

# NEWS CLIPS

## URBANWORLD FILM FESTIVAL DEBUTS UPCOMING BLACK MOVIES

NEW YORK (IPS) — The annual Urbanworld Film Festival, billed as the "biggest and best" of all the festivals featuring Black actors, wrapped up recently with general agreement that the future is bright for non-White movies.

More than 23 feature films, 20 short films, eight documentaries, and 10 other films in a special Latin American section were shown at this year's festival, held every August. The event opened with high glitz in the form of "Introducing Dorothy Dandridge," a feature movie about the tragic life and death of the first African-American woman to receive a Hollywood Oscar nomination for Best Actress. It starred Halle Berry and was bankrolled by the Home Box Office cable channel. Attention-grabbers also included Columbia Pictures "Blue Streak," starring Martin Lawrence as a jewel thief disguised as a cop, and the Dimension Productions film "In Too Deep" with Omar Epps, LL Cool J and Pam Grier. In the past, "Urbanworld" has been responsible for launching such U.S. studio-backed hits as "Soul Food," "How Stella Got Her Groove Back," "Why Do Fools Fall In Love," and independent films like "Down in The Delta." "Our mission is to expose independent minority films and entertainment to the widest audience possible," said founder Stacey Spikes, a former marketing executive with Miramax and October Films.

## TEXAS WORST POLLUTER IN NORTH AMERICA

OTTAWA (IPS) — A study based on the North American Free Trade Agreement statistics shows that Texas remains at the top of North American polluters. Ontario, Canada's second-largest and most populous province, has moved from third to second place in the pollution rankings. Louisiana and Ohio are in third and fourth positions, respectively. Environmentalists are blaming Ontario's neo-conservative government, which virtually has dismantled its environment department since 1995, for the increase in pollution problems in the province. The study by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) says that half of Canada's top 50 facilities for pollutant releases are in Ontario and two companies — Co-Steel Lasco in Whitby and Inco in Sudbury — are listed among the 25 biggest polluters.

## MASSIVE U.S.-UAE ARMS DEAL IN FINAL STAGES

UNITED NATIONS (IPS) — The United States is on the verge of finalizing an \$8 billion arms sale — the biggest single deal in nearly two decades — to one of the world's major oil producing nations: the United Arab Emirates, according to an authoritative trade source. "We expect an announcement by the end of this year," said Tom Cardamone, editor of the Washington-based Arms Trade News. The proposed sale includes about 80 F-16 combat aircraft — one of the frontline fighter planes currently in service with the U.S. Air Force — along with a staggering array of sophisticated missiles and radar and electronic systems, Cardamone said. Unlike the massive \$20 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia after the 1991 Gulf War — described as the largest in U.S. history — the UAE arms deal is steeped in controversy because the Gulf emirate was insisting on access to computer source codes that run all of the F-16's electronics systems. The Clinton Administration has backed the proposed deal, not only because the UAE is a strong political and military ally of the United States, but also because the sale would help boost the sagging post-Cold War U.S. defense industry, Cardamone said.

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN TO LEAD VETERANS ORGANIZATION

The Vietnam Veterans of America re-elected George C. Duggins as president at their biennial convention in California. He first assumed the presidency in 1997 after serving as vice-president. Duggins is the only African-American president of a major veterans service organization. A life member of the VVA, Duggins joined the organization in 1985 and has held many elected and appointed positions. He served on the National Board of Directors for nine years and has served as national chair of VVA's membership, credentials, convention, scholarship and minority affairs committees. He was elected vice-president in 1995.

# Black lawyer on hot seat for defending racist

Chinta Strausberg  
Chicago Defender

Chicago Attorney Anita Rivkin Carothers, better known for defending a Black woman who's battling a local White Alderman to regain custody of her son, is in hot water with much of the Black community for defending an avowed White racist.

During a radio show, Carothers dodged proverbial bullets from an audience who repeatedly said it couldn't understand why she agreed to represent Matthew Hale, an organizer of the World Church of the Creator, who is an admitted racist seeking to become a lawyer.

Having passed the bar

exam, Hale hired Carothers and a Jewish lawyer to defend him before the Character and Fitness Committee of the Illinois Bar, which has refused to grant him a license because he's allegedly morally unfit.

Carothers said she was contacted by Hale's lead counsel, Bob Herman, a Jewish man from St. Louis, during the time she was drafting a class action suit involving Olison.

