



Pete's Pickin's

BY W.A. "PETE" WILDER

Did anyone ever hear that Robert Umstead at one time was a member of a singing group? The answer is "yes." as a youngster, Robert, "Spug" Jones, Major Parker, and Andrew Bridges had a quartet in the children's group at St. Matthew AME Church. Don't ask me what year!

You can ask me "what year" Al Perry went to Bimini. The answer is 1992. His accomplices were his two sons, Al, Jr. and Toney. The pictures finally came last Monday. The pictures were lovely but there were questions. Some wanted to know about the fish house in the photo. Others wanted to know who the photographer was and if he was Al's "P.R." Some had doubts since the Rodney King verdict that maybe we might be suffering from "lying eyes." Al did have the pictures.

"B.J." Smith has another truck. I saw it at Haywood's Mortuary last Monday. As a result of the conversation, I came away feeling that B.J. and Chas. Haywood were developing a coalition of sorts. Just what kind defies definition.

The new minister arrived at St. Matthew AME Church last week in time for Sunday services. He is the Rev. Marion Robinson, formerly a member of St. Paul AME Church here. Word was received that the church received him readily.

Ms. Bernelle Hall Becknell was the Woman's Day speaker at the United Church for All People on the fourth Sunday at 11 a.m. Ms. Becknell is a Raleigh native who had lived in New York City for more than 20 years and has recently returned. She is the sister of Brother Ed Hall.

This is the season for St. Aug.'s track team. Somebody wrote that the only way for the club to lose is to leave the team at home. Some favorites.

'Twas nice to get back to City Hall and the Human Relations Office Thursday. I even dropped by to see Assistant City Manager Lawrence Wray.

I heard that Luther Williams was to have a birthday spread on Friday. The amazing thing is that Luther didn't say how many birthdays he had seen. Suffice it to say 21!

The people in the front apartments of Walnut Terrace have done a magnificent job beautifying their lawns. Believe it or not, somebody noticed it. It is out of sight. You ought to go by and see it. That is why I left word at Ralph Campbell, Jr.'s office for him to pay them a visit by the weekend.

I left word in the office of Floyd Carter for an urgency. Sorry, Floyd, the urgency still remains. May I also add it isn't too late!

I had a chance to attend a seminar, sponsored by the State of North Carolina Department on Aging. The special interest and instruction was Supplemental Security Income. You may be able to get more money. I'll be happy to help you look into it if you are interested. The intensive training began at 8:30 a.m. and ended about 4:45 p.m. People were there from all over the state. The instructor was a lawyer for U.S. Social Security from Washington, D.C. She brought a lot of useful information but she also received tremendous input from the field. I came away with expanded knowledge of the Social Security realm and pleasantly surprised to learn how flexible it sought to be.

Ms. Ruby Madden remains on our shut-in list. She resides on Postell Street and is a member of St. Matthew AME Church. She would love a call, a card, a prayer.

D. Lorenzo Sanders, Quarry Street, was scheduled to leave the city Friday morning to carry his granddaughter to Marion to participate in a statewide bowling tournament for youngsters. I understand that, bowl-

Blacks Get Less Benefits Says Study By Lawmakers

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Black applicants are less likely than whites to be awarded benefits under two major Social Security disability programs, a congressional study found.

The General Accounting Office said earlier this month that much of the racial differences were unexplained among applicants who appeal initial denial of benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance program and the smaller Supplemental Security Income program.

It urged the Social Security Administration to investigate reasons for the racial differences, and the agency generally agreed.

But Social Security Commissioner Gwendolyn S. King said the GAO's methodology may have been "seriously flawed" by failing to rely on a thorough analysis of medical data.

She said Social Security's own studies "consistently show that blacks apply for benefits at a higher rate and with less severe impairments than do whites."

The GAO, an investigative arm of Congress, made the recommendations in a report released May 11 by Sen. William Cohen, R-Maine.

It said much of the differences in initial acceptance rates could be explained by severity of impairments and demographic factors. But it said similar reasons could not be found at the appeals level.

It also found unexplained racial differences among one category of initial SSI applicants, aged 18 to 24.

