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# THE NORTH LAWNDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

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PROVIDING INFORMATION ON RESOURCES AND EVENTS THAT IMPROVE THE LIFESTYLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

## RENAISSANCE SCHOOLS FUND HOST NEW SCHOOLS EXPO

Zaki A. Muhammad



From left to right Jackie Boughton, Shameka Williams, Robin Johnson, Courtney Francis

On February 9, the Renaissance Schools Fund sponsored a New Schools EXPO that offered the opportunity for parents in Chicago to learn about newly created schools. The expo was held at Williams Multiplex, located at, 2710 S. Dearborn.

CEO Ms. Phyllis Lockett saw it as a day for parents to meet with

representatives of over 40 of the city's elite schools.

In addition to a table for each school, to present information about their campus, there were workshops dealing with educational topics. What Makes A Quality School Moderated by Ms. Lockett with Tim King, Founder and CEO Urban Prep

Academies and Lakita Little Principal of Frazier Preparatory Academy, Ms. Veda Simmons Parent and Ms. Mildred Wiley TAC Liaison is an example of one workshop. It was dedicated to exploring how parents and guardians can go the extra mile in making sure that their children receive a public education that suits their needs.

In talking with Ms. Lockett, she pointed out that the "Charter" school students spend 90 more minutes a day on average participating in academic exercises. "We are competing globally today with China, India. If you want to have any level of success, you have to pursue the best type of education and work hard to be the best." She added each of us has to take leadership more than we have in the past. "We are losing too many of our children and it is up to us to provide them with opportunities by creating models in education that are dramatically different than those that previously existed."

In commenting on how she felt

about the day's event's she responded by saying "Wonderful!"

Parents across Chicago have had the opportunity to seek out information for better schools and they are demanding high quality for their children. I personally am glad to see they have awakened and engaged in the process and am very happy to help."

Parents for School Choice provided a fact sheet that was distributed at the Expo and it included these statistics : 61 percent of CPS high school students are not proficient in reading, 70 percent of CPS high school are proficient not in math and only about half of African-American and Latino CPS students graduate from high school. Only 3 of every 100 African-American and Hispanic males in CPS earn a college degree. New School Performance statistics are better with 91 percent versus 83 percent of CPS. Elementary schools spend 317 minutes/day on core subjects versus 240 minutes/day at

See Expo page 4

## NAVY PIER CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Megan Sieberg



ComEd CEO Frank Clark

During the month of February, people all across the country celebrate Black History Month. It's a time for recognition of the trials and tribulations of African-American history, with an emphasis on the accomplishments of historical African-American figures.

Last Thursday, at Navy Pier, over 400 students and visitors, including four Chicago Public School baseball teams, gathered at the Pier's Crystal Gardens for an educational experience that included valuable lessons from accomplished African-Americans of the past and present, as well as

lessons on the importance of looking to the future.

The first speaker was Frank Clark, President and CEO of ComEd. To begin, Clark established himself as a supporter of Presidential Candidate Barack Obama. Claiming not to bear a political agenda, Clark stated that he merely wanted to point out the importance of Obama's message of change.

"Change is everywhere," he said. "Change is what this society needs."

Clark then reflected on his life

See Pier page 4

## Mexican President Felipe Calderon Visits Chicago Amongst Controversy

James Glover

Mexican President Felipe Calderon was in Chicago Tuesday. This is his first trip to the United States since taking office 14 months ago. The president met with Mayor Daley and Governor Rod Blagojevich.

Calderon visited the Little Village neighborhood, on the city's Southwest Side, to speak Tuesday afternoon. Calderon came to Chicago after first visiting New York and Boston. He was headed next to California.

Calderon wants American lawmakers to let more Mexicans live and work legally in the United States and he has told Mexican consuls here to work harder to promote the positive contributions of immigrants.

The United States and Mexico need to be united to prosper, he told the crowd in Spanish.

"It is not by closing our borders or canceling our commerce treaties that we can prosper together. We want to build bridges because it is bridges not walls that unite people," Calderon said in a quote translated by a Spanish-speaking journalist.

There is a tremendous amount of controversy surrounding President Calderon's visit to the United States. His critics say this is simply a political ploy and question why he did not set up a meeting with President Bush or Congress. However, Little Village residents



Felipe Calderon

were excited to meet the president.

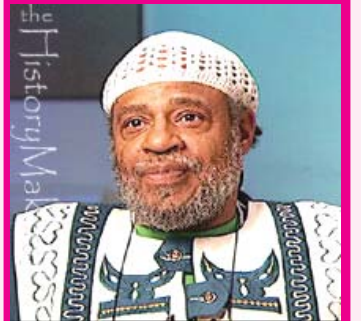
"This seems like a excellent opportunity to talk and really communicate with the man who is leading my family and my country," said Tyler Acevedo, who moved from Mexico almost ten years ago and is now a US Citizen. "Hopefully he can take what he is learning and negotiating here in the United States and put it to valiant use in Mexico so that our loved ones are cared for properly."

Calderon is not leaving Chicago empty handed. He has a deal that will help Mexican restaurant workers and an agreement with the state to strengthen educational ties between Mexico and Illinois.

The City Colleges of Chicago, the Illinois Restaurant Association and Mexican education officials are working together to launch a certification program for restaurant

See Visit page 5

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



**CONRAD WORRILL  
OFFERS INSIGHT  
ABOUT THE BLACK  
VOTE IN  
PRESIDENTIAL RACE  
PAGE - 3**



**STATE REP. FORD  
AND LEAMINGTON  
FOODS TEACH  
NORTH LAWNDALE  
RESIDENTS TO SHOP  
HEALTHIER  
PAGE - 5**

## ALSO INSIDE

**OPEN LETTER TO  
ELECTED OFFICIALS  
PAGE - 3**

**THE N-WORD  
(PART - 1)  
PAGE - 4**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR  
PAGE - 5**

**AT THE FLICKS  
PAGE - 6**

Visit us on our website at [www.nlcen.org](http://www.nlcen.org) for more articles, photos, information and more



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## NLCN 2008 Focus

### **Spirituality & Financial Literacy**

The primary focus for Strategic Human Services and the North Lawndale Community News during 2008 will be Church, Financial Literacy and Technology. There are many problems that face North Lawndale and its neighboring communities. All are the most important to any individual when it is his, her, or their biggest battle.

