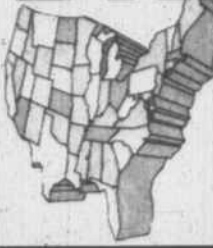


# NATIONAL BRIEFS



## TLC Beatrice being sold

TLC Beatrice International Holdings Inc., ranked for several years as one of the nation's largest African-American owned companies, will be sold along with its assets. The proceeds will be distributed among its shareholders.

TLC Beatrice, founded by the late Reginald F. Lewis and under the operation of his widow, Loida Nicolas Lewis, also has agreed to sell the 65 percent ownership interest in its ice cream operations in mainland Spain and the Canary Islands to the Iberian Beverage Group for \$191 million.

"We looked at every option to maximize value and deliver liquidity to the stockholders," said Lewis, chairwoman and CEO. "In the end, the board of directors decided that the sale of our Spanish ice cream operations and our other businesses and the plan of liquidation are the most effective ways to unlock the value of the company and equitably provide liquidity for our stockholders in a timely fashion." — New York Amsterdam

## Price for 2000 census jumps \$1.7 billion

The Census Bureau estimates that it will need an extra \$1.7 billion to conduct the census next year, bringing the total fiscal year 2000 funding request for the decennial count to \$4.5 billion.

The bureau says the extra funds are needed to comply with a January Supreme Court ruling that prohibits the use of sampling methods to count the population for purposes of congressional apportionment.

## 1998 a record year for weather

WASHINGTON (IPS) — Record high temperatures, coupled with increased numbers of storms and floods worldwide, made 1998 a year of extremes, according to the Worldwatch Institute.

"This past year was an off-the-chart year," said Lester Brown, president of Worldwatch and co-author of "Vital Signs 1999," the Washington think-tank's annual report on global trends.

Weather-related damage worldwide, for example, totaled \$92 billion in 1998, up 53 percent from the previous record of \$60 billion in 1996.

Record storms and floods last year drove some 300 million people from their homes — more people than live in the United States, the report said. Most of these people lived in China's Yangtze River valley, in Bangladesh and eastern India.

"Some were forced from their homes for only a few days, but others were out for weeks or months and some left permanently," said the 197-page report. — Danielle Knight

## Influx of refugees in Tanzania threatens food supply

NAIROBI, Kenya (IPS) — An influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo into Tanzania is threatening the limited food stocks in refugee camps, according to the Red Cross.

The number of refugees crossing over to Tanzania from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone has reached 62,000 since August 1998, says the latest monthly report by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, recently made available to IPS. In May alone, there were as many as 12,000 arrivals.

Fighting in the eastern DRC has intensified recently, with the Congolese government bombing the eastern rebel stronghold of Uvira for the second time in a month. This has prompted the Rwandese government to withdraw an earlier unilateral cease-fire.

"There is an urgent need for funding them," said the Red Cross. The U.N. World Food Program, which is distributing food in the camps, says its field staff has had to implement a 20 to 30 percent reduction in food rations due to the refugee pressure. "This couldn't have come at a worse time," said Irene Lacy, WFP representative in Tanzania. — Judith Achieng

## Prostate cancer plagues Jamaican males

KINGSTON, Jamaica (IPS) — The Jamaica Cancer Society recently released data from a five-year study that found that one in 304 men (out of 100,000 screened) had prostate cancer.

The report also pointed out that the rate is one of the highest in the world, ranking close to that of the United States.

Even more frightening is the finding that the mortality rate among Jamaicans with prostate cancer far exceeds that of their American counterparts.

Prostate cancer falls behind cardiovascular-related illnesses and other cancer-based diseases as the main causes of death in Jamaica. But the alarming rise in prostate cancer cases makes it easily the most feared. — Howard Campbell

## Wijdenbosch resignation demanded

PARAMARIBO, Surinam (IPS) — About 30,000 Surinamese joined in a massive carnival-like street protest earlier this month to demand the resignation of President Jules Wijdenbosch.

Organized by the country's main business organizations, opposition parties and anti-government labor unions, the protest was said by police to have been the largest in the recent history of the country, which gained independence from The Netherlands in 1975.

Apart from being the largest gathering on the streets in years, participants said it was significant because it was the first time civil society had taken such a firm stance against any administration, as well as cutting across every social and economic class.

In the past year, the state pension fund has been hard hit by a massive unofficial devaluation of the local guilder. And the currency has moved from about 700 to \$1 in December to 2,200 to \$1 in early May and 1,400 to \$1 this month.

The government also has been blamed for the increase in the migration rate of middle class and professional Surinamese and the dramatic decline of the currency and consequent massive hike in food prices.

"We want business people to be in the government because running a country is like running a business. It has to be run properly. Hopefully this is the end of this government," said Anthony Frank, a member of the Association of Trade and Industry of Surinam. — Bert Wilkinson

# Rosa Parks honored by Congress

By CATHERINE STRONG THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Hailed by lawmakers as the mother of civil rights, Rosa Parks was honored with the Congressional Gold Medal Tuesday, the highest civilian award given by Congress.

Mrs. Parks, 86, was lauded by the House and Senate leadership and President Clinton for an act of defiance more than four decades ago.

On Dec. 1, 1955, the seamstress, tired after a day's work in Montgomery, Ala., refused to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated city bus and was arrested for her defiance.

