

San Antonio Branch

SAN ANTONIO
BRANCH NAACP

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Highlights of Recent Meetings (see insert)
- Next Branch Meeting is June 11, at 5:45 PM, Barbara Jordan Center
- Op/Ed: Where Do We Go? (see insert)

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NAACP Newsletter

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Digital TV Conversion Help

Digital television (DTV) is a way of transmitting television signals to give a sharper picture, better sound quality, and more channels. Congress has ordered that on June 12, 2009 all television stations must switch their transmissions to digital instead of analog, the previous standard. Viewers receiving their television signal on cable or satellite, or who have purchased a new television in the last few years, will be able to receive the new digital programming.

If you have an older television and use rabbit ears or a rooftop an-



The coupon backlog problem has been resolved.

tenna, you will need a “digital-to-analog” converter box. Coupons valued at \$40 are available to apply to the cost of the

converter box. Assistance in getting the coupons, information on selecting equipment (converter boxes and antennas), and help setting up the equipment is available at the San Antonio Branch NAACP, 224-7636.

There will be sessions to discuss all of these issues on June 9, 2009, at 11:00 AM and again at 2:00 PM, at the Barbara Jordan Community Center, 2803 E. Commerce Street. Call for an appointment or to reserve a spot in the training session.

Freedom Fund Dinner Scheduled

This year the annual San Antonio Branch Freedom Fund Dinner will be held on October 23, 2009, at the La Villita Assembly Hall, at 7:00 PM. The Freedom Fund Dinner is the Branch’s most important fundraiser, providing the majority of operating funds.

This year the NAACP is celebrating 100 years nationally and 91 years locally. The souvenir journal will highlight the history and the accomplishments of African Americans in the growth of San Antonio into a large and influential city.

Representative Ruth Jones McClendon, Texas

House District 120, will be honored with an individual Image Award. The corporate Image Award will be presented to CPS Energy under the leadership of Mr. Milton Lee.

The Planning Committee is co-chaired by Dr. Dianna Burns-Banks and Mr. Michael Banks. The theme this year will be “Bold Dreams. Big Victories,” an acknowledgment of the new possibilities in this first year of the historic Obama administration.

The Civil Rights Challenge For This Generation



Benjamin Todd Jealous, National NAACP President and CEO

Benjamin Jealous, President and CEO of the National NAACP, in a recent article (*The American Prospect*, March 2009) identified mass incarceration as the civil rights challenge of this generation. Addressing it, he says, requires more than just changing draconian drug laws; it also requires confronting poverty and a failing public-education system. Young black folks, particularly the urban poor who

most need an organization like the NAACP to look out for them, are facing problems of violence, drugs, AIDS, and unequal education.

Many civil rights activists, and even their critics, agree with Jealous that this is the biggest civil rights issue of the modern era.

They just disagree on how to attack it. John McWhorter of the con-

servative Manhattan Institute says that a dysfunctional black culture, not racism, is the issue, and it can only be addressed internally. “The proper thing for a civil rights organization to do today is to go into services,” McWhorter says.

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Dates to Remember

Branch Hosts Speaker on Hospice

Jossh Carmen will speak at the regular Branch meeting on June 11, at 5:45 PM. Mr. Carmen, M.A. Chaplain, will discuss how hospice care can be a valuable support to families and loved ones facing end-of-life care issues. Mr. Carmen

is affiliated with Harbour Hospice of Bexar County.

Juneteeth Celebration

June 20: A Juneteenth Parade and Celebration will begin at the MLK Statue and continue to Davis Scott YMCA at S. New Braunfels and Iowa. Juneteenth commemo-

rates the day in 1865 that slaves in Texas finally learned that President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation years earlier and they were free.

New Branch Meeting Time

June 11: NAACP Branch meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Barbara Jordan Center, 2803 E. Commerce Street. The new time is 5:45 PM.

Where Are They Now?

Robin Laverne Wilson – New Jersey

Robin Laverne Wilson is a former Youth Council member and officer who also participated in

ACT-SO. After graduating from Judson High School, she attended Rutgers University, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2008. For her Rutgers Honors Program Wilson wrote her thesis

on “New Growth Media,” which served as the catalyst for starting her production company. She has worked for other producers and has also done editing. She is actively pursuing a career in filmmaking, media production and entertainment.



Centennial Quilt



The Branch thanked Mrs. Darceil Mitchell Williams for preparing a dis-

tinctive quilt square for inclusion in the National NAACP Centennial Quilt. She selected the symbolism of the Monkey Wrench. If slaves displayed a quilt sewn in the Monkey Wrench pattern, it was a signal. It told others it was time to gather the tools they needed for their journey. These tools might be real tools. They might also be tools like courage and awareness.