Many people believe in God. Churches, Synagogues, or Temples are good places, albeit not the only places, to develop a connection. There are many churches on the Westside and in Chicago, with the Faith based Initiatives, they have developed more outreach into the communities with programs and advocacy. We want more people to know that church is a great resource that helps improve the lifestyle of individuals and families.

There is still a great economic inequality. Being financially, unwise and uneducated, has created an uncountable loss for many in our coverage area.

The National Black Caucus of States Institute.(NBCSI) recognizes that while personal finance is important to everyone—lack of personal financial knowledge, increased debt and access to financial services has had a negatively disproportional impact on families—particularly African American families with limited resources.

Data indicate the overwhelming gap of economic resources as African Americans lag in home and business ownership, lack of savings accounts and lower credit scores.

There are alarming statistics that help frame these concerns:

- According to the Corporation for Enterprise Development 60% of African American families have zero or negative net financial assets.

- The average Black household has 54 cents of income and 12 cents of wealth for every dollar earned and held by whites.

- In the United States, 10% of the families control 90 % of financial wealth.

- A consumer with a low credit score of 560 compared to a consumer with a high credit score of 720 will pay approximately \$400 a month more or \$4,800 more a year—if they qualify for a loan.

- A disproportionate number of low credit scores are found in predominantly African American communities.

If there is going to be long-term improvement in this situation, NBCSI believes that it will begin with economic

Education. From the Economic Empower Forums of the National Black Caucus of States Institute website. [www.nbcsi.org](http://www.nbcsi.org)

SHS believes becoming financially literate can help solve the challenges above, and others, while also helping to create a better community for all.

We also will continue using technology to help educate, connect you to these resources. Throughout the year, we will connect you with resources and residents working in these areas. Check out our website and links such as the Lawndale Beehive. NLCN will continue to provide news and information on issues and events that are relevant to our readers, as well as touch on the focus of our previous years. By becoming a God connected, financially wise people, knowing, loving and caring about each other more, we can more participate and benefit in making our communities model neighborhoods. We hope by reading this community newspaper, you will become or remain inspired to keep moving forward to a better life wisely, overcoming adversity.

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The North Lawndale Community News is now published weekly by Strategic Human Services. Our purpose is to help inform our community on resources, events, and issues relevant to them and our neighboring communities. Our community includes those who live, work, worship in, and/or care about North Lawndale. Our focus is on positive, productive solutions, that will improve the lifestyle of our community members.

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# CONRAD WORRILL OFFERS INSIGHT ABOUT THE BLACK VOTE IN PRESIDENTIAL RACE

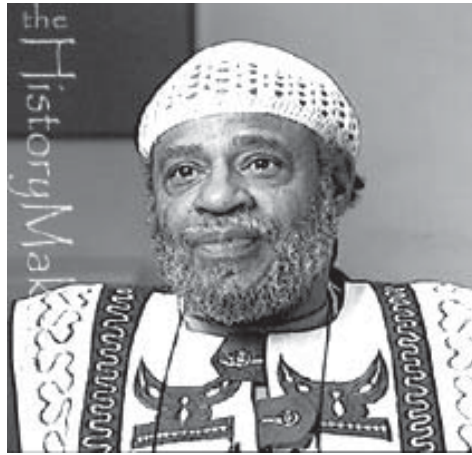
Veronica Harrison

Barack Obama: Not the first black person to run for the US presidential seat. In fact, Shirley Chisholm, a member of Congress, was the first black woman to run for US president in 1972. Jesse Jackson's name then appeared on the US presidential ballot in 1984 and 1988. So what is it about a black man running for the 2008 presidential seat that has everyone on their toes? Could it be that this time the *black* man has a real chance to win the election?

"The battle of the black vote has been a bloody struggle," said Conrad Worrill, an expert in African-American history, politics and culture. Worrill is the director of the Jacob Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University and a professor of History and Education. He also writes "Worrill's World," a famous weekly column in African-American newspapers across the entire country.

On February 3, 1870, the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment allowed the right of citizens of the United States to vote without being denied due to their race. Worrill believes that historical strides like the ratification of the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment greatly influence the evolution of the African-American vote in the US and its impact on the current 2008 presidential election.

Born August 15, 1941 in Pasadena, California, Worrill grew up the eldest of two brothers. His mother and father stressed black community life. These early teachings shaped him into the individual he is today and influenced his thoughts toward blacks and their roles in American politics.



Conrad Worrill

In regards to black history, Worrill suggested that he "lived through it." According to him, black people have a strong influence on American politics and this influence has caused Barack Obama to spark an evolutionary, groundbreaking political change in America. Black people are now at a place where they believe that, finally, they have the chance to create change.

"Black people have always been ready for change," said Worrill.

The argument that this election is not centered on race is not true to Worrill. In his opinion, it is about race. The fact that the 2008 presidential seat is centered on the black race has empowered the black community, especially the younger generation. Obama's campaign has fired up the young black generation, and the young white generation has been impacted by this same fire.

Former President Bill Clinton has been said to be "the first black president." He was highly favored and supported in the black community. In fact, following his scandal involving Monica Lewinsky, the black community gave him great support.

According to Worrill, Clinton was not the first black president and he thinks that the fact that the black community thinks this is absolutely ludicrous. However, the belief that Clinton was considered the first black president greatly supports his wife, Senator Hillary Clinton, and her vote in the black community.

