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

## WESTSIDE NAACP HONORS SEVEN IN 2012 FREEDOM FUND BANQUET 300 Members Gather At Crowne Plaza Hotel For Awards Gala

Story And Photos By Travles R. Lane



**Freedom Fund Honorees:** Westside Branch NAACP recognized (from left) Dr. Willie Wilson, Joshua Mercer, Bishop Jennie Pettis, Louis Carr, Cook County Clerk Dorothy Brown and Rep. LaShawn K. Ford, joined onstage by comedienne Adele Givens (3rd from r).

Joyfully affirming its connection to more than a century of striving to improve the standing of America's people of color, the Westside Branch Chapter of the NAACP held its annual Freedom Fund Banquet Saturday (May 12) inside Chicago's Crowne Plaza Hotel at 733 W. Halsted St.

With a host of local dignitaries among the more than 300 attendees, the dining room gala, themed, "Affirming America's Promise," honored seven Chicago African American achievers, including Cook County Clerk Dorothy Brown and Illinois Rep. LaShawn K. Ford (D-8th). The program, which also saw some of the honorees among 14 people who added their names and contributions to the Westside Branch's membership after the awards ceremonies were completed.

"Here on the Westside, we are working really, really hard to keep affirming America's promise," 3rd Vice President Deborah Williams implored

as she outlined the need for numbers. Family Altar Evangelist Baptist (E.B.) Church founder and pastor, Bishop Jennie I. Pettis, veteran insurance underwriter Larry C. Williams and Black Entertainment Television (BET) Media Sales President Louis Carr were also honored, as were Chicago Public School teacher Joshua Mercer and Dr. Willie Wilson, an accomplished entrepreneur and the founder and owner of Omar Medical Supplies in University Park.

"We've got a lot of work to do," Williams told the audience as she issued the call to membership. "(America) gave us this promise they call home ownership; then they took it away. They gave us a promise that we would have equal education..., but that didn't work out either.

"They gave us the right to vote. Guess what, in 2012, they are trying to take that away too. So we need all the members we can get to fight for our

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## LOCAL POST OFFICE ENDURES SCARE

*Chained Empty Briefcase Provides  
Early Morning Anxiety*

Travles R. Lane



**Safe, for now:** The Mary Alice Henry post office got early morning scare Thursday from an empty briefcase.

Having recently received a reprieve from the fear of getting closed, workers at a local Westside post office were scared for a while early Thursday (May 17) morning that they might get blown to bits.

The brief scare from a briefcase created some NATO-sized anxieties for the staff of the Mary Alice Henry branch of the United States Postal Service at

4222 W. Madison St., but after the potential threat was quickly defused by Chicago Police bomb squad technicians, according to Chicago District spokesman Mark Reynolds. The question of the facility's long term future, despite the recent decision by postal officials to foreclose on closing thousands of local post

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## Congressmen, Community Activist, And Concerned Citizens Stop Metra In Their Tracks

Tali Bakhit



Photo of the Metra Rally. Photo courtesy of Creative Commons.

Congressman Rush, Davis, And Jackson stood side by side with concerned citizens during a rally to stop Metra from bidding on the Englewood Flyover bid. The rally took place in front of Metra's headquarters at 547 W. Jackson on Friday, May 11th as a follow up to the prior weeks rally. Community and community leaders rallied due to what was believed to be an unfair contracting bid that had been introduced to the Englewood Community, called the Englewood Flyover bid. The bid was for 133 million, with only one African American contractor being offered a little less than 1% at \$110,000.

Political Activist Gerard Mooror

say "This is an insult----People need not be afraid to unite about issues that are contrary to the uplifting of their communities whether it's economic, social, or political, this is the reason why we are here." Several hundred people marched, held signs, and sang--"Cut Us In OR Cut It Out." The rally was lead by Congressman Bobby Rush----Congressman for the 1st Congressional District of Illinois, along with Congressman Danny Davis and Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. As a result of the unfair bidding which was in line for the voting process on Thursday May 9th----the three Congressman and

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

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

# NLCN 2012 Focus Health and Education

Twelve years have past since the New Millenium scare of the year 2000, a time of uncertainty. In 1999, NLCN began by thanking God for making this newsletter possible. Much has happened since October of 1999 when we first published the North Lawndale Community News more than eleven years ago. Many have contributed, supported, volunteered, written, taken photos, done research, and/or completed our workshops. We have helped many and many have helped us. Health is essential to a good life. Education is necessary for the pursuit of happiness in an economy driven society.

In 2001, our focus targeted the "Revival of the Family". In 2002, we targeted "Wholistic Wellness". In 2003, we targeted "Education and Training". 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. In 2006, the primary focus for SHS/ NCLN was Health, Education, and Welfare. In 2007, the primary focus for SHS/ NLCN was People and Education. In 2008, the primary focus for was the Church, Financial Literacy, and Technology. In 2009, the primary focus for SHS/NLCN was HEALTH & THE ECONOMY. In 2010, our primary focus was to live and reflect on our previous years of focus, as we progress to a better quality of life. In 2011 Health and Education.

So many things remain a high priority in our life. As we struggle to enjoy life, many have neglected the necessary choices that preserve and extend a healthy and abundant, spirit, mind, and body. So along with health, there is education (knowing) and the need to have the resources to act upon the knowledge for a better quality of life.