WIN Mother of the Year: Katie M. Jones

Mrs. Katie M. Jones was honored at the 7th Annual WIN Mother's Day Coffee at Tommy Moore's Café. Mrs. Jones was recognized as the Mother of the Year for her years of service to the community in education. The local WIN (Women in the NAACP) program is headed by Mrs. Patricia Bratcher and is

dedicated to enhancing the leadership role of women, and advocating for issues effecting women and children. A local WIN outreach program will include working with young mothers at the Seton Home to support them in seeking a new path in life.

ACT-SO Gold Medalists Headed for NY

The local ACT-SO Competition was held on Saturday, March 14th at the Barbara Jordan Center, Second Baptist Church, and Carver Branch Library. The gold medal winning students were: Darian Thomas (Poetry and Essay); Edwin Bates (Music Vocal Contemporary); Akil Dudley (Painting); Shelby Ford

(Sculpture); and Selena Mitchell (Entrepreneurship). New York City will be the host for the National ACT-SO Competition on July 8-12, 2009. Gold medalists will receive enrichments and assistance from their coaches and mentors prior to traveling to the Nationals.

The silver medalists

were: Janise Jackson (Essay); Denise Sapp (Essay); Kerri Thomas (Essay); Selena Mitchell (Musical Instrument Classical); Kevin Davison (Musical Instrumental Contemporary); Edwin Bates (Music Vocal Classical); Robert "Tre" Young (Music Vocal Contemporary); Akil Dudley (Drawing); and Shelby Ford (Painting).

The bronze medalists were: Janise Jackson (Poetry); Daizia McGhee (Poetry); Keith Hamilton (Essay); Milton Hamilton (Essay); and Kevin Davison (Music Instrumental Classical).

Benjamin Todd Jealous

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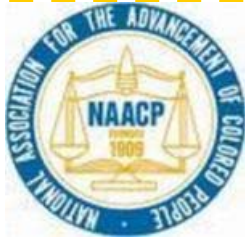
Jealous, however, argues that the NAACP needs to stick to its roots—advocating for better public policy. Providing services isn't the

NAACP's role, he argues. "Some people would like to see us as an alternative government infrastructure for black people," says Jealous. "I understand where that comes from; the reality is that's what we've been fighting

against for 100 years. What we've been fighting for is for the government that we already have to respond to the needs of all people. Our focus is on the needs of black America; that's what we do best; that's where we're known

best. But our goal is a fully functioning democracy."

Jealous is approaching the new political landscape with energy and optimism.



San Antonio Branch NAACP

2803 E. Commerce Street
San Antonio, TX 78203

Phone: (210) 224-7636

Fax: (210) 476-0989

E-mail: sanaacp@satx.rr.com

Fighting to Advance Social Justice

www.naacp-sanantonio.org

Tribute to Claude Black

Reverend Claude William Black Jr., pastor, community leader, and civil rights activist passed away on March 13, 2009, ending a life dedicated to serving the San Antonio community at many levels. He gained prominence as a powerful advocate for the minority community and opposed forces of injustice his entire life. He was hailed as a “man of vision and action,” and admired for his generosity, humility, and wisdom. Rev. Black was born in San Antonio in 1916. He attended Douglas High School and St. Philip’s College before graduating from Morehouse College in Atlanta and attending Andover Newton Theological Seminary in Massachusetts. He led civil rights protests and demonstrations in the turbulent 1960’s. He took his challenges to a new level by

persistently seeking and finally earning a seat on the city council, later becoming San Antonio’s



first African American mayor pro tem. He was the revered pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church for

five decades, and made the church a partner to civil rights causes and advocacy organizations. These actions made him the target of racial slurs, drive-by shootings, and an arson attempt on his church. He received innumerable awards and recognitions in his lifetime. Just this year Rev. Black was honored with the Testament of Hope Award by the MLK Realizing the Dream Foundation in Washington during Inauguration Week along with Senator Ted Kennedy, Congressman John Lewis (Georgia) and Activist Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Rev. Black entered the world at a time of rigid racial segregation, and through his efforts and the work of others, lived to see the inauguration of the first African American president.

Rev. Black was arguably San Antonio’s most influential black leader in the 20th century. He was 92 years old.

Where Do We Go?

Have we overcome? In a society where we don't know where we are, how can we know where we're going? We're lost. Where do we as African Americans in the United States and, more importantly, in San Antonio go? We have a large number of our brothers and sisters in jail. We have a large number of our youngsters in alternative schools. What are we going to do about this? Did you know that of the 2.3 million people in jails in the United States 40.9% are African Americans? *I venture to say that in any school district in San Antonio there are more African American youth in alternative schools than their percentage of students in the district.* Do you know what this means?

Our youth are slipping away from the schools and the education that once made us believe we could be looked upon for the content of our character rather than the color of our skin. Presently, there are three things negatively hindering the survival of our youth in San Antonio. The three things are incarceration, education, and employment.

