Island, Shelter Island and South Cove Apartments owned by Robert Bigelow. The suit alleged that the companies engaged in a pattern of a half-key or pin in the doorknobs of their tenants when they fell behind in the payment of their rent instead of serving their tenants with a 5 day eviction notice and an eviction order by a Judge as required under Nevada law. The company has denied all liability. Under the proposed settlement, Bigelow will set up a claim fund totaling 1.4 million dollars. Each class member household will receive \$1,500. The class representatives who prosecuted the actions on behalf of all similarly situated tenants will also receive compensation. Bigelow will also pay to publicize the settlement in the newspapers, for the cost of administering the claims process, and all attorney's fees and costs. The total value of the settlement is between \$1.8 million and \$2 million dollars. "We feel that the rights of hundreds of tenants have been vindicated with the settlement of this lawsuit," said Barbara Buckley, Esq., one of the attorneys with Clark County Legal Services who brought the lawsuit. Many of these tenants had very young children and were traumatized by their illegal eviction. This settlement sends a message that eviction laws cannot be ignored." Tenants who brought the lawsuit will be attending the hearing set for Thursday, March 5, 1998, at 9:00 am, in Dept. VII in the Eighth Judicial District Court, 200 S. 3rd Street.

GORE, ALVAREZ ANNOUNCE PACT WITH BIG THREE AUTOMAKERS

Vice President Al Gore and Aida Alvarez, director of the U.S. Small Business Administration recently announced an alliance with the "Big Three" U.S. automakers, General Motors Corporation, Ford Motor Company and Chrysler Corporation, that will benefit minority-owned businesses. The agreement will increase subcontracting awards to minority businesses by nearly \$3 billion over the next three years — a 50 percent increase over current levels; provide more technical and developmental assistance and encourage strategic alliances between minority and non-minority suppliers. The agreement marks an important public-private partnership. It is also the first time an industrial group of this size and economic importance has engaged in a partnership with the SBA. "Right now, our economy is stronger than it has been in decades," Gore said. "As we move into the 21st century, our challenge is to make sure that every individual, every business and every community has a chance to thrive. That's why our new partnership with the Big Three is so significant — and that's why the leadership of the auto industry will make such a big difference. By opening the doors of opportunity wider than ever before, we can prove that our growing diversity and our growing prosperity go hand-in-hand." For more information please contact your local SBA office. For the office nearest you call 800-8-ASKSBA or visit its website at www.sba.gov.

BLACK FARMERS, CBC DENOUNCE USDA'S STATUTE OF LIMITATION

More than 200 Black farmers and supporters heard J.L. Chestnut, the attorney representing Black farmers in the Pigford vs. the United States Department of Agriculture suit, give updates on the case at a Feb. 14 Town Hall Meeting coordinated by the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. This was part of its 15th Annual Farmers Conference, Marketing and Trade Show. The legal charge was launched in an effort to end the systemic discrimination experienced by Black farmers in their attempt to access USDA programs. The case is now in mediation and some Black farmers have been informed by the government that they will not be able to participate in the process because of a statute of limitations. That is, farmers who did not file their complaints within two years of the discriminatory action no longer have a claim against the USDA. Chestnut said that in 1983 the Reagan administration abolished the USDA Office of Civil Rights where farmers would have filed a complaint. The Clinton administration recently reopened the office. "How can you charge folks for not having filed on time when there was no way to file it?" Chestnut asked. Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus shares Chestnut's outrage. In a Feb. 20, 1998 letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, she insisted that the Department of Justice "intervene and correct this travesty of justice."

Feeding program back after stoppage

By John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

A program feeding low-income children is back after a 15-day hiatus.

Smart Start, started five years ago and funded by the Agriculture Department, was shut down last month to acquiesce to federal guidelines which say participating children must be out of school for 15 days to qualify for the nonprofit program.

Due to the track schooling, the program was forced to shut down during the school year to comply with the regulation. It started back up on Monday.

Brenda Chaney, program director of the Smart Start Food

Program, said the temporary stoppage was unavoidable. In order to receive funding, the state must abide by federal regulations.

The Agriculture Department funds the state programs. States administer the money to organizations to conduct the feeding.

According to Chaney, Smart Start provides breakfast for about 1,000 a day and lunch for approximately 1,400 youth daily.

The food program, which also operates as a child care center, is reimbursed by the state for the feeding costs.

"I enjoy it. It's a good program for the children in our

area."

Patricia Brown, president of Marble Manor Resident Council, criticized the temporary stoppage.

"To shutdown these programs in these poverty-stricken areas is to literally take food out of the mouths of babes," she said.

The children's activist thinks programs assisting the poor should be free of seemingly trivial rules which could stall aid.

Fentress Adams, a 35-year-old mother of four who is caring for an additional child praised the program.

"It cuts down on me purchasing small items such as

milk and cereal which can be expensive at times," she said. "It has motivated me to get out and move about in my community to see things work out and happen for our children."

In 1972, the federal government established the WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) program to help poor youth meet their dietary needs.

WIC provides education in nutrition and referrals to health services in case medical attention is needed.

In 1994, WIC is estimated to have fed 3.2 million children between the ages of 1-4 with 40 percent of all U.S. babies participating in the program.

Park Service might purchase King Center

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ATLANTA — Presently, the National Park Service is negotiating to buy the financially-strapped Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

The late civil rights activist's wife, Coretta Scott King, established the center as a memorial to her husband and a way to fight violence, hunger and racism. Both the King family and park service said the talks are in the preliminary stages.

The discussion includes not only a takeover of the center, but other family holdings such as the King residence, occupied by Coretta Scott King, and two other houses. King's crypt,



Supporters march hand in hand with Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King for social change in the 60's.

with its reflecting pool, and his birth home, would be donated by the family.

But, King's papers and

speeches in the center's library and archive would be sold separately to a university or nonprofit organization and

relocated, said Phillip Jones, president of Intellectual Properties Management, which manages the King estate.

Several years ago the center trimmed programs and staff because of budget deficits. It is supported by federal grants and private donations.

The Park Service proposes to renovate the King Center's administrative buildings for exhibits of King memorabilia, including some in the possession of the Park Service and other items that would be acquired as part of the sale.

The Park Service intends to finance the buyout with donations, said Frank Catroppa, superintendent of the King Historic District.

Appeals judge rules beatings not racial

Special to Sentinel-Voice

PASADENA, Calif. — An appeals judge, on Monday said a lack of police planning, not racial discrimination, seems to be the culprit for the 1992 riot beatings of Reginald Denny and three others.

Judge Andrew Kleinfeld said the evidence seemed to indicate police officers "sat around doing nothing," without orders from their superiors while the riot unfolded on national television and people all over the country wondered, "How come there aren't any police officers there?"

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by victims who claim discrimination against minorities led police to

withdraw officers from the flashpoint of the riots, leaving them to the mercy of rioters.

Judges Fern Smith, who listened to arguments by phone in San Francisco, and Charles Wiggins did not comment.

Attorney Eric Ferrer, representing the victims, blamed racism for a police department that decided to abandon beating victims when the riot ignited on April 29, 1992.

Denny, a trucker, was pulled from his vehicle and his skull crushed as TV news helicopters hovered over the flashpoint of the rioting, which followed the acquittal of four LAPD officers on brutality charges in the Rodney King beating case. Two officers were later convicted

of federal civil rights violations. Denny and the others had sought \$40 million in damages. They took their case to the Court of Appeals

after U.S. District Judge William Matthew Byrne Jr. dismissed it for a second time in March 1997. A decision by appeals court can take months.

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