

# NEWS CLIPS

## NY TIMES REPORT: WHITES FASTEST OFF WELFARE ROLLS

NEW YORK — Whites are leaving the welfare system faster than blacks or Hispanics, resulting in the highest minority percentage on record among welfare recipients, according to today's *New York Times*. Now, blacks outnumber whites on welfare. The *Times* also said the Hispanic share of the rolls is growing the fastest, and black and Hispanic recipients combined outnumber whites by about 2-to-1. In New York City, which has a caseload second only to the state of California, the number of whites on welfare has dropped 57 percent since March 1995, compared with a 30 percent decline for blacks. The Hispanic decline was just 7 percent. The growing minority domination of the rolls is a new, little-noticed and as yet largely unexplained phenomenon, the newspaper said. Most officials reacted with surprise when presented with the figures, which were compiled in a *New York Times* analysis of recent state data prepared by the Census Bureau. One reason why whites may be leaving faster is because their economic situations could be less grave than blacks or Hispanics. Other explanations include possible job and housing discrimination, more children born to minority recipients and less education in minority communities.

## JESSE JACKSON REMAINS HOSPITALIZED IN CHICAGO

CHICAGO — The Rev. Jesse Jackson, being treated for bronchial asthma, was in good spirits and improving on Monday, doctors said. "He has responded very well to treatment, and we should be able to discharge him soon," said Dr. Elsie Walker, an internist at Doctors Hospital of Hyde Park. Walker said she could not say specifically when the civil rights leader and former presidential candidate would be released. "He definitely will be released sometime this week," Walker said. Jackson came to the hospital Saturday night coughing, wheezing and experiencing shortness of breath after a Rainbow/PUSH Coalition rally. He was examined by Walker and by Dr. Wilfrid Jean-Jacques, an infectious disease specialist. Jean-Jacques said he found no indication that Jackson was suffering from pneumonia or any other infection. Jackson got sick on a trip to Africa a week ago, and a busy schedule after his return worsened his condition, said one of his sons, Jonathan Jackson.

## CONVICT SAYS CHURCH FIRES MEANT TO SPARK RACE WAR

MANNING, S.C. — A white man imprisoned for setting fire to two predominantly black churches three years ago testified that the blazes were meant to trigger a race war. "We were going to see if they (blacks) were going to retaliate by burning white churches," Gary Christopher Cox testified last Tuesday in a civil lawsuit brought by one of the churches that burned down. Cox said he and three other Ku Klux Klansmen who went to prison for the burnings hoped the fires would spark a race war and "get it going real good." The defendants are being sued by Macedonia Baptist Church, which contends that the Klan incited the men to burn the church on June 21, 1995. Officials said it cost \$200,000 to rebuild the church, which is seeking unspecified damages.

## REPORT EXAMINES CITIES WITH BAD RECORDS OF ALLEGED COP BRUTALITY

A new study "Shielded from Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States," by Human Rights Watch, a Washington-based public interest group, takes a highly critical look at how different cities cope with alleged police brutality. The study says race is a factor in many cases of alleged brutality, and uses anecdotal evidence to back up this contention. It pointed out that some police departments "have reputations for being brutal, like Los Angeles, or corrupt, like New York, and still others are considered incompetent. New Orleans has accomplished the rare feat of leading nationally in all categories." In New York city, which is currently enjoying a dramatic drop in crime, "civil rights advocates in the city note, however, that there has been a cost to the new strategy, revealed by steady citizen complaints against more aggressive NYPD officers." Similarly, the report says that "Philadelphia's police are grappling with the latest of the corruption and brutality scandals that have earned them one of the worst reputations of big city police departments." While the Atlanta Police Department, the report found, "has the weakest external review mechanism of any city covered by the study." Despite monitors outside the San Francisco Police Department, "the police force has failed, at times, to hold officers who commit abuses accountable, and high profile violations continue," the study reported.

# Alleged witness in dragging death likely a suspect

## Special to Sentinel-Voice

DALLAS — The man who claimed he watched in horror as two friends beat a black man who was then dragged to death behind a pickup truck may have played a bigger role in the attack than he let on, authorities say.

Blood was found on the shoes of all three men arrested in the June 7 death of James Byrd Jr., suggesting all joined in the attack, the *Dallas Morning News* reported last week, citing a police affidavit unsealed two weeks ago.

Authorities have said Shawn Berry, 23, may not face

as serious a penalty as John King and Lawrence Brewer, though all were indicted on capital murder charges July 6. But even Berry's attorney now says his client admitted to standing nearby as Byrd was beaten.

"I can tell you that we've got probably an equal amount of evidence against him as we do the other two guys," Jasper County Sheriff Billy Rowles said Tuesday. So much evidence has been amassed that "we don't need him" to obtain convictions against the other two.

Prosecutor Guy James Gray

said earlier this month he would seek the death penalty against King, 23, and Brewer, 31. He said results of tests being conducted by the FBI will be vital to the decision on whether to offer Berry a plea bargain.