Worrill described the 2008 presidential election as a "parallel historical phenomena staring us in the face."

For the first time in history, a black man and a woman are running neck and neck for the presidential seat. Needless to say, this is history in the making.

So, how has the African American vote evolved? Well, the black community is getting involved and exercising their right to vote in a way that has never been seen before.

"Anything that we do as a people is an impact on the world," said Worrill.

Worrill encourages the black community to stick together and fight to better our people. He lives by the motto stating that "the struggle is protracted."

"This means that the struggle is ongoing," he said. "(Black people) never give up no matter what the cause."

Veronica Harrison is a journalism student at Columbia College. To comment on this article visit our weblog at: [www.nlcn.org/](http://www.nlcn.org/)

## Letter to the Editor

*An Open Letter to Congressman Danny K. Davis, Senator Rickey Hendon, Representative Arthur L. Turner, Commissioner Robert Steele, Alderman Sharon Denise Dixon and Alderman Ricardo Munoz*

Dear Elected Officials:

The Lawndale Alliance needs your assistance on pushing for TIF reform on the proposed Ogden/Pulaski TIF. As you may recall, Alderman Dixon (24) and Alderman Munoz (22) promised to put in place an Advisory Council and a framework within which to negotiate community benefit agreements by the end of November, 2007. These measures protect the interests of current residents, while encouraging balanced community development. For whatever reason, this has not yet happened. Perhaps Alderman Dixon and Alderman Munoz may be waiting to create the council when the TIF passes in the City Council, which we feel will be too little too late. If community input is not in the Redevelopment Plan, it will not be included in the ordinance that will govern the TIF. Instead, we would be forced to rely upon verbal promises that may or may not materialize for a number of reasons. Given past experiences, we really don't want to take that chance.

You may be aware that the Lawndale Alliance found a number of errors and omissions when the first Redevelopment Plan was presented to the community. The errors included the list of Properties Potentially Displaced, which included a significant number of homes that had been substantially improved by their owners, including Alderman Dixon's property. In

See Officials page 7

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## The N-Word: Part 1

Julius Goodman

Why is there so much conversation concerning the new connotation called the N-word. Of course we know what it means, or do we? It seems now we as blacks or whoever the powers that be; are discussing who we are in words and these words (Niger, Nigger, Negro, Colored, Afro-American, African American, and now N-Word) have been in existence since slavery, before slavery, and after slavery.

There always seems to be somebody or some other ethnic group (including black folk) discussing who we are or shall I say who black folks are. Now we are involved in the discussions concerning the N-Word. Now our opinions about who we are seemed to matter, or do they? There is so much talk from different facets of society; it seems again to be just rhetoric. Have we, as black folk progressed? Do we have a choice to use the word? If so, is it positive when we use it or does it depend on the circumstances? Do we like it or not. Whom does it affect? How and when should it be used? Should the N-Word be used at all? If not the N-Word than what word, are we African Americans or are we the N-Word?

Now the N-word is big news or shall I say bigger news than "African American". I wonder if it has anything to do with the fact that now there is a black man actually making a legitimate run for the job of president of the United States. Not to say that any other time a black person ran for president it was not a legitimate run but I believe if all N-words vote he can win. Do we have the power to get rid of every negative connotation surrounding the N-Word? Can we eliminate every word and every reference to the N-Word? Should we even try? The N-word refers to the word Nigger. A word that; when used in a certain context, refers to a race of people whose ancestors were slaves.

"The N-Word, if used in a derogatory manner;

it is negative but if you are using it in an educational discussion than it should be permissive to use by anybody in that discussion and the person who is using the word should be sensitive to the audience," said K Jenkins.

Here we should understand that if you are in a teaching or learning situation, and the subject is history, clearly the teacher should use the word itself, Nigger, without fear of any kind of negative reprisals or undertones.

The N-Word could have would have been abolished many years ago if our so call black activist's leaders and civil rights workers, (especially those who came to be politicians and started to get money and grants from the white establishment) came back to the community with the truth. The truth as it tells us that just because someone calls you a name that does not mean you should act like it. Instead the majority of them came back to the community preaching there own agenda under the disguise of "Uncle Tom" and "Jim Crow". They said they were so concerned about our freedom and yet they continued to perpetuate, if not the word nigger, surly the concept of the word nigger and none said anything nationally or locally and they did nothing to protest its use as the media kept perpetuating its usage and meaning to further instill its negative connotations on us and our children, and our grandchildren.

We must eliminate the last visages of slavery in our lives by reinstituting our morals and values along with dignity and self respect. This is part 1 of a series. Please see the next issue and read the comments of the community.

*Julius Goodman is poet and motivational speaker. He is also a graduate from National Louis University with a degree in Behavioral Science. To comment on this article visit our weblog at: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).*

## Congratulations to HARRIS DEVELOPMENT February Business of the Month



Archie Harris Jr.

North Lawndale Community News and Harris Bank are proud to honor Harris Development (Low-cost Construction) as North Lawndale's Small Business of the Month for February.

Harris Development offers low cost construction that includes: Drywall, Interior Demolition, Decks, Electrical, Porches, Concrete repair, Wood Fencing and other home improvements projects for home, or offices. An agent for change is one way to describe Archie Harris, Jr., an enterprising young man whose five-year-old business Harris Development is making a difference in the North Lawndale community.

To read the full version of this article see the North Lawndale Community News February 7, 2008 issue.

## Pier from front page

to prove to students the importance of believing in themselves, working hard and investing in themselves. In doing so, he believes the next generation of black leaders will be equipped to make the changes he advocates.

"You can do more, you can do it better, and you can do it faster," he said.

After working in a book store as a young man, Clark was inspired by his wife to seek employment at ComEd, where he initially worked in the mail room. Although not happy with his position, and several positions he held thereafter, Clark emphasized that his success has been, in part, due to his willingness to perform jobs he did not like.

