

# Free at Last!

## Thinner Al Sharpton says he has the White House on his mind after stint in N.Y. jail

BY LUKAS I. ALPERT  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**NEW YORK** — On his first full day of freedom since walking out of a federal prison, a thinner, clean-shaven Rev. Al Sharpton was back in full force Saturday, rallying supporters and pressing the flesh on his way to his favorite restaurant.

"I'm going to walk through Harlem just to settle in again, then I'm going to Amy Ruth's for some fried chicken. I've been on a fried chicken fast for 90 days, and that's going to stop here," Sharpton told hundreds of cheering supporters at his National Action Net-

work headquarters.

The civil rights activist looked somewhat ruffled in a suit clearly tailored before he shed 32 pounds during a nearly monthlong hunger strike. And he had shaved the beard he grew in federal prison, where he was held for trespassing on a Navy bombing range on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

He said he was particularly looking forward to going to the Cotton Club for a night of dancing.

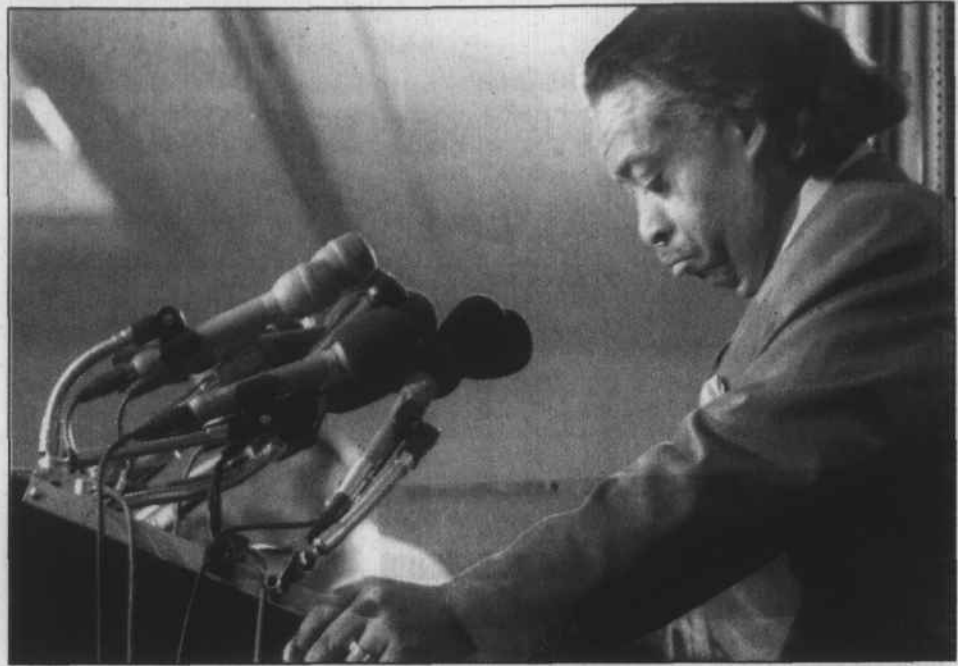
"Y'all have seen me dance in the past but imagine what I can do with my new frame," he told his supporters.

The question of whom he will endorse in this year's mayoral race was the first from reporters.

"I have not made any decision on that," Sharpton said.

But for him, the more important issue was his plan to run for president in 2004.

"I am prepared to do nationally what I have done locally, which is to help those who need help," Sharpton said. "They said when I ran for Senate that I was a joke, but I beat out the then-sitting City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman. When I ran for mayor, they said, 'Who would want him?' but I nearly forced the first runoff in the city in nearly 20 years."



The Rev. Al Sharpton takes a break from answering questions from the media in New York Monday, a few days after he was released from jail for protesting in Puerto Rico.

# CDC initiative elects state leaders to its board

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

**RALEIGH** — The N.C. Community Development Initiative has elected nine governmental, business and nonprofit leaders to its board of directors.

The initiative, headquartered in Raleigh, is a nonprofit organization that supports community development corporations (CDCs) in their efforts to revitalize low-resource communities by building affordable housing, assisting small businesses and fostering entrepreneurial development.

New board members include Rebecca Anderson, founder and executive director of HandMade in America, of Asheville; Julio Cordoba, president and chief executive officer of Valor Inc., of Raleigh; Rep. Beverly Earle, majority whip in the N.C. General Assembly, of Charlotte; Mary Gordon, plant director for Philip Morris USA, of Concord; former Gov. James Holshouser Jr., owner/partner in The Sanford Holshouser Law Firm, of Pinehurst; Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue

of New Bern; and Thomas W. Ross, executive director of Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, of Winston-Salem.

