

ENTERTAINMENT

KING OF POP SEEKING NOD FOR DETROIT CASINO

DETROIT — Michael Jackson made an election-eve stop Monday, urging voters to pass a plan that would allow him and a Detroit businessman to build a \$1 billion entertainment-and-casino complex. In 1995, Michigan voters approved casino gambling in Detroit. Mayor Dennis Archer ultimately awarded licenses to three developers, rejecting businessman Don Barden's bid as financially unstable. Barden then teamed up with the pop star and his supporters launched a petition drive to ask voters if he should get a casino license. Their proposal in Tuesday's election would require a casino agreement with a Detroit-based developer — a description that only fits the plan by Jackson and Barden. A second proposal would reaffirm the three casino selections by Archer. Jackson told a crowd outside a union hall that a vote in favor of his proposal would mean black ownership of at least one casino. "We know that the person who owns the company makes the rules. When you own the business and makes the rules you can provide more than jobs. You create a legacy like Henry Ford," the pop star said. "So vote yes to ensure economic development for blacks in Detroit and a legacy throughout the world." Archer said Barden's proposal would only guarantee lawsuits and a long delay in casino developments.



JACKSON

MOORE USES EXPERIENCES TO START ONE-WOMAN SHOW

PITTSBURGH — Melba Moore has seen enough troubles for a life's worth of blues songs — divorce, welfare, estrangement from her daughter. But she does not dwell on her problems in her new one-woman show, "Sweet Songs: A Journey In One Life." Moore, a Tony Award winner for the role of Luttiebelle in "Purlie" in 1970, divorced from her husband and business partner, Charles Huggins, in 1991. She said she once had to sneak into the office they once shared to retrieve her Tony award, an allegation which Huggins has denied. Her daughter shunned her and moved in with comedian Bill Cosby's family. Then when Moore applied for welfare in New York City in 1991, her friends turned their backs on her. Moore said she could either lay down and die or start over. She chose the latter. "The other person died painfully and slowly," she said about her troubled past.

R. KELLY SWITCHING TUNES, TURNING SPIRITUAL

NEW YORK — R. Kelly has made himself an R&B chart-topper with racy hits like "Bump 'N' Grind" and "Sex Me." Now, success is bringing out the singer's spiritual side. "I'm at the point now where I'm saying, 'I know I got famous from these sex songs, but I know there is a God; I believe there is a God,'" Kelly, 30, says in the September issue of Ebony. Among Kelly's entourage these days is a minister. And although he swears he's not about to launch a gospel music career, Kelly admits he cleaned up his act for his new album "Rated R," avoiding the suggestive lyrics he's known for. "It's an R&B album. It's a relationship album. It's a love album," he said. "There's one gospel song on the album dedicated to my mom," who died of cancer in 1993 said the singer.



KELLY

STEVIE WONDER VISITS CELL WHERE MANDELA LIVED

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Stevie Wonder, whose music was banned by the former apartheid government, visited the jail cell last week where Nelson Mandela was held. "As I always say when I speak of President Mandela, he's our king and president," Wonder said. Wonder traveled by helicopter to Robben Island, where South Africa's first black president spent much of his 27 years in custody. The prison has been converted to a national monument. Wonder also visited the rock quarry where Mandela did hard labor and was given a piece of stone by officials.



