

NATIONAL BRIEFS

STATE OF THE BLACK WORLD CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS (NNPA) - The Institute of the Black World 21st Century, under the leadership of veteran social and political activist Dr. Ron Daniels, recently announced plans to convene the Second State of the Black World Conference (SOBWC) in New Orleans, November 19-23, 2008. Centered on the theme "Return to the Source, Restoring Family, Rebuilding Community, Renewing the Struggle," a major goal of the conference is to focus national and international attention on New Orleans and the Gulf in support of the right to return of evacuees/displaced persons and their heroic struggle to reclaim and rebuild their homes and neighborhoods. Accordingly, the organizers of SOBWC hope to attract some 3,000 people from Black communities across the United States and people of African descent communities in Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe and Africa. SOBWC will also present a leadership award to Michael Baisdan for his galvanizing work on the Jena 6 case and a Lifetime Achievement Award to Rev. Jeremiah Wright for his courageous and visionary leadership as an apostle of liberation theology. For further information, call: 1-888-774-2921 or email sobwc@ibw21.org.

VALEDICTORIAN MAKES MOREHOUSE COLLEGE HISTORY

ATLANTA — When seniors at historically Black Morehouse College graduate on Sunday, Joshua Packwood will be the first White student to give the valedictorian address in the campus' 141-year history. Packwood, a 22-year-old Missourian who will graduate with a 4.0 GPA and a degree in economics, said that he is happy that he chose Morehouse over such universities as Columbia, Yale and Stanford. "I've been forced to see the world in a different perspective, that I don't think I could've gotten anywhere else," said Packwood, who was a Rhodes Scholar finalist. "None of the Ivies, no matter how large their enrollment is, no matter how many Nobel laureates they have on their faculty...none of them could've provided me with the perspective I have now. I've been here for four years and yet, I cannot give you the definition of Black. I cannot tell you what a Black man is. I really learned to look much deeper. It takes a lot of effort to know people," said Packwood.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Sidney A. Ribeau, Ph.D., has been named President of Howard University. He was the unanimous choice of the University's Trustees and becomes the 16th president of the historically Black institution. "I am excited by the opportunity to serve this historic institution," said Dr. Ribeau. "Howard is a remarkable university, a truly international university and one that has made significant contributions not only in this country but around the world, training principally African-Americans for global leadership roles in America and the world." Gen. Colin L. Powell, U.S. Army (Ret.) said, "The search committee was very impressed with Dr. Ribeau's credentials and his reputation as a facilitator of change and collegial leader. He is a charismatic executive who works effectively inside and outside the institution he heads." Prior to coming to Howard, Dr. Ribeau was president of Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio, for 13 years.

NATIONAL BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LAUNCHES NEW CHAPTER

PARIS France (NNPA) — The National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc., the largest Black business association in the world, has launched its newly established Paris affiliate. The French African Diaspora Chamber of Commerce has evolved from a study and collaboration of French activists. Its mission will be consistent with the NBCC and together they will create a progressive strategic plan that will develop Black entrepreneurship throughout France and Francophone nations, says Harry C. Alford, NBCC co-founder, president and CEO. "This is quite a milestone. Indeed, it is one of the proudest moments in our 15-year history," said Alford. France has very little business ownership amongst its Black population of approximately 8 million.

Mob death unnerves Cleveland

CLEVELAND (AP) — Even by tough, urban-crime standards it was a grisly attack: Up to 15 people chased a man, then kicked and beat him to death on the street. Before police arrived, one attacker urinated on the victim's head.

When the crime-hardened neighborhood awoke later that morning, two people reported a man lying on the pavement, his clothes being dragged off by his assailants.

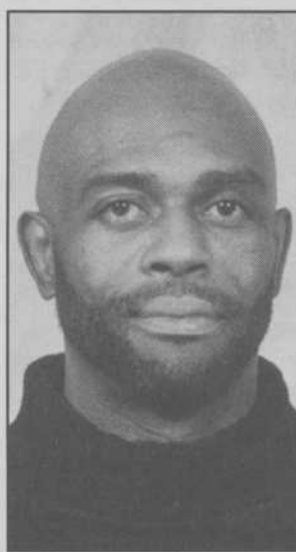
"You got a male being assaulted by 15 other guys. He's laying on the street," one 911 caller said.

The April 27 attack on Charles Gooden Jr. happened in the most murder-ridden neighborhood in one of the nation's poorest cities. But it was also within a 10-minute drive of the city's skyscrapers, sports venues and tourist attractions.

Three suspects have been charged with aggravated murder. Police have not mentioned a motive, but they expect more arrests.

It wasn't always dangerous along East 117th Street, where the tulips bloom late because of the cool winds blowing off Lake Erie just a mile to the north.

"It used to be so quiet, and we were so blessed to live on



Charles Gooden Jr.

