

NATIONAL BRIEFS



NAACP to hold convention in New York

(NNPA) — The NAACP will hold its 90th annual convention July 10-15 in New York City. The theme, "NAACP: 90 Years of Making Democracy Work," commemorates the association's historic founding in New York in 1909.

"It's a momentous occasion for those of us who are committed to justice and equality for people of color," said Kweisi Mfume, NAACP president and CEO. "Over the past 90 years, the NAACP has played a significant role in making America work for all of its citizens."

An estimated 14,000 delegates and visitors, representing the NAACP's 2,200 branches, are expected to attend the six-day convention. Invited guests include President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, U.S. Rep. J.C. Watts (R-Okla.) and James Clyburn (D-S.C.), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. Call 410-358-8900.

African American Women's Institute honors 11

(NNPA) — The African American Women's Institute in the Howard University Department of Sociology recently honored 11 outstanding black women with the 1999 Distinguished Service and Leadership Award.

The international conference, devoted to the presentation of scholarly work by black educators, administrators and students, recognized:

Mary Frances Berry, chairperson, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; Mary Schmidt Campbell, dean, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU; Elizabeth Catlett, artist; Camille Cosby, philanthropist; Adelaide Cromwell, educator; Etta Falconer, provost, Spelman College; Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, chief justice, International War Crimes Tribunal; Constance Baker Motley, federal District Court judge/counsel, Brown vs. Board of Education;

Eleanor Holmes Norton, District of Columbia delegate; Jessie Carney Smith, Fisk University librarian; and Alvia Wardlaw, curator 20th century art, Museum of Fine Arts-Houston and associate professor, Texas Southern University.

Founded in 1993, the African American Women's Institute is the focal point for cross-cultural studies of women of color. The institute seeks to build collaborations with women's programs at local universities and community organizations.

New Orleans to host Paul Robeson exhibit

(NNPA) — Black Arts National Diaspora Inc. has been selected as one of only three places in the world to host the "Paul Robeson: Bearer of a Culture" exhibit in New Orleans, La.

Hosted by Henry C. Lydia G. Sinds Art Gallery, there will be more than 300 original photos, letters, diary entries and video and audio tapes from Robeson's extraordinary life. The exhibit will run through Dec. 31. Call 888-535-2263.

INTERNATIONAL

Poor rainfall triggers food crisis

NAIROBI, Kenya (IPS) — Millions of people in the Horn of Africa face a looming food crisis due to an unusually short rainy season in the first half of this year, which has produced "dangerously low water levels."

The WFP said although late April brought adequate rains to Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, an extended dry spell, with only scattered rains in May and June, will sharply reduce livestock and crop production.

"We are facing a major hunger crisis affecting millions of people throughout the region," said Robin Wheeler, in charge of the WFP's regional Vulnerability Analysis Mapping.

To avert the crisis, WFP said it has already approved a \$40.5 million emergency operation budget to feed nearly 1.2 million most affected people in Ethiopia. — Judith Acheng

Ten million Congolese children to get vaccine

KINSHASA, Congo (IPS) — Ten million children will be vaccinated against polio beginning in August during the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) second national crusade against the crippling disease.

"The DRC, following the example of other African countries, is finally coming into the age of the complete eradication of polio," Health Minister Dr. Mashako Mamba told IPS. "We can't let our country become the breeding ground for this virus."

According to Mamba, the DRC is the last country on the continent to organize a nationwide campaign against polio.

The new campaign will cost about \$13 million. A large chunk of it will be financed by outside sources, such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

According to statistics from the Expanded Program for Vaccinations and the Fight Against Children's Communicable Diseases, around 10,000 Congolese children under 5 suffer from polio. — Bienvenu Mandala

Sixteen women in Malawi move into Parliament

LILONGWE, Malawi (IPS) — History was made in Malawi's second multiparty general elections recently when 16 women, the highest number ever, won seats in Parliament.

Malawians elected a new president and members of Parliament earlier this month in an election described as free and fair by rights groups and international observers, despite claims of irregularities by some opposition parties.

According to the Electoral Commission, a total of 62 women entered the race for the tiny Southern African country's 193 parliamentary seats.

"We have made some progress compared to the last Parliament, but we could have done better," says Reen Kachere, executive director of the Association of Progressive Women, a local rights group lobbying for increased women's participation in politics and decision-making. — Hazwell Kanjaye

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This Week In Black History...
July 10, 1893 — Dr. Daniel Hale Williams performs the world's first open heart surgery at Chicago's Provident Hospital.
July 11, 1905 — Niagara Movement meetings begin in Buffalo, N.Y. The movement, led by black intellectuals including renowned scholar W.E.B. DuBois, is a forerunner of the NAACP.

