

NEWS CLIPS

HEARING ON JACKSON ADVOCATE FIREBOMBING YIELDS CRUMBS

Nearly five months after the *Jackson Advocate* was firebombed, no suspects have been identified or caught. A May 26 Blue Ribbon Commission Hearing on Political Terrorism and Hate Crimes failed to yield any answers to the Jan. 26 firebombing. The five-hour hearing was co-chaired by Congressman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., the Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, president emeritus of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Dorothy R. Leavell, president of the NNPA. Also testifying were Charles Tisdale, publisher of the *Jackson Advocate*, and its editor Ali ShamsidDeen, Stephanie Parker-Weaver, executive secretary of the Jackson chapter of the SCLC, chief arson investigator Vernon Hughes and Sgt. Jim French of the Jackson police department. Hughes said several people have been questioned and polygraphed, but declined comment on the panel's questions, citing the ongoing investigation. He also said his department is working every day to find the perpetrators but is hampered because firebombings occur at least once a week in Jackson. Parker-Weaver, Tisdale and ShamsidDeen presented a 600-page file of circumstantial evidence they have compiled alleging people connected with Capitol Center, Inc., the management corporation overseeing the Jackson downtown business improvement district, were responsible for the firebombing.

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TRAINING PROGRAM HEADING TO SOUTH AFRICA

INROADS, Inc., an international not-for-profit career development organization for minority students, has announced it will, for the first time in its 28-year history, license its successful minority talent and leadership development training process to a group of interested corporate and community leaders in Johannesburg to form INROADS/South Africa. The group currently offers more than 930 corporate clients access to 6,200 talented minorities in 50 cities in the United States and cities in Toronto, Canada and Mexico City, Mexico. Under the South African agreement, INROADS will assist with affiliate start-up, operational procedures, corporate and student recruitment, student training, technical support and general office set-up. "The global need for our service confirms that training talented young people for success is universal. We are extremely excited about the opportunity to impact professional and leadership development in South Africa," said Charles I. Story, INROADS, Inc.'s president and CEO.

BLACK WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ADDRESSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The 1998 Mobil African-American Women on Tour empowerment conference series is addressing domestic violence and sexual abuse in the Black community during its continuing tour of Brooklyn (July 10-12), Washington, D.C. (Aug. 21-23), and Atlanta (Aug. 28-30). The conference has already made stops in Detroit and Philadelphia. "Sisters Speak Out on Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse" is moderated by Rebecca Singleton, a former victim who has become a national spokeswoman on women's rights. Now the founder and president of Urban Fitness Connection, Singleton has been featured in the national media extensively and has been honored by President Clinton for her work to combat violence against women and children. The forum features women's shelter administrators, psychologists, law enforcement officers and survivors who address personal empowerment and legal issues and offer advice on places to go for support and assistance.

NATIONAL NAACP TO CONVENE IN ATLANTA

Thousands of NAACP members will converge on Atlanta, July 11 - 16, for the 89th Annual NAACP Convention. The theme of this year is "Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today." Delegates will hear from Kweisi Mfume and Julian Bond as well as national leaders like Gen. Colin Powell, vice president Al Gore, former New York Mayor David Dinkins, Coretta Scott King, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, former NAACP executive director Benjamin Hooks, TransAfrica president Randall Robinson and many others. The 89th convention will address a plethora of important issues facing people of color. Among them: affirmative action, community and economic development, the plight of Black farmers, police brutality, policy toward Africa, cancer, violence, voter empowerment, Black images in the media and more. In addition, thousands of young people from around the country will participate in the 20th annual Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO). There will also be a Minority Business Expo, Health Fair, Commerce and Industry Show and a Job Fair. For more information and updates about the convention call 410-358-8900 or visit the NAACP website at www.naacp.org.

Black workers file lawsuit against Wonder Bread

Special to Sentinel-Voice
SAN FRANCISCO — Fifteen black workers who filed a lawsuit last week against a Wonder Bread plant say managers overlooked them for promotions, spouted racist jokes and refused to let them congregate for fear they might form a gang.

