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CHRONICLE

The Choice for African American News

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2001

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Locals: Jackson's victories outweigh failures

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Arguably, no community cheered louder this week when the Rev. Jesse Jackson announced that he would continue his crusades on behalf of disenfranchised people everywhere.

Jackson's roots run deep here in the Triad; he and three of his children graduated from N.C. A&T State University. Jackson has been a frequent guest at his alma mater for years, often attending commencement ceremonies and other high profile university events.

"The ground is no place for a champion," Jackson told an Associated Press reporter Saturday. "The ground is no place that I will wallow on."

His decision to continue to fight the good fight reversed comments he made in a statement last week in which he said he would disappear from public life to work on his personal life.

The news that Jackson, married for 38 years, had a love child with an aide he carried on an affair with hit last week like a nuclear bomb, sending tremors through those who admire the civil rights leader.

"It's heartbreaking news," said Linda Sutton, a voter awareness advocate and community activist. "It may have some effect on the effectiveness of what he has been doing, but his reason for activism, helping blacks, is very real. None of us (is) perfect."

Jackson revealed the secret about the baby, who is now 20 months, days before a supermarket tabloid was set to publish pictures of the baby's mother and a story about the affair. Jackson was in the midst of planning a protest rally in Florida in response to ballots there that were not counted as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling in the presidential election matter.

Bill Tatum, president of the Winston-Salem NAACP branch, said the timing of the revelation was a little too coincidental.

"It was very untimely," he said. "It was an attempt to silence the protest movement of the voters whose votes were not counted."

Jackson has also questioned the timing of the news. He compared the revelation about his affair with similar threats aimed at another civil rights icon. He told the Associated Press that Martin Luther King Jr., whom he worked under during the most heated years of the Civil Rights Movement, received notes threatening to reveal King's affairs just days before King was set to accept the Nobel Peace Prize.

Like King, Jackson said he will keep his eye on the prize.

"A two-year-old story was made public," Jackson said. "So, one can sense that there may be some motivation. But ... I accept my responsibility. What we must do here is put our focus not on my pain, but the people's agenda."

Tatum said he does not condone Jack-

See Jesse Jackson on A11

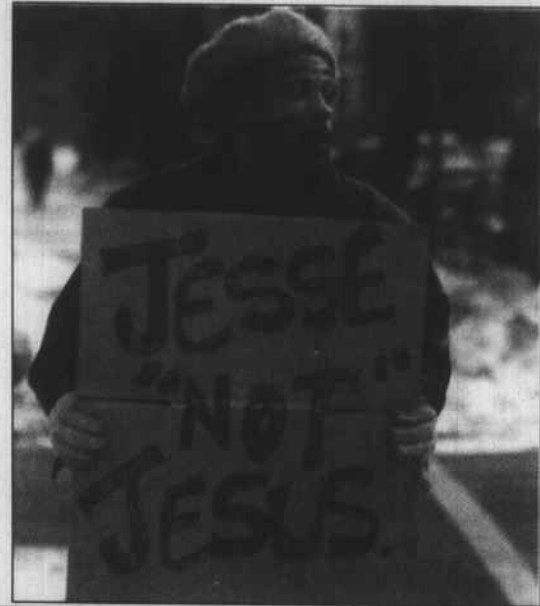


Photo by Tim Boyle/NewsMakers
Roosevelt Nelson Jr. of Chicago walks with a sign that reads "Jesse Not Jesus" on Jan. 19 outside the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition National Office in Chicago, Ill.

Family wants help in finding missing woman

BY PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

The family of Lula Gamble, who has been missing since Dec. 26, is asking anyone who has seen her to call the family, daughter LaTonya Gamble said Monday.

"The last time I saw her was that morning when she dropped my uncle (her brother) off at my grandmother's house at 1640 E. 22nd Street in Winston-Salem, about 10:30 in the morning."

"She left in a car but I don't know who she was with," LaTonya Gamble said.

"She hasn't called anyone and no one has seen her," LaTonya Gamble said.

Lula Gamble had most recently lived with her boyfriend on Greenway Avenue, Winston-Salem. "Her boyfriend is looking for her too," LaTonya Gamble said.

Lula Gamble stayed with her mother (Thelma Grant) at 1629 E. 22nd Street about two weeks in November when Lula was sick with the flu, LaTonya Gamble said.

She still had a cough when she was last seen, LaTonya Gamble said. "She was wearing a gray coat, khaki-looking pants and white tennis shoes. She's 5-3 1/2. She weighs about 150 pounds; medium brown skin; hair is off-black. The last time we (saw) her she had some braids. Her eyes are dark brown...She is 35 years old."

Lula Gamble is unemployed, LaTonya Gamble said.

LaTonya Gamble said Monday

See Missing on A4



Tavis Smiley signs a copy of his latest book for a local fan.

Smiley tells black America to shape up

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Tavis Smiley didn't know that the highest court in the land would decide 2000's racially-charged presidential race when he was putting the finishing touches on "How to Make Black America Better," his latest book. Smiley also had no way of knowing that Jesse Jackson, black America's preeminent leader, would be forced out of the public spotlight while Smiley was in the midst of a multi-city book tour.

