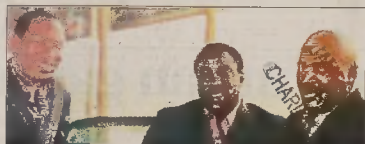


ANOTHER WNBA TEAM?
League president says Charlotte among several contenders; 1C



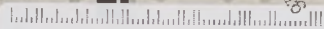
The Mighty (and we do mean Mighty) O'JAYS play Cricket Arena.

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PEOPLE OF PROMINENCE



Bryant Jones

Weighing in on race matters in Charlotte

Panel discussion with community leadership

By Erica Bryant
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Editor's note: On May 31 The Charlotte Post will host a serious discussion about race in Charlotte.

Six major community figures will come together at the Center Stage in NoDa to talk candidly about social and interracial trust - what's working and what's not. WSOX-TV Channel 9 news anchor Erica Bryant will facilitate the conversation. This is the first of a series of participant profiles.

Harry Jones is Mecklenburg County manager.

EB - Describe an event in your formative years when you first became truly aware that because of your skin color people might treat you differently.

HJ - I recall living on the Island of Taiwan in the late '50s and my sister and I were the only black students attending the military-based elementary school there. Two things I recall vividly, the first was our daily walk to school and being followed by throngs of Taiwanese who had not seen many black people and who would approach us and rub our skin with their fingers to see if our skin would cause a stain on their fingers. It was as if we were freaks of nature. During that same time frame while in, I believe, the fourth grade our class was reading the book about Robinson Crusoe which made repeated references to "black savages" and every time that reference...

Please see A MATTER/6A

URBAN LEAGUE WHITNEY M. YOUNG AWARDS



PHOTOS/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Comedian June Boykins, performing as Just June, broke up the audience with her impersonation of legendary comic Jackie "Moms" Mabley.



Former Urban League president Madine Falls (second from right) earned the Lifetime Achievement Award. From left, Kevin Henry (past chairman of the board), Minerva Mitchell (chairman of the board) and Geoff Durboraw (vice chair) made the presentation.



The Rev. Claude Alexander, pastor at The Park Ministries, (left) with his family. Alexander, a former Urban League board chairman, was recognized for his contributions to the organization and greater Charlotte community.

Mission is to help others help selves

Corporate, nonprofit, and political leaders helped celebrate the Urban League of Central Carolina's Whitney M. Young, Jr. Awards Gala April 21 at Renaissance Charlotte Suites Hotel.

The event honored the Rev. Claude Alexander, senior pastor at The Park Ministries and former Urban League board chair. Former Urban League president Madine Falls earned a lifetime achievement award for 20 years of service to the Charlotte area.

Supporters also pledged their commitment to help the Urban League with programs that empower communities across the region. The Whitney M. Young, Jr. Awards Gala is one of the Urban League's largest fundraisers.

The Urban League is only reaching 2 percent of residents eligible for its programs and services. Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated and Enterprise Rent-A-Car gave \$15,000 to the Sustaining Campaign and another \$9,000 in pledges was tallied from individual supporters. The campaign's 2007 goal is \$175,000.

Herbert L. White

Few in N.C. drawn to dropout hearings

Participants rare at statewide meetings

By Sommer Brokaw

THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

RALEIGH - North Carolina lawmakers are seeking public input on how to lower the state's dropout rate.

But few people are showing up for public hearings.

A small group of parents, former teachers and representatives from nonprofit agencies attended a hearing on dropout reform earlier this month at Southeast Raleigh High. A meeting at Shepard Middle in Durham had a similar turnout. The same happened late last year at West Charlotte High School.

"I was disappointed with the low attendance considering the epidemic we have across the state," Charmaine Fuller, assistant director for the Carolina Justice Policy Center, wrote in a May 2 e-mail.

Only 68 percent of high school students graduate in four years, according to the state's first four-year cohort rate released by the Department of Public Instruction.

The statistics are even more grim for black students with a graduation rate of 60 percent.

Please see DROPOUT/3A



Parmon

Economics on national county officials' agenda

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Economic development and partnerships is the focus of a national conference in Charlotte this week.

The National Organization of Black County Officials will host the economic conference May 17-20 at the Omni hotel, 132 East Trade St. The meeting will bring together national experts to share strategies for improving county government and partnership opportunities for small business. Of particular interest is finding creative solutions that make government more efficient.

"It gives county officials new tools and resources on what's going on around the country as far as governance," said Linda Haitcox, NOBCO's executive director.

Sessions will include discussions of 457 investments, environmental justice, affordable housing and public-private partnerships. Keynote speakers include Carolina Panthers President Mark Richardson; Ronald

See COUNTY/3A

Urban farms empower Africa

By Stephanie Hanes
THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of Congo - The fields that ended hunger for Henriette Lipepele's family are squeezed between a trash-strewn dirt road and a cluster of one-room cinder-block houses.

They are not exactly pretty, at least not in the wide, pastoral way that one might imagine fields and farms. Ms. Lipepele's beds of sweet potatoes and leafy bitekuteku are narrow and not quite straight; the patch where she added bananas and sugar cane seems almost overgrown with competing greenery. The setting is hardly bucolic.

But these plant beds wedged into the Quartier Mombele - one of the unpaved slums of Kinshasa, the sprawling capital of the Democratic Republic of

Please see AFRICA/S2A



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR/STEPHANIE HANES

GROWING SUCCESS: Henriette Lipepele works in one of the gardens outside her one-room home in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. She started growing vegetables in 1999 and her family has not gone hungry since.

APPRECIATION: RAY GOODING

Radio personality was a man of substance

By Cheris F. Hodges

cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

Ray Gooding, the first African American to host a show on WBT-AM, was always a trailblazer.

As a child, Mr. Gooding put together a soap box racer and entered a soap box derby where he was the only black participant, said childhood friend Robert Johnson, co-publisher/general manager of The Post.

"I knew he had the gift for

radio. He always liked to talk and like to be around crowds," Johnson said. "He always had an exciting voice and had excitement in his voice. He had the radio voice."

Johnson said that he was a strong willed person. "If it could be done, he wanted to do it," he said.

Mr. Gooding, who died Sunday at age 68, launched his radio career at WGLV.

Please see RADIO/3A



Ministry works to have fun and bring young people into church/5B

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