The North Lawndale newspaper was and is created to help fulfill the mission of Strategic Human Services. That mission is to provide information on resources and events that improved the lifestyle of individuals and families. This is our primary objective that includes all of the sub-objectives that help to reach that primary objective. There is a saying that if your're not sure where your're going, your're liable to end up someplace else- and not even know it.

Even though tough times are among us setting positive objectives and staying committed to them will be the focus of our news for this 2011 year.

## Writer's Meetings!!

The North Lawndale Community News  
Where: 1211 S. Western, Suite 203

**Time 6:00pm**

**Date May 17, 2012**

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## 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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**WHERE: House Of Prayer**  
 (3535 W. Roosevelt/Central Park)  
**TIME: 6pm to 8pm**  
 (6PM PRESS CONFERENCE)

**(INVITED POLITICIANS)**

- Congressman Jackson (2nd District)
- State Rep. LaShawn K. Ford
- State Rep. Art Turner, Jr.
- Alderman Ervin (28th Ward)
- Alderman Burnett (27th Ward)
- Alderman Chandler (24th Ward)
- Senator Elect Patricia Watkins
- Senator Collins
- Congressman Rush (1st District)
- Black Caucus Chairman of Chicago
- Alderman Brookins (21st Ward)
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P.O. BOX 24146 | CHICAGO, IL 60624 | 773-587-6018

**2012 North Lawndale****Community Benefits Agreement (CBA)  
FOR UCAN**

On behalf of the Greater Lawndale Black Chamber of Commerce, we draft this CBA with the over-all support of the North Lawndale Concerned Citizens Consortium as a project-specific, proposed agreement to be negotiated. We've met to discuss and analyze the relationships that are necessary to embrace and work with new corporate, business and social entities that exist or are interested in becoming a part of the North Lawndale community. This draft represents the collective voice of the community which will continue into infinity on behalf of the community. This agreement supports a broad community coalition that outlines the project's contributions to the community and ensures community support for the project. This CBA would be considered legally binding and to be incorporated into the developer's agreement.

This CBA is prepared to ensure a win-win development strategy; meaningful, up-front communication between the developer UCAN and the GLBCC/North Lawndale Residents (our constituents). This broad community coalition agreement decreases developers' risk while maximizing the positive impact of development on local residents and our economic structure. The developer benefits from active community support of the project, and community members gain when the project responds to our needs.

This CBA is supported by long-term, broad-based groups with deep roots in the community. The Coalitions represent a broad array of stakeholders, such as politicians, local residents across the income spectrum, representatives from labor, businesses, environmental and faith groups, and affordable housing advocates.

Lawndale residents recognize that high-quality new development is a critical and necessary part of addressing the issues of poverty; however, we seek an assertive role in shaping that development. We realize that no one wins if the project fails and there is no economic impact for the residents.

Why we feel a CBA is essential to our community for the follow reasons:

- Community benefits tools maximize returns on local government investment (federal, state and local funds, TIF, MMTX) in development.
- Community benefits programs can transform regions through stronger, more equitable economies.
- Community benefits help generate public support for economic development projects.
- Delivering community benefits is smart business.
- CBAs historically have been effective in holding developers accountable for their promises to local governments and residents.
- In poverty stricken communities, public input and buy in results in better projects that benefit the whole community and attract local customers.
- Community benefits will be part of our economic strategy and growth agenda.

**MEET CONGRESSMAN  
DANNY K. DAVIS**

(&amp; THE 7TH CONGRESSIONAL DIST. BUSINESS GROUP)

**AT THE  
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**TO DISCUSS:**  
**STATE PROGRAM CUTS.CLOSINGS**  
**JOBS.CONTRACTS.GRANTS**

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(Metra Fly-over, etc)
- Prison Closings  
(Tamms, Pontiac, Stateville)
- HUD Sec 3 Jobs Act  
(Low/Very Low Income People)
- Fight to keep Program Funding  
(Child Care, Youth Programs)
- Fight to keep Re-entry Programs  
(Crossroads)

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AGREEMENT  
From  
UCAN**

**For Info:**  
**(312)**  
**905-3962**

**COMMUNITY HERE'S YOUR CHANCE  
 TO BE HEARD & HELPED  
 "YOUR PRESENCE IS POWER"**

Below are the line items in which we would like seriously considered and reflected as an agreement from the developer (UCAN).

1. In a supportive role of African American owned businesses in North Lawndale to have an opportunity to compete for existing and all new opportunities; we request a list of goods and services that's supported and procured by UCAN. African American owned businesses will be given priority consideration on a negotiated basis for providing the goods and service needs of the UCAN organization.
2. Under the data profile provided, UCAN currently treat and house more than 80% African American children. We are asking for the employment percentage of the new facility to fairly reflect representation of the demographics of the clients and community you serve on both Executive, Superior/Management and non Supervisor/Management positions.
3. Expansion of advisory board seats to add North Lawndale residents.
4. Community to be actively involved in the selection of the Prime Contractor.
5. Budget break down of the construction project.
6. GLBCC becomes the monitoring and compliance, technical assistance and capacity building organization to insure local contract participation.
7. 50% North Lawndale residency participation on the construction jobs in the areas skilled/non-skilled.
8. Paid training for residency participation on various construction trades.
9. Annual set-aside fund towards growing and generating new African American businesses under the GLBCC/Alderman Michael D. Chandler (Dollar amount to be negotiated).