"Every job I did at ComEd was not a job I wanted to do," he said. "But, I always did my best."

Since joining ComEd in 1966, Clark has risen steadily through the ranks, holding positions in corporate policy, support and line functions. He is currently responsible for overseeing ComEd in its mission to service approximately 3.8 million customers throughout northern Illinois.

The next keynote speaker was jazz musician and composer, Orbert Davis. Davis is one of Chicago's most prominent trumpet



Former Cook County President Bobbie Steele

players, having worked with artists such as Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, Duran Duran, Gladys Knight, The Temptations and others.

After dazzling the audience with a short trumpet solo, Davis told students about the importance of "reaching for the stars," and not being afraid to be unique.

"You are at a time and place where you can make a difference," he said. "In order to do so, you have to create your own groove."

The last speaker was Former Cook County

Board Commissioner Bobbie L. Steele. Speaking as an African-American, as well as the first woman president of Cook County, Steele emphasized to students the notion that history is a process, of which they are all currently a part.

"You too are part of black history," she said. "What you do today will count tomorrow."

This, she noted, is not just a right, but a responsibility. She made it clear that despite her success as Cook County President, she was happy making a difference as a teacher, a mother and a community activist.

Accompanying the keynote speakers at the event were several local artists including: Terisa Griffen, who sang *Life Every Voice and Sing*; Najwa Dance Corps, who presented an exciting repertoire spanning eras of African-American heritage; Orator, Gloria M. Jackson, who performed her rendition of Dr. Martin Luther King's speech "I Have Been to the Mountaintop;" and The Choir Academy Charter School of Chicago.

In recognition of the Negro Baseball

Leagues, former players Henry "Hank" Presswood and Johnny "Lefty" Washington were honored with the "Perseverance & Persistence" Award. Both men admitted to the challenges of being African-American baseball players in the days before the Civil Rights Movement, but as stated by Lefty, "the sacrifice was well worth it."

Born on October 7, 1921, in Electric Mills Mississippi, "Hank" played for both the Cleveland Buckeyes and the Kansas City Monarchs. He went on to work at Inland Steele, where he played fast-pitched softball and won several trophies and a good sportsmanship award.

"Lefty" was born in Chicago on April 20, 1930. He played for the Chicago American Giants and the Houston Eagles. After joining the U.S. Marines he played semi-pro for the Chicago and Mid-west League until 1963.

Throughout the event, Chicago students were exposed to the successes of major African-American influences. Interspersed with rich, African-American cultural, the program provided students with lesson in black heritage, as well as advice on catalyzing change and continuing the process of making history.

*Megan Sieberg is a recent graduate of Northwestern University. She has a degree in Communication Studies and is currently the Communications Manager at the North Lawndale Community News.*

## Expo from front page

CPS elementary schools.

US Census Record Information for 2000 North Lawndale demographics are as follows: Population 41,768 with 93 percent black, 4.5 percent Hispanic 0.92 percent white 0.65 percent other and 0.13 percent Asian a median income of 18,342 and 44.3 percent of residents below poverty and unemployment 25.8 percent with educational attainment of 25 years old and above with no high school diploma 40 percent. 2007 According to CPS ISAT performance data 45.5 percent of students read at a district score of 60.9 percent, and 55 percent of students have a district score of 68.6

percent in math. PSAT performance score is 17.9 percent in reading and the district score is 39.4 percent for the district and 7.6 percent math with 30.5 percent for the district.

North Lawndale's LEARN Charter School at 1132 S. Homan began in 1980 with 11 students. Today it is pre K through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They have an astonishing rate of successful recognition as a Spotlight School and an Academic Improvement Award winner and one of only 38 double winners in those categories and 1 of 4 given those honors in Chicago.

They have an extended day of 7.5 hours as a school day with 200 days of school, making for an extended year. Tutoring combined with summer school has enabled it to boast 95 percent of its graduates earn high school

diplomas. Their success has allowed them to triple in size and move into a brand new building. Originally, the school was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a three flat building in Lawndale. The success has caused the school to move 6 times. Plans are underway to open two new schools in the next three years starting with kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade with a grade per year until they reach capacity. Ms. Courtney Francis the Head of School stated "We will do better in the future, because we are data driven. That means when we administer interim tests we examine the results more closely." She continued by saying, "What we discover informs our practice" and when questioned it (practice) refers to education. Her comments addressed why the Charter school

concept is different and gets seemingly better results than CPS regular schools by saying "Through our testing we now focus on 2 key areas in writing: Vocabulary and Extended Response Writing."

asked to clarify that Ms. Francis said "When students respond to questions in writing there is an opportunity to reflect on something that compares to what they've read or seen"

Other organizations like the PTA were represented and Up With People. Chicago Housing Authority sent personnel. There was even a screening for diabetes. All in All, the EXPO was a success.

*Zaki A. Muhammad is a West Side resident and writer. To comment on this article please visit our weblog at: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).*



# STATE REP. FORD AND LEAMINGTON FOODS TEACH NORTH LAWDALE RESIDENTS SHOP HEALTHIER

Lavonte' Roache'



Rep. LaShawn K. Ford at Lemington Foods

foods, dieticians providing expert information, books and pamphlets providing health information, a section of Leamington foods dedicated to health foods and pledge drive

On February 1, LaShawn K. Ford 8<sup>th</sup> District Representative and Leamington Foods, located at 5467 W. Madison, teamed up to teach North Lawndale residents how to shop for healthier foods. The event was held at Leamingtons. The event was sponsored in hopes of making a difference because nowadays there are not many people in today's generation who eat healthy. Ford and Leamington are trying to make a change, trying to stop heart disease, obesity and strokes, while promoting healthy eating habits.

This was the first event of Black history month for La Shawn K. Ford but he plans to keep it going thought out the weekend with festivities to include taste testing of healthy

promoting healthy eating.

