

News at a Glance

Charles to judge blues contest

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ray Charles celebrated his 73rd birthday with a cake shaped like a piano and visits from Quincy Jones and Willie Nelson.

"I've been lucky to have done so many things these 73 years, but there's a lot more I want to do in life, especially with longtime friends like Willie and Quincy," Charles, a legendary musician, said at his private studio.



Charles

At last week's festivities, Charles also announced a blues songwriting contest, which he'll judge with help from Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Alicia Keys and Roger Waters of Pink Floyd.

Teenagers can submit the lyrics to a blues song, and five winners will be flown to Los Angeles to work with Charles in producing the song.

Runner-up prizes include a bass lesson with Flea and a guitar signed by Britney Spears. Lyrics may be submitted through a Web site. The contest will end Dec. 15.

Charles has been resting because of a hip ailment but has started work on a duets album to feature B.B. King and others. He also received birthday notes from Clint Eastwood, Elton John and President Bush.

Charles, who was 7 when he lost his eyesight, has won 13 Grammy Awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award. He also was one of the original inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

He has recorded classic songs, including "What'd I Say" and "Georgia on My Mind."

Rock Hill votes to observe Martin Luther King Day

ROCK HILL, S.C. (AP) — The city of Rock Hill has voted to observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a holiday.

The City Council voted 6-1 last week to change the city's current King Day policy and observe the day as a full holiday. The city had recognized King Day as a floating holiday, meaning employees had the option to take the day off as one of two floating holidays.

Councilman Kevin Sutton voted against the change, saying the old policy better served city employees by giving them a choice about whether to take King Day off.

But supporters said it was important to recognize the life and work of the slain civil rights leader.

"Dr. King gave his life for the cause of equality and justice, not just for blacks, but for all the oppressed," said Osbey Roddey, one of the council's two black members.

The move to change the city's policy came less than two weeks after Mayor Doug Echols requested the city fully recognize the holiday. The request immediately gained the support of a majority of council members.

The city's change follows York County's decision earlier this month to change its King Day policy, which was similar to Rock Hill's.

Richmond rejects idea to name street after native Arthur Ashe

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Richmond's City Council rejected a proposal to rename a street for tennis great Arthur Ashe, a city native who was barred from playing on segregated tennis courts when he was a child.

The proposal drew opposition from many residents of the street known only as the Boulevard, a 2.5-mile thoroughfare lined with churches, a synagogue, apartments, museums, businesses, sports complexes and about 1,200 Edwardian-era homes, many on the National Register of Historic Places.

Seven years ago, the city split along racial lines over the large statue of Ashe erected on Monument Avenue, where several statues of Confederate heroes also stand.

Councilman Walter Kenney Sr. sought the name change, arguing that it would help Richmond embrace its diversity and reconcile its past.



Ashe

"Richmond had a unique opportunity to change the perception of race relations," Kenney said after last week's 7-2 vote. "This was a bridge for that."

Ashe died of AIDS-related pneumonia in February 1993, 10 months after revealing he had contracted the disease from a blood transfusion during heart bypass surgery in the 1980s.

About 50 people attended the meeting to argue against the change. Only one showed up to speak in support of the proposal.

University shuts down race-based bake sale

(Special to the NNPA) — Southern Methodist University ended a bake sale recently where cookies were sold at different prices depending on the buyer's race or gender.

The bake sale was organized by the Young Conservatives of Texas, who said the bake sale was intended as a protest of affirmative action. White males were charged \$1 for a cookie; white women, 75 cents; Hispanics, 50 cents; and blacks, 25 cents.

The group said it meant no offense and was only trying to protest the use of race or gender as a factor in college admissions.

Similar sales had been held by College Republican chapters at schools in at least five other states since February.

A black student filed a complaint with Southern Methodist University, saying the sale was offensive. School officials said they halted the event after 45 minutes because it created a potentially unsafe situation.

The sale drew a crowd outside the student center and several students engaged in a shouting match, Moore added.

The group sold only three cookies during its protest, raising \$1.50. Matt Houston, a black SMU sophomore, called the protest offensive.

"My reaction is disgust because of the ignorance of some of the SMU students," he said. "They were arguing that affirmative action was solely based on race. It's not based on race. It's based on bringing a diverse community to a certain organization."

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'Black-sounding' names a drawback?

BY JUSTIN POPE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — When Vonnessa Goode gives birth in a few weeks, one of her first decisions could be among the toughest: whether to give her daughter a distinctively black name.

