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

BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXTRAVAGANZA THE NAWJA DANCE CORP



The Najwa Dance Corp adult dancers move in rhythmic harmony to the African Drummers. Photo by Cameron Leviticus Martin



Founder and Director Najwa I, wearing one of her creative designs met with the audience after the performance. Photo by Cameron Leviticus Martin



One of the Najwa Dancers in front of the African marketplace in the Malcolm X Lobby. Photo by Cameron Leviticus Martin



The audience that attended the Najwa Dance Corp event expressed enjoyment during and after the performances. Photo by Cameron Leviticus Martin

Don't you Remember who you are was heard during a song as one of the lines of reflection in the lyrics danced to by the Najwa Dance Corp.

For Black History month, the Najwa Dance Corp reminded many of us of our African Roots through dance. Held at Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Van Buren, the Najwa Junior Dance Corp displayed their African cultural dance training in an awe inspiring fashion.

After an intermission the adult

dancers took everyone deeper into our African past of who we are by dancing to songs, both with messages of joy and inspiration sending out a sort of history healing. Listening to the African drumming and watching the dancers seemed to awaken a past inside that is asleep in many.

Founder, Najwa I spoke to NLCN and stated that 10% of the money raised would be added to Malcolm X Colleges donation to Haiti. For more information call 312 850-7224.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

LANE CHANGE:
HONEST
DIALOGUE IN
CONVERSATION
ON RACE
PAGE - 3

2010 OSCAR
PREDICTIONS
PAGE - 4

2010 CENSUS IN
SCHOOLS
PAGE - 5

EDNA STEWART DAY SALUTES LIFETIME OF SERVING OTHERS TRAVLES R. LANE

Perhaps embattled golfer Tiger Woods could take a few lessons in integrity from Edna Stewart, who also knows a thing or two about second chances.

On a day during Black History Month when Woods, one of the most heralded non-white Americans on the planet, was copping a mea culpa for past indiscretions at a somber Florida golf clubhouse, Stewart, a local, unsung African American heroine on Chicago's West Side had no apologies to make last Friday in a festive homage to a lifetime of great service and great food.

Joined by her family, local dignitaries, friends, customers and a crowd of local news media, Ms. Edna, the iconic matron and long-time owner of Edna's Soul Food Restaurant at 3175 W. Madison, was basking in the glow of unabashed appreciation at the diner as Gov. Pat Quinn proclaimed February 19, 2010 "Edna Stewart Day" in Illinois.

"It is indeed an honor and a great pleasure to be honored by Gov. Pat Quinn and the state of Illinois," Stewart said while sitting with friends and family before the 10:30 a.m. presentation that began with the governor's arrival in the midst of the breakfast rush at the restaurant.

The proclamation, hailed as Quinn's celebration of Black History Month 2010, gave recognition to an indefatigable little woman, who contributed in no small measure to some of that history herself.

"Black History Month gives us a time to reflect upon those who have made significant positive contributions to the African-American community in Illinois, said Quinn, who touted West Side roots of his own during his presentation remarks. "I want to commend Edna Stewart for her remarkable impact on Illinois, devoting over four decades to serving delicious soul food and second chances on the West Side of Chicago."

Illinois Senator Rickey Hendon (D-5th), and Representatives Art Turner (D-9th) and LaShawn Ford (D-8th) also delivered



Edna Stewart, owner of Edna's Soul Food Restaurant on the West Side remarks after having Feb. 19, 2010 declared "Edna Stewart Day" in Illinois by gubernatorial proclamation.

comments during the event, as did Alderman Ed Smith (D-28th) and former Cook County Board President Bobbie Steele. The Rev. Jackson and U.S. Congressman Danny Davis (D-7th) sent proxies to convey their appreciation for Stewart and her steadfast commitment to her customers and community service.

Boldly laying claim to serving "The Best Biscuits on Earth," Edna's Soul Food Restaurant opened on March 9, in the turbulent spring of 1966. Just weeks earlier, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had moved his family into a dilapidated slum apartment in the North Lawndale neighborhood to highlight the plight of the poor in Northern cities.

The scouts for King's entourage quickly learned about new, little place on Kedzie Avenue that specialized in the Nobel Laureate's favorite fare—fried chicken and biscuits.

