

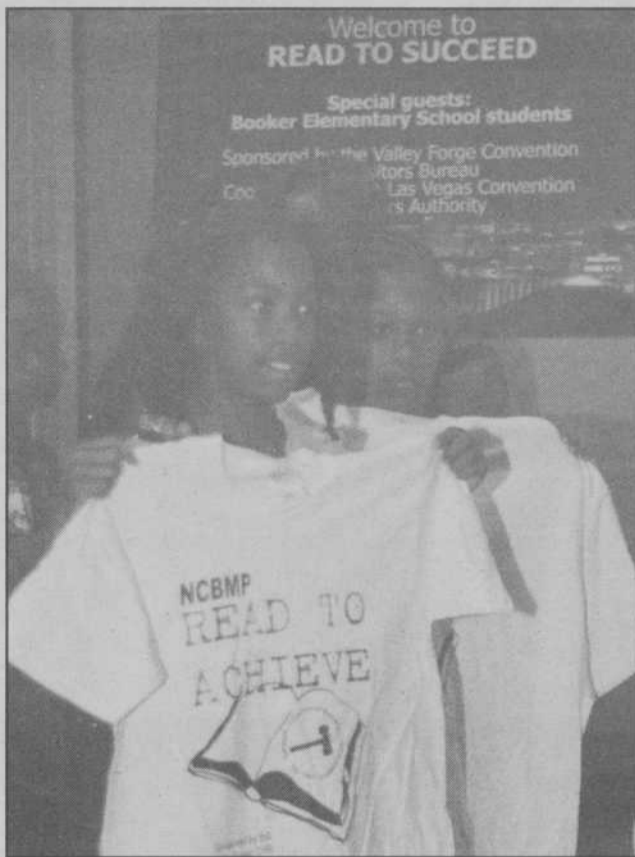
Read

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to be able to experience what tourists support."

Valley Forge Director of Convention Sales David P. Bradley said, "It's all about community outreach, giving back. We are merely meeting planners. We sponsor events and have the funds necessary to do so. Why not spend money on a good cause, if we're going to spend it. However, this day is not about how much money any of us has donated, but more about these children, Chairman Richard Snow, and all the work that he does and has done with the NCBMP."

Bradley has helped sponsor and facilitate a number of other activities throughout the country, including his volunteer work at the Ronald McDonald House and the painting of orphanages in many other states. "It beats leaving the golf course with sore muscles," he said. "It just feels good... it feels natural to help others."

Kermit R. Booker Elementary School is located at 2277 Martin Luther King Boulevard, but classes are temporarily housed on the campus of Wendell P. Williams on J Street and Madison Avenue, due to a renovation project that will increase the capacity of the building from 400 to 600 students, grades K through 5.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Booker students hold shirts that say: "Read to Achieve."

Booker students are being taught in portable units referred to on campus as "learning cottages" until the re-opening of the elementary school next school year, according to Mathis.

Amenities were extended to the students at the event from gifts and snacks to books and other major gifts for their families.

"In every city we visit, we spend money in the surrounding communities. We

do something meaningful, something memorable," said Snow. "We just want the children to learn, have fun, and enjoy themselves."

The meeting planners' organization was established in 1983. According to its website at NCBMP.com, the group's mission is to increase quality and improve members' skills at management of meetings, conferences, exhibitions and convocations. The membership includes meeting planners from various business, civil rights, church and fraternal organizations. Since its founding, NCBMP has made a significant impact in the hospitality community by identifying the sizable purchasing power

Democrats

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of. If you're American, that's your platform," said Clyburn. "Blue Dogs — I can't imagine the Blue Dogs being against raising minimum wage, I can't imagine the Blue Dogs being against having health care more accessible. Are you telling me that the Blue Dogs are against making education more affordable? I don't think so. It's a Blue Dog message. It's a yellow dog message. It's a Hispanic Caucus message. It's a Congressional Black Caucus message. I think that this is a message that every one of our caucuses can buy into."

James Clyburn (D-S.C.) will go from chair of the Democratic Caucus to House Majority Whip — the person largely responsible for unifying the party, galvanizing and managing the votes, and attempting to explain legislation in a way that is palatable to opponents.

Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Mel Watt (D-N.C.), also a member of Judiciary, says his first priority will be raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25. "I think if you look at that platform, I think it's an African-American platform; it's a White-American platform, that is any hyphenated-American that you can think

and impact of the African-American convention.