The workers want \$260 million in damages, their attorney said Monday.

The lawsuit against Wonder Bread, its parent company, Kansas City, Mo.-based Interstate Brands Corp., and five local managers was filed Thursday in San Francisco Superior Court.

The San Francisco plant employs 600 people, including 25 black workers who hold no

supervisory positions. Because of the absence of minorities, some employees call management the "White House."

Interstate Brands Senior Vice President Mark Dirkes denied that there was a ban on congregating and said any supervisory-level job was posted and open to all applicants.

He said he couldn't comment on details of the lawsuit.

"The company is an equal opportunity employer," he said. "We strive to assure that racial and ethnic discrimination is not part of our personnel decisions."

IBC, a \$3 billion-per-year company with 63 regional

bakeries, is the nation's largest baker. It makes Wonder Bread, HomePride bread and Hostess cupcakes.

The employees' attorney, Angela Alioto, said the ban against groups of black employees talking together was "verbal and we believe that it is in writing, but we don't know."

Plaintiff Theodis Carroll, a bakery worker, said managers cited a fear of gangs when they ordered black workers not to congregate.

"They don't like for the blacks to get together and talk, but the white guys are sitting down there on the floor (of the bakery) and that's OK," Carroll said.

None of the plaintiffs, who

have been with the company between three and 28 years, has been promoted from an entry-level job, said Alioto, a former city supervisor.

Among the other complaints in the lawsuit:

— A salesman said a supervisor wouldn't give him a day off after being robbed at gunpoint on the job. The salesman said he was told he should be OK because blacks see so much violence in their personal lives.

— A driver said he had to ask his shop steward to stop making racist jokes around him and was fired after a confrontation with a store manager who called a group of black women "welfare people."

Early release of Bensonhurst ringleader angers victim's family

By J. Zamgba Browne
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The early release of a man convicted of killing a New York teen in 1989 has drawn angry reactions from his victim's father and the Black community.

Keith Mondello was alleged to be the mastermind of the beating and murder of black teen Yusef Hawkins and the leader of the gang of whites from Brooklyn's Bensonhurst community who participated in the attack.

Moses Stewart, Hawkins' father, told a Harlem press conference earlier this month that he was "outraged" that Mondello was released without his family's being informed by the parole board. Stewart said he considered the decision a "slap in the face" and an insult.

"Nobody notified me," he said. "I was shocked and this really disturbed me. As Yusef's father, I have the right to know what's happening with that killer," he fumed. He was equally outraged over the hero's welcome given to Mondello upon his return home.

Hawkins was killed on Aug. 28, 1989, in Bensonhurst, where he had gone with some friends to answer a newspaper advertisement about a used car

Some speculate that the reprieves were given because the perpetrators were Italian.

for sale. He and his friends were attacked by the White mob reportedly led by Mondello.

Mondello later told authorities that he and his gang were looking for African-Americans and Latinos who were in the Bensonhurst community to visit a young White woman. He apparently mistook Hawkins and his friends for the group he was looking for.

Hawkins was beaten with baseball bats before being shot to death. Other gang members tied to the beating have also received early releases. Mondello is not the only gang member in the case who has been released early without the victim's family being notified.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, who joined Stewart at the press conference, led a march on June 6 to Bensonhurst to voice his outrage over the early release of Mondello.

He, Hawkins' family members and fellow community protesters revisited the site where Hawkins was killed. Sharpton expressed shock that neither Gov. Pataki

nor Mayor Giuliani has commented about Mondello's early parole.

"I find it strange that these two officials who have always been vehemently opposed to early parole are now mum on the Mondello issue," he said. "I don't quite understand the

reason for the double standard."

Some speculate that the reprieves were given because the perpetrators were Italian.

"We [went] back to Bensonhurst to let Mondello know that we know he is back," Stewart said. "I also want Mondello to know that he isn't forgotten and that he still has a debt to pay to my family and to society for the uncalled for murder of my child."

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