WONDER

Ventriloquists

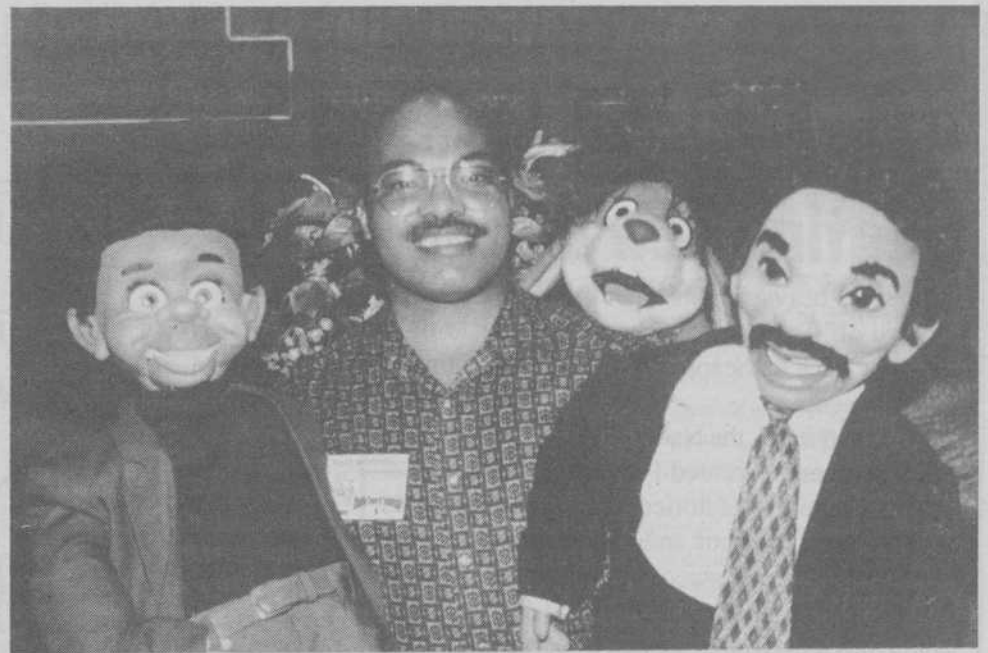
(Continued from Page 10) hold my water."

Myles does about eight gigs a year in Chicago, a city where he says vents could earn a living. He hopes to take ventriloquism corporate, making presentations about motivation and productivity in the workplace.

"This is a lifelong pursuit," he said. "The investments I make in it will come back to me, if not in money then at least in satisfaction."

Charlie Tomlinson III developed an interest in ventriloquism two years ago when he saw Willie Brown in a performance. Tired of his job as manager of a Red Lobster franchise, he was beginning to ask himself what he really wanted to do.

Though he was voted "class clown" during his senior year



Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy

Hangin' out with friends Charles, Monroe and Jesse Jackson, ventriloquist Charlie Tomlinson enjoys the smiles he receives during his performances.

at a Florida high school, he never tried to do anything with his comedic talent. After graduating in 1980, he attended

the historically Black Florida A & M University, earning a degree in business administration in 1985. From there he joined the Army, achieving the rank of captain.

His career has taken several turns since then, including another college degree: a master's in business administration with emphasis on human resource management from the University of Iowa. Tomlinson moonlights as a ventriloquist in the malls and churches of Decatur, Ala.

Among church groups, he says, his most popular routine is an imitation of the speeches of civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, whom he admires. He bought a special Jackson puppet for the routine. His primary puppet is Charles. Tomlinson does clean comedy only.

Tomlinson showed off an extensive collection of

photographs, newspaper clippings and other memorabilia documenting the long tradition of ventriloquism in the African-American community.

His passion for research now eclipsing his desire to perform, he's starting up a new magazine titled *The Black Ventriloquist* and writing a book on the subject.

Celebrated African-American ventriloquist Willie Tyler and sidekick Lester, headliners at last week's convention, are Tomlinson's and Charles' role models.

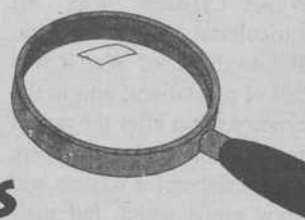
From performances in his Detroit, Mich. neighborhood at age 10, Tyler's rise to prominence culminated in appearances in the movie "Coming Home." He's shared stages with Diana Ross, Frank Sinatra, Jay Leno, Lou Rawls, Dolly Parton, Whoopie Goldberg, Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin.



Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy

In the exhibition room at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas ventriloquist Raymond Myles tries out a soft vent figure that might make its way back to Illinois with him.

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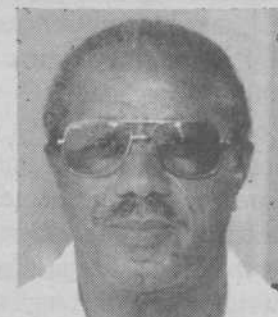
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