"I think coming here was a great idea North Lawndale community needs somebody to help us with eating healthier. I shop here all the time and hardly notice anyone buying vegetables and fruits, but lately I noticed that after talking to Ford before leaving the store, people go grab some vegetables and fruit," said Ieshia Thomas customer of Leamington Foods. It is amazing how one person can affect group."

La Shawn and his people arrived early to meet with the manger of Leamington and they started off the day on a healthy note for a lot of people. Adults and children were asking what should they start eating and if he had any suggestions to help them have a healthier

diet. He had quite a bit to say about healthy eating habits, but he could not spent too much time with one person so he gather them up and talked to everyone as a group. I thought he was going to loose control. He brought some contracts with him and asked costumers who signed it to promise they will try to stick to a healthier diet. They also handed out cooking books with some delicious and tasty healthy foods in it. I have one myself and it makes eating healthy much easier.

La Shawn said "helping people eat healthier is just one way I could give back to the community and I would like to do many more things for the North Lawndale. I think healthy eating is a big part of life and more people need excel their eating habits to a healthier level. A large amount of people in America are over weight and dying from diseases such as obesity, strokes and heart disease."

As I stood there watching the customers leaving the store with their healthy foods and cook books in their hands I realized that Mr. Ford had made a difference in those people lives by helping change the eating habits of a few of the people today. He inspired people to live a longer life while also saving them from a lifetime of high blood pressure and heart disease. Ford should go to more places in the North Lawndale Community and share his knowledge about healthy eating habits.

*Lavonte' Roache' is a resident on the West Side. To comment on this article visit our weblog at: [www.nlcn.org](http://www.nlcn.org).*

**Visit** from front page

workers.

Daley's office said it is a skills certification program similar to what's available in Mexico for a variety of jobs.

"Chicago is truly an international city and our membership relies heavily on a work force that is made up of immigrants from Mexico and all over the world. This certification program will enable our membership to save time and money on training," Sheila O'Grady, president of the Illinois Restaurant Association, said in a statement.

Mayor Daley, who has been, especially in recent years been dealing with a lot of immigration related issues here in Chicago, with the immigration argument reaching a critical point in 2007 with several marches and protest on both sides, is now in favor of working together to reach a positive solution.

"The contribution from the Mexican community not only in Chicago but across America has become vital to the success of many communities," said Mayor Daley in a press statement. "Now is the time to work with leaders from every avenue in order to ensure that not everyone who comes to America in such of education or a better financial life as a potential criminal or drug lord. The more we communicate, plan and develop solutions as opposed to screaming about problems, the more we can achieve as a unified society."

The day was not without its issues, as protestors did indeed gather outside Little Village High School to protest the President's presence.

"It would make much more sense for President Calderon to make improvements to his country so that his citizens don't feel the need to break US laws to seek a better life over here," said Robert Grace, protestor and Department of Immigration employee.

**See page 6**

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Zaki A. Muhammad

Asian American's at the Daley Center celebrated the Year of the Rat New Year's observance February 7, 2008. Performances by Melody Chorus and Sunrise Chorus together with The Magical Strings of Youth of the Betty Haag Academy of Music performed both Chinese and Western Classical Music to usher in the 4706<sup>th</sup> year of the lunar calendar.

Ms. Mei Lin, acting as the Mistress of Ceremonies, explained the correlation of the Fortune God who is similar to Santa Claus and gives presents at Christmas time. She continued to introduce traditional Chinese cultural information by noting that (Hong Bao or Ya Shi Qian) "Red envelopes" were hidden and waiting for audience members to discover them at the appropriate time and that they symbolized good luck in the coming year. Moreover, to make it more extraordinary, there was a special one containing money for shopping.

The festival usually begins on the first day of the first lunar month in the Chinese calendar and ends on the 15<sup>th</sup>. This day is called the Lantern Festival. It is the major holiday for China and areas beyond China and has had a strong influence on the New Year celebrations of its neighbors. This takes in Korea, Mongolia, Nepal Vietnam Japan Singapore Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Thailand and other countries with significant Chinese Populations.

It is marked by visits to relatives and friends in a practice known as "new-year visits". New Clothes are worn to signify a new year. And the color "Red" is liberally used in all decorations. The history of the beginning of the festival dates back to the Qin Dynasty and was said to have begun in month 1 during the Xia Dynasty, month 12 during the Shang Dynasty, and month 11 during the Zhou Dynasty. But records indicate that the Zhou Dynasty began its year with month 1. Intercalary months, used to keep the lunar calendar synchronized with the sun, were added after month 12 during both the Shang Dynasty (according to surviving Oracle Bones) and the Zhou Dynasty (according to Sima Qian). The first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, changed the beginning of the year to month 10 in 221 BC,



Chinese New Year Celebration at the Daley Center

also changing the location of the intercalary month to after month 9. Whether the New Year was celebrated at the beginning of month 10, of month one, or both is unknown. In 104 BC, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty established month one as the beginning of the year, where it remains.

Chicago's celebration at the Daley Center was sponsored by the Chinese Fine Arts Society. Started 24 years ago, it is a non-profit organization dedicated to education and promotion of the Chinese Cultural Arts and exists to provide programs and activities that promote the understanding of Chinese culture through music and other fine arts. Participating in the program was Ms. Linda Chiou, an award winning choreographer and professional dance instructor known for her various appearances on Taiwan Television Dancing Programs where she has showcased her talents in Chinese communities in Chicago, St. Louis and other cities.

Ms. Lori Ho, Soprano/Conductor, is a graduate

of Shih-Chien University School of Music in Taiwan. She trained in Classical Operatic Performance. She is also a Music Director/Conductor with six Community Choruses in Chicago. Recently, she performed with the Youth Symphony of Du Page and the Chicago Children's Choir for Silk Road Collaboration Concert at the Chicago Art Institute.