**"UCAN'T START A \$30,000,000  
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 WITHOUT A COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT"**

- Mark Carter



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### 24th Ward Alderman Michael D. Chandler ★ "News You Can Use" Report ★

#### 24th Ward Alderman Michael D. Chandler Encourages Ex-Offenders To Attend Upcoming Expungement Summit Sponsored By Clerk of Circuit Court of Cook County Dorothy Brown

For Immediate Release: (Chicago) 24th Alderman Michael D. Chandler is strongly encouraging all eligible ex-offenders to attend the upcoming Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit sponsored by Clerk of the Circuit Court Dorothy Brown to be held on Saturday, June 2, 2012 at the Apostolic Church of God, located at 6320 S. Dorchester Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. Registration for the summit begins at 8:30 a.m and will conclude at 6:00 p.m.

The summit is focused on providing services such as free legal services, application and filing assistance to ex-offenders who seek to have prior adult or juvenile felony or misdemeanor offenses expunged or sealed. Information will also be provided for clemency and certificate information. Other on-site information regarding child support, identity theft protection, and job training, housing and other community services resources will also be available.

"I am proud to work with Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown and other local elective officials, community, legal and social service organizations throughout the city in this effort, stated Alderman Chandler. "We need to provide every resource we can to reintegrate ex-offenders back into our communities in a positive, productive and effective manner. This expungement summit and the information that will be provided to ex-offenders at this activity is a significant step in achieving this goal."

Information that ex-offenders need to have with them for assistance at the summit is the following: 1) Drug Test Results needed for persons with felony drug convictions. Test should be taken before June 1st so results can be available for June 2nd summit; 2) Copy of Adult Rap Sheet; 3) Copy of Juvenile Rap Sheet; and 4) For Suburban Cases, obtain copy of criminal case information from the local police agency where your arrest occurred by requesting a Right to Access and Review.

Costs of Fees for depositions and expungement/sealing filings that can be completed at the Summit include: 1) Adult Certified Dispositions (\$9.00 per case); 2) Adult Expungement/Sealing & Illinois State Police Fee (\$120.00) per petition; and 3) Juvenile Expungement & Illinois State Police Fee (\$124.00) per petition.

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# ALDERMAN PATIENT WITH EMANUEL

*Ervin Waiting to See How His 28<sup>th</sup> Ward Can*

*Reap Benefits*

Travles R. Lane



As the sounds of progress could be heard from his office at 249 N. Pulaski Rd. last Thursday (May 12), 28<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Jason C. Ervin said recently he remains in a "wait-and-see" holding pattern when it comes to evaluating his now year-long relationship with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

The new mayor, now busy preparing the Windy City to host the NATO summit and deal with the large protests accompanying the event, marked his first year in office Wednesday (May 15).

Ervin, 38, succeeded his longtime mentor, the retired Ed Smith in November of 2010, and took office a few months before Emanuel won election on a super majority of the 2011 mayoral ballot. Ervin also cruised to a landslide win last year for his City Council seat. The former Maywood city manager said he respects the citywide constituency that voted in the new mayor. So Emanuel deserves a chance to deliver on his own vision for what City Hall thinks the people need and want.

"I'm willing to give the mayor the opportunity to put his plans in place and judge

them on the merits," Ervin said during an interview in the midst of his weekly ward night meetings with constituents. "Right now, there have been several issues that we have agreed on. But that doesn't mean by any means that I plan to be a rubber stamp for him."

"My interest is in doing all I can to move an agenda forward that ultimately benefits the 28<sup>th</sup> Ward. And I recognize that not all of what (Emanuel) wants to do will necessarily involve our interests, I am more interested in making sure we don't miss out on opportunities available to us. So, yes, I think the mayor deserves a chance."

Identifying the stripping, repair and resurfacing of a stretch of Pulaski Road that was ongoing just outside his ward office as a small step toward the kinds of joint investment projects needed to improve life quality in the 28<sup>th</sup>, Ervin said. The repaving of Pulaski represents a portion of a multi-million dollar infrastructure building collaboration targeting arterial roads, streets and alleyways on the West Side. A multi-phased project that also include curb, gutter and sidewalk repair and construction, is being

## Alice from front page

other community leaders like Political Activist Gerard Moorer Assistant to Congressman Davis and Founder of PACUP, along with Marker Carter President of the 7th Congressional District Business Group, decided to come together as one to form a coalition to stop the unfair contractual injustices within urban communities throughout Chicago. Carter says "This is the reason why the Chamber and the 7th Congressional District Business Group have united to make sure that the people be included in all projects that receive federal funding within a particular community."

"The Community Benefits Agreement And The Redevelopment Agreement," are the two main mechanisms in making sure that community is involved," says CEO of the Greater Lawndale Black Chamber Of Commerce Vetrese Boyce. "With out the two, the community gets almost nothing," adds Boyce.