With that advantage, Edna's became a welcome refuge of comfort and hospitality for King and his freedom fighters after their long, sometimes harrowing marches through hostile and violent all-white Chicago neighborhoods to demand an end to the slums and ghettos blacks and the other poor were relegated to by unfair housing policies and practices under then Mayor Richard J. Daley's administration.

And since virtually feeding the Civil Rights

See Edna page 3

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

North Lawndale Community News
Winner of the 2005 SBC Beyond the Call Award

North Lawndale Community News
Winner of the 7th Congressional District 2004
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Presented By Congressman Danny K. Davis &
Residents of the 7th Congressional District

NLCN

2010 Focus

Youth & Reflection

The North Lawndale Community News has ten years has completed. Much has happened since October of 1999 when we put out our first newsletter. Many have contributed, supported, volunteered, written, taken photos, done research, and/or completed our workshops. We have helped many and many have helped us.

When the North Lawndale Community News began in October of 1999 as the North Lawndale Community News-letter, a focus was established. First, we thanked God for making the newsletter possible. We stated that confidence in the good of the people was the motivating force behind it. Many resources and events are available to us and our neighboring communities and the role of this newspaper is to provide you with that information. Since then, the newsletter has become a newspaper, larger in newsprint size and organizational size.

In 2001, our focus targeted the "Revival of the Family". Many of us were then and are now concerned about the state of the family in our community. We focused on providing helpful and useful suggestions to strengthen and restore vitality to the family unit.

In 2002, we targeted "Wholistic Wellness". Our hope was that everyone in our community join us as we moved in the direction of creating a balanced life in which family, work, recreation, community participation, and spiritual endeavors worked together in harmony.

In 2003, we targeted "Education and Training". As a community, we are dominated by results of low educational levels, high unemployment, a hostile economic environment, and unbearable crime and murder statistics. Still, we pushed forward to improve life in our community on many levels and by many people from within the community, as well as concerned people from outside the community.

In 2004, the North Lawndale Community News focused on helping our community acquire a better quality of life through higher levels of reading and responsible wealth creation.

In 2005, it was Technology, Business Development, and Employment. We chose to include a strong focus on providing information and articles on resources in those areas because there was a growing unemployment rate in North Lawndale and some of its neighboring communities that are among the highest of all the 77 Chicago communities.

In 2006, the primary focus for SHS/ NCLN was Health, Education, and Welfare. Health is essential to a good life. Education is necessary for the pursuit of happiness especially in an economy driven society. Welfare is unavoidable in showing man's humanity (love) toward man.

In 2007, the primary focus for SHS/ NCLN was People and Education. Our history of people is great. People have strived to create progress in our community, raised their families, created businesses, triumphed over adversaries, and worked in the community. All year long NCLN focused on articles related to people and education throughout our newspaper, weblog, and website that serves the Westside of Chicago.

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

In 2009, the primary focus for SHS/NCLN was 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 selfcare practices.

In 2010, our primary focus will be to live and reflect on our previous years of focus, as we progress to a better quality of life.

The North Lawndale 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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LANE CHANGE: Honest Dialogue Needed In Conversation on Race

A Commentary BY TRAVLES R. LANE - thetlane@yahoo.com

I would respond to the writer of the letter in last week's edition that called my previous LANE CHANGE comments that race still sets the tone of American politics "inappropriate" by pointing to two recent political developments.

First, the U.S. Supreme Court recently reversed nearly a century of legal precedents by deciding to permit corporations to contribute unlimited financial resources to promoting the politicians and politics supporting their interests.

Secondly, nearly half of Arizona's legislature is sponsoring a proposed law to require presidential candidates to submit documents proving they are qualified to be president if they wish to appear on the ballot in that state in 2012. The measure is openly supportive of the notion that President Obama has yet to satisfactorily prove he is a U.S. citizen by birth.

Again, before going any further, the views expressed in LANE CHANGE are my own and are in no way endorsed by the publisher or supporters of the North Lawndale Community Newspaper.

Nor are they intended to target or offend anyone personally or any ethnic group prejudicially. I have no agenda or ax to grind against any body or any group of bodies. What I say here is simply my honest interpretation of what I see and know from my 51 years of lifelong experience as a Black American in the United States.

And I welcome any debate regarding my comments in any forum offering the opportunity for a constructive exchange of views for and/or against what I say in this space.

