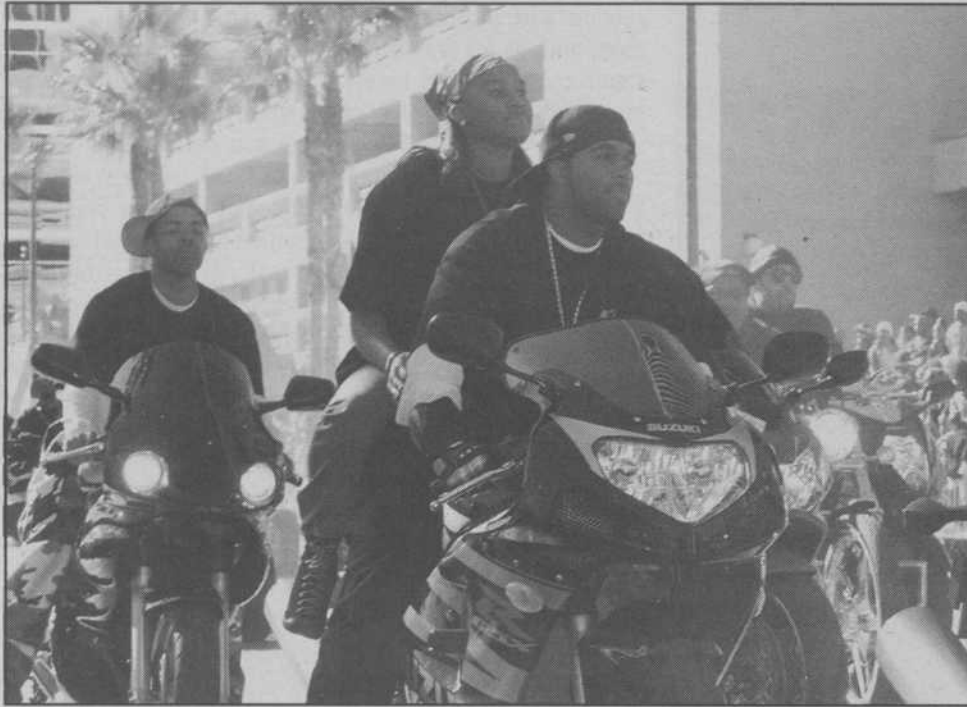


NAACP chides rules on bike event

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WILMINGTON, N.C. (NNPA) - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has asked a U.S. District Court in South Carolina to stop the City of Myrtle Beach from using a restrictive one-way traffic pattern along a major city boulevard over Memorial Day weekend. This is the only weekend each year when the majority of tourists in the city are African-American and the only weekend each year when the city implements a restrictive traffic plan requiring all traffic to travel one-way for 60 blocks.

Each year, in May, two large motorcycle rallies are held in the Myrtle Beach area. In mid-May, thousands of predominately White motorcyclists and tourists come to Myrtle Beach for an event known as "Harley Week." A week later, over Memorial Day weekend, a similar number of Black tourists attend a similar motorcycle rally in the Myrtle Beach area, known as "Black Bike Week." The treatment of the tourists for each event, say observers, is



Several African-American riders enjoy Black Biker Week in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

starkly different.

The White Harley Week tourists are wholeheartedly welcomed by the Myrtle Beach government, businesses, and community leaders.

When the Black tourists arrive, restaurants close, hotels implement special policies, and the city restricts travel along the main drag of Myrtle Beach — Ocean Bou-

levard, which is converted into an oppressive one-way traffic pattern that restricts traffic with limited exit points. The city's police department also deploys triple the number of police officers to enforce a one-time "zero tolerance" policy aimed at Black tourists.

The plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction is the latest court action taken

by the Conway (S.C.) Branch of the NAACP and other African-American tourists since filing the civil rights lawsuit against the city in 2003. In advance of Memorial Day weekend in 2005, the motion for preliminary injunction focuses on the traffic pattern along Ocean Boulevard and asks the court to stop the city from using this restrictive one-

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Anti-tobacco group honors top activists

By Hazel Trice Edney

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (NNPA) - Sixteen percent of Black students in high school are smokers. But community activist Sherri Watson Hyde aims to dent that statistic — and she's recruiting an army to help.

That is the reason that Watson, executive director of the National African-American Tobacco Prevention Network, was honored last week as one of four top honorees during the American Legacy Foundation Honors in New York.

"My greatest focus is to encourage others to join hundreds of thousands of warriors seeking to do the same thing that we're trying to do," Hyde told the audience of about 700 people in the glitzy Cipriani ballroom as she received the Community Activist Award.

"I'm just a mere servant of the people, seeking to secure opportunities for African-Americans and other people of color so that they can live longer and healthier lives," Hyde said.

Though smoking has dropped over the past two decades as a result of health crisis awareness, the statistics from the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention are still disturbing.

