

NEWS CLIPS

CITY TO BOOST HUMAN RELATIONS EFFORTS

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Leaders in the capital city want to establish a human relations commission to address discrimination in housing, public accommodations and other areas. The city's legal department is working on a draft ordinance to create the commission. City Council Vice President Bo Brown said the commission will hear complaints under the federal Fair Housing Act. The act prohibits discrimination based on such factors as race, sex and religion. The commission will also address concerns about social and racial issues, Brown said. "It would be a fact-finding organization that we think can help foster positive race relations," said Council President Louis Armstrong, who has been working toward adopting a fair housing ordinance for at least five years. Most major cities and 47 states have commissions. Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas do not. "Since Mississippi is one of three states that does not have this type of commission, we felt it would be a great opportunity for Jackson to demonstrate leadership in eliminating discrimination in our society," Armstrong said.

NAACP ACCEPTING SPINGARN MEDAL NOMINATIONS

NAACP Board of Directors Chairman Julian Bond is currently soliciting nominations for the 84th Spingarn Medal. Instituted by the late J.E. Spingarn in 1914, the award seeks to honor the highest or noblest achievement by an African-American. Nominations must include a detailed, current biographical profile of the nominee highlighting relevant activities and accomplishments. Supporting documents — news clippings, awards — should be attached. Information should be clearly typed or printed. To date, 83 Spingarn Medals have been awarded. Former medalists include Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Percy E. Sutton, William H. Cosby, Lena Horne, Carl Rowan and Myrlie Evers-Williams. The final selection is made by a Committee of Award, which is selected by the NAACP's Board of Directors. Nominations should be sent to: The Spingarn Medal Award Committee, 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, Md. 21215. Attn: Chairman's Office. Entries must be postmarked on or before Dec. 31. Those interested can call (410) 358-8900.

TIME WARNER CONTRIBUTES \$1.25 MILLION IN BROWN'S MEMORY

Time Warner, Inc. has pledged to contribute a total of \$1.25 million in honor of Ronald H. Brown, former U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Five hundred thousand dollars will be contributed to both Howard University and Middlebury College, Brown's alma mater, over a four-year period to create a Ronald H. Brown-Time Warner Endowment Fund at each school. Income from the endowment funds will be used to support initiatives that reflect Brown's commitment to global awareness and his understanding of the importance of history, language, politics, economics and diplomacy. Recently, Time Warner contributed \$100,000 to the Ron Brown Foundation. An additional \$150,000 will be contributed to the foundation over the next few years. "We are pleased to have the opportunity to honor the extraordinary life and career of Ron Brown and to advance the values of public service, education and global awareness that he fostered," said Gerald M. Levin, chairman and chief executive officer of Time Warner, Inc. "Time Warner has a long-standing commitment to enhance the quality of education in the communities we serve, so we are particularly pleased that our contributions will be used to support the important educational mission of the Ronald H. Brown Foundation, and to provide a unique learning experience for students and executives at Howard University and Middlebury College." "My family is grateful that Time Warner, Howard University and Middlebury College are continuing my father's legacy by supporting tomorrow's leaders through this new gift to the foundation and in the creation of the endowment funds," said Michael Brown, president and chief executive officer of the foundation.

Black writer defends her 'nappy hair'

By Timothy Williams
NEW YORK (AP) — Children's author Carolivia Herron stood her ground when several people at a Brooklyn community forum criticized her book "Nappy Hair" as reinforcing negative stereotypes about blacks.

"I think it's perfect as I wrote it," she said last week.

The book, about a young black girl with kinky hair, has sparked controversy in Brooklyn, where residents of one school district threatened a white teacher who read it with her mostly black and Hispanic third-grade students.

The teacher, Ruth Sherman, 27, has since transferred recently to a school in Queens, saying she felt unsafe after parents hurled racial epithets and cussed at

her. The author, Herron, a black California State University, Chico, English professor, emphatically disagreed with her critics at the meeting.

"I was certainly not trying to be a political activist," she said.

She said she hadn't realized the word "nappy" would spark such a reaction.

"I thought we'd gotten rid of this problem in the '60s," she said. "But I should have known better. You can't get rid of a 300-year-old problem in 10 years."