That said, I recount the two recent occurrences above merely to highlight my earlier point that little has truly changed in America since slavery when it comes to the instinctive emotions of fear and insecurity that race provokes.

The reality of a black president is spawning a white backlash against government itself as the same toxic environment of fear and insecurity that accompanies injustice anywhere still runs rampant in the United States and is growing ever more virulent as I write. Not because this country founded by Anglo-Saxons has moved beyond race,

but rather because today, government in America wears the face of a black male, the ultimate American boogeyman.

There is a growing, polarizing tension enveloping our nation between the races because of Obama's election and the looming fight for the White House in 2012. And any position denying that fact is not based in current or past American history.

In my opinion, the trauma to the national consciousness wrought by the race relations writ into the U.S. Constitution is akin to the damaged done to Jaycee Dugard by her kidnapper and rapist for the 18 years of her imprisonment, which included giving birth to the daughters Phillip Garrido, her tormentor.

Today Dugard is free of the beast who degraded her humanity and for nearly two decades, stole her and her heritage from the home and life she knew as a young child.

But do any of us who are aware of this young woman's tragic circumstances think she will ever truly "move beyond" the damaged done to her life simply because she now has her own responsibility for it? Can her children ever truly live beyond the truth of their own tortured heritage?

Only God knows if they may eventually heal to a degree that the knowledge of their experiences will become a less determining factor in their futures. Verily, only an escape from reality itself could even attempt to wipe the slate clean.

Each of the innocent victims in that tragedy will probably require years of intense clinical therapy to successfully cope with what they have already endured and the demons they will surely face going forward. Their healing will be found in their ability to cope with reality of their experience, rather than by avoiding the awful truth of its occurrence.

Thus, it must be also with black

and white Americans in facing the violent and destructive legacy of race relations the United States—a hundred years ago or just yesterday. And here too, only the intense clinical therapy of an honest, nonjudgmental and apolitical dialogue between the victimized descendants—both black and white—of American Slavery and

its aftermath up to even today, can begin to effectively counteract the insidious fear and insecurity that continue to define the 21st Century national state of race relations in this country. And as it is in any attempt to cope with an unpleasant fact of life, it never helps to deny the problem exists.

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CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH



(back row, left to right) John W. Rowe, Exelon Chairman and CEO, Peter Fazio, ComEd Director and Partner, Schiff Hardin, LLP, Frank M. Clark, ComEd Chairman and CEO, Dr. Alvin Poussaint, psychiatry professor at Harvard University, Anne Pramaggiore, ComEd President and COO, John Rogers, ComEd Director and Chairman and CEO, Ariel Investments and Leroy Barnes, President of Exelon African-American Members Association, joined students from the Rowe-Clark Math & Science Academy in West Humboldt Park to celebrate Black History Month. Dr. Poussaint spoke to the students about current issues affecting African-Americans and the importance of energizing younger generations to live out their potential. Photo courtesy of ComEd

Edna from front page

and Chicago Freedom movements during King's time on the West Side, Stewart's fine cooking has satisfied the soul food palate of all who has eaten at the small, cozy eatery, now located just east of the Madison-Kedzie intersection. Rev. Jackson and Rosa Parks are among the many Civil Rights Era luminaries who also whetted their appetites at Edna's during a time when many of those she fed had only IOU slips to pay her with.

"Those kids would never have any money, recalled Stewart, who was joined by her son Melvin, sisters Alice McCommon and Judy Mitchell, a retired circuit court judge, and brother Sam Mitchell Jr. and a host of other family and friends to celebrate her very own day. "We had a large jar in the place where they would put IOU slips in, and we said we would redeem them later.

"But we never worried about the jar. We knew they didn't have the money. But I just appreciated being able to give something back to the movement for what they were doing for us during those days."

Today the 71-year-old Stewart is battling cancer as she continues to build on a legacy that includes offering more than 100 former criminal offenders jobs during her 44 years in business. And Edna's Restaurant remains a neighborhood institution for good eating and good service as well as a meeting place where the current Mayor Daley and many

others of Chicago's and nearly all of the West Side's major movers and shakers come to discuss "big ideas."

However, "It's the small people she has helped who are the real testaments to Edna's dedication to service," her brother, Sam Mitchell Jr. said in a conversation before the governor arrived.

"I mean, [Edna] has received a lot of honors and awards from powerful people all over the country. She has served a lot of dignitaries over the years. But she has remained consistent in that she appreciates everybody the same.