"This won't be the last event we hold and, hopefully,

AFL-CIO

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now from school at the drop of a hat through zero-tolerance programs; we have disinvested in mental health care, so when they have substance abuse problems or other types of challenges, from the standpoint of behavior and mental health, they go to jail instead of to treatment. We're warehousing our young people in jails where they learn to be criminals. That is wrong," she said.

The Dellums Commission, which is chaired by former Congressman and Mayor-elect of Oakland, Calif., Ronald V. Dellums, was formed by the Health Policy Institute to analyze policies that affect young men of color and to develop action plans to improve their lives. The commission members, Christopher said, come from a variety of backgrounds.

"We didn't just fill it with thinkers and analysts. We filled it with judges and legislators and superintendents of schools and psychiatrists — people who live with these populations and treat them and understand something's got to be done."

Increasing the minimum wage; extending healthcare coverage to all uninsured children through the age of 18 who aren't covered by state programs; repealing mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related crimes were among some of

it won't be the last we have here in Las Vegas," said Snow. "We visit a lot of cities, and we thank the Las

the commission's recommendations.

Helen Kanovsky, Chief Operating Officer AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, said the AFL-CIO is equally excited about the new initiative, and has been successful in similar ventures. To date, Kanovsky said the AFL-CIO has provided job skills and apprenticeship programs for years and spends more than \$500 million annually for programs at 2,000 training centers across the country.

"They (the commission) talked with a large number of corporations as well, but it was labor that stepped up first. Labor stepped up and said: we hear what you say; we've read your report; we agree and we're here to help; and here's what we propose as our first step with you in implementing some of your recommendations," Kanovsky said.

The organization was among many, including the Congressional Black Caucus that received advanced copies of the commission's report.

Christopher said the CBC was responsive to the recommendations and vowed to share them with other legislators.

For the AFL-CIO program, Kanovsky said the organization wanted to do a more comprehensive program with not only job training, but job placement and mentoring programs, too.

Vegas Visitors Authority for making this a memorable trip for us so that we could make this workshop a memorable one for these children."

"It's on-the-job training, apprenticeship, distance learning — we have a significant role for the national labor college — this includes setting up an e-learning center with satellite facilities," she said.

"The plan is to create something we call an anchor facility, which is a physical center to all of this; where there is a place for community partnerships for labor, for business, for media for mentoring. We've talked to a number of people in the sports world who are interested in participating in the mentoring piece."

Kanovsky said New Orleans was an obvious choice for the location of the pilot program, especially with the rebuilding efforts that will allow the young men hands-on experience on construction sites doing a range of skillful jobs as electricians or bricklayers.

Currently, the AFL-CIO is scouting buildings for the "anchor facility" and a date has not been set for the opening, but Kanovsky said the location of the facility is expected to be decided in the coming months.

"It really builds on the kinds of things the labor movement has done for a long time, which is find a way to take people, give them a skill set and put them on the road to a middle-class economic life," she said of the new initiative.

Panther

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plane. "I was a soldier in the war for Black liberation," he said.

A decade ago, Times Books published his memoirs, "Long Time Gone," which told of his coming of age on Oakland's streets and of joining the Black Panthers when he was 37, rising to become a bodyguard for leader Eldridge Cleaver.

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in October 1966 in Oakland, by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton. They called for an end to police brutality in the Black community, and carried guns as they patrolled the city documenting police behavior.

In his book, Brent chronicled a July 1968 police shootout in which two police officers were critically wounded. Cleaver ordered him kicked out of the revolutionary group.

To avoid trial the following year, Brent used a .38-caliber handgun to hijack the plane to Cuba, where he believed he would be treated sympathetically as a militant Black leftist. None of the 76 people aboard the Boeing 707 was harmed.

He also told of stepping off the plane in Cuba to be immediately hustled away by Cuban police.

Although never formally convicted, he spent 22 months in an immigration jail while Cuban authorities tried to figure out what to do with him. Eventually, they let him stay to live out his exile. Brent earned a Spanish literature degree from the University of Havana and taught English at junior and senior high schools, but he never became a Cuban citizen.

"I am an American, an African-American, a Black man," he said in the 1996 interview with the AP. "And my fight was always in the United States."

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