

## SPORTS

# Bull rider takes cancer by horns

By Genoa Barrow

Special to Sentinel-Voice

SACRAMENTO (NNPA)—African-American men deal with a lot of bull. Few, however, make it their life's work as Southern California native Lee Akin has.

Akin, a champion bull rider, was in town recently competing in the Sacramento leg of the Professional Bull Riders' Built Ford Tough Series tour at Arco Arena. Akin, the top-ranked African-American on the PBR circuit, has also been tapped to take prostate cancer "by the horns."

Akin and fellow bull rider Owen Washburn are acting as spokesmen for the Theragenics Corporation's National Prostate Cancer Treatment Awareness Campaign.

Theragenics is the leading

provider of brachytherapy, or seeding, devices for prostate cancer treatment.

The campaign will target more than 100 million men and their families in 2005 with a simple message: "know your options for prostate cancer treatment."

According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 232,090 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in 2005.

Akin and Washburn will provide information regarding prostate cancer treatment in cities throughout the U.S. in conjunction with the PBR's Built Ford Tough Series tour. Both will spread the word through events, appearances, advertising, and a blue ribbon campaign aimed at educating fans of one of the fastest growing spectator sports in America.

"Being part of this awareness campaign is especially important to me," Akin said.

African-American men are at a higher risk of developing prostate cancer and it often strikes at an earlier age. I hope I can make a difference in someone's quality of life through my work with TheraSeed."

Many men don't have access to treatment options beyond surgery, says M. Christine Jacobs, president and CEO of Theragenics.

"With more than 100 million viewers annually and more than 1 million live event attendees, professional bull riding provides a unique platform to reach a large segment of the American public.

We are seizing this opportunity to reach an audience that needs to hear our message and become empowered

to take control of their healthcare," Jacobs said.

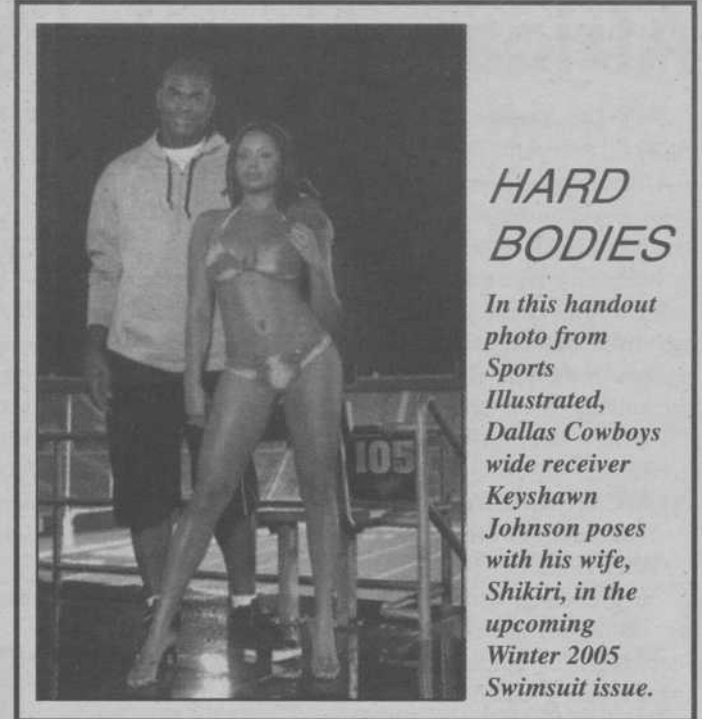
Akin hails from Hemet, California. He now hangs his cowboy hat in Weatherford, Okla. Akin has been a professional bull rider for more than seven years.

As a multiple qualifier in the PBR World Finals, he has won nearly 20 championship titles throughout his career including three PBR titles in 2003 in 2004.

As a member of "Team TheraSeed," Akin will wear shirts and protective vests featuring a specially designed blue ribbon and the company logo during each of his rides throughout the 2005 PBR season.

Blue ribbons designating prostate cancer awareness will also be handed out to fans at the events.