"From the president on down to the janitor of the building, she always treated them all with the same quality of concern and service."

"I've had a good run," Stewart remarked when summing up the history she has made and supported during the remarkable endurance record of Edna's Soul Food Restaurant.

Recognizing the achievement her very own day in Illinois as primarily the culmination of her "pleasure in meeting and serving people," Stewart added the challenge of working 20-hour days, 365 days a year for four decades to consistently provide good, quality food and service to her many customers over years has been more than compensated for by the reward of "just being able to do it after 44 years—and still satisfy people.

"That's what it has all about."

Special feature: 2010 OSCAR PREDICTIONS

David Schultz, film critic

It appears the handicapping this year's Academy award winner; there are a majority of sure bets among the nominees. Even with a couple of forecast surprises; But if one go by the Academy's track record and reasoning behind their choices. One can never underestimate the award committee for this annual event that airs its 82nd edition, Sunday March 7 over ABC-TV

Briefly, I predict with a certain amount of confidence that director James Cameron's "Avatar" will make up some of the difference for not winning best picture and best director, By copying most of the technical honors.

There is no doubt (for once) in anyone's mind that Mo'Nique is a "shoo-in" to walk away with an Oscar for best supporting actress for her terrifying and sad performance as the abusive mother in "Precious".

For best director, there is a two way race between the "ex's" Once married to each other, now allegedly cheering for the other to win. I predict Kathryn Bigelow will become a household name to win for her Iraqi war drama, "The Hurt Locker". She deserves to win over her ex, James Cameron for "Avatar".

And yet, there is a slight chance each could cancel the other out in this year of Obama for a literal "dark horse" to slip in; Lee Daniels for "precious" Only the third black director to receive a best director nomination behind Spike Lee and John Singleton.

Sandra Bullock deserves to win over Meryl Streep for best actress. Simply because Streep will probably be nominated for something else next year. Bullock finally found her foray in "The Blind Side" than those fluffy romantic comedies she's been doing lately.

The Academy Awards already has a sentimental favorite that is usually a comeback story or considered Hollywood royalty. Therefore, I suspect Jeff Bridges for "Crazy

Heart" will win for Best actor, that last year Mickey Rourke should have got but lost for "The Wrestler" While preventing the one I would really like to see win Jeremy Renner for "The Hurt Locker".

Anyway, here's the overview of my annual Oscar prediction for 2010:

Best Picture: "The Hurt Locker"

Best Director: Kathryn Bigelow for "The Hurt Locker"

Best Actor: Jeff Bridges for "Crazy Heart" over my personal choice: Jeremy Renner for "The Hurt Locker"

Best Actress: Sandra Bullock for "The Blind Side"

Best Supporting Actor: Christoph Waltz for "Inglourious Basterds" (His evil Nazi portrayal is this year's Javier Bardem for "No Country for Old Men")

Best Supporting Actress: Mo'Nique for "Precious"

Best Animated Feature: "Up"

Best Original Screenplay: Mark Boal for "The Hurt Locker"

Best Foreign Language Film: "The White Ribbon" (Germany)

Best Original Score: Michael Giacchino for "Up"

Best Documentary: "The Cove"

Best Visual Effects: "Avatar"

Best Cinematography: "Avatar"

Best Original Song: "The Weary Kind" from "Crazy Heart" probably will win over my personal choice: "Almost There" from The Princess and the Frog"

Best Costume: "The Young Victoria" could best out "Nine"

Best Art Direction: "The Imagination of Doctor Parnassus"

Best Makeup: "The Young Victoria"

Best Costume Design: "Nine"

Regenerating New Life at Rose of Sharon M.B. Church

There's a new kind of Pastor in North Lawndale, her name is Pastor Sharon Grant. She has been called to the low-low and the very-low-low income residents of our community. If you have had it really, really hard and want to graduate from the school of hard knocks then Pastor Sharon Grant is right for you.

Herself a graduate of the streets and all that with from a life situation of gang banging, drinking and drugging and being almost beat to death by our enemy Satan. Pastor Sharon Grant wants to help build a new community, this writer having looked into her eyes, and felt her caring spirit she earned three (3) stars *** for sincerity.

In her informative brochure Pastor Grant says..."I grew-up on the West Side of Chicago. "Street gangs and drugs took over and seemed to run the neighborhood"...

