

# Economic reciprocity practiced at D.C. event

By Tonya B. Lewis

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — It's a well-known fact that the dollar barely circulates in the Black community. In fact, on average, the dollar stays in the Black community for one transaction. However, for one weekend in Washington, D.C., the dollar circulated and circulated at the Millions More Movement.

African-American vendors roamed the Washington Mall selling commemorative buttons, tee-shirts, art and incense, along with African-American culture and consciousness. For one vendor,

his presence at this year's march is evidence of the progress of the Million Man March 10 years earlier.

One example, Abdullah Brooks, who has attended every march in Washington for the past decade, was inspired by Minister Louis Farrakhan and the inaugural march to be the entrepreneur he longed to be. He started Alfa Unlimited, an art gallery specializing in "historic fine arts," and hasn't looked back since. Surrounded by a large crowd and laminated images of Muhammad Ali, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,

Brooks said he took up the call to change his life and his community.

"What motivated me to open the art gallery was the Million Man March," said Brooks. "I know the importance of images and the negative images that they throw at us all the time. I felt that I could do my part in counteracting that with the positive images of history. I decided to bring my photos out here so that we can have positive images in our home, which is really important. That's my purpose for opening up the shop."

At the Millions More

Movement Farrakhan pointed out the economic power of African-Americans, especially when applied to producing an event of such magnitude.

"We didn't ask any White philanthropists to give us their money so that they may tell us who could speak and who could not," said Farrakhan. "Everything that you see in front of you and around you is paid for by the hard work of those who support the Millions More Movement."

Andy Nicolas, a Yonkers, N.Y., native, wanted to make a bold statement at the Millions More Movement on behalf of Hurricane Katrina's victim. He used his brain and business sense to create one of the hottest selling products at the march. He designed and sold tee-shirts featuring the images of President George W. Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Michael Chertoff of Homeland Security and Michael Brown of FEMA with a caption that read: "Wanted for New Orleans Genocide."

Nicolas said the tee-shirt was his way of calling attention to the inadequate response of the government in

the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

"It took the people four or five days to get into their own backyard. It happened right here in America," said Nicolas. "There's no reason in the world that it should have taken that long. They should have been out there the very next morning. I was really upset."

Defying police orders, Nicolas continued to sell his tee-shirts without a permit, but he said it wasn't about money, but about making people remember that African-Americans suffered at the hands of Katrina and the government.

"People are starting to forget about it," said Nicolas. "I think people still need to talk about it. I see it fading away slowly but surely. I don't want it to fade away. I get angry talking about it."

Tee-shirts and art dedicated in honor of African-Americans or remembrance of atrocities suffered are increasing in Brooks' opinion. He said he has seen the decline and now increase of cultural awareness and consciousness in the Black community.

"Blacks are getting so-

cially aware, more conscious," said the 51-year-old Washington, D.C., native. "I was at the Poor People's march. I was a little guy, but I was there. At that time, Blacks were very socially conscious when I was a kid," he said. "We kind of lost it. But now, with all the events that have been happening, like with Katrina and the Bush era, it's sort of waking us back up and getting us back into unity."

Farrakhan commented on that unity.

"The most important thing that has happened in our history has happened today," he said. "And, that is, we have seen an unprecedented number of Black leaders of organizations coming together to speak to America and the world with one voice. This has never happened before in our history; that a whole spectrum of Black thought was represented on this stage in front of the Capitol of the United States of America. This tells us that a new day is dawning in America and the world, starting with the unity of the dry bones in the valley."

Tonya B. Lewis writes for the Dallas Weekly.

## Katrina puts La. jobless mark at levels from '80s

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Job losses after Hurricane Katrina sent Louisiana's unemployment rate soaring to 11.5 percent, the highest level since the 1980s oil crash, officials said Tuesday.

The state Labor Department said in its monthly report that 234,000 jobs were lost in September — the majority in southeastern Louisiana — after Katrina struck on Aug. 29.

The figures represent only some of the fallout from Katrina, and none of the damage done by Hurricane Rita's foray into Louisiana on Sept. 24.

The September unemployment rate was the highest since January 1987, when Louisiana's economy was reeling from a major oil price crash that led to a deep recession. The jobless rate was 5.8 percent in August and 5.7 percent in September 2004.

Labor officials said in an early estimate last week that 296,365 people were left unemployed by Katrina and Rita. It said that in a seven-week period that stretched into Oc-

tober, it processed 271,846 eligible unemployment claims for Katrina and 24,519 for Rita.

By comparison, there were 12,710 initial claims for unemployment in August and 11,946 in September of last year.

Labor Department officials said the September figures was compiled without key information normally used — household survey information supplied by the Census Bureau. Census officials were unable to compile it in some areas because of mandatory evacuation orders.

Louisiana State University economist Loren Scott said the Louisiana unemployment rate is probably even higher than reported because it is calculated on where a jobless worker files for government benefits.

"We have exported a lot of our unemployment rate to other states," Scott said.

The report also is skewed because the number of employed workers includes those who are not working but are still being paid by their companies, he said.

## Bulge

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pounds through their eight-week, campus-wide fitness challenge.

At Norfolk State, campus health experts will teach students how to gauge their weight by calculating their body-mass index and to chart weight loss through shrinking jean sizes rather than dreaded weigh-ins.

In dining halls, monthly theme nights highlight new kinds of fruits and vegetables, while "PHAT stations" across campus let students check their blood pressure and heart rates.

"All connect going toward the same outcome, which is to improve the fitness of our folks," said Spartan Health Center medical director John Anderson.

They're battling more than just the lure of Burger King and junk food.

For one, Anderson said they're up against decades of cultural traditions that emphasize pigs feet, chitlins and other soul food staples doctors say just aren't healthy.

Combine that with a sense of invincibility and you get students picking fried chicken over veggie burgers, he said.

Being away from home also complicates things, said Lincoln women's center director Michale Rainey.

"Once you come to college, you can pretty much pick and choose what type of food and when you want to eat it," she said. "You can order Domino's at 2 a.m. because you're studying. That's a contributor."

At Norfolk, Carroll can testify. A former runner and volleyball player, the Philadelphia native maintained a size 6 through high school.

Now she's closer to a size 14.

"When I got to college, it went from two meals a day to three meals plus snacks," said Carroll, who estimates that all of her six closest friends are over their ideal weights.

Now she tends to eat on the run, avoiding the square meal and vegetarian options offered in campus cafeterias in favor of grab-and-go sandwiches.

She joined the health challenge in hopes of dropping 30 pounds and reaching her ideal of "thick" — that is, thin, but with the strategic curves once praised in the '90s rap classic "Baby Got Back."

"I'm going into PR, where you need to have... that magazine look," she said. But today she chooses french fries and a fried chicken sandwich.

## Expertise Student of the Month

Charles Young said he believes he was chosen as the Student of the Month because he is persistent and "brings a certain light to the school." After his December graduation, the 19-year-old Hair Design Student plans to work in a family salon while continuing to train and hone his skills. "I have to thank my Mom and the rest of my family for investing in my career related dream." Young's ultimate goal is to become a platform artist, where he will demonstrate hair styling designs and techniques on stage. "It's a lot you can do with hair and your imagination," he said. He already has a client base, and has become well known for his shampoos and scalp massages. However, his specialty is flat ironing. "This is a great school and a great career choice... if you want it, you can achieve it... but you must be persistent and work hard. In the end, you'll find that your sacrifices were worth it."



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