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

Alderman Sharon Dixon Receives Driver's License after Suspension Ruled Improper

Krista Christophe



24th Ward Alderman Sharon Dixon

Dixon's license was suspended after she was arrested January 20th under charges of driving under the influence, obstruction of traffic, and driving without proof of insurance.

In a police report, Officer Laura Kubiak stated Alderman Dixon demanded that uniformed officers make way for her vehicle. The officers were blocking traffic in order to

transport equipment to the scene of a fire. According to Kubiak's statements, Alderman Dixon yelled at the police officers after they told her to move her vehicle.

Officer Kubiak reported that alcohol was smelled on the

alderman's breath and she was arrested after refusing to leave the scene.

Judge Burke presided over Alderman Dixon's four hour hearing on Thursday. During the hearing the alderman stated that she had two glasses of wine at a friend's house that evening. On the drive home she was forced to swerve when a squad car pulled out in front of her.

The judge was not pleased with the alderman's conduct, but ceded that intoxication should have been the bottom line for her arrest in January. "You are an elected official. You cannot behave like that...however; the issue is not whether you were obnoxious, but whether there was probable cause to believe you were intoxicated." As the alderman's license was ruled improperly

suspended, it will be difficult for prosecutors to prove that she was driving under the influence.

On January 21, Alderman Dixon held a short press conference addressing the issue. She declined to say whether or not she was offered a breathalyzer test and commented on the police reports of the incident.

"The report is not who I am and those that truly know me know that that is not who I am." She also stated that the allegations of her intoxication were unfounded, her altercation with police outside the scene of the fatal fire got out of hand, and as a result she was arrested. She apologized for any embarrassment she caused the community or the City of Chicago.

On May 21st, Alderman Sharon Dixon was granted her driver's license after Judge Eileen O'Neill Burke ruled that her driving credentials were improperly suspended. Alderman

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Rush Mourns Death of "Blues Queen" Koko Taylor



history."

News Release from
kokotaylor.com:

Grammy Award-winning blues legend Koko Taylor, 80, died on June 3, 2009 in her hometown of Chicago, IL, as a result of complications following her May 19 surgery to correct a gastrointestinal bleed. On May 7, 2009, the critically acclaimed Taylor, known worldwide as the "Queen of the Blues," won her 29th Blues Music Award (for Traditional Female Blues Artist Of The Year), making her the recipient of more Blues Music Awards than any other artist. In 2004 she received the NEA National Heritage Fellowship Award, which is among the highest honors given to an American artist. Her most recent CD, 2007's Old School, was nominated for a Grammy (eight of her nine Alligator albums were Grammy-nominated). She won a Grammy in 1984 for her guest appearance on the compilation album Blues Explosion on Atlantic.

Born Cora Walton on a sharecropper's farm just outside Memphis, TN, on September 28, 1928, Koko, nicknamed for her love

See Koko back page

CHICAGO — U.S. Representative Bobby L. Rush (IL-01) released the following statement on learning of the death of blues legend Koko Taylor:

"I am saddened to learn Koko Taylor has made her transition. Her voice represented the spirit of Chicago, proud, loud and full of life," Rush said. "There is no doubt she was the queen of the blues and her legacy will live on through her music.

Her family and friends remain in my thoughts and prayers and we remain indebted to her for her contributions to America's rich music

WORD UP: From Boys to Men

Calvin Crayton



Men of Zion Hill give praises during men's day program.

I wrote my first *Word Up* column three years ago and it started as part of Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church Men's Day Program. Three years later (three years of *Word Up*) I still write from Zion Hill's Men's Day program. I remind those who read this column that *Word Up* is a Bible based column and if anyone is offended by the word of God they can take it up with him. "He changes not." (Malachi 3:6) On the other hand, if I offend you, I remind you that I'm only human.