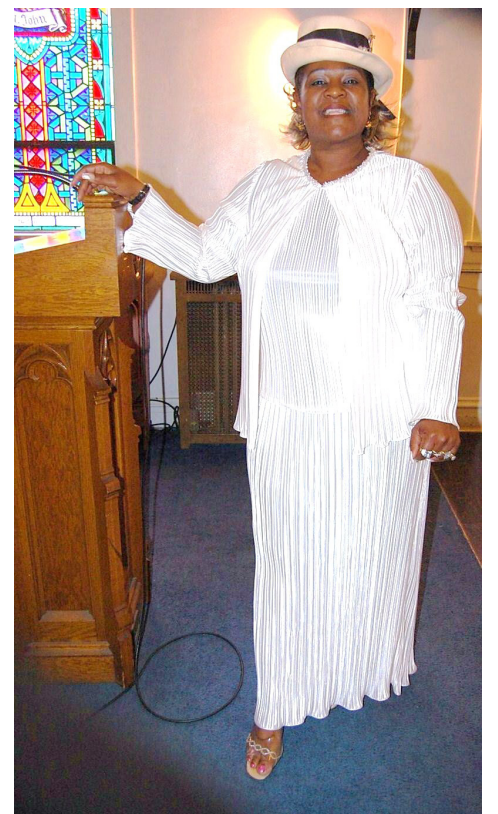
..."almost everyone I grew-up with is either dead, in jail, or is mentally ill"...

Pastor Sharon Grant understands the moral dilemma facing our teenagers, that they have a choice..."You can make \$5,000 a week selling drugs easily, so why would you want to work for \$7.00 an hour"?...

Some of her objectives are:

- Work with group homes in the neighborhood
- Conduct workshops
- Be a Motivational Speaker
- Continue to work with the City of Elgin's - Mental Health Unit
- Speaking at Correctional Facilities in Chicago
- Help put families back together
- Complete her remaining course requirements for a Bachelors' Degree in Ministerial Studies

Pastor Grants' specialty is in using versatile methods that enable persons to grow mentally



stronger and spiritually wholesome.

In 1999 Pastor Grant founded the Grant Foundation in order to help women in need that also has a cleaning service that will provide employment for women.

This is when she began her motivational speaking that has helped so many persons over the years. Pastor Sharon Grant has received numerous awards that mean a lot to her, especially the: Hunger Fighter Award from the Chicago Anti-hunger Federation and the Bet Entrepreneur of the Year award from the Small

See Rose page 5

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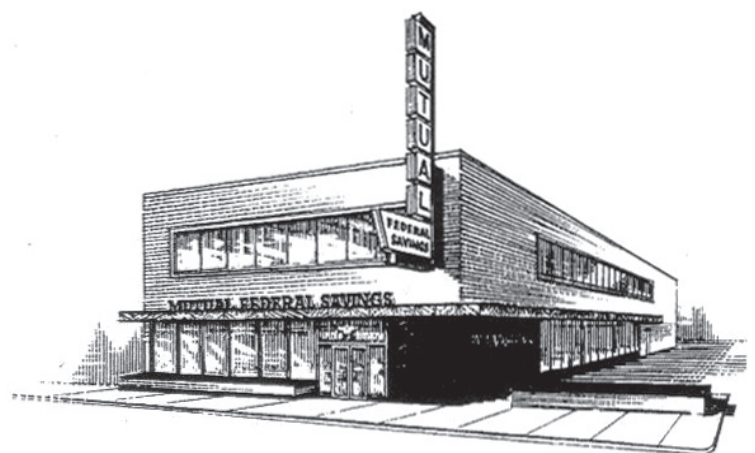
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ITS ALL ABOUT US: 2010 Census in Schools

The U.S. Census Bureau has created a Census in Schools program called 2010 Census: It's About Us. The program will provide educators with resources to teach the nation's students about the importance of the census so children can help deliver this message to their families. The program will engage America's youth to help ensure every child and every household member is counted in 2010.

Who will the Census in Schools program reach?

The program will reach the following audiences within the 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa:

- Every public, private and tribal school, through printed and Web-based materials
- Home schools, through Web-based materials
- Students in kindergarten through 12th grade
- School administrators
- Teachers
- Households with school-age children
- Educational organizations

What does the Census in Schools program offer educators and students?