117th Street," said Irene Bennett, 78, who has lived there for 40 years. She is so used to gunfire and loud outbursts at night that she slept through the commotion of Gooden's slaying.

In retirement, she and her husband had hoped to enjoy simple pleasures: watching people pass by and planting flowers around their neatly kept home. But the violence in the neighborhood makes that impossible.

"You pay for your home. You work hard. You retire, and you want to enjoy, just come out on your porch and ... wait for the summertime to come," she said, shaking her head.

The attackers sent word that anyone helping police could face retribution, according to City Councilman Kevin Conwell. He described the assailants as gang members.

Conwell said the motive was based on an argument involving a woman and a threat by her cousin against Gooden, 41.

"He went to defend his malehood honor. He hit the cousin in the mouth. When that happened, the other gang members jumped on him," said Conwell, relying on information from police and neighbors.

Charged in the slaying were Latangia Anderson, 23, Johnny Brown, 20, and Paris Moore, 19, all of Cleveland. They were each jailed on \$1 million bond.

None of the three defendants was able to afford an attorney. The lawyers appointed to represent them all said they could not comment on the case.

After the attack, a memorial of stuffed animals took shape outside the Bennett house because the slaying scene doesn't have a tree to anchor the display.

The display has dwindled but still has a stuffed dog with the label "Puppy love"

and another with Gooden's nickname, Bud, written on it, according to Bennett, who knew Gooden when he was a youngster visiting an uncle down the street.

The uncle's house is now boarded up, along with many other neighborhood homes left dilapidated by poverty and drugs. There are a few newly renovated homes and two newer ones, one with barred windows. But in the once-lively commercial district around the corner, most stores are closed, except for a few barbershops or storefront churches.

The neighborhood is Cleveland's murder capital, according to police spokesman Lt. Thomas Stacho, and outsiders driving the streets risk getting pegged as people looking to buy crack cocaine.

Still, Gooden's death unnerved people here, including the 911 callers.

"They're stomping somebody and ripping their clothes off. You need to come," another caller said. "Like 15 of them beating the hell out of him."

The emergency dispatcher asked if an ambulance should be sent. "You better bring a stretcher, too," the caller replied. "Please hurry."

Advocates: U.S. ill prepared for Nov. 4

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Record turnouts at polling places across the nation during the Barack Obama-Hillary Clinton battle for the Democratic nomination have revealed a continuation of serious flaws in America's electoral process that could cause a fiasco Nov. 4, according to a nonpartisan report.

"The report demonstrates that most of the state and county and local election machinery was unprepared for a real heavy turnout," says Barbara Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, a primary partner in the Election Protection Coalition that has manned voter protection hotlines since January. "It really demonstrates that our democracy has deep fault lines and is not being administered well... We are not prepared. We actively count on a low voter turnout and count on voter apathy."

The 15-page, "Election Protection 2008 Primary Report," jointly compiled and

distributed by the Lawyers Committee and the National Campaign for Fair Elections, says lawyers and other volunteers who manned voter question and complaint hotlines over the past five months fielded more than 5,000 calls that include complaints and charges revealing everything from serious mechanical flaws to apparent intentional shenanigans and voter intimidation at the

polls.

Few problems have occurred in affluent areas, but they are mainly happening in low income, Black and Hispanic neighborhoods. Because Black voters typically cast 90 percent of their ballots for Democrats, mishaps at the polls could cause another Election 2000-styled fiasco in the event of a close race between the Democratic nominee and Republican

John McCain.

"Unfortunately, the encouraging story of record turnout has been tempered by voters in each primary reporting they were underserved by the infrastructure that supports the election process," the report states. "While each state had a unique set of issues at the polls, there are some common obstacles that voters

(See Voting, Page 9)

Obama's demonization may continue to election in fall

By Askia Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The demonization of Sen. Barack Obama — who has gone from once being labeled "not Black enough" to being depicted for White voters as being "too Black," seems destined to continue all the way to the November general election.

The campaign of Sen. Hillary Clinton, desperately behind in pledged convention delegates, popular votes, and the numbers of state primary victories, has successfully pinned a "Black militant" image on Sen. Obama, who ironically came to prominence in this campaign when he decisively won early campaign contests in the overwhelmingly White states

of Iowa and New Hampshire.

A poll of Democratic voters conducted by Edison/Mitofsky for the television networks and The Associated Press found that Clinton drew 63 percent of the White vote while Obama drew 90 percent of the Black vote, according to published reports. More strikingly, Adam Nagourney wrote for "Young@Heart," the poll found that 18 percent of Democrats said that race mattered to them in this contest — and just 63 percent of those voters said they would support Obama in a general election.

Clinton's campaign, which unashamedly boasts the support of feminist leaders all over the country, has been able to play both the

(See Demonization, Page 10)