I would like to give thanks to Albert Crayton who invited me to

the Men's Day Program; he has truly has been an example of a man in my life. It's a pleasure to see him singing in the men's choir. To him I say, "I love you." Congratulations to Pastor Gregory Posley on hearing your father sing. To Deacon Stephen Davis, I thank you and God for you not only being a man of God but also a man and husband to my sister Denise whom I consider a Woman of Women. Finally, I give thanks to all the men and women of Zion Hill for the love they have shown me over the last three years and I would like to personally thank

Sister Barbara Kees for not being too sophisticated to ride the CTA. Let's Word Up!

Pastor Derrick Garth once made the statement, "When men stand up, little boys sit down." Brother John Tyler spoke on the occasion. His point was that the time is now. Men of God can no longer sit on the sidelines and be spectators. We must rise to the challenge, examine ourselves, and ask, "How well do we represent what we claim we believe in." In Psalms 26:1-2 David asked the Lord to examine him and try his heart and to test him. How many of us are willing to take that test?

I remember as a child my mom would look at us before we went outside because we represented her and daddy. How we presented ourselves was a reflection on them. When David had his ordeal with Bathsheba, Nathan reminded him that his deed had given great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme. (2nd Samuel 11:14). A man knows what to do and also does it. James 4:17 states, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin you see delayed obedience is still disobedience." Ephesians 5:28-30 states: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself

See Word page 7

Visit us on our website at www.nlcen.org for more articles, photos, information and more.

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Winner of the
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# NLCN

## 2009 FOCUS

### HEALTH & THE ECONOMY

One of the major issues of the recent presidential campaign was health care. Health care costs have become an escalating burden for employers and consumers alike. Research has shown that total health spending is reduced when consumers bear more responsibility for their health and the expenses related to it. One of the best ways to increase life expectancy while reducing disability is to encourage a culture of self-care practices.

Self care is personal health maintenance. It is the care taken by individuals towards their own health and well being. Self care includes the actions individuals take in their role as care givers for their children, their families, and others to stay fit and to maintain good physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Extreme self care means making choices and decisions that honor our soul in everyday living. It means feeding ourselves whole foods, moving our bodies every day, balancing silence with activity, and surrounding ourselves with supportive, like-minded people who are committed to improving or restoring health and uplifting the quality of their lives as well.

More than 75% of people surveyed in the United Kingdom said if they had guidance or support from a professional or peer they would feel far more confident about taking care of their own health. Research shows that supporting self care can improve health outcomes and increase patient satisfaction. Our intention is to support individuals, families, institutions, and communities in their efforts to practice extreme self care. During 2009, the North Lawndale Community News focuses on cost-effective ways you can improve your health by practicing self care.

The Economy has made itself the number one issue with gas prices reaching almost \$5.00 per gallon and having a domino effect on everything else sold, except housing stock which experienced a terrible decline with the high rate of foreclosures. The Chicago metropolitan area reported 5,821 new foreclosure filings in December, a foreclosure rate of one new foreclosure filing for every 499 households — more than twice the national average. That brought the area's fourth quarter foreclosure total to 16,949 and its 2006 foreclosure total to 57,706, according to Realty Trac.

Even transportation on the CTA went on the rise with one day passes increasing by seventy-five cents and monthly passes increased by \$10.00 from \$75.00 to \$85.00. Those are just a few of the increases.

The North Lawndale Community News this year is expanding on last years financial focus to give attention to its broader parent the economy. Saving and making smarter shopping decisions will help stop us losing through wasteful choices. Finding new ways to increase our income is a necessity for many in an area where gentrification is not going to stop.

One of the hardest things to change is behavior. Modifying behavior seems to be easy when it comes to pain. Social pain lack of money has to be extreme for many to change. 2009 should be different for many and of course many will continue toward economic mistakes and financial ruin.

But in today's information society there is no excuse for not making smart choices. Financial literacy alone is not enough. Look what happened to Lehman Brothers and what's happening to many other financial institutions let alone individuals, families, and small businesses.

