

News at a Glance

ACLU backs black author in lawsuit over ticket for racial slur

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The American Civil Liberties Union is backing a lawsuit that accuses a police in a Louisiana city of violating the civil rights of a black author who was cited for a sign with a racial slur on his car.

Lawyers for the ACLU's Louisiana chapter signed up this week to represent Johnny Duncan in his case in federal court against the city of Amite, police and city officials.

Duncan was parked outside a restaurant in Amite in August 2007 when police officers confronted him about a sign on his car advertising his book, which contains a racial slur in its title. Officers said he violated the state's obscenity law, but the ticket was later dismissed.

The ACLU says the book's title may be offensive but isn't obscene. A lawyer for the city says the lawsuit is frivolous.

Democrats make staff picks for Organizing for America

WASHINGTON, DC — In a video announcement sent to supporters and Democratic National Committee (DNC) activists last week, Obama for America Campaign Manager David Plouffe introduced Mitch Stewart as the director of Organizing for America.

The new initiative will work in partnership with the DNC to continue to build, engage and strengthen the unprecedented organization that was built during the campaign and the grassroots network built over the past four years at the DNC. The joint partnership signifies the ongoing commitment to both building and strengthening the grassroots movement, and reaching out to people in all 50 states to engage Americans in this movement for change, according to officials.

"I'm extremely pleased that Organizing for America will be housed here at the DNC. Working in partnership, we will seek to engage people in new ways, and to broaden what President Obama calls the 'Coalition for Change' in America," said Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, the new DNC leader. "I know first-hand how important it is to reach out and engage the grassroots all across a state and all across our country."

In addition to Stewart, the DNC also announced that Jeremy Bird will serve as deputy director. Stewart served as Iowa Caucus director, Indiana state director and Virginia state director for the Obama campaign. Bird served as Obama campaign field director in South Carolina during the primaries and general election director in Ohio.

President Obama's suit-maker files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago-based company that makes suits preferred by President Barack Obama has filed for bankruptcy.

Hartmarx Corp. and its U.S. subsidiaries filed for Chapter 11 protection Friday. The company says its Canadian and other non-U.S. affiliates have not sought bankruptcy protection.

Hartmarx makes business, casual and golf apparel under its own brands, including Hart Schaffner Marx. The clothier's products can be found in department stores and mail-order catalogs.

The company has arranged up to \$160 million of debtor-in-possession financing and is seeking court approval to continue operating its business and paying employees.

Hartmarx made a tuxedo, a topcoat and a suit for Obama's inauguration. The company also made the dark-navy custom-made suit Obama wore Election Night in Chicago.

Franklin gives gifts to First Family

At last week's inauguration, Aretha Franklin presented President Obama with 17 sermons from her father, the late Rev. Dr. C.L. Franklin.

The sermons were recorded at the New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit, where Rev. Franklin was the pastor for 38 years. They included "The Eagle Stirreth Her Nest," one of Rev. Franklin's famous sermons that elevated him to national and international fame.

The legendary singer also gave the president an autographed copy of her father's biography, "Singing In A Strange Land," by Nick Salvatore, an author, historian and professor at Cornell University. A small Bible engraved with a personal message was also among the gifts presented to President Obama. The Queen of Soul gave First Lady Michelle a solid gold brooch with white diamonds. Franklin's 15-year-old grandson, Jordan Franklin, gave the first daughters — Malia and Sasha — a collection of Gospel/Christian Hip-Hop music.

Franklin participated in President Obama's Inauguration by singing a rousing rendition of the anthem, "My Country 'Tis of Thee." She is recording and releasing a commemorative version of "My Country 'Tis of Thee."



Aretha Franklin

NAZI HIGHWAY

Racist group adopts a roadway

BY MARGARET STAFFORD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A neo-Nazi group has joined the state's "Adopt-A-Highway" volunteer pickup program, taking advantage of a free speech court fight won four years ago by the Ku Klux Klan.

The Springfield unit of the National Socialist Movement has committed to cleaning up trash along a half-mile section of Highway 160 near the Springfield city limits.

Two signs noting the group's membership in the Adopt-A-Highway program went up in October but drew attention only recently when the group picked up litter as part of a gathering in Springfield.

The state says it had no way to reject the group's application. A 2005 U.S. Supreme Court ruling arising from a similar effort by the Ku Klux Klan says Adopt-A-Highway program can't be denied because of a group's political beliefs. At the time, the state could reject applications for the program from groups that denied membership based on race or had a history of violence.

"It's a First Amendment thing, and we can't discriminate as long as they pick up the trash," said Bob Edwards, a spokesman for the transportation department's office in Springfield.



A photo from the group's Web site shows members on the highway giving the Nazi salute.

