

News Briefs

Mfume says NY police used excessive force

Kweisi Mfume, president and CEO of the NAACP, has called for federal and New York law enforcement to move swiftly through the investigation of an unarmed African immigrant shot by police in the hallway of his apartment building.



Mfume

Ahmed Diallo, a 22-year-old Guinean, was shot 19 times by four plainclothes policemen. The lawyer for the officers, who are all members of the NYPD undercover street crime unit, said his clients thought the victim had a gun.

"This shooting is a representative case of excessive force at its worst. I am asking both the U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and New York city Mayor Rudy Giuliani to reassure the nation that these types of incidents will not be tolerated and to state publicly that they will use every possible vehicle to get to the facts involved in the case and make sure that justice is fair and swift," Mfume said.

He said police behavior in this incident deserves the same response as the Abner Louima case involving an Haitian immigrant, who was tortured in a Brooklyn police station bathroom.

"The NAACP will not sit by idly watching the incidents of police brutality go up as part of an

effort to make crime figures go down while the rights of innocent, unarmed, hard-working people are aggressively attacked," Mfume said. "The association will be joining with other concerned citizens in an attempt to underscore the absolute foolishness of police brutality that has reared its ugly head again in New York, and again involving another person of color."

Largest Lending Discrimination Case Settled

President Clinton and Vice President Gore recently announced the largest lending discrimination settlement in American history - \$6.5 billion in mortgages and special programs designed to help 78,000 minority and low- to moderate-income families become homeowners. The Department of Housing and Urban Development negotiated the record settlement with Columbia National Inc., which was accused of violating the Fair Housing Act by discriminating against minorities seeking home mortgages. The settlement closes HUD's investigation of lending discrimination charges, which grew out of a November 1997 complaint against the Columbia, Md. based firm by the Forth Worth Human Relations Commission. - Carolina Peacemaker

Black newspaper bibliography unveiled

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress recently heralded the publication of "African-American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography" with a reception in the James Madison Memorial Building.

"This is the first comprehensive guide to the vast body of newspapers and periodicals by and about African-Americans," said the center's director John Y. Cole. "It draws on the resources of the Library of Congress and other research libraries, large and small, but particularly on the collection at the Wisconsin Historical Society, where the editor, James P. Danky, is newspapers and periodicals librarian."

Congo President bans political parties

KINSHASA (IPS) - Enraged Congolese politicians say the decision by President Laurent-Desire Kabila to dissolve the existing 400 political parties, when he lifted a ban on multi-party democracy recently, infringes on the freedom of association in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The law, governing the activities of political parties and organizations, which was decreed on Jan. 31, dissolved all the 400 parties and called upon those wishing to continue to operate to register at the ministry of interior, within 30 days. The application takes three months to process. Alphonse Lupumba Kamanda, chairman of the opposition Republican Front, described the decree as "wicked, in its content, and against the elementary principles of democracy."

"Kabila nurtures the illusion of dictating to political parties the way they should be run. That is simply an aberration," Kamanda

vows that his party "will fight for the repeal of the law."

Jamaican budget cuts hit hard

KINGSTON (IPS) - Reactions have been mixed to the Jamaican government's recent admission that it cannot afford its \$3.6 billion budget and is therefore forced to cut public expenditures. The budget has been cut from \$3.6 billion to \$3.5 billion. Finance Minister Omar Davies said the government had expected to borrow some \$440 million from external sources to help finance the budget but to date has only managed to obtain \$272 million, leaving a gap of \$168 million. In order to bridge that gap, the government had to increase its domestic borrowing.

"The crisis in Asia and other parts of Europe has dampened the prospect (of borrowing from overseas), making money hard to come by," Davies said. Some argue that while the budget cut was necessary, rather than slashing capital expenditures for social programs - like health and infrastructure projects - the government should have cut recurrent expenditures dealing primarily with salaries, including the salaries of government officials.

"Any economic decision taken in any part of the world in which the government of the day has to cut its budget or increase taxation or put mechanisms in place to mop up liquidity will have some negative impact on the lives of the poor," he said. "It is not that you willfully put systems in place to affect the poor, but it is unavoidable." - Neville Johnson

One year later, still no arrests in bombing of black paper

By BARBARA HARRIS
THE TRI-STATE DEFENDER

Just over a year ago, the Jackson Advocate in Mississippi was destroyed by an early morning firebombing.

However, the controversial investigation has produced no arrests despite the local Southern Christian Leadership Conference's probe naming a 29-year-old male from Meridian, Miss. as a possible suspect.

Tony Lewis Hodges was indicted early last month on five counts of manufacturing homemade bombs in March 1997 and placing them in the Jackson nail salon of Theta Hudson, a former girlfriend. It is unclear what motive, if any, Hodges may have had for being involved in the paper firebombing, but during the investigation, SCLC Executive Secretary Stephanie Parker-Weaver said she was told by one source that "some black person threw the firebombs into the Advocate, but did not have a real reason. The person had done another crime and did not want to go to jail and was being forced to firebomb the Advocate because the feds were holding that crime over their head as blackmail."