Solutions come to the internet, books, economic experts, financial counselors and experts, the media and your economical neighbors.

The North Lawndale Community News will tap into resources and share them with you, our reader. So to help you improve your health and your economy keep reading The North Lawndale News. We say yours because some may not modify their behavior, except when the pain comes and still some won't change.. Your input is also welcome If you have some information that is beneficial please submit it. Let's make smarter health and economic moves for life in 2009.

## THE NORTH LAWDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

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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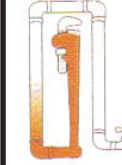
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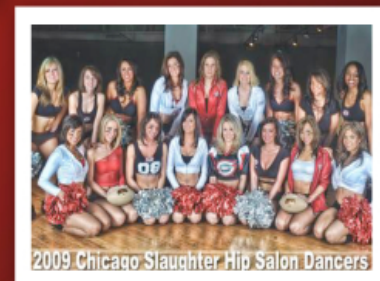
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# From Sista to Sister: Legacy of Loyalty Lost

Tali Bakhit



Tali Bakhit

It was only until I began to operate out of love that I recognized how important loyalty is. Loyalty is a word that reflects the core of being that one ought to in sisterhood. It is encouragement, allegiance, devotion, and fidelity all wrapped up in one. It is being able to see the difference between saying and committing. This quality of being loyal joins together a bond of life's unforgettable journeys.

Just recently, I walked into a local clothing store owned by a sister, a young beautiful African-American entrepreneur. I felt the energy of discomfort that graced the atmosphere as I entered the front door to walk into the store. Upon my entry, I introduced myself to the owner of the store and reminded her about our meeting prior to my visit. She

said hello, but the hello wasn't very inspiring.

Despite this, I continued to look around the store in order to find out what type of attire was being sold there. It thought her establishment was in an odd location for a clothing store.

At first glance, I noticed that this young lady cater to a Caucasian woman that was already in the store upon my arrival. Of course I didn't find in harm in what she was doing because a customer is a customer, and we should all be treated with great customer service. However, I did have a problem with my not receiving that same type of customer service.

I figured that business probably wasn't that good so I decided to ask her, and she confirmed my assumption. I then began to compliment all of the beautiful items that the young lady had for sale and I still didn't get much feedback. I then dug into my bag to give her a card, and said that I would like to speak to her more in detail about creating financial freedom.

Immediately this young lady said "You came in to my store with your own agenda. You are just like the rest of the black people that I know. You always want something for nothing." I was surprised, shocked, disappointed, but most importantly, I felt so sorry for this young sister.

She worked so hard, and had been through so many harsh experiences with people of her own race, she felt as if every African-American - or black person for that matter - would be utterly impossible to deal with based on her experience. It was vividly apparent that this young lady had been

through something because the energy that I experienced was like none other than I had ever experienced while shopping in my own neighborhood.

This story is an example of the legacy of loyalty lost amongst my people; especially the sisters, as we operate in business matters. I have heard the words quite often from sistas, "I don't deal with a bunch of women." I have always asked the question, "Why?" Why can't we all get along? We are all made of different shapes, sizes, colors, personalities, and perspectives on life.

This is what makes life so grand! If we lived in a society of homogeneity the world would be quite boring. So, I say in the words of the great legendary entertainer Tina Turner, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." Through the efforts of operating out of love through loyalty, one will always succeed. Let's retrace the legacy of loyalty! One love, peace and light my sisters.

Tali Bakhit is a visionary journalist, writer, entrepreneur, and owner of her own company Bon-chic Productions. Born and raised in the inner city of Philadelphia, she knows the struggles that young African American sisters go through on an everyday basis.

As a writer for the North Lawndale Community Newspaper, Tali has made a loyal commitment to give back to the sisters to prove, "Yes, we can - all get along and create a since of loyalty."