Ms. Wen Ming Leung is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Music School in Piano Performance and is the Music Director of the Chinese Fine Arts Society and performed a leading role in Ibsen's "Doll House" to critical acclaim.

Melody Chorus is a sister Chorus of Sunrise Chorus and is conducted by Ms Lori Ho and has participated in the 2005 through 2008 New Year Celebration at the Daley Center and Navy Pier Chinese Celebration.

Sunrise Chorus, formed in 1996, with Ms Ho as the Conductor and Ms Leung as its Music Director, has performed in many venues

representing Asian communities. Most notably Asian Pacific Heritage Month events, and a tour in Taiwan to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Providence University in Taichung and a concert at Zee Shan Kaoshung Cultural Center as well as local events like the Millennium Park Grand Opening Celebration, WGN 9 News, Chicago Cultural Center Preston Bradley Hall and various Multicultural celebrations.

The Magical Strings of Youth of the Betty Haag Academy of Music of Buffalo Grove performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Grant Park symphony, locally. Nationally, they appeared on the Phil Donahue Show, Kids Say the Darndest Things with Bill Cosby and Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center.

Internationally, they have played for Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, President Nasurbayev in Kazakhstan, Princess Margaret of the British Royal Family, Boris Yeltsin in Moscow, President Lee in Taiwan, and were the featured entertainment for the Kellogg Hannah Neil World of Children Awards and performed at the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual American Academy of Achievement Awards Ceremony.

In conclusion, the program was Gong She (Happy New Year) performed by the combined voices of the Sunrise and Melody Choruses, Grandma's Pern Hu Gulf, the Moon Represents My Heart A Wedding and The Harvest-an Ami Aboriginal Song in Taiwan interspersed with The Magical Strings of Youth Betty Hagg Academy of Music performing: Folk Tunes by German Minuet One by J. S. Bach Bouree b G F. Handel, Sound of Music by R. Rogers, Over the Rainbow by A. Arien, Edelweiss by R. Rogers, Plink Plank Plunk by Leroy Anderson, Joy of Spring (Chinese New year Celebration), Yuen Mao, Concerto Grosso Opus 6 # 8 by A. Corelli, Rumanian Dances B. Bartok, Fiddle Fiddle Leroy Anderson, Orange Blossom Special A. Arien, and Moe Li Hwa Chinese Folk Song. Directed b Ms. Betty Hagg Kuhnke and Piano Accompanist Thomas Zeman.

*Zaki A. Muhammad is a West Side resident and writer. To comment on this article please visit our weblog at: [www.nlcn.org](http://www.nlcn.org).*



## Sports & Entertainment

# AT THE FLICKS

David H. Schultz, film critic

Michelle Morgan in *Diary of the Dead*

**George A. Romero's DIARY OF THE DEAD (\*\*\*)** Horror filmmaker George A. Romero goes "back to the future" and delivers his latest zombie opus with its brains and humor. After the street riot, doomsday look of his last zombie film 2006's "Land of the Dead", in which the zombies were represented as racial outcasts trying to find a place to be that later led to their beginning development of thought and reasoning.

*Diary of the Dead* is a movie that stands away from the others by returning Romero back to his grassroots in the rural areas outside of Pittsburgh. Where it all began with his 1968 black & white cult classic, *Night of the Living Dead*. While Romero almost in the same breath, takes on the computer age.

Romero's new stanza is scaled down from

his previous 'zombie' efforts, taking on a more intimate approach through the camcorder viewpoint reminiscent of "The Blair Witch Project" and more recently utilized in "Cloverfield".

A small group of co-eds are performing in a mummy movie as a thesis for its seldom seen student filmmaker, Jason Creed (Josh Close) who is having his work in progress observed by his alcoholic and cynical British professor Andrew Maxwell (Scott Wentworth).

As in the original 1968 film, a radio broadcast interrupts their production with news of an unexplained event of dead people coming back to life that is beginning to spread into an epidemic. Jason decides to scrap his mummy movie project to record the events of this epidemic that was initially refer to as a "terrorist act" that begins to personally affect the group into their quest for survival.

The premise serves the chills and thrills with psychological comments and social observations geared toward the hi-tech influences and the youth driven society we live in that makes Romero's "Dairy of the Dead" an often funny yet smart zombie movie. Upon hearing the news report, the lead actor in the mummy costume, Ridley (Philip Riccio) who lives off the wealth of his rich parents; decides to leave Jason and his crew behind. But he invites to return with him to his parents' secure compound mansion home.

Filming all the time in order to preserve the truth over the distorted version of the zombie epidemic by the manipulated news media, Jason returns to the dorm where he finds his disenchanted girlfriend, Deborah (Michelle Morgan) who begins to grow stronger with confident and determination

through the crisis.

Romero's script and action briefly takes on an inner city viewpoint. When the white co-eds in need of RV gas, and ammo; team up with a small army of blacks who take them to their warehouse hideout. Where the blacks think they have now the power since the threat of zombies has run all the white people out of town.

Clearly, Romero doesn't make the ethnic participation enough of an intricate part of this story as he has done in his previous movies. But at least, he tries to address the ghetto response to this aftermath

Then both groups have to search for a lone black member who just died from a heart attack, who is now walking among them all as a zombie.

Through each encounter, Romero's script and direction often touches a nerve that often registers insight and humor not only show how in tone Romero is with today's youth, thorough their thoughts and concerns.

All becomes Romero's fertile territory to make social and political statements that strikes a chord along side the body count that makes "Diary of the Dead" a socially reverent movie about our true fears and concerns that are real and more threatening than zombies.

When Romero climaxes this film with the hanging of a zombie woman shot in half for sport by two redneck hunters. After suggesting the zombie invasion as a form of unexplained terrorism. Romero echoes the Old South's lynching mob that Romero uses to point up our own paranoia and ignorance that might allow a different yet familiar scenario that could let a part of history repeat itself.