Church preaches hate against minorities

By CHRISTOPHER THORNE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST PEORIA, Ill. — It bills itself as a religion.

But the World Church of the Creator preaches hate against minorities, and critics say its bigotry has provoked violence against blacks and Jews.

Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, believed to have killed two and wounded seven in a two-state shooting spree that ended with his suicide, was a member of the white supremacist group for a year. He listed his Indiana University address on group literature as a contact point.

He was also profiled in a November church newsletter as "Creator of the Month" for distributing flyers at Indiana University.

While this unabashed bigotry styles itself as a religion, there are no altars or church buildings. Instead, Matt Hale, a skinny 27-year-old violin player, reaches his followers through a Web site dripping with racism, written in a swastika-adorned room in his parents' East Peoria home.

"This is a religion for and created by sociopaths," Mark Potok, spokesman for the Southern Poverty Law Center, said Monday.



Indiana University Dean of Students Richard McKaig, right, describes his conversations with Benjamin Nathaniel Smith as Bloomington Police Detective Bill Parker, center, and Ken Kaiser of the FBI listen during a news conference in Bloomington, Ind., Monday. Smith, a white supremacist, targeted minorities in a deadly Fourth of July weekend shooting spree in two states.

Potok and others believe the World Church of the Creator is responsible for encouraging racial violence like the two-state spree that ended in Smith's sui-

cide late Sunday night in Salem, Ill.

While the church's Web site has a note saying it does not condone violence, it also calls

for a "racial holy war" and extermination of non-whites.

"Hale and his group are not

See Shooting on A5

Publisher '98 software links black couple to monkeys

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN DIEGO — Microsoft Corp. is facing another legal battle, this time on grounds that its Publisher 1998 software includes a "racially-charged" message that black people are monkeys.

John Elijah, 32, filed a lawsuit Tuesday in U.S. District Court that claims when users type "monkey" to access drawings and pictures of the animal, one of the choices is a black couple sitting on monkey bars at a playground.

"I felt the blood rushing out of my whole body," said Elijah, a construction worker who was shown the image by a white co-worker who accessed it by coincidence. "I was humiliated."

Elijah is demanding that

Microsoft fix the software, which is used to create newsletters and documents with graphics and pictures, and \$75,000 in damages.

Elijah's attorney, Harvey Levine, left the lawsuit open as a class action, allowing the estimated 4 million customers who have bought the software to receive compensation or an updated version that corrects the problem.

Microsoft spokesman Greg Shaw said the Washington-based company is aware of the problem and will provide a software update to anyone who wants it. He said the Publisher 2000 software does not contain the image. "We regret any offense or

inconvenience," Shaw said. "We are deeply committed to doing everything possible to prevent this in the future."

Levine suspects the picture was specifically programmed to appear, as "some sort of sick insider joke."

But Shaw said the link was unintentional. He said the software contains images that can be accessed by using several key words. A computer user who searched for "couple" may have accessed the photo as well as someone who typed "bar," which would have also accessed images of drinking glasses or bottled beverages.

In this case, "monkey" brings up an assortment of pictures

including monkeys in trees, a gorilla and the closely-cropped photo of the black couple, which Levine called "racially-charged" and offensive.

Elijah, who is married and has two children, said his wife has become so upset that she's now afraid for the family's safety.

"She's been talking about leaving and going to live with her mom," he said. "Her biggest fear is that maybe skinheads or people like that will face off with me. She's afraid people will think I'm doing this for the money, and not because I want it fixed."

"I don't want anyone else to have to see this," he said.

GSU bankruptcy may affect students

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GRAMBLING, La. — Grambling State University officials are trying to determine how the GSU Foundation's bankruptcy filing will impact the school and students.

The Grambling State University Foundation, a nonprofit support organization separate from the school, filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy June 18 in the Western District of U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Monroe.

Grambling President Steve Favors said he recently stopped transferring contributions to the foundation, but was unclear how much money had been transferred already.

Favors said the university "will try to accommodate any student whose scholarship might be affected."

All contributions now, including the \$500,000 recently raised during the Tiger Fund Drive, are safely under control of the school, Favors said.

Favors said he has been concerned about the foundation's operation since taking over as president in May 1998.

Favors said he met with the foundation's executive director, James E. Webb, two months ago and asked him to allow the university to review the foundation's books. Although Webb agreed at the time, the foundation never provided the financial information promised, Favors said.

The foundation was separated from the university in 1993 by GSU President Harold Lundy when it came under fire from legislative auditors for awarding more than \$900,000 in scholarships without having the funds to support them.

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