Age-specific educational materials for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Materials include: maps displaying population counts and other demographic information; and lesson plans grouped by grade and correlated to national standards for math, geography and language arts. Materials that integrate census information with social studies and community participation also will be available.

Kits for principals containing maps, a Census in Schools program brochure, information about online lessons, quick-start teaching guides and family take-home kits.

Online resources for teachers, including lesson plans, family take-home kits, event ideas and census data to teach students and their families about the census' role in U.S. history, current events and more. The interactive, user-friendly Census in Schools Web site features memory games, word finds, state facts, coloring pages, research project ideas and more.

Opportunities to discuss and practice civic responsibility through five 15-minute lessons, available online, during a Census in Schools Week celebration.

What do Census in Schools program lessons entail?

Lessons are designed to:

Familiarize students with the census questionnaire

Help children build map literacy by teaching students how to read different kinds of maps and how to create their own maps.

Immerse students in census data and encourage them to collect data on their own.

Challenge students to get to know their communities and think about community needs.

Make it easy for educators to include the materials in their lesson plans.

How can you use the Census in Schools program?

Administrators and educators:

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Teach students about the history and importance of the nation's census and underscore how a complete count benefits their communities.

Help students understand that the census is about them, their families and their neighbors, not just about people in other places.

Ask Parent Teacher Associations and Parent Teacher Organizations to get involved in raising awareness of the 2010 Census.

Spread the news about the 2010 Census through school Web sites, newsletters and parent-teacher conferences.

Provide students with family take-home pages to promote participation in the 2010 Census and initiate a family dialogue about the benefits of being counted.

Educational organizations:

Become an official Census Bureau partner for the 2010 Census.

Send notices about the Census in Schools program to your members.

Publish articles about the program in newsletters and on your organization's Web site.

Encourage school administrators to endorse the Census in Schools program nationwide.

For more information about the Census in Schools program, please visit census.gov/schools/. For more information about the 2010 Census, please visit 2010census.gov.

Rose frompage 4

Business Benefit Association (SBBA). She is currently a member off the Extraordinary women Ministries and a big supporter for: Feed the Children.

In Pastor Grants brochure she states these Key Points-Read slowly

1. You must kill your old way of thinking. That's what got you in a lot of trouble. You must not think one way but know that your way is not always right.

2. You can change, but it is going to take some effort and some work. It did not take overnight to get in the position you are in ..so it will take a while for you to get well.

3. We are limited a human beings but there is help so feel free to ask for help. E-mail me or call me personally. I will see to your need being met. You can also write to me. I know how it is to be in need of help and there is no one there to help. Allow me to come into your world and help you. We are here to help one another, you alone cannot do it... Life is not to something to be sad, unhappy, or filled with anxiety...Remember, we all have made mistakes, it's okay. That is something called life so stop blaming yourself for everything that

has gone wrong in your life.

Here are just a few methods that Pastor Grant recommends to get you on your way to improving your life for the rest of your life:

- Remove yourself from negative speaking people

- Stop struggling for nothing
- Respect yourself
- Start taking time out for yourself
- It's ok to start over

Pastor Grant advises us that by you using these few methods they will help you to soar to new heights in your life. Now just imagine how far you can go with her lifesaving workshops? Pastor Grant's workshops have helped the elderly, married couples, widows, teens and single persons, those saddled with addictions and mental health problems. Pastor Sharon Grant said:

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AT THE FLICKS

David H. Schultz, film critic

THE CRAZIES (**1/2) A descent revision of George Romero’s 1973 film that reshapes the initial premise of a biological plague that hits a small town and the townspeople’s rebellion against the Army that tries to contain them

The film is structured somewhat like the original; when during a little league baseball game in the tiny Iowa township of Ogden Marsh. Sheriff Dutten (Timothy Olyphant) and his slightly redneck deputy, Russell (Joe Anderson) observe and tries to halt a former town drunk who walks onto the play field with a shotgun and a blank facial expression.

When he raises the gun, the sheriff is forced to shoot him dead. He thinks the man was drunk. But the medical examiner reveals there was no alcohol in his body. Soon after, a farmer with the same facial expression locks his wife and son in the closet and sets their house on fire,

Later, some local hunters happen to find a dead pilot in the swamp water without his plane. Facing three deaths within 48 hrs, the sharp minded sheriff leads a boating investigation that uncovers the sunken airplane underneath their boat.