Her arrest set off a lengthy bus boycott by thousands of blacks — led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., then a local minister. The boycott lasted about a year until the Supreme Court declared Montgomery's bus segregation law unconstitutional.

"She is the mother of the civil rights movement," said Rep. Julia Carson, D-Ind., who pushed for the legislation granting the Congressional Gold Medal to Mrs. Parks, who now lives in Detroit.

"It is a celebration of the life of Rosa Parks, who is receiving the honor while she can still see it," Carson said of Mrs. Parks, who appeared frail and had to be helped to her feet from her wheelchair, sometimes steadying herself on the arm of House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill.

"I thank God that when your time came, you were not afraid," House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., said at the Capitol Rotunda ceremony. "You had courage, and you sat down for all of America and all of America's freedom."

Congressional lawmakers gave



Associated Press photo by Khue But

Rosa Parks, flanked by Dorothy Height, president emerita and chairman of the board of the National Council of Negro Women, left, and actress Cicely Tyson, right, takes part in "A High Tea of Celebration." The event was held to honor Parks' receipt of the Congressional Gold Medal. She received the medal from President Clinton during a Capitol Hill ceremony Tuesday.

Mrs. Parks an artist's drawing of the medal, which is not yet finished.

"I thank you," she said in a low, halting voice, adding that she accepted the award for a "free people" and for civil rights.

The gratitude went both ways. "I thank you for what you have done," Clinton told Mrs. Parks.

"She sat, anchored to that seat, as Dr. King said, by the accumulated indignities of days gone by and the countless aspirations of generations yet unborn," the president said. "Rosa Parks said, 'I didn't get on that bus to get arrested; I got on that bus to go home.'"

The president said he was only 9 when Mrs. Parks refused to stand up. He and his friends

"couldn't figure out anything we could do since we couldn't even vote. So we began to sit on the back of the bus when we got on."

Mrs. Parks action cost her the seamstress job and prompted harassment and threats to her family. So she moved to Detroit in 1957. She joined the staff of Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., in 1965 and worked there until retiring in 1988.

In 1987, Mrs. Parks co-founded a nonprofit group, the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development, to help young people in Detroit.

A guest at Clinton's State of the Union address in January, Mrs. Parks has received numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The legislation awarding her

the Congressional Gold Medal was approved by the Senate without dissent April 19. The House voted 424-1 for it the next day. The only "no" vote was cast by Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, who said he opposes spending government money on such awards.

Lawmakers initially used the Congressional Gold Medal to honor military leaders but began using it during the 20th century to recognize excellence in a range of fields. More than 320 medals have been awarded.

The first was given to George Washington in 1776 for "wise and spirited conduct" during the Revolutionary War.

Recent honorees include Frank Sinatra, Mother Teresa and South African President Nelson Mandela.

# Imprisoned minister humbled by prison life

By KAREN L SHAW THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — From the pulpit of Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church, the Rev. Henry J. Lyons preached the word of the Lord for 27 years.

And for nearly five years, he was president of one of the nation's largest black church groups, the National Baptist Convention USA.

Now, after being convicted on state charges of racketeering and grand theft, the 57-year-old minister wears prison blues and shares half of an open dormitory with 69 other inmates, engaging in intense Bible study.

A repentant, more humble

Lyons has emerged since he began his 5 1/2-year state sentence, his lawyers said. It is this man who now awaits sentencing Friday on federal charges of tax evasion and bank fraud.

"He's reading the Bible and reading prayer every day ... trying to find peace for himself," said attorney Jeff Brown. "He's been doing an awful lot of work reading about Paul ... and some of the disciples who have spent time in prison."

Lyons was convicted Feb. 27 in state court of bilking nearly \$4 million from corporations trying to do business with the Baptist convention, and of stealing almost \$250,000 donated by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith for burned black churches in the South.

He pleaded guilty in federal court March 17 to five related counts of evading taxes, engaging in fraudulent activities and lying to officials. In return, federal prosecutors dropped 49 other charges, including extortion, conspiracy and money laundering.

Lyons is scheduled to appear before U.S. District Judge Henry Lee Adams in Tampa. The federal charges carry a total possible sentence of 75 years and heavy fines. But under sentencing guidelines that take into account the crime, the impact on its victims and Lyons' background, the minister likely faces a sentence between six and eight years, said Brown, Lyons' attorney for the federal case.

The minister is serving his state sentence at Lowell Correctional Institution-Men's Unit, a

prison about nine miles north of Ocala. Any remaining federal time would then be served in a federal institution.

Once the head of the head a powerful black church group, with an annual salary of \$100,000, Lyons had a difficult

time adjusting to the rough and tumble life inside prison, where the bathroom has walls but no doors.

"They put him through a boot camp, and there (are) a lot of young offenders who go through it," said attorney Denis

de Vlaming, who has communicated with the minister by mail. "He was with kids who were just yelling and screaming and carrying on ... driving him batty."

Separation from his family

See Lyons on A9



Lyons

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## This Week In Black History...

June 17, 1871 — James Weldon Johnson is born in Tampa, Fla. Johnson would go on to be the first African American admitted to the Florida bar and pen "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing."

June 23, 1982 — The House of Representatives approves an extension of the voting rights act, despite strident opposition by N.C. Sen. Jesse Helms.

Celebrate Juneteenth