"All of the laws that applied to that case, all involved the Constitution," Carothers said, adding that the first Amendment and the Constitution is "bigger than Matthew Hale" "If we allow

the Constitution, the First Amendment (to be compromised) because of Matthew Hale, it's going to hurt us and all people of color," she said.

Carothers said Hale "has said some insulting and disparaging things, even about his attorneys, but under the First Amendment he has the right to do that."

"He did make a statement to the media that in hiring us he took two steps backwards in order to take one step forward. It's insulting. It's disparaging. It's annoying, but it's covered by the First Amendment," she said.

Asked what kind of responses she has received

after becoming Hale's attorney, Carothers said even some of her peers have given her negative comments. Numerous callers made similar remarks, including several urging her to represent Black clients.

Carothers said she has done a great deal of pro bono work for men, women and children of color and will continue to do so.

"It's important to separate the First Amendment from Matthew Hale," she said. She added that it is the job of a lawyer to honor his or her oath to protect the Constitution and the First Amendment, even on behalf of a racist.

# Teacher strike continues in Motor City

DETROIT (AP) — Rodericus Rayford's children should have been in school Wednesday.

Instead, nine of his nieces, nephews, children and neighbors sat on his front porch as a teacher strike kept kids out of class and parents struggling to find ways to keep them occupied.

Though Rayford, 33, said he supports teachers and their demands for smaller class sizes, more supplies and increased pay, he said he hopes they get back to work soon.

"Otherwise I'll get some signs for the kids, and we'll all go picket out there with them saying, 'We want to go back,'" Rayford said, laughing.

Detroit's Belle Isle Zoo is offering free admission to all

Detroit school kids for the duration of the strike.

People's Community Services had closed down its summer programs a week ago, but associate director Lynne Thompson said all of the centers are open again to accommodate the children.

"Our centers are up and running with full staff, and we will be open for the duration of the strike," she said.

The union, which represents about 9,200 classroom teachers, voted Monday to reject a 10-day contract extension recommended by a reform school board appointed last spring by Mayor Dennis Archer.

The teachers went on strike Tuesday on what should have been the first day of classes in the 172,000-

student district.

The teachers' main sticking points are a longer school day and school year, the administration's proposals that would tie merit pay to school performance and a requirement that after a certain number of sick days, teachers must provide a doctor's to qualify for additional sick days, said union president John Elliott.

He said he hadn't heard any complaints from parents about the strike, the fourth by Detroit teachers since 1982.

"Most parents are not excited yet," Elliott said Wednesday. "Usually the parents just make whatever adjustments they need to make."

But school volunteer Angela Banks, 27, who has three children in the Detroit

school system, said she doesn't support the strike or the teachers.

"They shouldn't be asking for more money until they can prove they're teaching our kids," she said.

Banks, who rode bikes with her kids Wednesday to pass the time, said she might run into problems if teachers don't return to the classroom before she goes back to her own job next week.

Tinene Myers, whose 7-year-old daughter is handicapped, said: "I had planned on going back to school so this is putting a hold on my plans."

Meanwhile Rayford, a carpenter, said he enjoyed spending time with all of the children who crammed his porch Wednesday. But he'd rather have been working.

## Keyes

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and you deserve to be defeated," he said.

Lt. Gov. Steve Windom, one of Bush's Alabama chairmen, played down the outcome, saying, "I don't think it has any significance outside this room."

Even Hatch said Bush may be unbeatable. "George Bush has it wrapped up because the party hierarchy is with him."

State Party Chairman Winton Blount warned that candidates were risking "snubbing a significant group of Republican votes" by not participating. But Carl Grafton, a political scientist at Auburn University at Montgomery, said it wouldn't hurt Bush.

"After eight years of Bill Clinton, these people want to win the presidency," Grafton said. "Just because Bush doesn't show up, they are not going to punish him."

The pay-to-vote contest followed Saturday morning frivolities including live-elephant rides and a ball-throw at a Bill Clinton look-a-like in a dunking booth.

Unlike the Iowa straw poll, which Bush won two weeks ago, the Alabama straw poll did not allow candidates to pay for unlimited delegates. They could only sign up 100 delegates each for the \$35 seats, but most didn't bother. That caused many to discount the poll's importance.

"You'd really have to be a political junkie to know about this," Black said.

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