

News at a glance

Wyclef Jean wants 'to build a new Haiti'

JACMEL, Haiti (AP) — Wyclef Jean called on his Haitian countrymen to reject violence and work for a stable future during a free concert aimed at promoting development in the impoverished nation. "It's time to build a new Haiti," the Grammy-winning artist told more than 20,000 cheering fans recently at the waterfront pier of this resort town. It was his first concert in Haiti in eight years.



Jean

The concert capped off a week-long film and culture festival organized by Jean's Yele Haiti charity, which promotes music and the arts as a way to reduce poverty, create jobs and improve Haiti's image.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and most of its 8 million people live on less than \$2 per day. The Caribbean country is struggling to recover from a bloody 2004 revolt that toppled former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Jean, a Haitian citizen who lives in the United States, condemned the ongoing street violence that has followed the revolt, especially a wave of kidnappings for ransom that have plagued the capital, Port-au-Prince.

"If we don't stop kidnappings, the country can't develop," Jean said.

Jean was born in Haiti but left for the United States with his family at age 9. He later achieved world fame through his hip-hop band, The Fugees.

Ex-chief in hate crime case to work with group serving blacks

WAUKESHA, Wis. (AP) — A former rural fire chief accused of joining a fellow firefighter in a racially motivated confrontation with a black fisherman must serve a year's probation and do 100 hours of community service, including 50 hours with an organization primarily serving African-Americans, a judge has ordered.

Waukesha County Circuit Judge Lee S. Dreyfus Jr. described the conduct of former North Lake Chief Terrence Stapleton as "blatantly racist" during the confrontation with Mark Bratton of Milwaukee, who was fishing with his family at the Monches Mill Pond, on April 19, 2005.

Prosecutors said Stapleton used his German shepherd to chase Bratton, and Mark Weber threatened Bratton with a handgun. Both Stapleton and Weber had been drinking, according to court records, and Bratton said both used racial epithets as they told him to leave.

Stapleton and Weber have since resigned from the fire department. Stapleton, 67, entered an Alford plea to a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct with a hate crime enhancer. In such a plea, a defendant does not admit guilt but concedes there is enough evidence for a conviction. A misdemeanor charge of obstruction had been dismissed but was considered at sentencing.

Weber, 42, pleaded guilty last week to a misdemeanor count of pointing a firearm at a person and to a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct with a hate crime enhancer. He had faced the hate crime penalty in the gun charge, but it was dropped as part of the plea agreement.

S.C. native to head think tank

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, the nation's premier African American think tank, has appointed trailblazing Washington lawyer Ralph B. Everett to serve as its new President and Chief Executive Officer, effective Jan. 1.

Everett will lead the Joint Center at an important time for people of color in America, with the number of black elected officials in the U.S. having grown to more than 9,500 and as African Americans prepare to assume the leadership of key committees in the new Congress.

"Having worked with the Joint Center from my days as a young Capitol Hill staffer nearly 30 years ago, I can tell you this appointment is a dream come true for me," said Everett.



Everett

Everett has worked since 1989 as a partner at Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, a leading international law firm with more than 1,000 attorneys in 18 offices throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. The first African American to receive a partnership at the firm, he has served as Managing Partner of the Washington office and is a member of the Policy Committee and Co-Chair of the Firm's Federal Legislative Practice Group. While at Paul Hastings, Mr. Everett has specialized in matters pertaining to the legislative and executive branches, as well as independent regulatory agencies. He has particular experience in telecommunications and transportation policy issues.

A native of Orangeburg, S.C., Everett is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Morehouse College and has a juris doctor from Duke University Law School, where he was an Earl Warren Legal Scholar. He began his professional career as a lawyer in the North Carolina Department of Labor in Raleigh.

Co-founder of BET network to give \$5 million to U.Va.

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Sheila Johnson, co-founder of the Black Entertainment Television network, is donating \$5 million to the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education, the Richmond Times-Dispatch reported last week.

The gift will mostly go toward financing clinics that help children with psychological disorders that impede their learning, the newspaper said.

Johnson is a member of the school's foundation. She and her then-husband, businessman Robert Johnson, became billionaires when they sold BET to Viacom in 2000.

The couple founded the channel in 1980. They divorced in 2002.

Johnson lives on a 200-acre farm near Middleburg in northern Virginia. She recently said she's donated about \$21 million in recent years.

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Kilpatrick elected as CBC chair

She succeeds Mel Watt

BY BEN EVANS THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Congressional Black Caucus on Dec. 6 tapped Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick as its chairwoman for the next two years, when black lawmakers will wield more power in Congress than ever.

Kilpatrick, D-Mich., a former school teacher and the mother of Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, was chosen unanimously. She succeeds Rep. Mel Watt, D-N.C.

"Watch for us," Kilpatrick told reporters. "We will take this caucus to another level."

Because Democrats will be in control when Congress convenes a new session Jan. 4, the 43-member caucus will take up a historic slate of leadership positions, including the third-ranking member in the House, Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina.

It also will count as members four likely committee heads, up to 20 subcommittee leaders, and the only black senator, Barack Obama of Illinois, a possible presidential candidate.



Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick greets N.C. A&T students when she visited the school in 2003.

"That's more power than African-Americans have ever had in the Congress of the United States," said Ronald Walters, a political scientist and director of the African

American Leadership Institute at the University of Maryland. Kilpatrick said she would continue the organization's focus on issues such as health care, housing and education.

Watt said the caucus also would seek to address racial inequities in the criminal justice system and the crisis in Sudan's Darfur province.

See Kilpatrick on A13

House criticizes French city for Abu-Jamal honor

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — House members passed a resolution Dec. 6 denouncing a French city for naming a street in honor of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was sentenced to death for shooting a Philadelphia police officer.

"We must stand together as one and send a strong message to the world that cop-killers deserve to be punished, not to be celebrated," said Republican Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick, a Philadelphia-area congressman who authored the resolution.

The vote came a few days shy of the 25th anniversary of the shooting of Daniel Faulkner, a 25-year-old officer shot after he pulled over Abu-Jamal's brother on Dec. 9, 1981. Abu-Jamal, a one-time radio reporter and former Black Panther, was convicted in 1982 and sentenced to death.

Abu-Jamal's writings and taped speeches on the justice system have made him a cause celebre among Hollywood activists, foreign politicians and some death-penalty opponents who believe he was the victim of a racist justice system.

In December 2001, a federal judge overturned Abu-Jamal's death sentence but upheld his conviction. Both sides have appealed that ruling, and Abu-Jamal remains on death row in western Pennsylvania. Last year, the 3rd Circuit of Appeals agreed to consider Abu-Jamal's

appeal of his conviction.

In April, a street in St. Denis, a suburb in France just north of Paris, was named after Abu-Jamal.

The resolution asks the French government to step in to change the street name if St. Denis opted not to. The measure passed 368-31, with eight



Abu-Jamal

members voting present.

The vote was symbolic since the Senate is not expected to take up the measure before Congress adjourns.

Reps. John Conyers, D-Mich., and Bobby Scott, D-Va., said Congress should focus on

French government focus on the needs of its people while we focus on the needs of hard working people here in America," Conyers said.

Pennsylvania Reps. Allyson Schwartz, a Democrat, and Charles Dent, a Republican, also spoke in favor of the resolution.

The police union in Philadelphia sent a representative to Washington and watched the vote closely.

See Street on A12

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