

Entertainment Briefs

RAP MOGUL SIMMONS GETS 'FATHER OF THE YEAR' HONOR

NEW YORK (AP) — Rap mogul Russell Simmons is among those being honored as "Father of the Year" by the National Father's Day Committee. The committee selected Simmons and six others for their work as professionals and parents. The awards will be presented June 7 in New York. Proceeds from ticket sales to the event will go to a prostate cancer treatment center on New York's Long Island. Also being honored: boxer George Foreman, New York Giants coach Jim Fassel, New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell, chef Jacques Pepin and Wall Street executive Howard Lutnick.

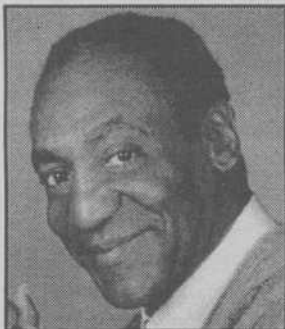
PATTY LaBELLE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND LYRICS IN 'LADY MARMALADE'

WASHINGTON (AP) - Patti LaBelle said she didn't know the meaning of the famous French line in "Lady Marmalade" when her group, LaBelle, recorded the hit in 1974. In the song about a New Orleans prostitute, the group sings, "Voulez vous coucher avec moi ce soir?" Translated into English, that means, "Will you sleep with me tonight?" "I just knew it sounded cute. Soon after that we found out, but we said, well, let's keep it anyway," LaBelle told AP Radio. "There's nothing you can do about that. You know, that's someone's lifestyle, and I'm just gonna sing about it." LaBelle, 57, said she's thrilled with the version of "Lady Marmalade" that appears on the "Moulin Rouge" movie soundtrack. Christina Aguilera, Lil' Kim, Mya and Pink did a cover of the song, which moves from No. 3 to No. 1 next week on the Billboard Hot 100 despite the fact that it is not available as a single. "The girls who are doing it now, they're doing such a wonderful job," she said. "The video is beautiful and I'm really happy. Whenever I hear it, I get a glow."

BILL COSBY SPEECH SELLS OUT AT UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

CINCINNATI (AP) — Every ticket to hear Bill Cosby, guest speaker at next month's University of Cincinnati graduation ceremony, has been snapped up. The last remaining tickets, which are free but required for admission to the ceremony on June 8, were claimed Thursday

morning, university spokeswoman Chris Curran said. No other speaker for the school's commencement exercises has demonstrated that type of drawing power in years, Curran said. University officials said those without tickets won't be denied a chance to hear or see Cosby, one of the nation's most popular commencement speakers. The entire ceremony will be provided by streaming video on the Internet (<http://www.stremedia.uc.edu>). About 6,000 people could graduate in the June 8 commencement. Typically, only about half the number of eligible students come to the ceremony. However, Curran said the university is expecting a crowd of at least twice the number of graduates to be on hand for Cosby's appearance.



BILL COSBY

PRINCE SWears OFF CURSING AND PREACHES IMPORTANCE OF VIRTUE

NEW YORK - A G-rated Prince? It may be hard to believe, but the singer who once provoked shock waves with his X-rated lyrics has sworn off cursing and is preaching about the importance of virtue in the May edition of Gotham magazine. Prince, who is now a Jehovah's Witness, said that "when you use those (curse) words, you call up all the anger, all the negative times the word has been used before - you bring it toward yourself. Why would you want that?" Prince also told the magazine that teens need more God in their lives. "When I look at the violence, I wonder where the parents are, but also where is God in their lives? A kid in an open computer ready for programming. Some weird relationships happen, smoking too early and sex." Jehovah's Witnesses are an apocalyptic group that interprets the Bible differently than traditional Christian organizations.

ENTERTAINMENT

Homegrown talent electrifies

Nyla Pickett
Sentinel-Voice

Here's the story: a star is born in the desert. Out of the dust rises a bright, talented performer with the full-bodied feel of a soul-diva from the old school.

Here's the real: the ability to get a substantial gig at The Aladdin's Blue Note, to successfully orchestrate a decent, if not extremely impressive and entertaining set, to pack the house, and to emerge with a motivated following, is a feat - one gracefully accomplished by Serena Henry this past weekend.

Here's the background. Serena's story is not an unfamiliar one: local girl makes it big. The difference is Serena's talent is not that of your run-of-the-mill, every-other-r&b pseudodiva, fly-by-night wannabe. Evident in her performance is the strength and perseverance of a multi-talented songstress and a persistent, diligent man-



Sentinel-Voice photos by John Broussard

agement team. Serena Henry impressed during her recent Blue Note gig. The songstress has won praise in local circles for her talent.

Having toured for three years as a special artist with Gladys Knight, Henry brings to the stage a symphonic melody of tunes borrowed from the best. From Aretha to Oleta to Bonnie Rait and back to Whitney, she is able to follow the scale, carry the tune and do justice along the way. Though her renditions of "Respect," "Get There" and "I Can't Make You Love

Me" - by the ladies, respectively - were exceptional, one might suggest that a voice and talent like that deserves it's own platform.

Her ability to copy the greats is fantastic, but therein lies the sneaky suspicion that a full-bodied, full-scale, far-reaching voice as such should be able to stretch out and lay over its own keys, with its own tune, telling its own story. There's no doubt that with more exposure (Serena is due to perform again locally very soon), the tide will turn and her camp will grow appropriately. Her team seems to be striving toward this, and managed to fully pack the Note's house by the last show.

The performer has a lot to offer. She is, apparently, a pianist, a dancer and an actress. It seems it is only a matter of time before the word gets out that there is a songbird in the midst!

Ms. Henry brings with her a band of local musicians who have - apparently, through their obvious prowess - performed with some of the best. According to her manager, Gem Wilshire of Gem's Gems - who happens to be Serena's most avid follower, strongest supporter, the faith magic behind the music, and her mom - the five-piece ensemble came together at the eleventh hour to rehearse and (See Serena, Page 9)



Dennis Rodman objects to noise rules

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (AP) — The City Council took the first step toward approving a tougher noise ordinance, but not before the city's most famous noisemaker spoke his peace.

Former basketball star Dennis Rodman, who has received more than 50 police visits and been fined more than \$8,500 for violations of the current ordinance over the past year, told council members on Tuesday that authorities are unfairly targeting him.

"My complaint is that I get harassed every day," Rodman said. "I throw a lot of parties - yes I do - but at all my parties there aren't any kids in danger... everything's controlled, I have security guards all over the perimeter."

City officials have said Rodman could face misdemeanor disturbing the peace charges from his 40th birthday party on May 12, which they said featured an illegal

helicopter landing, a rock concert without a permit and hundreds of invited and uninvited guests.

Deputy City Attorney Daniel K. Ohl said proposed changes to the ordinance are "not just for Rodman," although he acknowledged the

former NBA star "helped move the rewrite forward."

The changes would outlaw "unreasonable, unnecessary or disturbing" noise, but would require police to warn violators before citing them. They also would clarify that property owners are respon-

sible for noise violations on their land.

Council members gave the changes initial approval Tuesday night.

If they give the proposed rules final approval next month, they will take effect 30 days later.

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