Police said the attack near the east Texas town of Jasper was solely because Byrd, 49, was black. The defendants are white.

Berry has recanted parts of his initial account, including his contention that he ran away when King and Brewer began beating Byrd, said his lawyer, Lum Hawthorn.

In a written statement, Berry

told investigators that he was close enough during the beating that Byrd once fell on him while struggling to stand up, Hawthorn said.

"He stood aside and Byrd fell on the ground," Hawthorn said. "I would not be surprised if there were blood somewhere on Mr. Berry and some other things as well: DNA, hair fibers."

Rowles said that other evidence, which he declined to detail, suggests that Berry "had an equal role" in the attack.

"His little bubble is slowly bursting. That's about all I can say," Rowles said.

# Future of federal hate crimes bill uncertain

## Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Eight weeks after a black man was dragged to his death in Texas, a killing quickly identified as a hate crime, legislation to extend the hate-crimes statute to offenses based on disability and sexual orientation faces an uncertain fate.

Democratic sponsors of the twin House and Senate bills had hoped James Byrd's grisly death last month would give momentum to the legislation.

"He was the causative force behind this measure," Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, said at a hearing last Wednesday. The bill, if it becomes law, should be named for Byrd, Conyers said.

President Clinton endorsed the legislation last year, Byrd's eldest daughter has lobbied for the bill, and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch of Utah has pledged to move

some kind of hate-crimes bill this year.

But Hatch and other congressional Republicans have expressed misgivings that the legislation is unnecessary because dozens of states have laws protecting the groups identified in the bill.

Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia have laws against hate crimes. Of those, 22 include sexual orientation in categories protected, said



CONYERS

the Human Rights Campaign, by the nation's largest gay and lesbian advocacy group.

Sponsored in the House by Reps. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), and Conyers, and in the Senate by Sens.

Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), the bill would make it easier for the Justice Department to prosecute hate crimes in addition to bringing under its umbrella victims of attacks based on sexual orientation, sex or disability.

Current federal law applies only to crimes motivated by race, color, religion or national origin and requires Justice to prove additional circumstances

existed besides motivation.

Rep. George Gekas (R-Pa.), said the bill would result in only a "modest increase" in federal prosecutions of hate crimes. "This act would add more of a symbolic ... aura of partnership" between state and federal law enforcement officials, he said.

Rep. Bob Barr (R-Ga.), said the bill did not adequately define the categories of people who would be protected under it. Drug dependency, for example, is considered by some courts to be a disability, he said.

Democrats say the GOP criticism is less about law than about election-year skittishness over the notion of giving homosexuals extra legal protection at a time when

(See *Hate Crimes*, Page 16)

# NAACP asks House to pass hate crimes bill immediately

## Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON — The NAACP reiterated its strong support for the immediate passage of legislation enhancing the Hate Crimes Prevention Act at its national convention in Atlanta.

The legislation, H.R. 3081 in the House, would expand federal jurisdiction to reach all serious hate crimes and provide grants to state and local authorities to help prevent hate crimes, especially by juveniles.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People noted the increase in hate crimes, particularly against Blacks. According to the Justice Department's most recent Hate Crimes Report, hate-motivated violence increased most against Blacks.

Putting a face to the statistics is necessary to understand the scope of the problem, NAACP members said.

Oumar Dia, who was black, was shot to death in January at a Denver bus stop by 19-year old Nathan Thill, a known skinhead. An innocent female bystander was shot and

paralyzed as she attempted to help Dia.

The next month an unidentified Black man was severely injured on a highway in Lake Forest, Calif., when a white male, screaming racial epithets, unloaded a 45-caliber hand gun into an adjacent car striking him in the ribs.

Forty-five-year old Brian Wilmes in March was taunted with anti-gay slogans and viciously beaten outside a bar well known for its homosexual patrons.

He later died of his injuries. The legislation being supported covers crimes based on sexual preference.

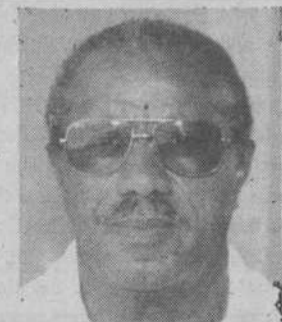
In April, two white supremacists in California, Jeffrey Allen Campbell, 28, and Justin Bertone, 19, pled guilty to conspiracy to plant 10 bombs in Black neighborhoods to "scare away" minorities.

More recently, James Byrd, Jr., a 40-year father of three, was entrapped and dragged to his death by three white supremacists in Jasper, Texas.

Copy-cat attempts sprouted up in Belleville, Ill., and other places around the country.

"Congress should waste no

## Get A Car Today! I can help you!



Doc Jackson

Call me personally 288-4048  
457-4161

## Bring Me Your Trade! I'll Make A Way!!

2 YR. WARRANTY AVAILABLE ON MOST VEHICLES  
**Desert Chrysler-Plymouth**  
(on Fremont / Mojave near Showboat Casino)