Therefore, we should never let our fears overrun our capability to reason through any situation. An example of the insight behind the terror of this movie. Which If you excuse the pun, Romero's "Diary of the Dead" leaves us something to chew on in our mind beyond

Ryan Reynolds and Rachel Weisz in *Definitely, Maybe*

the horror premise. R; 95min. A Weinstein Company Picture Distributed by Third Rail Releasing – Presented at selected theaters

**DEFINITELY, MAYBE (\*\*1/2)** The latest, designated "chick flick" romantic comedy could divide the opinions between the movie theater couples. As the men might view this movie as predictable compared to the counter response by their soul mate. But the movie is nothing that doesn't rock the foundation of love and matrimony.

Essentially, this is an engaging comedy based on a premise that leads into an exploratory odyssey that climaxes into a self revelation

Ryan Reynolds portrays a N.Y ad executive, Will Hayes whose considering what to do the about the terms of his divorce papers from his ex-wife that he just received at work The movie audience doesn't see who the ex is physically because of what occurs soon after. When Will leaves from his office to pick up his 10 yr old daughter, Maya (Abigail Breslin) at her public school. He runs to a chaotic scene of outraged parents over the explicit mature their children are being taught about sex.

This occurrence leads to the inquisitive child wanting to know everything about his life before marriage and how he and his soon-to-be "ex" and the child's mother met and fell

See Flicks page 7

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**In accordance with Illinois law, Henry Ford Academy: Power House High will hold its enrollment lottery on Thursday, February 21, 2008 at 5:00 p.m., for selection of its 2008 ninth grade class. The lottery will be held at the Homan Square Community Center at 3517 West Arthington, Chicago, Illinois 60624. The lottery is open to the public. Families/students are not required to attend.**

## Visit from page 6

"Instead of telling the US to make changes to accommodate Mexico, why not actually work on the poverty, job issues and corruption in your own country? Take responsibility for your citizens Calderon, instead of dumping that responsibility on the US."

Not all presence was negative. While many citizens do believe that Mexico has its own share of problems that need to be handled, there are also those who believe that it is a two way problem that can be fixed with some hard work from both sides.

"I do agree that changes must be made in Mexico to help its citizens not feel as though they have to leave in search of a better life,

but I do think the US should play some role in the process," said Heather Rios, a Immigrant Rights Activist, who attended the President's event. "The US, after all, makes billions of dollars in Mexico and from Mexican labor within the US, so throwing up their hands and saying it's not their problem is really not an option. It's not an easy issue, but one that can be solved if the US and Mexico work together."

James Glover is a North Lawndale resident and NLCN staff writer. He is also involved in Non Profit work and Community Organizing. To comment on this article visit our weblog at: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).



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### Flicks from page 6

in love. In attempt to try to sanitize his story to his daughter.

Will admits to having several female relationships through his life. In particular, three women from what he speaks about using two of three aliases. To possibly hide "trade secrets" toward what kind of a "dawg" men can be to women.

After an auspicious start in the local campaign office as a toilet paper re-filler, Will meets up with apolitical minded copy girl, April (Isla Fisher) with a cynical viewpoint to politics.

Later while trying to get Emily to visit him in New York. She instead mails him a diary to deliver to a free spirited and ambitious journalist; Summers (Rachel Weisz) share her apartment with her mentor-teacher, Hampton Roth (Kevin Kline) a noted sexagenarian author.

As Will unfolds his story upon his daughter, Maya, there are amusing scenes of dialogue and situation from Will's stumbling through certain sensitive areas that he tries to gloss over. But the precocious daughter continues to probe and offers her mature insight into the proceedings, which develops into a deeper reason before the initial question that shows a child's concern for her father.

This eventually leads into a revelation for Will who discover whom he should have been with initially, over the choice he made that gave him a daughter who only wants her dad to be happy.

Writer Adam Brooks tries to establish a sense of irony and honesty through his people and the humor that flows out naturally, not like a parade of one liner jokes and one dimensional caricatures that works without being too cliché for such an insightful premise to build this charming movie on.

PG-13; 110min. A Universal Picture Release - Presented at selected theaters

David Schultz is a film critic for NLCN and other publications. To comment on this article visit our weblog at: [www.nlcen.org](http://www.nlcen.org).

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### Officials from page 3

fact, the errors were so pervasive the list was reduced from 317 to 41. Thanks to the due diligence of the Lawndale Alliance and concerned community residents, the Redevelopment Plan was revised. Unfortunately, we are still getting phone calls from property owners that tell us that their property is on the list in spite of the fact that they have recently improved their property. Clearly, the plan needs to be revised, yet again. This needs to be done before the plan is approved. It would be a shame to include these properties in a City ordinance in error.

We are equally concerned about the Redevelopment Budget for the Proposed Ogden/Pulaski TIF. The budget seems more intent on taking care of people moving in and less on the people who are already here. There is some money for job training but none for job creation/development or new business development (this goes back to the old saying "Give a man a fish he'll eat for a day, Teach him to fish and he will eat for a lifetime"). The City insists that they will provide a Small Business Improvement Fund if the TIF is approved. We prefer that the funds be included in the 23-year TIF budget, where they will be included in the ordinance, and not subject to changing priorities of the City's general operating budget. This precedent was set by the City when they included \$2,500,000 for job training in the Redevelopment Budget in addition to the City's promise of a TIFWorks (employment) program once the TIF is implemented.

We could continue, but we think you see where we are on this issue. What do we need from you? First we need you to testify at the CDC meeting on February 19th in favor of postponing implementing the TIF until the community has its input included and the aldermen follow through on the Advisory Committee. Specifically, we would like to see suggestions that were made by the public included in the body of the Redevelopment Plan, as well as the Redevelopment Budget. We would also like to convene major stakeholders, including members of the Lawndale Alliance, to negotiate a framework for creating legally binding multilateral community benefit agreements, wherein each party agrees to provide some benefit to the community in exchange for TIF assistance. This would include members of the community as well. The negotiations should be facilitated by a dispassionate party with knowledge of local laws, understanding of community development issues and skilled in mediation. Potential sources for such a mediator include the Community Economic Development Law Project or a legal clinic within one of the local universities.