Sensing there is something wrong with the water, Dutten borrows a moments from “Jaws: when the town mayor refuses to agree with the sheriff’s request to cut off the water supply from the lake. But Dutten does it anyway, but it’s too late.

Soon after the film shifts into high gear when the US army troops wearing gas mask invade the town explaining nothing. They begin to quarantine the residents that leads to Sheriff Dutten being separated from his pregnant doctor- wife, Judy (Radha Mitchell) whose been taken to a makeshift hospital to be examined.

It soon becomes apparent that this unexplained epidemic has the military unable to tell the difference between who is contaminated and whose not So they just shoot to kill anyone that walking around and driving a vehicle that wasn’t booted , In order to contain the infected resident from spreading..

While in the makeshift hospital where women are strapped to beds for the night; Judy and her friend and medical assistant, Becca (Danielle Panabaker) manage to delayed being killed by one of these “crazies”, in time to be rescued by Sheriff Dutten and his deputy, Russell.

From this, the foursome begin their survivalist

odyssey; trying to find a form of transportation that might pass the military checkpoints along the highway to escape the quarantined town. This allows for creative moments of shocking danger, gore and off beat humor.

Such as Sheriff Dutten’s encounter with one of the crazies in the hospital with an electric hand saw that runs amuck toward him Later followed by a car wash sequence of terror and amusement that are clever modification over the original.

Along with the real reason behind the epidemic that was different from the original film; revealed as a bio war testing error done by the U.S. military. And climaxes with the sheriff and his wife in a race against time in a truck before the town gets nuked. These improvements to the original premise subsequently offer the kind of moral warning of what we are doing to ourselves.

Full of shocks and bloody gore, “The Crazies” is a smart and scary horror film that manages to be made better over the initial version; with an apocalyptic approach in this survivalist odyssey more entertaining to watch. **R; 88min. An Overture Films Release –Presented at selected theaters**

COP OUT (*1/2) What was intended to be a throwback to those 1980’s interracial buddy team action comedies that started with “48Hrs.” through “Lethal Weapon” and I thought was buried after the Chris Tucker- Jackie Chan disappointment, Rush Hour 3”

This silly, retread offering, “Cop Out” turns into a “bust” of its own; that also happens to star one of the movie genre’s exponents, Bruce Willis who teamed with Damon Wayans in director Tony Scott’s 1991’s “The Last Boy Scout”.

Now, “Cop Out”; is suppose to represent a modern transition of the buddy movie genre into today’s “bro-mance” action comedy. In which Bruce Willis and Tracy Morgan are clearly no Riggs and Murtaugh portraying a 9 yr. veteran police detective duo, Jimmie Monroe and Paul Hodges who bicker and complain like a married couple while chasing the bad guys.

Well, excuse me that label doesn’t change what their characters resemble already while trying to bust a Mexican drug operation in Brooklyn. Because the duo are partnered enough to know each other’s personal problems.

Morgan who follows the character formula of the



Tracy Morgan and Bruce Willis in Cop Out

buddy movie genre as the hyped up, loud mouth, jive talking black who happens here to be paranoia with fear and concern over his wife’s suspected infidelity with the next door neighbor

Willis keeping the straight face has the problem of paying for his daughter’s upcoming wedding that would help clean up his “dead beat dad” image with his ex-wife who’s re-married to a wealthy husband ready to foot the bill.

But the financial plan is in jeopardy, when the cop duo happens to botch a drug stakeout that gets them suspended from pay and duty for 30 days. So Jimmie, whose also a hobbyist has to try to sell his valuable baseball card to cover his daughter’s wedding.

However, when Jimmie begins to make the transaction to sell the card to a sports memorabilia store owner. The store is robbed right under Hodges standing outside by one of two men played by Sean William Scott as a glib talking cat burglar, Dave. Whom I suppose is the new Joe Pesci from “Lethal Weapon 2”

Scott’s character ends up somehow becomes an

unofficial buddy to the cops in their quest to recover the card that was sold in exchange for drugs to a ruthless Latin drug kingpin, “Poor Boy” (Juan Hernandez) whose hires with intend to double cross Monroe and Hodges to retrieve his jacked Benz that has a valuable and sexy cargo in its trunk that witness a gangland shooting and possess an incriminating ledger on a flash drive connected to a crucifix necklace

The film gets more ridiculous that’s only occasionally amusing. It’s not wonder that allegedly Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg were once attacked to this film project. But even stranger than that. Actor-director Kevin Smith of “Silent Bob” fame who recently was in the news fort being too fat for a Southwest airline flight and who last directed the 2008 comedy “Zack and Miri Make a Porno”.