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## Lawndale Alliance Releases Findings and Recommendations From TIF Town Hall Meeting

The Lawndale Alliance today released findings and recommendations from a TIF Town Hall meeting held on Tuesday, May 26, 2009. Focusing its analysis on the seven Redevelopment Project Areas impacting the North Lawndale community, the group examined the TIFs' goals and objectives, most recent financial results, track record in hiring and contracting minorities, women and local residents; major projects, and the implications of legislative policies and real estate developments on the surrounding community.

### Key Findings

- Redevelopment Project expenditures within TIF districts often exceed the 23-year redevelopment budget

- The Sterling Park development has or will receive \$23,000,000 in TIF funding from the Homan-Arthington TIF, which has a \$10,000,000 redevelopment budget.

- Cineplex Odeon/ICE Theaters (now closed) was awarded \$3,300,000 in TIF assistance from the Roosevelt-Homan TIF, which has a redevelopment budget of \$2,400,000.

- While there are allowances to transfer funds between TIFs (porting), there does not appear to be any provision to amend the TIF redevelopment budgets to reflect the current reality.

- The Collins High School gym is slated to be demolished for construction of an Olympic Velodrome in the event Chicago is successful in its bid to host the 2016 Olympics. In 2006 the City invested \$30.3 million TIF dollars in the school for major capital improvements under the Modern Schools Across Chicago Program

- Data for 2006 suggest that for every dollar that goes towards financing and real estate development, only 3 cents benefit the local (North Lawndale) residents and business owners.

- One of the stated goals of a number of TIF redevelopment plans is to increase employment opportunities for the people who live in the impacted

communities. However, current and pending legislation favors unionized labor on public works projects. Moreover, there is a push to expand the definition of public works projects to include TIF districts and Empowerment Zones. This measure would effectively lock African American construction workers and laborers out of opportunities to work on construction jobs in their own communities.

- It is not clear whether any of the TIF-funded projects also received HUD assistance, making them subject to hiring low and very low income residents pursuant to HUD Section 3. This data is not tracked in the TIF annual reports.

- The TIF Annual reports indicate funding for job training activities, but do not describe the nature of the training, or how many residents were trained and subsequently hired.

- The City typically does not include programs such as the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) and Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) in the redevelopment budgets, but routinely charges the TIF funds for these expenses.

- The City indicates that "Private Investment" could include other public funds that are not from the TIF fund. However, no disclosure is made as to what other public funds have been made available.

- The City and delegate agencies seem to only make appearances at meetings hosted by elected officials or its delegate agencies. This can be problematic in communities where the flow of information is inefficient. Moreover, this tends to politicize the process of providing information and access to services to which tax payers are entitled.

"We invited major TIF stakeholders to prepare presentations or participate on discussion panels," said Valerie F. Leonard, one of the group's conveners. This included aldermen from 6 wards

See TIF page 7

## National Currents This Week's US News

- President Obama vetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit US Court of Appeals Judge Sonia Sotomayor as his nominee for the Supreme Court of the United State. Justice David Souter announced his retirement from the court on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Judge Sotomayor was raised in the Bronx in New York, New York and attended Princeton and Yale Law School. She has presided over many decisions in her time as a judge, including the decision that ended the Major League Baseball strike of 1995. If confirmed, Judge Sotomayor will be the first Latina justice.

- On May 26<sup>th</sup>, the California Supreme Court confirmed the state's voters decision to ban gay marriage. Gay marriages that already exist will remain legal in the state.

- The Brazilian Air Force found a trail of wreckage from Air France flight 447. Their findings confirm the crash of the transatlantic flight. 228 people were on board the flight; no survivors have been found. The flight disappeared on Sunday night four hours after it left Rio de Janeiro.

- This week, Laura Ling and Euna Lee will go to trial in North Korea. Ling and Lee are the first Americans to be tried in the state. Members of their family have expressed fear of the results of the trial and pled for leniency. They have expressed that they want Ling and Lee's situation to be kept separate from North Korea's recent weapons showdown.

