

# March set for victim of torture

**By Cash Michaels**  
*Special to Sentinel-Voice*  
(NNPA) - Promising "busloads" of supporters and demonstrators from across the nation to protest the absence of hate crime charges in the alleged month-long rape and torture of a young Black woman, attorney Malik Shabazz of the Washington D.C.-based Black Lawyers for Justice says a national march and rally is planned for Charleston, W.V., for Saturday, Nov 3.

The primary organizers for the march are Black Lawyers for Justice, or BLFJ, and the Support Committee for Megan Williams. This march will be endorsed by at least 100 Black organizations, student groups, clergy, and other community leaders.

Charleston was chosen because the state capital and federal courthouse are located there, organizers said.

So far, Logan County prosecutors have resisted adding either state or federal hate crime charges to the long litany of first-degree criminal offenses the six White career criminals — three of whom are women — are charged with in their alleged abduction and torture of Megan Williams, 20.

The six suspects, Frankie Lee Brewster, 49; her son, Bobby Ray, 24, who authorities believe had some sort of relationship with the alleged victim; Danny Combs, 20; George Messer, 27; Karen Burton, 46, and her daughter Alisha, 22 — all of whom have collectively racked up 108 criminal charges since 1991 — the most serious being first-degree murder — are charged with kidnapping and at least one count each of first-degree sexual assault, among other charges.

The prosecutors' argue that so much has to be done to make sure their evidence is solid and airtight against each of the six, that state hate crime charges, which carry a maximum of 10 years in prison, could be considered much later on, if at all.

Making sure that all six defendants are convicted for kidnapping, which could send each to prison for life, in addition to first-degree sexual assault, which could add an additional 35 years behind bars, is their top priority.

Two weeks ago, Logan County prosecutor Brian Abraham said hate crime charges would be "difficult" to prove because there is evi-

dence that Megan Williams had a "social relationship" with one of her alleged captors, Bobby Brewster, for several months before.

In fact, Brewster had been in jail from July 18 until August 2 on a domestic abuse charge against Williams.

Federal authorities have ceded the case to the state, so no charges are expected from them.

Black activists like Shabazz, the Nation of Islam and the New Black Panther Party, among others, believe that the allegations of beating, stabbing, strangling with a cable, being raped at knifepoint; having scalding hot water poured on her, being made to eat dog and rat feces; forced to drink urine from a toilet, perform oral sex, lick up her own blood and being threatened with death, all the while being told, "This is what we do to niggers around here," should be clear evidence that Megan Williams was targeted primarily because she is Black.

Indeed, activists say, Williams' own words to Logan County Sheriff's investigators on Sept. 8 — the day she was rescued by deputies from the broken-down mobile home trailer she was being

held prisoner in after they were tipped off — provided the justification for a hate crime.

"They said it was because I was colored," Williams is quoted in a written statement to authorities. "They said they don't like Black people, and they said they were going to hang me."

The young, mentally challenged woman added that her alleged captors were usually high on drugs or alcohol when they tortured her.

"It is obvious that this is one of the most sick, horrific, sadistic and evil hate crimes that has ever occurred in U.S. history," Shabazz, who is legally advising Williams and her family, told reporters during a recent press conference in which he demanded that federal and state hate crimes charges be rendered.

"The number of outright hate crimes and injustice cases against Blacks is rising so rapidly it's hard for our office to keep track," Shabazz continued on the BLFJ website. "We are calling for every concerned person in our community to respond to this national crisis with vigor and due diligence. The November 3 March in

(See March, Page 11)

# Obama: Fire man for insensitivity

WASHINGTON (AP) - Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama said recently that the head of the Justice Department's voting rights division should be fired for saying voter ID laws hurt the elderly but aren't a problem for minorities because they often die before old age.

John Tanner's remarks came during an Oct. 5 panel discussion on minority voters before the National Latino Congress in Los Angeles. Tanner addressed state laws that require photo identification for voting, saying that elderly voters disproportionately don't have the proper IDs.

"That's a shame, you know, creating problems for elderly persons just is not good under any circumstance," Tanner said, according to video posted on YouTube.

