

BLACKONOMICS

Shortest boycott in U.S. history? Pepsi

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

What ever happened to the boycott of Pepsi Cola called by Russell Simmons on behalf of the Hip-Hop Action Network? Since it was only a short while ago, I am sure you remember the reason for the boycott ("New Pepsi Challenge") and the subsequent "deal" made by Simmons, Pepsi and the rapper Ludacris. The deal called for \$3 million dollars to go to the Ludacris Foundation in exchange for an end to the boycott that, according to unofficial online polls, would not have been supported by a majority of Pepsi drinkers because of "brand loyalty and disagreement with Simmons" on the issue. Where are the Montgomery boycotters when you need them?

Some say Simmons sold out Hip-Hop for \$3 million. Some say Simmons used the threat of boycott to leverage support for his own venture into the lucrative soft drink industry. Others say Simmons was taking a stand in support of those he represents: the hip-hop generation. I don't know what Simmons' motivation was, so I will not comment on that. I do know that sometimes the tactics we use to achieve "economic progress" versus what we receive in return for our threats and saber rattling make little sense.

I cannot say it better than someone named B Easy, who wrote a response to the Pepsi boycott issue on the www.sohh.com website, a top-of-the-line hip hop site, from what I could see. B Easy says, "We didn't solve the problem by getting money. Solving the problem is boycotting Pepsi and letting them financially feel what happens when you disrespect Hip-Hop. This is about integrity and respect and you can't put a price tag on it."

Makes "cents" to me, B Easy. Tell us more.

"Imagine how the Hip-Hop community could have been galvanized as a force to be reckoned with. How American youth could have felt the power of their dollar and their voice," he continued. Hmmm. I see what you mean, B Easy.

"Instead [of seizing this opportunity], the Hip-Hop community sits once again as lame consumers ready for any corporation to market to us any way they see fit. (Hey guys... just add a Hip-Hop soundtrack to the commercial... they'll buy it.)" Hey, B Easy, this is what I've been saying for years now. What are your final thoughts on this issue?

"The only one to benefit from this boycott fiasco was Pepsi, Rush Arts, and whoever's down with the Ludacris Foundation. Pepsi gained our silence. And Russell gained a measly \$3 million for Rush Arts to add programs to schools," B Easy lamented. As I said, I cannot put it any better than that.

We have been down this boycott road before, many times. There are several boycotts in force right now, including one against the City of Cincinnati. What amazes me is the reaction, even from some of our brothers and sisters, when Black people call for a boycott. White folks say it's not the right thing to do; the mayor of Cincinnati called the boycotters, "economic terrorists." Some Black folks got on that same bandwagon and rebuked their own people for using a last-resort tactic to address wrongs committed against us.

But check this out. White folks call for boycotts all the time and nothing is said. France has lost, at last count, some \$300 million in business because of a boycott called by White talk show hosts and others. A boycott of Pepsi was called by Bill O'Reilly before Simmons did so. Another "conservative" talk show host, Joe Scarborough, has suggested a boycott against MCI because Danny Glover "called George Bush a racist."

It's a veritable boycott feast when it comes to complaints by Whites. Let Blacks call a boycott and all hell breaks loose! Thus, we have the shortest boycott in history in Simmons' boycott of Pepsi Cola, because White folks and some Blacks did not approve of it, and finally, the coup
(See Clingman, Page 15)

Black woman to head major ad firm

(Special to the NNPA)—Ann Fudge has been named chair and chief executive of Young & Rubicam Inc., becoming the first African-American woman to lead a large division of a major agency company.

The announcement came after wide speculation that Michael Dolan, who has worked for Y.&R. for seven years would be leaving.

Headquartered in New York, Y.&R. has 539 offices in 80 countries. It is one of the three largest divisions of the WPP Group; one of the world's most comprehensive communications services groups.



Ann Fudge will be chairwoman and chief executive of Young & Rubicam Advertising, becoming the first African-American woman to lead a large division of a major agency company.