Moorer says "We are marching today to make sure that African American's within their urban communities receive a correct percentage of contracts." According to Congressman Danny Davis the bidding should be delayed until there is a fair share of contracting being offered to African American people within the Englewood community. Congressman Davis says "I got involved because it's unfair and it's a disgrace---We are looking for Metra to re-evaluate the contract." Congressman Davis felt it to be necessary to rally in front of Metra's headquarters two weeks in a row--and due to the approach and hearing the voices of the people Metra has decided to pull the bid off of the table until further notice.

If contracts are not being offered to African Americans within their own communities---jobs are not available to the people, which has a major impact on the economic growth within a community. Especially a community like Englewood where 98.2 % of it's residents are Black/African American, the poverty rate is at 46.8% and the unemployment rate is at 26.%. Also based on a study done for documentary

film "The Interrupters," produced by Kartemquin Films, only 5.2% of Englewood residents over the age of twenty-five have obtained a bachelor degree or higher. This documentary was released in 2011 and it tells the story of three violence interrupters who try to protect their Chicago communities from the violence they once employed. Which somewhat corresponds to what is being presented in the Englewood Flyover Bid---if people are not offered jobs, people turn to alternative measures, and the crime rate raises. There needs to be a medium of address between the people and the issues that they are confronting and in the case of Metra it was the Congressmen, Political Activist, And Community coming together to march in order to stop Metra in it's tracks. But what about future projects--and why does one have to go through such drastic measures to receive a fair share?

This is the reason why it is important for organizations like The Greater Lawndale Black Chamber Of Commerce, 7th Congressional District Business Group, Political leaders and community to come together to make sure that everyone understand their right's without going through such drastic measures. For more information on the rally----discussing and resolving community issues attend the up coming "Community To Discuss The State Of Affairs In The African American Community," at the House Of Prayer located at 3535 W. Roosevelt on May 22nd, at 6pm. For more information on the Englewood Flyover Bid please do the correct research needed to understand the project. This stories focus is on the injustices of unfair contractual bidding.

For more information contact Gerard Moorer at Congressman Danny Davis's office at 773-533-7520 or Mark Carter at 312-905-3962

**UPcoming projects coming to the community**

1. UCAN Project
2. Chicago State
3. Comed Training Camp
4. Metra



# State Rep. Ford Finds It Hard Turning Back Hands of Times

## HB 5723 to Seal Some Felony Offenses Still in Committee

Travles R. Lane



**Outstanding Legislator:** Rep. LaShawn K. Ford (center) accepts a Westside NAACP 2012 Freedom Fund Banquet Award Saturday from Branch President Karl Brinson and Chairman Vera Davis

From Muhammad Ali to Shaquille O'Neal, athletes have learned the hard lesson. So have entertainers, politicians and parties to repeat marriages to the same spouse come to realize just how very hard it is to, in the words of that old soulful Tyrone Davis hit, "Turn Back the Hands of Time."

Oh baby, getting back to tomorrow is all but impossible to do.

Rep. LaShawn K. Ford (D-8<sup>th</sup>) is also discovering just how difficult it can be to erase yesterday, as he continues the long, hard slog of trying to navigate his House Bill (HB) 5723, the proposed criminal records sealing bill legislation, through the General Assembly in Springfield. Nevertheless, the (age-year-old)

Westside legislator is undaunted in his now year-long quest to keep employers and other institutions in the state from holding minor criminal offenses against former offenders, who are disproportionately represented by minorities. First introduced in February, HB 5723 has been amended once and is currently stalled in the legislature's Rules Committee since March 30.

"We still working to try to get 60 votes in the House, and we've got to get 30 votes in the Senate," Ford

said Saturday (May 12), while before receiving the NAACP Westside Branch's "Outstanding Legislator" award at the organization's annual 2012 Freedom Fund Banquet at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The former elementary school social studies instructor said currently 50 votes can be tallied favoring the bill, but getting another 10 aboard is going "to be about teaching people" helping them to understand that giving a second chance to a slightly greater number of youthful offenders "is not going to harm society. It's a benefit."

Ford identifies supporters of the downstate prison industry and Republicans who serve the interests of banks and other businesses seeking to exclude hiring convicts as the most prominent and determined opponents of the measure. The politicians, he added, also do not wish to appear to be soft of criminals.

Eighteen members of the 97<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, including seven who signed on since

the bill went to committee, are now supporting HB 5723, formally titled the Criminal Identification Act-Felony Sealing bill.

"It's a matter of changing perceptions," Ford added. "We have to change the perceptions in Springfield and in the public that just black people have backgrounds, so they can see this measure as addressing an issue for society in general. We would probably get more support then."

The NAACP's Westside and South Side branches back the proposed law along with a host of local, state and national social justice organizations.

Relatedly, an online New York Times editorial on April 29 detailed a renewal of the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's ruling 25 years ago that "bars companies from automatically denying employment to people based on arrest or conviction records."

The editorial also mentioned two developments that spurred the EEOC into action: "computer-based arrests and conviction records" that can be rife with errors, and "the dramatic increase" in the number of Americans in general, but minorities in particular, arrested for minor offenses due to zero tolerance policing.

That fact highlights the need for the sealing bill beyond an exclusive benefit to excluded groups, Ford said. "I know change is not easy, but a lot of people backgrounds, not just us."

## Alice from front page

offices nationwide, however, remain subject to continued uncertainty.

"There was a briefcase chained to a street sign adjacent to the post office," said Reynolds, reached by phone around 8:50 Thursday morning. "Someone noticed it and notified someone in our inspection service, and they called the police."