Hodges was indicted 19 months before the incident at the Advocate for bombing Hudson's nail salon. His participation in that crime led to speculation that he may have been coerced to participate in the firebombing with a promise of leniency. If Hodges was involved, Parker-Weaver contends, he did not act alone.

The SCLC's investigation points to a well-oiled conspiracy involving law enforcement officials and downtown business persons, she said.

The three bombs ATF confiscated at the nail salon were described in the indictment by U.S. Attorney Brad Pigott as "gasoline-fueled incendiary devices with fuse and detonator."

Pigott has come under considerable criticism recently for his failure to aggressively pursue the Hodges case and lack of action in the Advocate firebombing case.

"Now that Pigott has officially charged Hodges with attempting to bomb Hudson's nail salon, maybe he will indict whoever is involved with or guilty of the unsolved Jan. 26, 1998, Jackson Advocate bombing," declared Parker-Weaver. "It is just as important to bring closure to this 'other ungodly domestic terrorist assault - an unAmerican First Amendment constitutional attack, so that our community can begin healing old racial, political and economic wounds recently laid bare before the nation by the bombing of a black-owned newspaper in Mississippi in 1998, not 1968."

Meanwhile, Vernon Hughes was removed in November from the nail salon bombing case by deputy fire chief Raymond McNulty. Hughes was also removed in December 1998 as chief investigator for the Advocate firebombing and the July 22, 1998 firebombing of the house at 333 Eastview St. adjacent to Advocate Publisher Charles Tisdale's home.

Hughes told Jackson's daily newspaper, The Clarion-Ledger, last summer that the Eastview fire was "typical house fire," totally unrelated to the unsolved Advocate firebombing.

"Hughes' deliberately indifferent statements of disinformation to The Clarion-Ledger further endangered the lives of Tisdale, his family and staff," said state Rep. Jim Evans, who also serves as Advocate board chairman and SCLC national board member.

Outraged at Hughes apparent attempt "to obstruct justice and conspire with the perpetrators," SCLC officials demanded an immediate apology from him.

"After more than 19 years on the fire department, Vernon Hughes still couldn't tell the difference between a typical house fire and a bombing," Evans said.

On Aug. 21, Hughes publicly apologized and admitted he was incompetent. The cases have been reassigned to newly-appointed acting chief arson investigator Van Presson.

"Both [fires] are a top priority with the Jackson Fire Department, and will remain that way,"

McNulty says, vowing that Presson and his men would work diligently to try and solve both firebombing. Meanwhile, civil rights leaders and Advocate staff, management and supporters continue to inquire about the whereabouts of a videotape from a surveillance camera mounted atop the A.H. McCoy Federal Building, one block from the newspaper.

The Advocate is currently in negotiations with the city of Jackson to lease a building on Farish Street, associate publisher Alice Thomas-Tisdale said. The Hill-Holly Building, the Advocate's former home and site of last year's firebombing, is in the final stages of renovation.

The building is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

The Chronicle's e-mail address is:

wschron@netunlimited.net



GET A JUMP
ON THE
COMPETITION



Evening and Executive
MBA Programs ~ Winston-Salem
Information Session

Saturday, February 20
10 a.m. - 12 Noon
(Formal remarks begin at 10:30 a.m.)

Wake Forest University
Worrell Professional Center

Call today! 800.428.6012 or 336.758.4584
www.mba.wfu.edu

Tuition-free! Enrollment Notice.



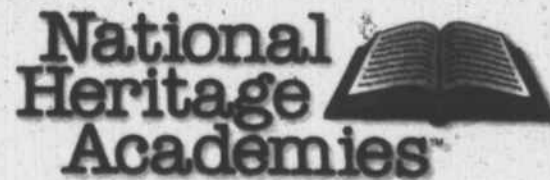
Winston-Salem Charter Academy plans to open for the 1999 school year, offering Kindergarten through fifth grades.

Winston-Salem Charter Academy makes good sense for anyone interested in quality education.

- Children learn the fundamentals in a stimulating atmosphere.
- Parents know their youngsters are in a safe environment where academic excellence and the development of moral values are emphasized.
- Teachers are dedicated and respected for their skills and have the support of parents and administration.
- On standardized tests measuring academic growth, students of a National Heritage Academy scored 40% above the national average.

Please plan to attend a parent information meeting on Wednesday, March 3 at the Lawrence Joel Veteran Memorial Coliseum, Administrative Building in the Assembly Room at 7p.m. We will explain our unique educational program with its emphasis on both academic excellence and moral character development. Call (800) 699-9235 to register for the meeting.

Winston-Salem Charter Academy...
your tuition-free choice.



4601 Six Forks Road, Suite 500
Raleigh, NC 27609
(800) 699-9235
www.heritageacademies.com

Triad Pest Control

beware!!!

Termite Season

is

Coming...

Call

Triad Pest Control
1535 S. Martin Luther King Drive
Winston-Salem, NC
788-3020

The Chronicle's
e-mail address
is:
wschron@netunlimited.net