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AUGUST 22

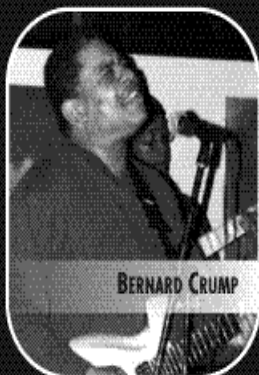
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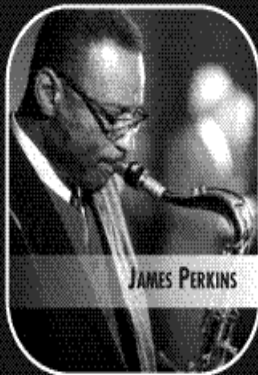
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# AT THE FLICKS

David H. Schultz, film critic

**DANCE FLICK (\*1/2)** From the efforts achieved here, if the senior Wayans brothers were trying to pass the comedic baton onto their siblings, the transition doesn't go smoothly for either side. Borrowing story and character essence from such urban boogie movies such as "Save the Last Dance" and "Step Up," they Wayans created a foundation to run the gambit of their raunchy and satirical jabs. Clean-cut Thomas Uncles (Damon Wayans, Jr.) along with partner A-Con (Affron Crockett) are part of a local dance crew who find themselves in a \$5,000 debt to a food fanatic "Jabba the Hut" sized mobster, Sugar Bear (David Allan Grier in a fat suit).

Meanwhile, uptown white girl, Megan (Shoshanna Bush) temporarily quits her dream of dancing after her mother suffers a ridiculous fatal accident on route to view her daughter's stage audition. Megan relocates to the inner city with her ne'er-do-well father (Chris Elliot) and enrolls into Musical High School.

This is when this movie gets some life by spreading out its parody spoofing to other recent movies and characters, and celebrity and pop culture references that are weaved around the story's set-up premise. Examples are found in supporting characters like the Zac Elfron look-a-like with homosexual references in song and the 1950s plump girl, resembling "Hairspray".

The closest to a real genuine laugh getter is Grier's exaggerated mock performance of Jennifer Holiday's screen rendition of "You're Gonna Love Me" from "Dreamgirls." It is sort of a comedic highlight. Megan finds an ally in Charity (Essence Atkins), who is the popular girl in school has her glam squad of followers. Charity got stuck with a two-girl "damn" squad showing Megan around the school where she has a run-in with popular girl and obvious rival, Nora (Christina Murphy).

Soon after, Megan meets up with Thomas in the same acting class. Each eventually begins

to work together on dance moves before the film's street dance challenge finale. Thomas and A-Con must face off against their rival crew in a dance-off with Thomas being joined by Megan and other reject class dancers trying to win the contest to pay off their debt to Sugar Bear who literally helps flatten the competition.

Still, "Dance Flick" isn't all "that" funny as it is silly. The problem is, most of the "hit and miss" humor in this movie can be seen coming before the punchline or payoff occurs. Clearly, ripe for satire, the Wayans don't put much "smarts" into their humor. Whenever the Wayans do these films, it feels like they rush them out, hoping to hit while the genre is hot. However, too much time has passed. They've could have made a better, funnier and smarter movie than we got here. It's a tired excuse with barely enough jokes to sustain such a short movie to begin with.

**PG-13; 84min. A Paramount Pictures Release – Presented at selected theaters**

**UP (\*\*\*)** Pixar's tenth computer animated feature should help continue an almost unbroken streak of exceptional films and box office hits that no other studio and/or animators can touch.

Even so, some will criticize "UP" for not reaching the caliber achieved in previous Pixar films, like last summer's "Wall-E."

While this might be true, "UP" represents itself well enough by demonstrating many of the attributes expected from Pixar's talented and insightful storytellers. The film is a little more for adults, though it still caters to the young. "UP" has more going for it than against it because beyond its adventure and humor, there is a genuine spirit that motivates the film's story, action, and emotions. This is a warmhearted film about relationships lost and found and a dream achieved.