Reynolds said that after the police arrived, the briefcase was X-rayed and found to be devoid of a bomb or any other threat. "It was empty," he said.

"Now, why someone would chain an empty briefcase to a street sign, I have no way to tell you."

Reynolds, who endured the anger of the West Garfield Park residents served by the facility last year, when closure talk was prevalent, added its operations will continue "for now."

Coincidentally, a May 17, an Associated Press article at [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) detailed plans outlined by Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe for the USPS to close dozens of mail processing centers nationwide this summer. Donahoe blames Congress' inaction of cutting postal cost for the decision to consolidate 140 centers within the next year, according to the report. More cuts, it says, are planned for 2014.

However, before opening hours Thursday, Mary Alice Henry was declared safe, and supervisor Wesley Young and the employees there were back to business as usual as normalcy at the post office resumed following the early morning tensions.

"Everything's fine; everybody back in the building," said Reynolds.

## Fund from front page

interests."

Twelve people signed up for one-year memberships, while two others pledged to lifetime support, Williams said following the event.

Before Williams took the podium, renowned stand up comedienne Adele Givens, aka the "Queen of Comedy," had the guests rocking with laughter. The former Regal Theater and Def Comedy Jam performer and veteran sitcom actress kicked her act after legendary entertainer/singer Marzette Griffith soothed and dazzled the place with a 20-minute music set. Veteran Chicago broadcasters Art Porter, and former WGN television anchor Allison Payne emceed the evening event.

Brown, who has been Circuit Court Clerk since 2000 and swept to victory in last month's primary elections, was awarded for "Outstanding Public Service. Ford received the "Outstanding Legislator award. The 8<sup>th</sup> District Democrat is currently striving to shepherd his criminal record sealing bill through the General Assembly.

With her husband of 58 years looking on, Bishop Pettis was honored for "Outstanding Religious Leadership;" Carr, the founder of the Louis Carr Internship Foundation received the "Outstanding Youth Development" award and Mercer was awarded as the "Nola Bright community Service" honoree. Dr. Wilson was recognized as "Outstanding Humanitarian" for a long history of philanthropy throughout the city.

Among the dignitaries attending were U.S. Congressman Danny Davis (D-7<sup>th</sup>), who along with his wife, Vera, presented a vintage photograph to the branch depicting Black History legends Gen. Benjamin Davis, Joe Louis and Thurgood Marshall. Maywood Mayor Henderson Yarbrough,

State Rep. Karen Yarbrough (D-7<sup>th</sup>), Cook County Commissioner Earlean Collins, Ald. Jason Ervin (28<sup>th</sup>) and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Barbara McGowan were also present, along with former Cook County President Bobbie Steele and former state Rep. Coy Pugh.

Disc Jockey DJ Xtreme, James Finnigan, kept the music going throughout the program, which began with Oak Park River Forest High School student Sandra Williams leading the audience in a soulful rendition of the "Lift Every Voice and Sing" anthem.

"We're in some real troubling times," said Branch President Karl Brinson before the honor procession. "We're still fighting; we still need soldiers... and we need support—support, support, support."

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# AT THE FLICKS

David Schultz, film critic

**BERNIE (\*\*1/2)** Director Richard Linklater delivers a mock documentary approach that has dark comedic undertones to contrast this true-life crime incident that was inspired from a 1998 Texas article about a highly regarded, devoted Christian local mortician known for his devotion to his work, civil minded and “people person skills” that had already endeared him to the resident of this aptly named small Texas town of Carthage.

In his most restrained, well detailed and nuance performance against his usual zany screen persona, Jack Black delivers, like he’s never done before in movies. Black portrays real life Bernie Tiede, the assistant funeral director who always made checkup visits on the elderly widows following the burial of their husbands.

Until he ran into the crusty exterior of the hateful and widely despised rich widow, Marjorie Nugent played with uppity contempt and snobbery by Shirley MacLaine.

After countless attempts to check up on her, bearing gifts that left Bernie having the door slammed in his face by the cantankerous Mrs. Nugent.

One day, Mr. Nugent unexpectedly invites Bernie into her home that allows Bernie to spark a friendship with the wealthy, lonely widow.

Kind hearted Bernie is the kind of guy with many talents who always was helping out others that is well stated in testimonies in the documentary comments with the townspeople who also offered the opposite in opinions, having less than anything flattering to say about Mrs. Nugent throughout the film.

Unable to have any life of his own without Mrs. Nugent’s infringing; Bernie’s frustrations begins to make him feel smothered. And eventually, even the best of intentions on any person can be taken to extremes, reaching one’s unexpected “breaking point”.

When Mrs. Nugent nags Bernie with orders while preparing to travel together on an appointment. She begins to head for her car in the garage. Almost without even thinking, Bernie suddenly shoots and kills Mrs. Nugent in the back four times from a small rifle used to keep armadillos out of her garden.

Instantly, Bernie knows he has sin and cries out for forgiveness. And yet, Bernie goes back to the life he enjoyed before. Trying to atone for his sin; Bernie becomes a local philanthropist, using Mrs. Nugent’s money to help expand the town’s business district and help out friends and residents in financial needs.