Genoa Barrow writes for the Sacramento Observer.



## HARD BODIES

In this handout photo from Sports Illustrated, Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson poses with his wife, Shikiri, in the upcoming Winter 2005 Swimsuit issue.

# Negro Leagues art exhibit barnstorms into St. Louis

By Kimberly Brandy

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ST. LOUIS (NNPA) — The stands overflow, packed with Black kings and queens dressed in their Sunday best. Everyone knows that the next pitch, if delivered accurately, could be the final throw of the game.

As the stone-faced pitcher in the foreground begins his wind-up, he calmly looks over his shoulder to see if the base runner has strayed too far from his safe haven. The crowd waits forever for the hurler's next move, which has been permanently frozen in time by artist Lonnie Powell.

Powell's painting, titled "Looking Him Back," is one of 35 works of art that make up "Shades of Greatness," a traveling art exhibit inspired by Negro League baseball.

The exhibit was developed by the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, in partnership with the Ford Motor Company, to showcase an array of original artwork depicting the history of the Negro Leagues.

The exhibit originated at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Mo., and it became a traveling exhibit in 2004, according to the museum's informational www.nlbm.com website. It states that the exhibit provides "a tribute to the courageous athletes who fought the prejudices of society to play the game they loved."

Baseball fans, art buffs and historians alike will have the opportunity to view the exhibit through April 4 at the Portfolio Gallery and Education Center.

Powell said he is "old enough to have gone to a Kansas City Monarchs game." He lived just six blocks from Kansas City Municipal Stadium, where the Monarchs played home games, and remembers sneaking into the park to see them play.

"What I tried to do with the piece was to take all of those images that I can remember and put them into one piece. The pitcher is actually a conglomerate of all the pitchers

that pitched so well in those days," Powell said.

"This is a conceptual piece that hit the mood of what I felt when I started looking back on those days. I had to see it through young eyes. It is a reflection," Powell explained.

Other artists featured in the exhibit include Leroy Allen, Norm Bannister, Terry L. Beavers, NedRa Bonds, Eric Brace, Bonnye Brown, Henry W. Dixon, John Ferry, Raylee Frazier, Rob Hatem, Anthony High, Ed Hogan, Kevin Hosley, Robert Hurst, Jared Kraus, George E. Morris, Steve Musgrave, Kadir Nelson, Frank Norfleet, Ramon Olivera, John Richardson, Keith Shepherd, Ken Stanford, Veronica Sublett, Cortney Wall, Larry Welo and Steve Wilson.

The gallery in which Powell's piece will be displayed for the next several months was founded and is directed by his brother, Robert Powell.

In 1989, brother Powell decided that he heard enough African-American artists in St. Louis simply discussing the problem of not having enough outlets in the area to show their works without doing anything to improve their situation, so he opened up his own home to them as an exhibit space. From this simple act, Portfolio was born.

To borrow a baseball comparison from fiction, Powell and his "counterparts" built it, but the public can't always be trusted to come.

"People still feel like they have to go away to see good things," gallery director Powell said. "I want people to know that we are here, and we have great art."

Selected, limited-edition lithographs from the exhibit are available for sale. For further information about the exhibit visit the gallery website www.portfolio-stl.com or call (314) 533-3323.

Kimberly Brandy writes for the St. Louis American.

## Sports Pace

(Continued from Page 19)

aren't. It's sad to say."

### AFRICAN-AMERICAN REGGIE FOWLER BIDS TO PURCHASE MINNESOTA VIKINGS

An Arizona businessman, Reggie Fowler, has outbid Glen Taylor, the current owner the Minnesota Timberwolves, for the purchase of the Minnesota Vikings from Red McCombs. The *Arizona Republic* has reported Fowler's wealth at more than \$400 million.

Fowler would join Robert Johnson, the owner of the Charlotte Bobcats in the National Basketball Association, as the only African-American sole owners of sports teams in major sports.

McCombs purchased the Vikings team in 1998.

Although the progress for African-Americans is apparent across many fields in sports. The truth is, we still have a lot of ground to cover.



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