Carl Fredericksen (Ed Asner) is a grumpy curmudgeon who is set in his ways and clings

to his past memories. He is a former balloon salesman now living an isolated, septuagenarian life away from the outside world. His "old house" is now surrounded by the sight and noise of progress in the form of several new and taller buildings under construction by a group of black sunglasses and suit wearing land developers that Carl refuses to sell his property to avoid film buffs might pick up on Pixar purposely making Carl resemble a square headed Spencer Tracy in "Bad Day at Black Rock" with Walter Matthau's comedic timing in their senior years.

Carl keeps refusing to sell to the black suited developers. The house carries memories of his childhood and a good life with his beloved wife, Ellie. This past is beautifully chronicled in the film's beginning.

As a sly, quiet kid, Carl was befriended by a hyper-active boy who inspired his love for travel and adventure through their joint admiration over the publicized exploits of famed explorer, Charles Muntz (Christopher Plummer). The adventurer who discovered a "Lost World" type island in South America called "Paradise Falls," a place both kids want to visit someday.

Later Muntz was considered a fraud for his claim of a rare bird on the island. His public shaming led to him to a self-imposed exile from the U.S. for many years.

Meanwhile, Carl grew up to meet and marry with his soul mate. They made plans to fulfill Carl's dream to travel to Paradise Falls from the "My Adventure Book" scrap book that was passed onto him by his childhood friend. However, life's obstacles and responsibilities always interrupted their planned trip and they never made it before Ellie became ill.



Essence Atkins and Marlon Wayans in 'Dance Flick'

Years later, he is introduced to Russell (wonderfully voiced by non-pro Jordan Nagai), a pudgy Junior Wilderness Explorer out to help an elderly person to earn his last merit badge. Soon after this introduction Carl receives a court summons because he refused assistance from a construction worker who was accidentally hurt when trying to help Carl with his old, sentimental mailbox.

Carl is considered a "menace to society" and is evicted from his house by the court, into a retirement community. Instead, Carl hatches a plan to fulfill his dream, attaching thousands of helium filled balloons to make his house float across the sky. His peaceful flight is suddenly interrupted when Carl discovers a stowaway on his front porch – a frightened Russell.

Co-writer and director Pete Docter, who last did "Monsters Inc.," continues to find inspiration from his affection for old movies and their stars that are cleverly incorporated throughout this movie.

For instance, when Carl's balloon adventure takes flight, some older moviegoers might

See Flicks page 7

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## Flicks from page 6

understand the wink to producer Irwin Allen's innocuous 1962 screen version of "Five Weeks in A Balloon," based on Jules Verne's tale of a balloon expedition to Africa.

Also, there is this opposites attract, "Odd couple" complex through the unlikely pairing of Carl and Russell. The kid's presence offers some insight and thought to how he's been neglected by his preoccupied father. He helps to fill some gaps in Carl's life. This is what this film is more about than the adventure. It's these genuine, often subtle moments that resonate more than the action and smart humor. Russell quickly navigates the floating house to the site of the waterfall at Paradise Falls. However, Russell charts them into an unexpected adventure. The kid discovers the rare thirteen foot tall bird (based on the Himalayan Monal pheasant, one of the world's most iridescent birds) and is joined by a friendly hunting dog, Dug, with a talking collar.

"UP" is one of Pixar's most hilarious movies. But more important, this is a movie that connects. With its attention to detail along with the execution, and above all, the writing that captures and states so much about Carl and Russell, enough to bridge that generation gap with today's audiences living in such a youth oriented society that doesn't pay enough attention to the value of seniors today.

