

## Community Notes

• **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership** will sponsor an MWBE outreach fair March 14.

The fair will be held at 1 p.m. at the Charlotte Regional Realtors Association Building, 1201 Greenwood Cliff, third floor. Housing Partnership staff will be available to answer questions and discuss qualifying procedures on contracts to be offered to bid, including computer services, insurance, lawn maintenance and residential construction trades.

For more information, call 342-0933.

• The city of **Charlotte** will unveil a small business directory Saturday.

Sylvia Grier, president of BIRS Co. International, will present the directory at 9 a.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, room CH-14 in the basement. The directory offers information on resources in Charlotte-Mecklenburg that can assist businesses in economic development, bonding, certification, technical assistance and networking.

• **Johnson C. Smith University** will hold its first Circle of Honor Awards March 29 at the Sheraton Airport Plaza Hotel.

This year's honorees are Sarah Belk Gambrell of the Belk Stores; Rev. Clifford Jones, pastor of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

and Rev. Leon Riddick, former pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church. The university will also honor James and Melva Costen, president and professor at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and a posthumous award for John McDonald of McDonald's Cafeteria.

Tickets are \$50 for individuals, \$100 for benefactors and \$125 for patrons and must be purchased in advance. For more information, call June Saunders Grayson at 378-1025.

• The general meeting of the **Democratic Women's Club of Mecklenburg County** will be March 18.

The meeting will be held at Democratic Party Headquarters, 2821 South Blvd. and features Mecklenburg County Commissioners candidates. For more information, call Sharon Ward at 375-0223, extension 106 or 536-2757.

• **Harding High School** students will sponsor a fundraising drive this weekend.

The Ram-A-Thon, sponsored by the PTSA, will be held from 1-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The drive is a direct appeal for contributions to meet the school's \$25,000 goal for landscaping/renovation, scholarships and a benevolence fund. For more information, call 343-6007.

• **The Hidden Valley Optimist Club** will sponsor an Atlantic City getaway next month.

The trip is \$174 per person for double occupancy for a two-night stay at the Midtown Bala and includes two casino trips and a show at the resort. Proceeds will go to the Hidden Valley community. Deadline for application is March 28.

For more information, call 379-0235.

• **The Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP** is accepting applications for the African-American Cultural, Technological, Scientific Olympic competition. The competition will be held April 20 at Garinger High School, and winners advance to the national contest in Charlotte July 6-11. Deadline for applications is April 5.

• Sponsors, players and volunteers are needed to field the **Westside Babe Ruth League**.

Four teams made up of boys 13-15 years will compete in the baseball league. For more information, call Dexter Hayes at 358-0258.

• Parent facilitators will sponsor **Male Volunteer Day** Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. at Lincoln Heights Elementary School to honor male volunteers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. For more information, call Sarah Caldwell, 343-6067.

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## Charlotte sailor finds success in the navy

By Marcus Myers  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

**SAN DIEGO** - The U.S. Navy is a reflection of society and its sailors represent almost every ethnic group. African American sailors have long been successful throughout the fleet and continue to be models of success in today's changing Navy.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Darren L. McKissick, 22, is a prime example of African Americans in today's Navy.

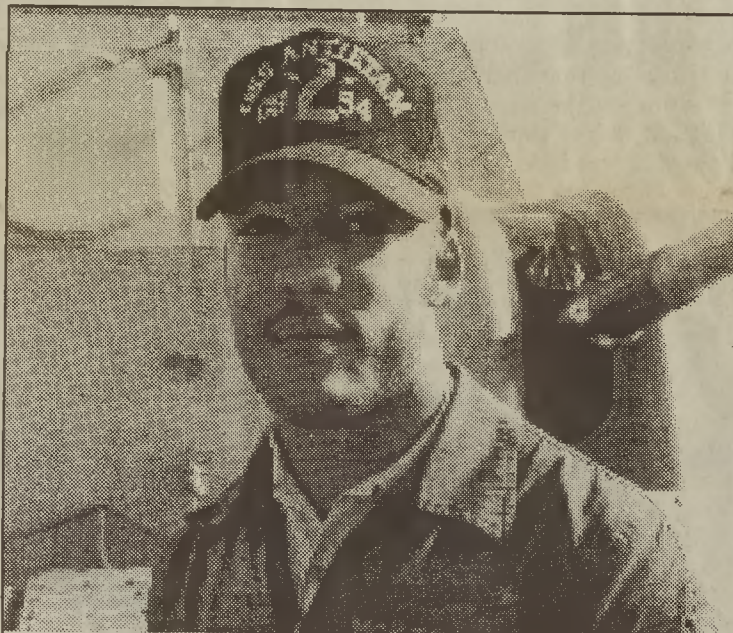
McKissick is stationed aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam and feels his heritage is important to him and that it is a motivational factor in his Navy career.

"My heritage makes me realize how far African Americans have progressed. I am also able to look back and see how people as a whole have grown over the past few decades," said McKissick.

McKissick, a communications specialist, transmits and receives messages linking the Antietam with other naval activities.

The Antietam is one of the Navy's most formidable multi-mission warships that is equipped with powerful gas turbine engines and a state-of-the-art Aegis combat system. The Aegis is an integrated system designed to simultaneously collect, evaluate and display combat information, launch and guide missiles to their targets and share tactical information with other ships.

Carrying a variety of missiles, torpedoes and rapid fire guns, the San Diego-based cruiser can not only build a defensive shield around a naval battle group, it can also



Petty Officer 3rd Class Darren L. McKissick of Charlotte on duty with U.S. Navy.

conduct offensive strike missions.

While the Navy provides ample opportunities for success, McKissick uses the strengths of his heritage to ensure success.

"The secret of my success has been a lot of hard work, perseverance, dedication and faith in God," said McKissick.

As a role model in the Navy, his advice for young African Americans is to continue to stay positive and strive for success.

"My advice to young African-Americans would be if you have the chance to travel, do it. There's a lot more out there to see than just your hometown," said McKissick, a three-year veteran.

McKissick is proof that African Americans continue to make a positive impact in the Navy and strive for positions of greater leadership and

responsibility.

"Some of my best accomplishments have been being promoted to the rank of petty officer third class, traveling, maturing and becoming more disciplined," said McKissick. "My ultimate goal to finish my current tour at sea and go to shore duty in September. I want to spend two years at a shore-based communications station in San Diego."

America's strength is drawn from its cultural diversity; the Navy is no different. African American sailors like McKissick continue to provide new and innovative ideas that keep the Navy moving in the right direction.

Marcus Myers is a Navy Journalist assigned to the Navy Public Affairs Center in San Diego, Calif.

## Simpson denied insurance claim for legal costs

By Cliff Edwards  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**CHICAGO** - An insurance company has rejected a claim by O.J. Simpson that would defray expenses in his wrongful-death lawsuits, saying the claim didn't relate to his business activities.

Simpson filed the claim in October on the general business liability policy that covers him as an executive in his company, Orenthal Productions, said William

Shaffer, a spokesman for Chicago-based insurer CNA Financial Corp.

Simpson sought the money to help pay expenses in the wrongful-death lawsuits filed by the families of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Simpson was acquitted of murder charges Oct. 3 in the deaths of Ms. Simpson and Goldman.

Simpson recently sold his New York condo at a loss and has been peddling a video that he says tells his side of the

story.

CNA in October initially rejected a query from a representative of Orenthal Productions and has had several discussions with Simpson's representatives since then, Shaffer said Monday.

"There have been some conversations, but we said then and we say now that fundamentally the policy didn't cover the activity in the civil suit, therefore we did not have

See OJ page 6A

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