Then Bernie creates the illusion that Mrs. Nugent was alive and makes her (permanently) unavailable when inquiries are made by relatives and associates that are beginning to wonder even though they still disliked her.

Still, Bernie and Mrs. Nugent are individuals who are contrarily different. One nice and one not so nice and yet never deviate from who they truly are inside and out. Even afterwards, especially Bernie who remains essentially the same person throughout the film.

However, the only person that becomes suspicious from the start is Mrs. Nugent’s persistent stock broker, Lloyd Hornbuckler (Richard Robichaux) who ultimately brings the sheriff department to break in and search the house until they find the widow’s body kept intact and frozen in the garage freezer.

Even though a tearfully remorseful Bernie admits to the heinous crime. It became apparent the townspeople still hold Bernie in high regard over the hated victim. Because of whom he was and what he’s done for his community.

This becomes the consensus that is heard by the district attorney assigned to prosecute the case against Bernie Tiede; Danny Buck Davidson (Matthew McConaughey) who sees a difficult task at hand in holding the trial in Carthage. In what seems to be a slightly underwritten for McConaughey compared to his last legal role in “The Lincoln Lawyer”.

With such biased residents to form an objective jury; Davidson manages to obtain an unprecedented ruling from the presiding judge to move the trial venue 47 miles away that equally tips the scale for the DA looking to set the trail based on the crime not Bernie’s popularity.

Even if there are those who might not normally care for Jack Black. You will see something different in him that generates the kind of diverse and meaningful performance that showcases his true acting potential and versatility in “Bernie” that is one of those little big films that is worth your time and attention.

And I hope Jack Black will mix –it-up more within his comedic repertoire and future film roles that might challenge him more into deeper movies that are worthwhile, entertaining and interesting as this film is. **R; 104min. A Millennium Entertainment Pictures Release - Presented at selected theaters**  
**THE DICTATOR (\*\*\*)** Sasha Baron Cohen continues his comedic assault as a chameleon comic



Sasha Baron Cohen in “The Dictator”

guerilla that pushed the standards of absurdity and offensiveness with “Borat” then faltered a little with “Bruno”.

Now Cohen returns with his first fully scripted, non- mock documentary comedy that is skewered from headlines and sharpened to comedic extremes.

Through this “stranger in a strange land” premise; “The Dictator” outlandishly pokes fun at the antics and excesses of an tyrannical, extravagantly bearded, Quaddafi- like leader of the fictional Republic of Wadiya, Admiral General Aladeen (Sasha Baron Cohen), a human explosion of a short fused megalomaniac with a pinnacle for high class prostitutes.

While personally, he’s a lonely monarch with no socially redeeming qualities who claims to have developed the country’s own nuclear weapon.

When Admiral General Aladeen (Cohen) refuses to allow an international committee led by the U.S. to investigate his claim. This naturally leads to sanctions against the Republic of Wadiya from the international community.

But all Aldeen claims to be doing is fulfill a promise to his late father not to sell the Wadiya oil to any country that would try to bring democracy there.

Then when an assassination attempts kills Aladeen’s double, Aldeen assigns his trusted advisor, Timir (Ben Kingsley) to recruit and train a new double that happens to be a complete idiot (also played by Cohen).

Soon after the international council demand an explanation from the ruler. So Aldeen is invited to speak at the United Nations in New York to address his position. Aldeen travels to New York with Timir

Chi native John C. Reilly appears briefly as an FBI agent assigned to protect the foreign guests who turn out to be a hired assassin assigned to torture and kill the ruler.

Clearly, the movie gets its inspiration from recent headlines that are parlay into the characters and incidents But this British comic’s roots from this film goes as far back to 1960’s Peter Seller comedy, “The Mouse that Roared” in which a small third world country wants to go to war with America to loses, so we would repair and revitalize his country to Woody Allen’s view of revolution in 1971’s “Bananas”, to name a few.

The film might be scripted, but Cohen’s humor has no mercy for any ethnic group. Comments about being Jewish, Hebrew and other third world nationalities fly all out of Aladeen’s mouth to outrageous degrees. While blacks get roasted when Aladeen in need of a beard; breaks into a funeral home to steal the head of a reputed drug kingpin who later becomes a running Muppet –like gag.

While “The Dictator” may not be on the level of “Borat”. There is a method to Cohen’s madness that show him as a political satirist here that strips away at all the social labels and pretense that the government and the media utilize.

Cohen’s co-written script and character comes close in this film, the political elements that stings and being wildly applauded in a speech near the finale that Aladeen addressing the world draws amusing and ironic parallels to Dictatorship and Democracy that points to the sorry state of the latter.

When Cohen in character comes off profane and hilarious as he does in “The Dictator”; Cohen becomes this mad comic genius that reminds us a little of the early Woody Allen films before he got serious and Fellini-like influenced.

But if a talented comedian grows, he must evolve; Sasha Baron Cohen has the potential and

even could have done more than just a movie to build on to what “The Dictator” accomplishes. Still, for this moment, it’s more important for the moviegoer now to just revel in the absurdity and consider his insight. **R; 83 min. A Paramount Pictures Release – Presented at selected theaters**  
**BATTLESHIP (\*1/2)** Some times I think we are getting closer to the day when a movie will be made up from the phone book. I’m kidding of course!