About 45,000 African-Americans die from tobacco-related deaths each year. If current smoking patterns of African-Americans continue, an estimated 1.6 million Black people currently under the age of 18 will become regular smokers, and about 500,000 of them will eventually die of a smoking-related disease.

Last year, the American Legacy Foundation awarded a \$4.5 million, three-year grant to a coalition of six national African-American organizations — the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, the NAACP, the National Urban League, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the National Conference of Black Mayors and the National Association of Neighborhoods — to help curb tobacco use among African-Americans.

— More than 4,000 young people try their first cigarette each day. The 16 percent of Black high school students who smoke is a reduction from 22 percent just six years ago, according to the CDC.

— Watson was especially recognized for her work in leading marches and speak-

ing out against the tobacco industry's marketing of flavored cigarettes, which appear to target Black youth.

The anti-tobacco movement appears to be at full scale. Amidst a snowstorm that intensified toward evening, hundreds packed the ballroom at the Black tie affair, celebrating the victories in the deeply emotional cause.

The awards event themed, "They're Making it Happen," drew anti-tobacco advocates from around the nation, including actress Cicely Tyson, former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and 1984 Democratic vice presidential candidate, Geraldine Ferraro.

The festive awards gala, in its second year, belied the tragic statistics.

"Tobacco use kills 1,200 Americans every day and 450,000 every year. More people die from tobacco-related diseases than from AIDS, alcohol use, drugs, fires, car accidents, murders and suicides combined," says Cheryl G. Heaton, president and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation.

"It is the nation's leading preventable cause of death as the tobacco industry spends \$24 million every day to advertise and promote its

lethal and addictive products."

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg received the Public Service Award for going against the grain to outlaw smoking in restaurants, bars and clubs in New York, which not only saved workers from the dangers of second-hand smoke from the cigarettes of others, but led to an 11 percent drop in cigarette smoking in New York.

"No person should needlessly have to put their life on the line just to earn a living," Bloomberg said to applause.

The Corporate Leadership Award went to Novartis Consumer Health for its Novartis nicotine patch that has been credited for helping nine million people to stop smoking. The Progress in Media Award went to Time Inc. for helping Legacy to reach a national audience in its educational and awareness campaigns, including the foundation's Circle of Friends program, which promotes people helping those close to them to stop smoking.

Brian J. McNamara, senior vice president for Novartis and Jack Haire, executive vice president for Time Inc., received the awards.

Cities, states eye halt to genocide

By Zenitha Prince

Special to Sentinel-Voice

BALTIMORE (NNPA) - The U.S. campaign to end genocide in Darfur, Sudan, is quietly forging ahead from the streets to statehouses nationwide, campaign leaders said.

"We're moving ahead," said Joe Madison, radio host and co-leader of the Sudan Campaign.

The world's attention on the continued massacring of ethnic Africans in Darfur was largely washed away by a swollen tide of media coverage of the tsunami disaster in Asia.

"It was unfortunate, but it's just the way society is, especially when there are a lot of White Europeans involved," Madison said.

But unlike the Asian tsunami, which was a force of nature and, thus, unavoidable, Madison continued, "The Sudan 'tsunami' was done by man: [thus], one, it could have been prevented; and two, it could be stopped."

The coalition was largely responsible, along with the Congressional Black Caucus, for prodding both the Congress and the White House to label the systematic killing of Black Africans of the Fur, Zhabawa and Masalit tribes as genocide and to get involved in the conflict between the Sudanese government, its cohort, the Janjaweed militia and Black rebels.

Now, they have ramped up their agenda, with several lawmakers introducing measures in legislatures in New Jersey, California, Illinois and Maryland to divest about \$91 billion in U.S. pension and retirement funds from 83 publicly traded companies with holdings in oil-rich Sudan. The strategy was successfully used against the South African government during its days of apartheid, and activists feel it can be effective again.

"There has been no hesitation," Madison said, of the legislation's reception in New Jersey, where bills were first introduced.

"In both [House and Senate] hearings received a majority vote and bipartisan support." The campaign's work continues amidst the resolution of another situation it was involved in — the 21-year civil war between Sudan's Muslim North and Christian South, which has left about 1.5 million people dead.

Even that good news is overshadowed, however, by the continuing attacks on civilians in Darfur. United Nations officials say the agreement's success may hinge on the culmination of that conflict.

The mayhem in this southwestern state erupted two years ago when the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and the Justice and Equality Movement staged an uprising to force the government to give Black Darfurians

(See *Darfur*, Page 12)

Second Baptist Church
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with the Vesper Choir under the
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University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff

Sunday, March 20th

8 am and 11 am Services

Rev. Lloyd Hall, Jr.

Gethsemane Baptist Church
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500 West Madison

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Rev. Jesse Scott at 648-6155