The state can deny an organization's application only if it has members who have been convicted of violent criminal activity within the past 10 years.

The NSM Springfield unit decided to take part in the highway project because it wants to clean up the community, said Ariana Glass, a 16-year-old member of the youth division of the group.

"We wanted to prove that we're not out here just to have fun, we want to make the community look good," Glass said.

The group heard both

honks of support and jeers when about 30 members and supporters picked up trash Saturday. Greene County sheriff's deputies ticketed one man who group members said became threatening but there were no other incidents, Glass said.

Members of the highway cleanup program are required to clean up trash at least four times a year. Edwards said about 600 groups pick up trash in the 12 counties surrounding Springfield.

Edwards said his department had received only one phone call asking why the

National Socialist group was allowed to adopt the highway. Louise Whall, spokeswoman for the city of Springfield, was not aware of the group's action until contacted by the AP, but said the city had no jurisdiction because it's a state program.

Most other states have programs similar to Missouri's. Ten states — Alabama, Arkansas, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas and Vermont — had joined in filing a brief backing Missouri's side in the court fight.

Exhibit highlights late Justice Thurgood Marshall's early career

BY DANNY JACOBS
THE (BALTIMORE) DAILY RECORD

BALTIMORE (AP) — Thurgood Marshall — divorce lawyer?

It's difficult to imagine the first black Supreme Court justice and Baltimore native as anything but a civil rights attorney. But Larry S. Gibson discovered 10 instances where Marshall handled divorce cases, as well as several fender-benders, after he was admitted to the Maryland bar in 1933.

"He did major civil rights cases, but he also tried to keep his private practice," said Gibson, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Law and of counsel at Shapiro, Sher Guinot & Sandler.

Marshall's balancing act is apparent in "Thurgood Marshall's Early Career in Maryland: 1933-1937," an exhibit created by Gibson and permanently installed in the Thurgood Marshall Law Library at Maryland.

2008 marked the 100th anniversary of Marshall's birth, the 70th anniversary of the graduation of Donald Gaines Murray, Maryland law school's first black student (whose entrance was secured by a Court of Appeals decision argued by Marshall), and the 30th anniversary of the effort to rename the law library after Marshall.



Thurgood Marshall

It was about that time, in 1978, that Gibson began talking to Marshall's friends, family and legal contemporaries about Marshall's early years as a lawyer in Baltimore.

"No one has done a decent job of covering the four years that he practiced here," said Gibson, who also talked with Marshall himself. "It was a very active period, but it was difficult to get at."

So Gibson pored through more than 2,000 documents, including court files, newspaper accounts and Marshall's personal letters

to create the nine, three-foot panels that are displayed in the library next to a collection of 18 photographs of Marshall from a boy to shortly before his death in 1993.

Gibson's research showed Marshall developing habits as a young lawyer he would use the rest of his career.

"His attitude about work and his priorities were shaped here in Maryland," said Gibson, who is also writing a book based on his research.

Gibson purposely says "Maryland," not "Baltimore," because Marshall was the first black lawyer to practice in multiple jurisdictions in the state, including Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince

George's counties.

"He always had several irons on the fire," Gibson said.

Almost immediately after Marshall was admitted to the bar in 1933, he joined a group of lawyers in delivering a petition, included in the exhibit, to Gov. Albert C. Ritchie demanding anti-lynching legislation after a hanging in Princess Anne, Gibson said.

Marshall's penchant for civil rights led to some financial strain as well as a letter, included in the exhibit, from Charles Hamilton Houston, Marshall's friend, mentor and law school dean at Howard University, reminding Marshall not to lose sight of his private practice. Still, Marshall

See Marshall on A10

Get with the plan

WINSTON-SALEM 2009 PATROL PLAN

The Winston-Salem Police Department has implemented a new patrol plan intended to: reduce crime, improve response time and make it easier to know the officers who patrol your neighborhood. Come meet Police Chief Scott Cunningham and learn more about the plan. All meetings will be held 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

DISTRICT 1:
Jan. 27 (Zone 1), Deacon Room at Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.
Jan. 29 (Zone 2), Deacon Room at Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

DISTRICT 2:
Feb. 3 (Zone 1), Sedge Garden Recreation Center, 401 Robbins Rd.
Feb. 5 (Zone 2), Sprague Street Recreation Ctr., 1350 E. Sprague St.

DISTRICT 3:
Feb. 10 (Zone 1), First Alliance Church, 1601 Pope Rd.
Feb. 12 (Zone 2), South Fork Recreation Ctr., 4403 Country Club Rd.

Not sure what district and zone you live in? Visit WSPD.org for a detailed map, or call City Link at 727-8000. Missed your district meeting? Come to any other meeting.



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