And yet, we have a movie designed from a popular board game. But it’s not as far fetched as it might sound. In 1985 “Clue “was the basis used for an all -star silly comedy whodunit.

Now, Hasbro who have minted their” G.I Joe” and” Transformers” action toy figures: into blockbuster movies franchises; applied the aliens invading earth premise to their titled board game.

After a brief scientific intro of NASA discovering a Goldilocks planet in a separate galaxy that has a similar environment to Earth that part of the Beacon Project. In which the scientists tries to communicate with them who suddenly try to answer back...but not with a friendly response, of course!

While, the human elements lays the ground work before the aliens’ arrival; Two brothers in Hawaii – one is a Naval ship commander, Stone Hopper (Alexander Skarsgard) chastises his younger, unemployed drunken brother. Alex (Taylor Kitsch) at a local bar for wasting his time and talents.

Until Stone charts Alex into a new course and direction - by making him join the Navy on his 26th birthday. While Alex is eyeing a lovely more legs to sexy body, physiotherapist, Samantha Shane (Brooklyn Decker) who later and obviously turns out to be the daughter to a strict and stern Admiral (Liam Neeson) who only sees Alex as an undisciplined officer who somehow is a Lieutenant.

Alex has been given all the chances but continues to mess up during the RIMPAC naval exercise competition. Where Alex suffers a competitive foul blow from a Japanese officer, Yugi Nagata (Tadanobu Asano) who later become allies against the intergalactic threat and find a defensive by actually playing the board game on radar in a strategic “Art of War” philosophy (“fight the enemy where they aren’t”)

While Alex and Samantha have already shared their love that has to now put on hold. Even as Alex is trying to mustard up enough courage to ask, the Admiral’s permission to marry his daughter. When he’s about to get booted out of the Navy. (Boy, it’s a good thing this movie wasn’t based on the Parker brother’s board game, “Life”) It’s so implausible to the military to be believed.

Therefore we are almost grateful when the special effects take over. As five separate objects hurdling through deep space mostly crash into the Pacific Ocean with a communication satellite fragments crashes into Hong Kong

This begins the massive action spectacle scale of “BattleShip” that is sort of like watching “Pearl Harbor” with aliens. When alien spacecraft crashes into the ocean and rises ominously from the depth near the naval base in Oahu.

A reconnaissance mission from one of several destroyers under Stone’s command is sent out that triggers the back and forth sea battles that the Americans are naturally ill equip to oppose their advance and enormous weaponry.

Pop star Rihanna makes her acting debut here as a spunky military grunt who is more or less one of the boys here that only presence is to serve the female demo in the audience.

Stone is among the causalities that Alex intends to avenge. Yet he’s ill prepared to command the remaining destroyer from the decimated fleet. But learns and shares the responsibility with his Japanese rival (We’ve come a long way from Dec. 7, 1944)

They ultimately leads to discovering the aliens’ intention and weakness, involving the aliens’ attempts hook-up to our communication system from a mountainous Hawaiian remote that is also being averted by Samantha is trying to work her therapy with a large, black and still intimidating, real life paraplegic Army veteran played by an imposing real-life Iraq hero, Gregory D. Gadson who both run into a techno-geek Cal (Hamish Linklater) who gains some needed courage to break the aliens’ communication wall

And a amusing yet ridiculous finale when Alex and his crew have to rely on revitalizing a relic battleship turned into a floating museum, back into action with its “old salt” seniors who ultimately get the job done over their young and modern counterparts..

Yet, predictably funny at times, “BattleShip” is another example of the Boys with Toys’ mentality with a lack to stress enough authenticity that would lend some creditability to certain situation that depicts a laziness from the screenwriters who rather settle more on its popcorn moments in its huge action sequences leading into a teaser scene after the end credits to indicates a discovery in Oslo to suggest a movie sequel deal that is predictable to almost everything else about this movie. **PG-13; 131min. A Universal Pictures Release – Presented at selected theaters**  
**WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU’RE EXPECTING (\*\*1/2)** Somewhat following on the heels of “Think like a Man”, we have another ensemble comedy of interwoven characters and situations around a singular theme drawn from an almost 20 yr old advice bestseller by Heidi Murkoff that won’t survive with its relevant subject matter as well as the screen transformation to Steve Harvey’s book.

The film kicks off at a familiar celebrity-reality TV dance elimination show, where fitness guru Jules (Cameron Diaz) gives a nasty revelation to her pregnancy to dance partner- boyfriend, Evan (Matthew Morrison) by literally throws up into the winner’s cup during the live telecast.

Equally surprised by her pregnancy is lactation author Wendy (Elizabeth Banks) who discusses breast feeding to a group of kids in her store. She had nearly giving up after two years of trying with former chunky reality TV contestant, Gary ( Ben Falcone) whose weight problem was brought on by the constant competition in everything from his ex-racing car driver- dad, Ramsey (Dennis Quaid) who again one-ups his son’s pregnancy news. When Ramsey announces his trophy wife, Skyler (Brooklyn Decker) is expecting twins.

And there’s two different meals on wheels managers, Rosie (Anna Kendrick) and Marco (Chance Crawford) who were former high school friends who become shocked by their “one night stand” after competing for patrons at a “movies in the park” setting

The film is wrapped around the only non pregnant member, free lance photographer, Holly (Jennifer Lopez) with her “frightened of the prospect” husband, Alex (Rodrigo Santoro)are about to become parents through adopting a baby from Ethiopia being arranged from their meeting with counselor rep (Kim Fields in a brief bit).

