

SAN ANTONIO
BRANCH NAACP

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Next Branch Meeting is September 10, at 5:45 PM, Barbara Jordan Center
- Report on the Centennial National Convention (see insert A)
- Highlights of Recent Meetings (see insert B)

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San Antonio Branch

NAACP Newsletter

VOLUME 7

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SEPTEMBER 2009

Bold Dreams. Big Victories

Freedom Fund Dinner Celebrates 100 Years of History

The 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. The book will feature human interest stories and photos. Mario Salas will provide a historical piece from a political perspective. The richness of the struggle for progress in racial advancement and equality is an integral part of the narrative of San Antonio and will be the unifying theme of the souvenir booklet.

The keynote speaker will be Rev. Charles White, Jr., National Director of the Department of Field Operations for the NAACP. The Department is responsible for assisting Units with the implementation of the NAACP Strategic Plan, membership development and the policy, programs and procedures



of the Association.

Representative Ruth Jones McClendon, Texas House District 120, will be honored with an individual Image Award. She has served as a member of the Texas House of Represen-

tatives for the past 11 years. She has established a solid reputation as a strong advocate for the welfare of children while earning prominent positions of responsibility and influence within the legislative community.

The corporate Image Award will be presented to CPS Energy under the leadership of Mr. Milton Lee. Under Lee's leadership, CPS Energy has become the nation's largest municipally owned energy company. It ranks among the nation's lowest-cost energy providers, owns the highest financial ratings of any electric system in the U.S. and is a leader in wind-energy capacity among municipally owned utilities. Much of Lee's success has been in his ability to take careful successive logical steps in his quest to make CPS Energy increasingly more valuable to the citizens of San Antonio.

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VIA Procurement Workshop for Small and Minority Business

Learn how to do business with VIA. Attend the VIA Procurement Department's Workshop on September 24, 2009, 5 PM-8 PM, at the VIA Metro Center. The registration fee is \$5.00 (cash only). Listen in on a quick IFB (Invitation for Bid), and RFP (Request for Proposal) overview. Learn how to apply to VIA's potential bidders list. Learn about local and federal certification requirements. Check into VIA's current and future business opportunities. Meet with VIA's contract administrators and buyers. For more information call (210) 362-2400. Register now at: www.viainfo.net. Food and refreshments will be furnished.

President's Corner: Fighting for St. Paul Square



Branch President
Marvinette Smith

"Youth are encouraged to attend all three sessions as each session will provide different information."



It was with great dismay that the San Antonio Branch of the NAACP learned from the classified section of the Express-News that the City of San Antonio is proposing to sell so-called "surplus property" in St. Paul Square. Apparently, the only reason any notice of the proposed sale was given to the citizens of San Antonio is because Federal law mandates notice. The Code of Federal Regulations in Title 24, Section 570.505 is quite clear— if a City has received a Federal Commu-

nity Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for a project and that City proposes a change in use of the property in question, citizens MUST be provided reasonable notice of the change in use and given the opportunity to comment on the proposed change. The City of San Antonio's actions in this regard do not meet the Federal Government's intent.

The notice was published under the Legals/ Public Notice column of

the June 12, 2009 edition—a time difference of only 13 days (including weekends, Flag Day and Father's Day). The City's usual notice of operation, when officials are genuinely seeking public comment, is to publish the notice in the Express-News Metro section with copy style designed to catch the reader's eye and grab the readers attention.

To the eyes of the NAACP membership, this notice of proposed sale was not meant to be seen nor acted upon in a timely manner by the citizens affected by the City's action.

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SAT Prep Tutoring

Good preparation can make the difference between success and failure. The San Antonio NAACP Youth Council is offering SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) Preparation Classes on September 12, 19, and 26, from 9 AM to 1 PM at St. Philip's College.

Youth are encouraged to attend all three sessions as each session will provide different information. The cost is \$25, the class is limited to the first 30 persons. Please complete the form below and mail with your check to: San Antonio NAACP Youth Council by Sep-

tember 8, 2009. The address is 4007 McCullough Ave #310, San Antonio, TX 78212.

For more information, please contact Regina Horne-Espree, (210) 325-5857, or email naacpy-outhsa@yahoo.com.

Did You Know?

Utility Bill Relief

If you are at the lower end of the income bracket there is an agency in Texas that may

be able to help you reduce your electric and phone bills. To find out if you are eligible for relief on your electric and/or phone bill call 1-866-454-8387 and they will send you the necessary forms to be returned to determine your eligi-

bility. Although they will ask you for your Social Security number it is NOT necessary that you provide it.

For more information on the Lite-Up Texas program, sponsored by the Public Utilities Commission of Texas, go to www.puc.state.tx.us/ocp/assist/lowincasst.cfm.