Y.&R. is a diversified, global marketing and communications organization with integrated services housing agencies like Young & Rubicam Advertising; Wunderman, a specialist in

direct marketing; Landor Associates, focusing on corporate identity; and the Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe public relations firms.

Fudge also will be chair-

woman and chief executive of Young & Rubicam Advertising.

Most recently she was president of the beverages, desserts and Post cereal division of Kraft Foods. Responsible for brands with an estimated \$5 billion in sales, she left that job in 2001 to concentrate on working with philanthropic and social organizations. She also served on boards of corporations such as General Electric, Honeywell International and Marriott International. She has also been named by Fortune magazine as one of the 50 most powerful women in American business.

Suburbs to home three Black funeral parlors

By Earl Byrd

BALTIMORE (NNPA)—After slavery, a proud tradition began with Black doctors or midwives assisting newly freed slave mothers giving birth. The practice continued during Jim Crow. When Blacks jumped the broom, a Black preacher did the service in a Black church. And when the inevitability of death came, a solemn Black undertaker in a high hat attended the body and buried a family's loved one with compassion in a Black cemetery.

Integration changed that. Blacks were no longer restricted to midwives or Black hospitals. And starting some 40 years ago, a burgeoning Black middle-class population fled the blighted and crime-filled city and headed

to the suburbs. Upon death, these Black families were forced to turn to area undertakers who were invariably White.

To reintroduce and keep alive the proud Black undertaker tradition for families in these African-American enclaves and communities, two prominent Black undertakers, Wylie Funeral Home, owned by Al Wylie, and Howell Funeral Home, owned by Willie and Brian Howell, are building funeral homes in the Baltimore suburbs.

Wylie is opening a facility in Randallstown, while the Howell brothers are building mortuaries in Columbia and Ann Arundel County.

"There are two reasons for Black undertakers to establish funeral homes in the suburbs," says Hari P. Close II,

public relations director for the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association (NFDMA).

"One," he says, "there is a great need in those areas because of the Black population boom, and two, there has been a major trend of African-Americans using White funeral homes outside Baltimore because there are no Black funeral homes in those areas."

Close, owner of Hari P. Close Funeral Service, is building another funeral home close to home in northwest Baltimore because the Black population has increased there by 60 percent, he says, "and there has never been a Black funeral home in that community."

Al Wylie, 57, is breaking ground in Randallstown in

July. His will be an eloquently detailed, 11,000-square-foot structure costing \$2.5 million, with 99 parking spaces and a chapel for 180 mourners. He expects his facility to be completed by March next year. Wylie opened his state-of-the-art funeral home here in August 1993, providing casket and clothing selection, and even a designer casket. He also knows how to present the body for optimum viewing.

"At a loved one's death you only get one chance to do it right," he says. "That's why I'm moving. The people needed a funeral parlor in the community. Our people moved to Randallstown, Owings Mill, Woodlawn and up in Carroll County, but no Black undertaker moved with
(See Parlors, Page 17)



First Preston

Helping People Achieve the American Dream...

"Successfully Buying a Home from HUD"

First Preston, the marketing and management contractor for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will be presenting a "Successfully Buying a Home from HUD" Seminar.

May 31, 2003
10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

East Las Vegas Senior
Community Center
250 N. Eastern Avenue
Las Vegas, Nevada



This seminar will teach you the following:

- The advantages of buying a HUD home
- Pre-qualify for a home loan with a participating lender
- Select a real estate agent to assist with the process
- Search for a HUD home in any area
- Complete the contract of sale and other documents
- The requirements for closing and occupancy

*Down payment assistance and credit counseling information will be available!

*A \$500 certificate will be available for attendees of this event and may be used toward specific applicable closing costs by potential homeowners. Certain terms and conditions may apply.

*This seminar will be presented in both English and Spanish. The Guide Book to Buying a Home from HUD and other information will be available at this seminar.