

NEWS CLIPS

COMMUNITY GROUP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS FOR ITS PROGRAMS

Community Action Against Rape needs volunteers for its hot line, speakers' bureau and court monitor programs. Those interested can call 385-2153. CAAR will hold Volunteer Crisis Intervention Training classes in February, June and October. Topics include police, child protective services; court procedures; handling victims who are adults, children, male, female, elderly, and have physical, mental, emotional or intellectual challenges; post traumatic stress disorder and rape-related trauma; cultural diversity; suicide, secondary victimization; sexually transmitted diseases; civil litigation; sexual harassment; and domestic violence. The next Volunteer Crisis Intervention Counselor training will take place from Feb. 1 to Feb. 25. The 45-hour training class will prepare volunteers to help victims of sexual violence during and after crises. All applicants will be interviewed and screened prior to acceptance. Interviews will be conducted Jan. 11-22. Those interested in additional information can call 385-2153 or write to Community Action Against Rape, 749 Veterans Memorial Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101.

PRYOR STILL CRACKING JOKES

NEW YORK (AP) — He's confined to a wheelchair by multiple sclerosis and is virtually unable to utter anything longer than a sentence. But Richard Pryor can still crack jokes. Pryor, who was profiled in Sunday's New York Times Magazine, celebrated his 58th birthday at a party in December with friends like Damon Wayans, Morgan Freeman and Samuel L. Jackson. He had these droll observations: — On being honored for his contributions to the genre of comedy with a prize named for Mark Twain: "I didn't know him personally." — What he considers the most surprising thing in America today: "That I'm not in the graveyard." The presentation of the Twain Prize to Pryor, which took place earlier this month at the Kennedy Center in Washington, was broadcast Wednesday on Comedy Central. Proceeds from the show will go to a scholarship fund for young comedians.

HOWARD LAW ALUMNI ELECT FLORIDA ATTORNEY TO PRESIDENCY

Attorney F. Malcolm Cunningham, Jr. has been elected the national president of the Howard University Law Alumni Association for a one-year term. He has been an officer of the 3500-member association since 1996. As president, Cunningham will be responsible for all alumni activities including serving as an officer of the Howard Law School. "Most of the year will be spent on infrastructure issues including the use of technology to enhance communications among alumni," he said. "I will spend the rest of the time raising money for the law school, recruiting students, and reminding America that the mission of the law school is to produce lawyers who are social engineers for justice." A managing partner of Cunningham Law Firm in West Palm Beach, Fla., he received his juris doctor degree in 1980. Cunningham was admitted to the Florida Bar that same year. He is a member of both the American and National Bar associations.

LINCOLN CENTER HONORS DUKE ELLINGTON

NEW YORK (AP) — Lincoln Center has scheduled 400 events to honor Duke Ellington this year, the 100th anniversary of his birth, and you don't have to take the A train to get to all of them. Among the events honoring Ellington this year include a PBS program, a book, a live CD and performances in Central Park and on subway platforms. The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra also plans to celebrate with a five-month tour of Europe, Australia and Asia. The first event, "Happy Reunion — Memories of Duke," reminiscences by 17 musicians who were in Ellington's band before his death in 1974, followed a news conference last Thursday. Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, artistic director of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, played Ellington's "Portrait of Louis Armstrong" with the Hall High School Concert Jazz Band of West Hartford, Conn. "There's nothing more to say about Duke," Marsalis said. "Just play his music and it's going to be all apparent."

The LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE

Officers' racist email prompts closer look at shooting

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — A civil rights group has asked authorities to take a second look at a controversial 1991 shooting by a police detective who last month was accused of sending ethnic slurs in e-mail messages.

Det. Mark Lauber, who is white, was cleared of any criminal wrongdoing after a four-month grand jury investigation into the death of Paul Mills, 19, who was black.

Lauber was one of eight city police officers suspended for allegedly sending or

receiving derogatory messages over the police department computer system. He and three other officers were accused of writing the messages.

Erie County District Attorney Frank Clark said he would consider the request by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, but added it is unlikely the case would be reopened unless some important new evidence was found.

Lauber said he fired after Mills, who was allegedly

involved in cocaine, pointed a gun at him. But the gun allegedly carried by Mills was not found until a day later, when investigators located it on the roof of a storage shed near the shooting scene.

"There have always been questions about how that gun mysteriously appeared on a rooftop, a day after the shooting," Frank Mesiah, president of the Buffalo NAACP chapter, said Thursday. "Did Mills, with a fatal gunshot wound in him, throw his gun up onto a roof?"