Smith obviously knew he was working from a bad script, but he had an obligation to make it better. Instead, Smith makes it worse by increasing the body count among the Latinos in stereotypical drug and thug gangster roles that won’t make this movie endearing

See Flicks page 7

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Flicks frompage 6

to this sector of the minority audience

Another backward and blatant example of minority misrepresentation without character balance that does nothing but bore us with disdain for the lack of consideration in the script and direction. **R; 90min. A Warner Bros. Pictures Release**
— Presented at selected theaters

THE GHOST WRITER (*)**
"The Ghost Writer" is a shallow yet fairly intriguing exercise from exiled filmmaker Roman Polanski that feels too drawn out for too long in the first half. While begins to show some interest and energy in its last hour that almost salvages this modest effort with its diverse cast.

Based on Robert Harris' novel who co wrote the script with Polanski that bears possible similarities to a real life political scandal. The film begins without fanfare at a ferry boat dock. Where the dead body of Michael McAra washes ashore. McAra had just finished the manuscript memoirs on controversial, former British Prime minister, Adam Lang (well played by Pierce Brosnan).

The American publisher who purchase the right for \$10 million are in a rush to recoup their money. But they first need to find another ghost writer to punch up McAra's tedious treatment.

Ewan McGregor seems to sleep walk part of his role of a successful British ghost writer whose awoken for this once in a lifetime opportunity from his agent; Rick (Jon Berthal) who meets up with him for an interview at U.S. based Rhinehart Publishing Co.

Where one British executive doesn't think he's right for the job. But publishing boss, John Maddox (played by a bald headed James Belushi) who questions McGregor, along with Lang's D.C. attorney (Timothy Hutton) who later gives him a different manuscript to look over.

Regardless, Maddox hires "the Ghost" because he can be quick to meet the one month deadline.

Still, "The Ghost" (Ewan McGregor) should have realized he was getting into more than he bargained for. When he's mugged outside his apartment building by two motorcyclists for the transcript they thought belong to McAra that was given

him by Lang's attorney.

This sets a tone, we hardly feel because Polanski usually doesn't distinguish himself enough in his films. Of course, this also sets Polanski apart from most filmmakers. And "The Ghost Writer" is no exception.

More character driven to develop its story. "The Ghost" arrives at the coastal retreat to find McAra's locked manuscript and Lang tightly guarded under around the clock security.

The film begins to get interesting when the news media exposes Lang's involvement in authorized secret torture and war crimes that leads "The Ghost" into an investigation that shows his ghost writer predecessor discovered something incriminating against Lang that is somewhere revealed in the manuscript that "The Ghost" is being rushed by the publisher to complete in half the initial time.

"The Ghost Writer" is a film about deception and corruption without the espionage edge Probably because director Roman Polanski doesn't inject much distinctive style or substance into the proceedings. The film's first half that sets up the characters and background the situation that leads into The Ghost's investigation is a little mysterious but more pedestrian. Until the performances begin to click when McGregor's character travel to meet with Paul Emmett (Tom Wilkinson) who acts like he doesn't the answers when he does. And soon after their visit has "The Ghost" followed.

Then an assassination attempt occurs at the airport on Lang's life by a disgruntled British man who tries to pump "The Ghost" earlier in the film for Lang's whereabouts at a pub.

But its after The Ghost" completes his work on the manuscript that leads to the publishing firm hosting a reception. Where "The Ghost" realizes what McAra discovered is written within the first ages of the manuscript.

"The Ghost Writer" is far from being a bad or boring film, just a film under Polanski's somewhat flat direction that should have been better and memorable than it is. **R; 128min. A Summit Entertainment Picture release**
— Presented at selected theaters

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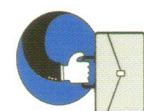
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1/16	Word 2007 Basic To Advance
1/23	Excel 2007 Basic To Advance
1/30	PowerPoint 2007 Basic To Advance
2/6	Access 2007 Basic to Advance
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