Ideally, we would like for you to provide public testimony and a letter to the Community Development Commission as follows:

Ms. Mary Richardson-Lowry, Chairman  
Community Development Commission  
121 North LaSalle Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

Please carbon copy Alderman Dixon, Alderman Munoz, and the Lawndale Alliance on the letter and fax it to

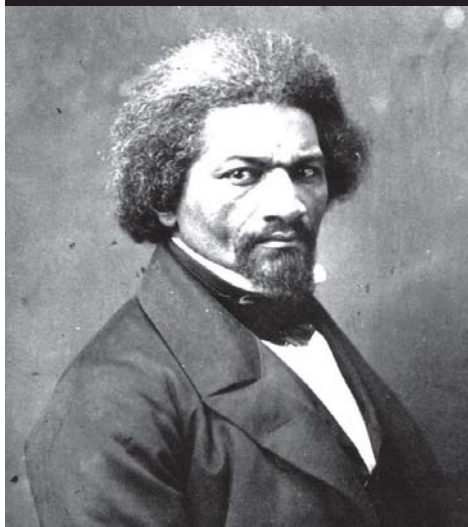
the attention of Valerie F. Leonard at 773-522-1832. If you are unable to make the hearing for any reason, please send a member of your staff to read the letter for the public record, or give us permission to read it aloud as we present testimony.

We need you to assist us in approaching Congressman Danny K. Davis to file for an extension of the life of the Lawndale Community Conservation Council, which is expected to sunset within the next month or so. It is important that this body be assembled according to best practices of organizational development. This would include provisions that mitigate conflicts of interest, separation between the planning, development and advisory functions, a balance of membership that includes broad based representation, geographically, across quality of life sectors and individual skill sets and backgrounds. With these committees/commissions in place, we can then work on community benefit agreements with the developers in our community. We also believe that this approach would be an excellent model of community development that is holistic and inclusive.

Joe Ann Bradley will be giving you a call to set up an appointment with you to go into more detail about our concerns. Thank you so much for your assistance in these matters and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,  
**THE LAWDALE ALLIANCE**

### FEB 14 BLACK FACTS



Frederick Douglass

\* On this day in 1817, Frederick Baile Douglass was born into slavery. Douglass purchased his freedom in 1845 and went on to become the greatest abolitionist of his time.

\* On this day in 1867, Morehouse College was organized in Augusta, Georgia. The institution was later moved to Atlanta. New registration law in Tennessee abolished racial distinctions in voting.

\* On this day in 1936, National Negro Congress was organized at Chicago meeting attended by 817 delegates representing more than 500 organizations. Asa Phillip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was elected president of the new organization.

\* On this day in 1760, Richard Allen was born into slavery in Philadelphia.

\* On this day in 1946, Entertainer and dancer Gregory Hines was born.

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SPORTS ROUNDUP

Todd Thomas

Chicago Public League playoffs are in full gear and this week features several big games for schools in the area.

The west side boasts four of the top six spots in the rankings including; No. 6 North Lawndale. The Phoenix (22-3, 9-1 Red-Northwest) are playing in their first-ever Public League playoff tournament. They defeated Steinmetz in their first –round contest last week, and now face Red-North runner-up Senn High School (16-5, 7-3 Red North). The game is Thursday Feb. 14, 4pm Collins Gym.

The Marshall Commandos (21-4, 10-0 Red West) finished in first place in the Public League Red West Conference and are having an inspired season under the leadership of their new coach. They play Hubbard High School (12-14, 4-6 Red Central) on Thursday, 4pm at Marshall.

Farragut (16-5, 8-2 Red West) have played respectably for the majority of the season but they need a signature victory to solidify their effort. Center Mike Dunigan solid inside and his role is complemented by the outside game of Isaiah Williams. They play Hope High School ((15-6, 8-2 Red Central) on Thursday, 4pm at Farragut.

There is a possibility that Whitney Young (21-4, 9-1 Red-Northwest) may not qualify as west-side-proper, they have mixed it up with the area’s best teams and aren’t ranked No. 3 for nothing. The Dolphins play Payton High School (19-7, 4-6 Red-Northwest) on Thursday, 4pm at Young.

Crane (12-7, 6-4 Red West) is doing okay and were not expecting to have a stellar season. They face No. 1

Simeon (22-2, 10-0 Red South) in their next game. Simeon surprised many when they came back strong after the departure of their stars from last season. Several basketball talents transferred over for the season. However, they are now the team to beat on the road to the 2008 Public League championship.

It is a good thing high school basketball is entertaining because there has not been much to cheer about at the United Center. The Bulls (20-30) are in eleventh place in the Eastern conference playoff hunt at mid season.

They have been struggling and every game has taken near perfection to win because the margin for error is slim for them. The season has been difficult in the best of times and they will be hard pressed to improve. The injuries to key players, forward Lual Deng, shooting guard Ben Gordon, and guard Kirk Hinrich have taken a toll. The most seriously injured, Deng, will be out until after the all-star break and his status is unknown for the rest of the season. Also do not forget that they have an interim head coach and all kinds of free-agent headaches looming after the season.

To brighten things up Chicago sport fans will have to look south and enter the summer like worlds of the Cubs and White Sox who will be opening spring training in Arizona this week. The status of the ball teams is uncertain as well. They both had sub-par off-seasons as far as new acquisitions and will have to come up with big surprises to make this a baseball season to remember.

Todd Thomas is a freelance writer for NLCN and other publications. To comment on this article visit our weblog at: www.nlcn.org.

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