"Of course, that also ties into the racial aspect because our society is such that minorities don't become elderly the way White people do. They die first.

"There are inequities in healthcare. There are a variety of inequities in this country, and so anything that disproportionately impacts the elderly has the opposite impact on minorities. Just the math is such as that," Tanner said.

Tanner declined a request for an interview Friday to explain his remarks.

Justice Department spokesman Erik Ablin said Tanner had worked for the department's voting section since 1976, the last two years as its chief. Tanner's tenure also includes a stint in the White House counsel's office during the Clinton administration.

"Mr. Tanner is an attorney who works to protect civil rights on a daily basis," Ablin said, adding that the official had won numerous awards from African-American groups. "Nothing in his comments deviated from his firm commitment to enforce the law, and it is unfortunate that they have been so grossly misconstrued."

(See Comment, Page 4)

# Cartoon, threat reopens rifts on race at Kentucky campus

LEXINGTON, Ky. (AP) - A Southern university is trying to defend its image after the student newspaper published a cartoon of a Black man being sold at auction and a racist death threat was scribbled on the door of a Black student leader's dorm room.

Earlier this month, the cartoon in the University of Kentucky's newspaper, the *Kernel*, sparked peaceful protests around campus. It showed a Black student, bare-chested and chained, being auctioned off among three fictional fraternities: Aryan Omega, Kappa Kappa Kappa and Alpha Caucasian.

Just when the furor was starting to die down, a junior recently elected as "Mr. Black" University of Ken-

tucky" returned to his residence hall to find his door vandalized with the message: "Die," followed by a racial slur.

University officials condemned the cartoon and the threat, and President Lee Todd spoke Thursday to the state's Commission on Human Rights, which held a special meeting on campus to address the incidents.

"They were ugly and should not have happened," Todd said.

Todd insists the school had started to make significant progress in race relations. Black enrollment on the campus broke a record this year, and the school retained Black students at a higher rate than their White classmates.

Yet Josh Watkins, the student whose door was vandalized, and Black leaders contend the university might not have advanced quite as far as enrollment suggests.

"It's a history of segregation," Watkins said. "In the day and age we live in, you would think people would try to improve that image. It's almost like you can bait someone to get here and then leave them out to pasture to fend for themselves."

Kentucky, a border state during the Civil War, wasn't as slow to desegregate as some universities in the Deep South, although it took a lawsuit for the first graduate student to be admitted in 1949. Black undergraduates arrived five years later.

(See Racism, Page 4)

# Rally

(Continued from Page 1)

arrested. They can go out there and do things for kids to prevent them from getting in trouble with the criminal justice system," Johnson said.

Non-Blacks were also welcome, but organizers stressed the need for the Black community to solve its own problems. Most of the victims of gun violence in the city are

Black.

"I grew up in the streets. I don't want my son to be subjected to the same thing," said resident Christopher Norris, 34, who brought his 15-year-old son, Isaiah Saunders, to the event. "I want to keep him on the right track and let him know there are more opportunities out there, and he doesn't have to resort to violence," Norris said.

Follow the Rainbow to...

# Good Health!



When your family counts on you to stay healthy, you can count on Rainbow Medical Centers' board certified family physicians to provide the highest quality of primary and urgent care services. Our facilities offer lab, x-ray, and are open evenings and weekends for your convenience. Rainbow Medical Centers has also been awarded Joint Commission Accreditation (JCAHO) for maintaining national standards of quality healthcare.



Track your health at  
**My Health Zone**  
You'll find it at...  
[www.rainbowmedical.com](http://www.rainbowmedical.com)



**RAINBOW**  
Medical Centers

**PRIMARY & URGENT CARE**



Board Certified Physicians  
Most Insurances Accepted

West  
255-6657  
1341 S. Rainbow Blvd.

East  
438-4003  
821 N. Nellis Blvd.

North  
655-0550  
4920 Lone Mtn. Rd.

Rampart  
254-9192  
8522 Del Webb Blvd.

Galleria  
436-5800  
1397 Galleria Dr.

Golden Triangle  
657-9555  
1302 W. Craig Rd.

Boulder Hwy  
898-1405  
4241 S. Nellis Blvd.