"The largely unexplained racial differences in allowance rates [at the appeals level] calls into question the equity of treatment between black and white applicants," the report said.

Racial differences in awarding benefits have been found consistently over 30 years in the Social Security Disability Insurance program, and for at least the last five years in the Supplemental Security Income program, the report said.

However, the GAO found that blacks receive benefits at a higher rate than whites.

In 1988, within the general population of working-age adults, blacks were twice as likely as whites to receive disability program benefits and four times as likely to receive SSI benefits, it said.

Within the working-age population with severe impairments in that year, blacks were receiving benefits at a rate comparable with that of whites, the GAO found. Blacks in general applied at a higher rate, thus offsetting their lower rate of acceptance, the study found.

The Social Security Disability Insurance program provides income for the disabled covered by Social Security. The Supplemental Security Income program provides federal and state assistance to the disabled who have low income and little assets, regardless of whether they are covered by Social Security insurance.

Both cover the disabled who cannot work for at least a year. The disability program paid nearly \$25 billion to three million disabled workers and 1.3 million dependents in 1990. The SSI program paid nearly \$13 billion to 3.4 million disabled.

Applicants appeal the denial of claims to administrative law judges. Under the disability insurance program, the judges allowed benefits to 55 percent of blacks and 66 percent of whites who appealed in 1988, the year the GAO examined.

Under the SSI program, the judges allowed 51 percent of black appeals and 60 percent of white appeals.

The largest racial differences were found in the Social Security Administration's Chicago office, where the difference in allowance rates on appeal was 17 percent for the disability program. In New York, the rate was 15 percent. The smallest racial differences were found in Denver and Philadelphia.

King, in a statement the day the report was released, said the agency has already begun examinations of decisions by the administrative law judges and expects initial results in June. She also said she has increased the number of minority and female judges over the past two years.



FALCON TWINS—Lovely St. Augustine's Falcon twins Robin and Felicia Walker, who are majoring in Criminal Justice and Business Administration respectively, are currently pursuing a deal with a major record company as well as recipients of their degrees from the college as '92 graduates.

Nat'l. Black Mayors Pick Officers

ATLANTA, Ga.—The National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc., elected new officers during its 18th annual convention held in Kansas City, Mo. April 22-25. Mayor Henry Espy of Clarksdale, Miss., is the new president of the 337-member organization.

When Mayor Espy was elected to the city commission in 1975, he was the first black elected official in Clarksdale. He served as commissioner for 14 years, and then mayor pro-tem for three years before being elected mayor in 1989. He is also president of Century Funeral Home, Inc. and Century Burial Association.

A business education graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Espy governs a population of approximately 25,000 people in Clarksdale. In his acceptance speech as the new president of NCBM, he noted the lack of federal funding in addressing the problems that black mayors face in their cities, and encouraged them to be "mayors of vision" in finding creative solutions. He is proposing a three-day hearing in Atlanta, arranged by his brother, U.S. Rep. Mike Espy (D-Miss.), with federal housing and transportation officials to create a plan of action for the cities to present to Congress.

Espy succeeds Mayor Unita Blackwell of Mayersville, Miss., who served two terms as president of NCBM.

Other officers elected include first vice president, Mayor David Johnson, Harvey, Ill.; second vice president, Mayor Lottie Williams, Velda City, Mo.; third vice presi-

dent, Mayor Julius Patrick, Boyce, La.; treasurer, Mayor Carrie Perry, Hartford, Conn.; secretary, Mayor George Shannon, Pleasant Hill, La.; and historian, Mayor Janie G. Goree, Carlisle, S.C.

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Communities In Schools Gets PTA Council OK

Wake County PTA Council has endorsed Wake County Communities In Schools' (CIS) mission to help prevent school dropouts and coordinate community services to Wake County students and families in crisis.

CIS was incorporated in 1990 and now serves 300 middle and high school students in six Wake County public schools: East Wake High, Garner Senior High, North Garner Middle, Zebulon Middle, Millbrook High, and East Wake Middle.

"PTA is pleased to support Communities In Schools and offer our help in building partnerships for education," says Pat Trussell, Wake County PTA Council president.

Local PTAs with a CIS program will be encouraged to appoint a board member to function as a liaison to their CIS program.

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