Holly receives advice from her gal pals that is passed on to nervous Alex who is quietly unsure and frightened by the prospect. He’s joins into a “dudes group” of baby stroller dads led by Chris Rock who usually doesn’t fair well in ensemble comedies like his lackluster black variation on “Death of a Funeral” and Adam Sandler’s “Grown-ups”.

But Rock’s deft, observational comments(closer to his stand-up style) is sort of the heart and mind of this movie and its book that also delivers some of the best laughs (that includes a running gag from one of his clumsy yet unflappable kids in the park) and better insight that this movie could have used more. Instead of being so dramatically descriptive in the film’s last half.

Obvious this movie is instructional enough for those who know and those who are thinking about what a new arrival come do to their lives. But the movie is amusing, but it’s not funny enough as it should have been with more sophisticated wit within its humor.

So while “What to Except When You’re Expecting” has its purpose; the movie is still somewhere in the middle. It’s funny at times, but it’s no “blessed event”. **PG-13; 110min. A Lionsgate Release – Presented at selected theaters**



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### Erving from page 4

financed with local, state and federal funds, said the alderman. The 4-mile resurfacing of Pulaski Road from Ogden Ave. to North Ave. is part of the plan to improve nearly 30 miles of streets in the area, and should be completed in a "few weeks," Ervin said.

Beyond the roads project, Ervin has thus far voted for Emanuel's initiatives requiring council approval far more than he has opposed what the mayor wants. His votes have

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endorsed the Infrastructure Trust Plan, speed cameras near schools and Emanuel's moves to reshape Chicago Public Schools.

Ervin, a certified public accountant and the ward's committeeman, added he understand the angst throughout the city regarding what seems to be an increasing move toward charter schools and private schools by the administration. No neighborhood wants to lose its school, he said. Yet budgets are limited and money is scarce.

"So we have to look at how well some of these schools are serving the kids," said Ervin. "If we are using resources to keep a school open when half of the school is empty, then we have to look at other options. I'm all for keeping schools open, but ultimately we have to take into consideration primarily is how we can better educate our children, not where they go to school."

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WED SEPT. 7	WED FEB. 8	SAT SEPT. 3	FRI MAR. 2	SAT OCT. 1	WED MAR. 14
WED OCT. 5	WED MAR. 7	FRI OCT. 7	SAT MAR. 3	WED OCT. 12	SAT MAR. 31
SAT NOV. 5	WED APR. 4	FRI NOV. 4	FRI APR. 6	WED NOV. 16	WED APR. 11
WED NOV. 9	WED MAY 2	FRI NOV. 25	FRI MAY 4	WED DEC. 14	WED MAY 9
WED DEC. 7	WED JUN. 6	SAT NOV. 26	FRI JUN. 1	SAT DEC. 31	WED JUN. 13
			SAT JUN 2		
MICROSOFT WORD LEVEL II		MICROSOFT EXCEL LEVEL II		MICROSOFT POWERPOINT LEVEL II	
2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
SAT AUG. 13	WED JAN. 18	FRI AUG. 19	FRI JAN. 20	WED AUG. 24	SAT JAN. 7
WED AUG. 17	SAT FEB. 11	SAT SEPT. 10	FRI FEB. 17	WED SEPT. 28	WED JAN. 25
WED SEPT. 21	WED FEB. 22	FRI SEPT. 16	FRI MAR. 16	SAT OCT. 8	WED FEB. 29
WED OCT. 19	WED MAR. 21	FRI OCT. 21	FRI APR. 20	WED OCT. 26	WED MAR. 28
SAT NOV. 12	WED APR. 18	FRI NOV. 4	FRI MAY. 18	WED NOV. 30	SAT APR. 7
WED DEC. 21	SAT MAY 12	FRI NOV. 18	FRI MAY 2	WED DEC. 28	WED APR. 25
	WED MAY. 16	SAT DEC. 10	FRI JUN. 9		WED MAY 23
		FRI DEC. 17	FRI JUN. 15		
ACCESS LEVEL I		WEB DESIGN LEVEL I		MICROSOFT WEB DESIGN LEVEL II	
2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
FRI AUG. 26	SAT JAN. 14	SAT AUG. 20	SAT JAN. 21	SAT AUG. 27	SAT JAN. 28
FRI SEPT. 23	FRI JAN. 27	SAT SEPT. 17	SAT FEB. 18	SAT SEPT. 24	SAT FEB. 25
FRI OCT. 28	FRI FEB. 24	SAT OCT. 22	SAT MAR. 17	SAT OCT. 29	SAT MAR. 24
FRI NOV. 25	FRI MAR. 23	SAT NOV. 19	SAT APR. 21	SAT NOV. 19	SAT APR. 28
FRI DEC. 23	SAT APR. 14	SAT DEC. 17	SAT MAY. 19	SAT DEC. 24	SAT MAY. 26
	FRI APR. 27		SAT JUN. 16		SAT JUN. 23
	FRI MAY. 25				
	FRI JUN. 22				
				BASIC COMPUTER LITERACY	
				EVERY 2ND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH	

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