The author and talk show host talked about those ironies as well as other things last Friday at Special Occasions.

"The question of what we are going to do as black Americans to

"Some of us still do not want to call him the president-elect but the president-select because he was selected by the Supreme Court."

-Tavis Smiley

make black America better has

taken on increased significance," Smiley said, eluding to then-President-elect Bush's impending inauguration and Jackson's decision to remove himself from the spotlight after he revealed he fathered a baby through an affair with a young aide.

Smiley, who hosts a nighttime talk show on Black Entertainment Television and is a regular commentator on the "Tom Joyner in the Morning" radio show, gave the impromptu talk before signing copies of the book. Almost 100 people stood in a snake-like line and listened as Smiley talked about his reasons for writing the

See Smiley on A11

Competition to test students' knowledge

Feb. 16 is deadline for high-school students to enter Underground Railroad essay contest

BY PAUL COLLINS
THE CHRONICLE

Forsyth County high school students have until Feb. 16 to enter an essay in the Harriet Tubman Research, Discovery, and Essay Contest, sponsored by The Chronicle and coordinated by Dr. Ernie Wade and Associates. A \$500 first prize, \$250 second prize and \$100 third prize will be awarded in each of the two divisions: ninth-10th grades and 11th-12th grades. The top five finishers in each division will receive a three-night, four-day all-expense-paid trip along the route the Underground Railroad took in North Carolina.

"Once we determine what the route is, we're going to travel it," Wade said.

Wade said there are two established Underground Railroad sites in North Carolina - at New Bern and Greensboro. It's the job of people entering the contest to find additional sites on the Underground Railroad in North Carolina. The student's essay will describe the work he or she did on the project.

How do students go about finding information? The Internet is a great source, Wade said. You'll find a wealth of information if you look up Harriet Tubman and Underground Railroad. You may also want to look up abolitionist and Quaker.

Public, college and university libraries and history departments at universities and historically black colleges may also be sources of information. For example, a student might find a professor who will say the absolute authority on the Underground Railroad is so-and-so and tell you how to contact the authority.

Also, there is an underground railroad in Cleveland, Ohio.

And the N.C. Historical Society could be a source of information.

Stay focused. There is information about Underground Railroad sites all over the country, but contestants need to find out only about additional Underground Railroad sites in North Carolina.

"Given the distance between New Bern and Greensboro, you have to think there were other sites (on the Underground Railroad in North Carolina)," Wade said. "You're walking at night." That trip would have taken many days. "You assume there were additional sites."

Also, there may have been a site closer to North Carolina's coast than New Bern, Wade said. "You can probably assume ships left Charleston and other places in South Carolina and disembarked somewhere on the coast of North Carolina."

Anyone interested in entering

See Contest on A4

Living Out Loud

Hearing-impaired teen adds beauty queen to list of accomplishments

T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Brionne Williams' parents have always instilled in her a sky's-the-limit type of mentality despite the fact that she has a physical disability that sometimes creates barriers.

The teen-ager was born with a hearing disability; all through life she attended regular schools, receiving special instruction to help her speak properly. Brionne taught herself to sign and read lips.

With her hearing aid, Brionne's hearing is about 25 percent. An only child, Brionne has thrived because of her outgoing personality and her ability to laugh when others might cry, her parents believe.

It was that personality that propelled her to the Miss Parkland (High School) title. After being first runner-up in 1999 she took the title last November, donning dazzling evening and sports wear along the way.

But it was her talent that her parents

believed won the title for Brionne. She has played the piano for more than 10 years and exercised her skills to the extreme by performing a difficult classical piece during the pageant.

Brionne, with a big smile, is the first to admit that the performance didn't go as well as she had planned.

"I messed up one time," she laughed.

Her mother, Dr. Myrna Williams, a psychologist in private practice, said she believes she knows why the judges overlooked the faux pas.

"I think the judges recognized the difficulty of what she was doing," Myrna Williams said. "I think people are also real proud of her and see her as a role model as far as being a hearing impaired person. The fact that she can play the piano well and only has 25 percent hearing is really a blessing."

See Williams on A10



Brionne Williams practices the piano in her home.

Photo by Kevin Walker

The Chronicle wins awards for news reporting

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Chronicle picked up two awards in the 2000 North Carolina Press Association News, Editorial and Photojournalism Contest. The annual awards are given in various categories and are judged by the staffs of newspapers in other states.

Chronicle sports editor Sam Davis and T. Kevin Walker won a third-place prize in the News Enterprise Reporting category for a story published last year about a local teen who killed his much older girlfriend and then himself. The award is Davis' first non-sports NCPA prize; his sports section has racked up many of the awards over the years.

Walker and former Chronicle reporter Cheri Hodges also won a third-place award in the General News Reporting category for a story written a year ago about black leaders refusing to go to the local Adam's Mark hotel because of allegations of racism that had been lodged at the hotel chain. The award is Hodges' first NCPA prize and Walker's third.

The awards are scheduled to be presented tonight in Chapel Hill.



Davis