



LaMont Walker and another city worker fix a water problem on First Street. Photo by Jason Pitt

Public urged to honor city's hardest workers

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

During National Public Works Week, May 20-26, Mayor Allen Joines and the members of the City Council encourage city residents to join them in honoring the dedicated men and women who provide for the city's everyday needs as members of the city's Public Works Department.

"Our public works employees rarely get the recognition they deserve," Joines said, "but imagine what our daily lives would be without them. I encourage all city residents to take this occasion to become better acquainted with the people who clean our streets, collect our garbage and yard waste, operate our landfills, install and maintain sewers, provide us with clean water, construct our storm drains, fix our pot holes, and maintain our traffic system."

Council Member Joycelyn Johnson, the chair of the council's Public Works Committee, urged city residents to thank the public works employees they come across this week.

"We owe our public works employees our gratitude for keeping Winston-Salem running smoothly from day to day," she said, "even when it means going out in the middle of the



City Council Member Joycelyn Johnson

night to repair a broken water main or salt the streets before a winter storm."

At the City Council meeting on Monday, Joines will deliver a proclamation honoring the city's public works employees.

Cities across the nation this month are celebrating National Public Works Week, organized by the American Public Works Association. Now in its 47th year, the association celebrates the hard work and dedication of the public works professionals.

OES

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Brenda Colter, who is called the Worthy Matron as head of the chapter.

The chapter certainly deserved a breather. Service comes first for #620, Colter said. Members recently took part in the Susan G. Koman Race for the Cure event. They are regulars at Petree Elementary School, where they mentor and tutor students. The Queens also visit local nursing homes, taking residents things like socks, soap and fruit.

The Order of the Eastern Star and other Prince Hall Freemasonry organizations have played an important role in nearly every aspect of African-American culture and life over the past two centuries, providing a means to foster brotherhood and sisterhood among members; and taking strong stands on issues like emancipation, Civil Rights and education.



Colter

Saturday's tea paid homage to the past by honoring the most senior members of the chapter, folks like Sister Dorothy Sprinkle and Sister Daisy Taylor, who started Queens of Olympic #620 nearly half a century ago with about 20 other ladies.

"I love it," Sprinkle said when asked why she has remained a loyal member for 47 years.

She loved it even when it meant climbing three flights of stairs to get to meetings in the old ragged building the chapter used to call home in the 1960s. Once on the corner of Patterson Avenue and Seventh Street, that building has long been demolished.

"We had some good times in that old shabby building," Taylor recalled. "For our meetings, everybody used to bring a dish of food. It was hard climbing those steps with food, but it was worth it once we got there."

Longtime members Macie Sibert, the chapter's oldest member, and Lula West were also honored for their seniority. Colter and other chapter members were inspired by recent tragedies to honor the ladies.

"I have been to too many funerals," Colter said. "We want to honor these ladies now while we still can give them their flowers."

Even the most senior chapter members are young at heart. Sibert, for example, still drives and she is in her 90s. But each time a member



Photos by Kevin Walker

Sister Vera Taylor sports her crown.

dies, the chapter loses a bit of its past and vitality, Colter said. There are about 100 members, most are of advanced age. Colter admits that it is a challenge filling the voids left by dedicated members after they pass on.

"There was a time when you had to be the daughter of a mason to join, but that has changed," she said. "We have what we call 'open season' where we try to get younger people interested in the organization."

Taylor doesn't see the same commitment to Christian service among today's young folks that she was a part of during the chapter's lean years.

"There are a lot of things that have changed," she said, "and to me, not for the better."

But Taylor - who did not think that the chapter would still be around 47 years later - believes the organization will survive. She says she will do her part to make sure of that.

"I am 73-years-old. I ain't going nowhere," she said when asked if she planned to end her membership anytime soon.

The chapter raised more than \$1,500 from recent fish-frys and banquets. The money always goes to help others. For example, \$600 was donated to hospice in honor of a member who was comforted there in her last days. Funds are also used to provide scholarships to students. Sister Vera Taylor was presented with a crown and flowers for raising the most money for the chapter, one of 10 black Order of Eastern Star organizations in Forsyth County.

Letters

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called WORTH—Women Offering Representation That Heal. My faculty advisor is Dr. Tasha Stanley. She's been my personal mentor too. WORTH took over the letter writing campaign this year," Boudreaux said.

"This year it was a week-long campaign and different organizations sponsored a day to get letters signed. We've gathered over 100 letters."

WORTH is offering students a choice of three letters to sign—strong, moderate or passive.

Majidah Muhammad, a

sophomore from Silver Springs, Md., signed the moderate letter, which included the following:

"With all of the influence and power that BET has as a global network for black entertainment, it is capable of changing how the world views Black people through new, innovative, and revolutionary shows that offer a much wider range of personalities and lifestyles within the black race.

"As Black Entertainment Television, it is your responsibility to create the most comprehensive representation of black life and entertainment. Should you choose to ignore these suggestions, you are

openly turning your back on the prospect of a better Black Entertainment Television network. I hope that you will choose to do the right thing."

Muhammad told The Final Call, "I was excited when I heard about the letter writing campaign and wanted to be a part of it. I signed the letter that critiqued what they were doing, but also encouraged them to do something better."

Writing letters to BET is not the only thing the letter writing campaign is doing.

They are also circulating a petition thanking TV One for their positive depiction of Black women. So far, they have over 300 signatures.

"Thank you, TV One, for airing positive, multi-dimensional representations of Black people to ourselves and the world! Thank you for being a network that educates and

entertains. Thank you for being a network that inspires, motivates, and uplifts black America.

"Most importantly, thank you for not being like BET! As a sign of our thanks, please know that those listed below support your network because you are different! We do not support BET or networks like it, and recognize the need for more networks like you! We thank you again!"

The students at Spelman have distinguished themselves as opposing the negative

images of Black women in the music and media.

For two days, they participated in a town hall meeting The Oprah Winfrey Show had, discussing the responsibility rap music has in the negative portrayal of black women.

Benjamin Chavis, executive director of the Hip Hop Summit Action Network, was a guest on the show for the second day of the meeting, and invited the Spelman students to participate in further discussions on this issue.



Debra Lee

Lopez

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process. She may be inconvenienced by an appearance at a deposition. I can assure the court that I will not ask for her autograph."

The lawsuit in

Manhattan sought unspecified monetary damages and an injunction barring further broadcasting of "South Beach," which has been canceled.

Lopez is among six defendants, including UPN and CBS Television, the

companies that broadcast "South Beach." UPN was a division of CBS Television Stations Group and has since merged with the also-struggling WB to form CW, a 50-50 venture between CBS Corp. and Warner Bros. Entertainment.

NCSA

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involved, "West Side Story" was one of the biggest undertakings in the history of NCSA. The last all-School production was "Brigadoon," in 1996.

"West Side Story" also impacted the city's economy. Downtown restaurants and area hotels reported a brisk business, as audience-goers flocked to local eateries and out-of-town guests arrived to see the show. In fact, Visit Winston-Salem (the

Convention and Visitors Bureau) made "West Side Story" a "spotlight event" for its "Weekends in Winston" promotion.

More than 15,000 audience-members saw a total of 12 performances that included 10 public performances, a campus-only show, and a free performance for more than 1,300 area schoolchildren.

On June 8, NCSA's "West Side Story" will play at Chicago's prestigious Ravinia Festival, where the buzz has spread. More than 3,000 reserved seats are already sold out for that performance.



Chancellor Mauceri

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