Incarceration. Watch your

youngsters. Keep them off the streets after midnight. There is an old saying: "nothing good happens to a youngster after midnight." If you allow your youngster to drive, ensure they are a good driver and they obey the laws. Tell them to not, under any circumstance, give a law enforcement official reason to arrest them. Tell them that if they use drugs or run with those who do they will get caught, and then they will go to jail. "If you sleep with dogs, you going to get fleas," as the saying goes. Of course once they go to jail they are in another world. If they are eighteen or older the criminal record will follow them the rest of their lives.

Education. Explain to your children that K-12th grade education is free. I am amazed at the number of youth who barely graduate from high school that now want to go to college and have to pay their way. That's a good thing, but college is expensive and necessary for future success in today's global society. Success in adult life is through education, one way or another. Education is also a life-long continual process. Kids should be preparing for the SAT and ACT, and applying for college admission. As parents, if

you are unable to help, find someone who is willing to help. There is a reservoir of talent that can be called upon if help is needed. You are not alone.

Employment. After we keep our youth out of jail and get them a quality education we should bring them back home to be productive. Once they return home we need to find mentors that will work with the young people and provide internships in their respective areas of expertise. We have an abundance of African-Americans in San Antonio who can guide our young people in an effort to make them successful in their chosen field of education. It's not about the money. It's about giving back, and we need to teach them about this. The first job out of college is as much about opportunity as it is about money. It could be about an opportunity that could provide advancement. But the bottom line is that we need to bring our college educated youth back to San Antonio so they can help improve the overall quality of life for all.

Remember, we have not made it until we all have made it. We have not overcome until we have all overcome.

Where do we go? I don't know, do you?

E. F. "Smiley" Williams

Highlights of Recent Meetings

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January 8: Vice President Horace Brown reported that installation and training on new Access database software will enhance the maintenance of accurate membership records and facilitate printing of mailing labels. President Marvinette Smith said she secured two computers from San Antonio Fighting Back and furniture from AT&T to equip the office.

February 12: The body approved the establishment of an ad hoc committee to develop a response letter regarding the contents of a promotional brochure distributed by the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. New members were welcomed: Mr. Brandon Logan, Mrs. Gwendolyn White, Mrs. Patricia Bratcher (appointed as WIN chair). Guests were recognized: Mrs. Sandra Washington, and Ms. Sherrie Williams.

The body voted to send two adult and two Youth Council representatives to the Region VI Civil Rights Advocacy Institute in Albuquerque, NM.

The body was reminded that the Branch website address is www.naacp-sanantonio.org.

Mr. William Burman was appointed to serve as Chair of the Economic Development Committee.

March 12: The Political Action Committee Chair, Ms. Jo McCall, gained approval for her proposal to conduct a “Meet the Candidates” Forum for mayoral and District 2 city council candidates on April 11, 2009, at the San Antonio Red Cross Facility.

ACT-SO Chair, Claudette Lewis, reported that this year’s competition will be held in three locations. She thanked new volunteers Ms. Turner, and Mrs. Gwendolyn White. Mrs. Lewis announced that she secured 10 new Branch memberships through volunteers and organizations involved with the ACT-SO competition.

Youth Council members provided community service by gathering contributions for the Food Bank, participated in the State NAACP Convention, and marched on MLK Day.

President Smith announced the appointment of Mrs. Dorothy Collins as Parliamentarian.

President Smith appealed for volunteers to help secure documents, plaques, photographs, and artifacts reflecting the history of the San Antonio Branch. The State NAACP has requested historical information from local units, and the San Antonio Branch will celebrate its centennial in 2018.

April 9: The “Meet the Candidates” Forum occurred as planned on April 11. The Pan Hellenic Council joined as co-sponsors of the event. All major mayoral candidates and seven of eight district 2 city council candidates were present. Media coverage appeared in the San Antonio Express-News and KSAT12 TV. Pre-event publicity included a 30-minute on-air interview on KCHL Radio by President Smith and Membership Chair, Capt. James Turner. The first use of the Branch email marketing service, Constant Contact, was made publicizing the Forum. Collecting more email addresses from Branch members will expand the usefulness of this service.

Mrs. Regina Horne-Espree, Youth Council Advisor, reported a successful Youth Image Awards Luncheon on April 4, at the Fort Sam Houston NCO Club. Twenty-seven students received Youth Image Awards. The Ethel Minor Civil Rights Scholarship was presented to Arleya Horne, Milton Hamilton, and Keith Hamilton.

Education Committee Chair, Mrs. Mildred Lamkin, introduced Mr. James Howard, the first African American president of SAISD. He provided an informative overview of economic and other factors effecting the dwindling student population. Branch members noted that the district misses opportunities to enlist support from the community.

The Branch recognized the skill and generosity of Mrs. Darceil Mitchell Williams, who quilted a square commemorating the national NAACP centennial.