On the one hand, Goode and the child's father don't want their daughter "robbed of her ethnicity," she said. On the other, she believes a distinctively black name could end up being an economic impediment.

"I do believe now when a résumé comes across an employer's desk they could be easily discriminated against because they know that person is of African-American descent," she said. "It's a difficult decision."

Minorities of all kinds have wrestled with whether to celebrate their culture by giving their children distinctive names, or help them "blend in" with a name that won't stick out. Thousands of Jews have changed their names, hoping to improve their economic prospects in the face of discrimination, as have Asians and other minorities.

Blacks, however, have chosen increasingly distinctive names over the past century, with the trend accelerat-



Vonnessa Goode is coping with what to name her unborn child.

Photo by AP

ing during the 1960s.

Researchers who have looked at Census records have found that 100 years ago, the 20 most popular names were largely the same for blacks and whites; now only a handful are among the most popular with both groups. Names such as DeShawn and Shanice are almost exclusively black, while whites, whose names also have become increasingly

distinctive, favored names such as Cody and Caitlin.

Two recent papers from the Cambridge-based National Bureau of Economic Research draw somewhat different conclusions about whether a black name is a burden. One, an analysis of the 16 million births in California between 1960 and 2000, claims it has no significant effect on how someone's life turns out.

The other, however, suggests a black-sounding name remains an impediment to getting a job. After responding to 1,300 classified ads with dummy résumés, the authors found black-sounding names were 50 percent less likely to get a callback than white-sounding names with comparable résumés.

See Names on A4

Williams, Bond trade barbs at GOP event

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — NAACP Board Chair Julian Bond and conservative talk show host Armstrong Williams are accustomed to squaring off on television. But no one expected them to clash over a recent reception hosted by Williams in honor of the Bush administration's black appointees.

"Julian Bond was here earlier and people were asking, 'Why is he here?'" Williams said last week to a largely youthful crowd of 150 people at the reception in the basement of the U.S. Capitol. "We want people to understand our ideas and what we believe in. It's easy to condemn the Republican Party when you don't know what our message is."

Williams was just warming up.

"I'm not afraid of the other side, but they're afraid of us. That's why they demonize us. We have nothing to hide and nothing to run away from...It is very easy to tell the truth," Williams said. "It's when you tell lies (that) you have to have a memory to correct them. And we're right and they're wrong. Absolutely."

In an interview, Bond, who spars often with Williams on "America's Black Forum," a nationally syndicated television program, said he attended the reception at Williams' invitation and brought his 8-year-old grandson to meet high government officials, but left when he saw who would be there.

"The first thing I saw was the program. It featured Sen. (Rick) Santorum (R-Pa.) and (Rep.) Tom DeLay (R-Texas), and I thought, '...I don't want this child exposed to these people.' It could harm him immea-



Bond



Williams

surably to be exposed to people with such an evil view of justice and fairness," Bond said. "But, any rate, I did introduce Brandon to (Education) Secretary (Roderick) Paige."

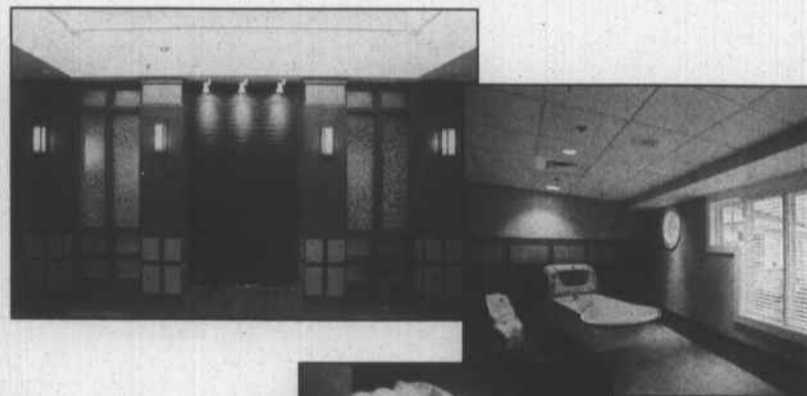
Both Santorum and DeLay are white ultra-conservatives, consistently earning F's on the NAACP's annual civil rights report card.

For three consecutive years, Bond hammered the Bush administration at the NAACP's annual convention. The first year, he likened the administration to the "Taliban wing of American politics." Last year, he equated Bush's civil rights policies to "snake oil." This

See Williams on A10

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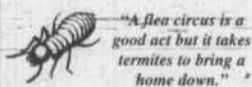
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