"Now, in light of the slurs

being sent by e-mail in the department, we would like the district attorney to take another look. Could this shooting have been motivated by a detective's animosity for African-Americans? We would like to know," he said.

Clark said the circumstances of the shooting had already gone before a grand jury.

"In order to put it before a grand jury again, we would have to tell a judge that there is some new evidence, not before known to the grand jury."

Jamaican spellers' ban sparks tiff on the island

WASHINGTON (AP) — The national spelling bee — as innocent as apple pie, right? — has spawned an international incident of sorts.

Young spellers from Jamaica, home of the reigning champ, have been disqualified from this year's competition. The island nation is in an uproar.

A spelling coach is quoting scripture in his defense. Even the Rev. Jesse Jackson has entered the fray.

And it doesn't end there. Some people in spelling bee land wonder whether Jamaica is drilling students to be super spellers to beat the Americans.

"The idea that there's this crop of kids spelling their minds out in a spelling factory is not accurate at all," says O'Neil Hamilton, a spokesman for Jamaica's embassy in Washington.

It all started last May when 249 spellers traveled to the 71st annual spelldown in

Washington. The contest is open to contestants from areas with official sponsors, and have come in the past from the continental United States, Mexico, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and Guam. The event is sponsored by Scripps Howard, part of the Cincinnati, Ohio-based E.W. Scripps Co., which operates newspapers and television stations.

Worried that some youngsters might be getting extra time to study, spelling bee officials imposed a new rule: To be eligible for this coming May's competition, spellers had to win a qualifying regional or local contest held no earlier than this Feb. 1. That would require a change in Jamaica, which for nearly four decades has held its spelling bee the August before the event.

Jamaica's bee, however, was held again in August.

Scripps Howard then disqualified the sponsor, Phillips & Phillips Stationery Supplies Ltd., from sending spellers to this year's competition.

"Some people have taken this action as anti-Jamaica. We have not banned the country," says Paige Kimble, director of the spelling bee. "It's a specific move against a sponsor, not a country."

But the action hit hard in Jamaica, which has sent spellers to Washington only twice — both with good results. In 1997, Jamaican speller Jason Edwards James placed eighth and last year, Bettina McLean finished sixth and Jody-Anne Maxwell became the first non-U.S. citizen to win the competition by successfully spelling her final word C-H-I-A-R-O-S-C-U-R-I-S-T (an artist who works in lights and darks).

"She's a folk hero. She's like Michael Jordan,"

Hamilton said of Jody-Anne.

Karen Thomson of sponsor Phillips & Phillips says she didn't get written news of the rule change until two weeks before Jamaica held its bee on Aug. 12.

Bee officials claim the sponsor tried to qualify two contestants for this year based solely on their previous qualification to last year. Ms. Thomson says that's not true — that she only was inquiring about rules for repeat contestants.

"We basically are a Third World country. We have a very small voice — like a squeak — and nobody listens," says Ms. Thomson, who claims she's spent nearly \$1,500 since August on long-distance calls to resolve the dispute.

Ms. Thomson says she told bee officials that to comply, Jamaica would hold new regional competitions after Feb. 1. But officials said (See *Spellers*, Page 19)

New Alabama governor cites Wallace, King in speech

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Gov. Don Siegelman paid homage at his inaugural Monday to leaders who shaped the state — Jefferson Davis, George Wallace, Martin Luther King Jr. — as he promised to enhance Alabama with an administration free of racial divisiveness.

Siegelman took the oath of office on the same Capitol steps where Davis became president of the Confederacy in 1861, where Wallace declared "segregation forever" in his 1963 inauguration, and where King ended the bloody Selma-to-Montgomery march that led to passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

"That is our history. Those are our roots," said Siegelman, a Democrat. "But today a new generation of Alabamians takes this stage. And in God's noonday light, we honor our heritage, unite our citizens, rededicate ourselves to Alabama values and stride confidently into a new century."

Siegelman, 52, took the oath of office from former Georgia Gov. Zell Miller, who started an education lottery that became Siegelman's campaign model for Alabama. Siegelman expects a lottery to raise about \$150 million a year for free college tuition, more computers in public schools and a voluntary pre-kindergarten program.

"No child should fail simply because they don't have the money to go to college," he said.

Siegelman beat Republican Gov. Fob James in November.

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