Herron told the 300 people gathered at the House of the Lord Church that some sections of the book were the result of compromises between her and editors.

"If you don't compromise,

you don't get published," she said.

But Sarah Jones Johnson, of Roselle, N.J., disagreed.

"It's one thing to compromise with editors," she said. "It's another thing to compromise your people."

A parent of a child in Miss Sherman's Brooklyn class told the forum she failed to find a positive representation of blacks in the book.

"I was very upset by it," said the woman, who did not identify herself.

"It didn't make me feel good about myself, and I don't think it made my daughter feel good about herself."

Herron responded: "We have to agree to disagree on that."

Herron has said there is

nothing racist in the book, which she calls "a wonderful celebration of nappy African-American hair."

Many of those at the forum had not read the book but attended because they were curious to learn more about it.

One man said he did not like the idea of white teachers using the book.

"I have a problem with white people teaching out of your book, because they will take it and manipulate it," said Carlos Briscole, 58, of Brooklyn.

Herron did not respond directly to that comment, but she has said that anyone can teach the book. She did not discuss the threats to Sherman, who was not at the meeting.

Customs dept. accused of ignoring racist searches

By Linn Washington
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A major flaw exists in the U.S. Customs Service investigation into widespread complaints of discriminatory drug searches against Black travelers.

This flaw, according to Black Customs Service employees, is the failure to examine the major cause of discriminatory searches: racism within that federal agency.

Black Customs personnel claim the mistreatment of Black travelers is connected to the employment discrimination they experience. Blacks hold less than two percent of the positions in the top four job categories in the Customs

Service.

Nevertheless, top Customs Service officials defend divorcing Black employee complaints from their investigation into complaints of improper search procedures.

"We are not looking at complaints lodged by employees of the Customs Service at this point," said Linda Batts, the ranking Black official in Customs, during a recent interview with the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

The search of a pregnant Nigerian passenger this summer provides a stark example of the criticized procedures prompting the Customs investigation.

White Customs personnel

in Atlanta forced the traveler to undergo a monitored bowel movement at a hospital for suspected drug smuggling.

When the Black woman passed no drugs during the 24-hour monitoring period, a Customs supervisor initially resisted approving payment for a sonogram that a doctor requested to make sure the woman's unborn baby was unharmed, sources said.

"Anyone in their right mind would know that a pregnant female should be given a test to ensure that the baby was O.K.," said a Customs Service source. "This is just another example of the racism Black travelers experience from white customs personnel."

In Atlanta, a Black female

customs service inspector recently received a one-day suspension for allegedly failing to report the abusive search of a Jamaican woman by a white female inspector two years ago.

The white customs inspector received no disciplinary action despite the Black traveler filing a formal complaint.

The penalized black inspector said the one-day suspension was further retaliation for her repeated complaints about discriminatory conduct in Atlanta.

Batts would not comment on the disciplinary action against the black Atlanta inspector because personnel (See Searches, Page 16)

White brothers first to be tried under state hate crime law

GRETNA, La. (AP) — The first trial involving Louisiana's new hate crimes law got underway earlier this month, as jury members were selected to decide whether two white brothers are guilty of pouring gasoline on three black men's cars, one of which had a 3-year-old strapped inside.

Frank Palermo III, 32, of Gretna, and Patrick Palermo, 21, of Harvey, are charged with attempted aggravated arson of the cars, which carries a maximum 20-year sentence. If the jury finds them guilty and also finds that racial hatred was the motivation, five years could be added to the sentence.

Rainy weather during the Sept. 9 incident prevented the brothers from igniting the cars with their cigarette lighters, said Jefferson Parish Sheriff

Harry Lee.

The brothers allegedly spewed racial insults at the father of the 3-year-old child and two other black motorists who had stopped to help him work on his stalled car in Harvey.

The Palermos left in their vehicle, circled the block and came back with a baseball bat, authorities said. A scuffle followed. Then Frank Palermo allegedly grabbed the father's gasoline can and doused all the vehicles as the child sat in the car, authorities said.


Frank Palermo said after his arrest that racial slurs were used and blows exchanged — but only after the motorists began cursing him and his brother. He said the incident was a simple street fight and denied trying to set the cars on fire.

Black Women:

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