The initiative also re-elected Ronald J. Leeper, president of R.J. Leeper Co., of Charlotte, and Brian Coyle, senior vice president and community development manager at BB&T, of Raleigh.

"We are fortunate to have such prominent North Carolinians on our board," said Abdul Sm Rasheed, president and chief executive officer of the initiative. "These are people who for many years have dedicated themselves to improving North Carolina communities and creating

opportunities for people of all walks of life. We will benefit from their knowledge and experience as we continue to assist CDCs and other nonprofits."

Anderson has 27 years of experience in economic and community development in Western North Carolina. Through HandMade in America, she works with more than 1,500 craftspeople and has more than 20 partnerships with local, regional and state organizations and institutions.

Cordoba, born in Colombia, South America, founded Valcor in 1987 and moved his company from Florida to Raleigh in 1989. He is one of the founders of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of North Carolina and served as president of the organization from 1996-1999. He serves on the Governor's Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs.

Earle is serving her fourth term in the state House of Representatives. She is now the only woman in an elected leadership position in the House or the Senate and is the first woman Democrat to serve as House

majority whip.

A t Philip Morris U S A . Gordon manages more than 2,600 employees in one of the

world's most technologically advanced cigarette manufacturing facilities. In 2000, she received Charlotte Business Journal's Woman of the Year award.

Holshouser served as governor of North Carolina from 1973-77. He has continued to provide leadership to a broad range of civic organizations. He is a member emeritus of the board of governors of the University of North Carolina, where he chaired the personnel and budget committees.

Perdue is the first female lieutenant governor of North Carolina.

A health-care professional who specialized in aging, she served five terms in the state Senate and two terms in the state House of Representatives.

Ross has spent his life in public service and served the judicial branch of government for more than 17 years. He was chief of state to Congressman Robin Britt, a Superior Court judge, professor of law and government, and director of the Administrative Office of the Courts immediately before joining Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

Leeper, who chairs the initiative board, has served the initiative since 1996. He also chairs a Minority Contractors Resource center to give small business people assistance and support and is on the Executive Committee of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and involved in several other civic activities. He was a member of the Charlotte City Council for 10 years.

Coyle has served on the initiative board since 1999. He manages BB&T's community development projects, chairs the N.C. Housing Partnership, and is a member of sev-

eral boards, including the Community Investment Corporation of North Carolina and the Carolina Affordable Housing Equity Corp.

The N.C. Community Development Initiative was established in 1994 and is a national leader in community economic development in low-wealth communities. As an intermediary, the initiative obtains resources from many investors, including the N.C. General Assembly, foundations, and the private sector and then channels them to high-performing CDCs and nonprofits engaged in community economic development. The initiative also provides strategic issues management and makes loans through its subsidiary, Initiative Capital, a Community Development Financial Institution, to facilitate residential and commercial development.

The initiative increasingly is a resource for nonprofits and governmental units that want to collaborate on development projects but need professional assistance in creating financial packages or developing and managing projects that require special skills and experience.

## Ohio congressman requests investigation into 'AIDS flow'

**WASHINGTON** (NNPA) — An Ohio congressman has asked the Bush administration to investigate the research of a black man who claims AIDS was developed by the U.S. government.

In a July 19 letter to Comptroller General David Walker, Rep. James A. Traficant Jr., a Democrat, wrote that civil rights activist and AIDS researcher Boyd Graves "has been studying the origins of the AIDS virus for years and has discovered documents that put into question the U.S. government's involvement in the creation of the virus."

Traficant, who enclosed examples of Graves' research, asked that they be examined for the health of Americans and people all over the world.

An official at the comptroller's office said she could not confirm receiving the correspondence. As of press time last week, the comptroller's office had not replied to the letter, according to Anthony Traficanti, regional director for the congressman.

Graves, who has addressed sev-

eral African-American audiences on his theory, believes AIDS is the result of a U.S. government-backed

biological weapons program used by the Pentagon to limit black population growth.

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**NICL**

The Neighborhood Institute for Community Leadership (NICL) is a nine-month local program providing training to citizens of Forsyth County that have a vested interest in the societal and physical development of Forsyth County neighborhoods. NICL offers two tracks during the program. The Leadership Development Track focuses on developing the skills of community leaders participating on neighborhood and community development organizations that are proactive in addressing community issues. The Community Development Track is designed specifically for board members of community development corporations (CDCs), and neighborhood associations that may be involved in development or revitalization efforts.

### Neighborhood Institute for Community Leadership

Registration Deadline:  
8/31/01

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