PG; 89min. A Pixar Animation Studio Presentation Released by Walt Disney Pictures

- Presented at selected theaters

## TIF from page 5

that are impacted by these TIFs, the Department of Community Development, and representatives from local nonprofits that receive TIF funding or manage the NIF and SBIF programs within the TIFs. "They either ignored the invitation or canceled their appearances," Ms. Leonard said. "This is very troubling, given that these non-profits have benefited from tens of millions of TIF dollars so far. Our local government, elected officials, and nonprofit organizations are accountable to the public." Ms. Leonard indicated that their cancellations have been "a blessing in disguise", because it caused the local residents to do the research themselves.

*The Lawndale Alliance is a group of community residents who have come together to address issues that impact the quality of life in North Lawndale. The group was formed in 2007 when the proposed Ogden-Pulaski TIF Redevelopment Plan was introduced to the community. A copy of the TIF Town Hall presentation is available upon request. For further information, contact Valerie F. Leonard at 773-521-3137 or valeriefleonard@msn.com.*

## Word from front page

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body his flesh, and of his bones." I submit that everything God does reconciles man unto himself.

For instance, the word "man" is in the middle of commandments. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 2:2-3 says, "David charged Solomon to be strong and shew himself a man and keep the charge of the Lord to walk in his ways to keep his commandments and judgements." In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:11 Paul stated, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." In the words of the song sung by Brother Terrace Pouncey, "Tomorrow may be too late." Remember, if you don't read the book you lose the lesson! Word Up!

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## Koko from front page

of chocolate, fell in love with music at an early age. Inspired by gospel music and WDIA blues disc jockeys B.B. King and Rufus Thomas, Taylor began belting the blues with her five brothers and sisters, accompanying themselves on their homemade instruments. In 1952, Taylor and her soon-to-be-husband, the late Robert “Pops” Taylor, traveled to Chicago with nothing but, in Koko’s words, “thirty-five cents and a box of Ritz Crackers.”

In Chicago, “Pops” worked for a packing company, and Koko cleaned houses. Together they frequented the city’s blues clubs nightly. Encouraged by her husband, Koko began to sit in with the city’s top blues bands, and soon she was in demand as a guest artist. One evening in 1962 Koko was approached by arranger/composer Willie Dixon. Overwhelmed by Koko’s performance, Dixon landed Koko a Chess Records recording contract, where he produced her several singles, two albums and penned her million-selling 1965 hit “Wang Dang Doodle,” which would become Taylor’s signature song.

After Chess Records was sold, Taylor found a home with the Chicago’s Alligator Records in 1975 and released the Grammy-nominated I Got What It Takes. She recorded eight more albums for Alligator between 1978 and 2007, received seven more Grammy nominations and made numerous guest appearances on various albums and tribute recordings. Koko appeared in the films Wild At Heart, Mercury Rising and Blues Brothers 2000. She performed on Late Night With David Letterman, Late Night With Conan O’Brien, CBS-TV’s This Morning, National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, CBS-TV’s Early Edition, and numerous regional television programs.

Over the course of her 40-plus-year career, Taylor received every award the blues world has to offer. On March 3, 1993, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley honored Taylor with a “Legend Of The Year” Award and declared “Koko Taylor Day” throughout Chicago. In 1997, she was inducted into the Blues Foundation’s Hall of Fame. A year later, Chicago Magazine named her “Chicagoan Of The Year” and, in 1999, Taylor received the Blues Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2009 Taylor performed in Washington, D.C. at The Kennedy Center Honors honoring Morgan Freeman.

Koko Taylor was one of very few women who found success in the male-dominated blues world. She took her music from the tiny clubs of Chicago’s South Side to concert halls and major festivals all over the world. She shared stages with every major blues star, including Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, B.B. King, Junior Wells and Buddy Guy as well as rock icons Robert Plant and Jimmy Page.

Taylor’s final performance was on May 7, 2009 in Memphis at the Blues Music Awards, where she sang “Wang Dang Doodle” after receiving her award for Traditional Blues Female Artist Of The Year.

Survivors include Taylor’s husband Hays Harris, daughter Joyce Threatt, son-in-law Lee Threatt, grandchildren Lee, Jr. and Wendy, and three great-grandchildren.