

## The Reader's Corner

By Monica Riley Verley  
Sentinel-Voice

May is "National Women's Wellness Month." It is a time for us, as women, to get back in-tune with our bodies, our selves, and our spirits. Of course, we should treat our bodies as our temples, EVERYDAY! Take the time to visit your doctor and your dentist this month. There are 31 days in May; so there's no excuse. We must take care of ourselves so that we can be present and be healthy to enjoy our loved ones. To have excellent health, you must invest time and energy into the transformation of your "Sacred Body Temple." Be good to yourself.

This month I'm honored to highlight "Sacred Woman: A Guide To Healing The Feminine Body, Mind and Spirit," by Queen Afua.

"You have to commit to good health. You have to live good health because it comes from the inside out. It comes from what you bring to your life: positive, empowering thoughts, prayers and affirmations, uplifting company and high-quality, life-giving foods," said Queen Afua.

With love, wisdom, and passion, Queen Afua guides us to accept our mission and our mantle as Sacred Women—to heal ourselves, the generations of women in our families, our communities, and our world.

Queen Afua begins by helping us to discover our unique "womb-an-ness"—and to honor the womb as the center of our consciousness and creativity. Whether we are conceiving babies or businesses, ideas or art, Queen Afua illuminates the importance of cultivating our womb wisdom. After teaching us to transcend the taboos of growing up female, she outlines the full circle of womb wellness from menstruation to childbirth to menopause, and gives us a twenty-eight-day program for womb spirit rejuvenation and purification. Once our optimal womb wellness has been firmly established, we are ready for our initiation into Sacred Womanhood.

Through extraordinary meditations, affirmations, and rituals rooted in Ancient Egyptian temple teachings, Queen Afua guides us through the nine portals of initiation. These "portals," also known as "The 9 Gateways to Divinity," are briefly outlined below:

- Gateway 0: Sacred Womb – "The conditions of our wombs directly reflects the conditions of our mind, spirits and actions.
- Gateway 1: Sacred Word – Words have power to heal and awaken the being into radiant light. Learn how to open up into your wholeness as a woman by applying to your life the power of Sacred Word.
- Gateway 2: Sacred Food – Learn how to use whole natural foods of the garden for complete wellness for "Food Is medicine."
- Gateway 3: Sacred Movement – Gain the ability to use movement to creatively release and heal thyself. Reawaken your soul with the joy of sacred movement.
- Gateway 4: Sacred Beauty – Learn how to naturally pamper, beautify and nurture yourself from head to toe.
- Gateway 5: Sacred Space – Develop the principles for maintaining a spiritually charged home so to bring peace and healing to all those who enter therein.
- Gateway 6: Sacred Healing – Sacred Woman establish your powers as the primary healer of the home.
- Gateway 7: Sacred Relationships – Learn how to stop hurting from your relationships and how to make them work.
- Gateway 8: Sacred Male/Female Union – Learn how to create and maintain a healthy balanced union with a divine mate.
- Gateway 9: Nefer Atum (the Divine Lotus) – This final destination of Sacred Woman reflects the ultimate in balance, beauty and wellness.

Queen Afua is a nationally renowned herbalist, natural health and nutrition expert, and dedicated healer of women's bodies and women's souls. She practices a uniquely Afrocentric spirituality. Her classic bestseller, "Heal Thyself," forever changed the way African-Americans practice holistic health. Among her many clients are Erykah Badu, Vanessa Williams, Roberta Flack, John Amos, and Stevie Wonder.

Monica Riley Verley holds a BA in English and Africana Studies from Vassar College and a Masters Degree in Journalism from Northwestern University. She is currently Executive Director of Programming and Promotions for Eastern Region PBS.



## WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Dozens of youth christen the Doolittle Community Center pool during grand opening festivities Saturday. An all-day pool party featuring food, music and games was one of the highlights of the center's 11th annual community festival. The pool's opening comes weeks after that of the newly renovated center. *Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy*

## Officer

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the Kansas Ave Seventh Day Adventist Church in the Eastside which attracted over 50 people, all united in their opposition to the reinstatement of Stewart.

Wilson said that the community was outraged at any chance that Stewart might return to policing the streets of Riverside. "The anger is as fresh today as it was five years ago," he said as many people nodded their heads in agreement. "Her blood is screaming from the ground."

Woodie Rucker Hughes, president of Riverside's chapter of the NAACP, agreed and said the community must do whatever it takes—protests, civil disobedience or pursuing legal channels—to keep Stewart and the other officers off the force.

"Whatever it takes," she said, "With his return, we will be afraid for our own lives."

SCLC Riverside Chapter president Rev. James Baylark said that only a collective effort can prevail, and joined others who condemned the judge's ruling to reinstate Stewart.

"We do not support murder in the streets," he said, "We do not put murderers back on the streets."

Stewart's return would send an already troubled police department many steps backward in its efforts to reform under the consent decree that the city of Riverside signed with State Attorney General Bill Lockyer in March 2001. More than one person suggested that a community delegation should

meet with Lockyer to discuss this issue, arguing that Stewart's reinstatement might be in violation of the decree.

The ruling brought back memories of the tragic shooting and Stewart's conduct during and afterwards.

On Dec. 28, 1998, Stewart and three other officers shot Miller 12 times in the back or the back of her head after responding to a medical distress call. At first the officers alleged that she fired her gun at them, but the gun was determined to be inoperable.

After the shooting, Stewart and officer Michael Alagna high-fived and all the officers including their sergeant, Gregory Preece, laughed, joked, made racial remarks and reenacted the shooting, according to former officer Rene Rodriguez and Miller's family members. According to Rodriguez,

Stewart continued joking at the General Investigation Bureau while the officers were being interviewed about the shooting. When Stewart asked if he could get more time off after the shooting, another officer told him it depended on his emotional state.

"I'll try to act real distraught," Stewart then said sarcastically.

Many speakers expressed concern on how Riverside's city government was returning to its past roots of the 1950s, rather than moving forward embracing a new millennium.

Tanya Humphries said that more African-Americans need to get involved in the political process and that the city council elections this fall were crucial because if more "angry wealthy white men got elected, it would be like returning to the 1950s. She

said that they, like current council members Ed Adkison and Frank Schiavone who voiced their opposition to appealing the judge's ruling, won't understand why people are so upset because it is not real to them.

The Riverside Police Officer's Association had endorsed and financially supported both Adkison and Schiavone during previous elections and recently announced its support for Art Gage, who is running for the Third Ward council seat this fall. Humphries and others said it was important for people to register and vote because local elected officials play a larger role in people's lives than those at the state and national level. The city council had not released a decision on how it is planning to handle the Stewart case by press time. The case could take weeks to decide.



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