Fighting for St. Paul Square

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The area of the City’s near east-side known as St. Paul Square, is a Local and State designated historical landmark. It is adjacent to the officially designated Historic Enclave, Elis Alley, that was one of the earliest (and last remaining intact) settlements of African American Freedmen in Post-Civil War San Antonio. The commercial establishments and profes-

sional office buildings along Commerce Street and the surrounding streets were the Central Business District for Black citizens who, after Reconstruction, were by law denied access to the goods, services, parks, and retail establishments that were available to white citizens.

In addition to hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues, the area housed the Black USO, the only public site specifically for the coun-

try’s brave, Black servicemen. This legacy would be lost if this building on Commerce Street remains a part of the architecture callously deemed surplus by the City. The eastside St. Paul Square area was redeveloped with CDBG funds at about the same time that the Westside Market Square was being developed. Just a few months ago the city answered criticism from the majority (in San Antonio) Mexican-American community concerning the proposed sale of Market

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Where Are They Now?

Destinee Waiters – Houston

Destinee Waiters is a former Youth Council member and ACT-SO participant. She graduated from Incarnate Word High School before going on to



earn her BA in Political

Science from UTSA. After earning her law degree from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University, Waiters successfully passed the Bar Exam and is currently Assistant General Counsel for the Houston Community College System.

Freedom Fund Dinner

(Continued from page 1)

A new addition to the activities this year is the Freedom Fund Reception scheduled for the day before the dinner, at St. Philip’s College. With the support and cooperation of the Department of Fine Arts, and the Culinary School, the recep-

tion will be the culmination of a collaborative process including a judged contest to select the best graphic arts rendering of the theme, “Celebrating 100 Years.” The winning piece will be reproduced as a poster, and the artist will be available at the reception to autograph copies of these anniversary

mementos.

Ticket purchases can be arranged by calling the San Antonio NAACP, 224-7636, or contacting Gertie Williams, 653-9294 or 289-9950. To purchase tickets online go to www.naacp-sanantonio.org.

The Planning Committee is co-chaired by Dr. Dianna Burns-Banks and Mr. Mi-

chael Banks. The theme this year is “Bold Dreams. Big Victories,” an acknowledgement of the new possibilities in this first year of the historic Obama administration.



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Fighting for St. Paul Square

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Square. Wisely, that proposal was taken off the table, as well as the idea that La Villita could or should be sold. During the recent city-wide elections, every candidate in the various races was adamant that San Antonio's cultural history and the buildings that epitomize it should not be offered for sale under any circumstance. The NAACP wonders if the city has decided that the often neglected east-side's place in history is simply too unimportant to save, cherish and use to promote the multi-culturalism that San Antonio proclaims so heavily both nationally internationally.

San Antonio, The State of Texas and

other states in the Union as well as foreign countries just last



week celebrated Juneteenth - the day that Gen. Grainger arrived in Galveston to announce (two years late) that president Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slave in the South. During some of those

celebrations a re-enactor portrayed Sojourner Truth who famously asked "ain't I a women" deserving of all the protections allowed other men and women in this country?

The membership of the NAACP asks: Aren't we tax-paying citizens deserving of our cultural and architectural history to be protected too?

WE ARE ASKING DO NOT SELL ST. PAUL SQUARE

Marvinette Smith, Branch President

NAACP Centennial Convention: “Bold Dreams. Big Victories”

The NAACP...*Who Needs It?*

Part I

Some have preached a eulogy for the NAACP. However, after my pilgrimage to New York City for the Centennial Convention, I can attest to the fact that the NAACP is alive, needed and actively working to fulfill the mission of its founders.

The air crackled with nervous excitement during Sunday’s ACT-SO Awards ceremony. Our city was represented by Edwin Bates, Akil Dudley, Shelby Ford, and Darian Thomas. Contestants were on pins and needles waiting to find out who had won in categories including electronics, energy, math, music, oratory, physics, and sculpture. Explosive cheers accompanied each announcement of the winners. As an adult I was thrilled to see the great variety of talent... and such joy to hear that San Antonio’s Selena Mitchell had placed in the category of Entrepreneurship. Hearty congratulations to all ACT-SO participants, their parents, and dedicated sponsor, Claudette Lewis!

The first plenary’s headliners were President Benjamin Jealous, New York Governor David Paterson, Senator Kristen Gillibrand, Congressman Charles Rangel, and former NAACP presidents, Bruce Gordon, Kweisi Mfume, and Dr. Benjamin Hooks. Dr. Hooks required assistance in making his way to the microphone...but once there, he brought the audience to their feet with fiery oratory challenging us to “bell the cat” of ignorance, hatred, and discrimination.

The NAACP is unique in its method of developing leadership skills among our youth: Youth elect their own representatives to sit on the national board. Weekday mornings during the convention began with regional meetings. (Region VI is composed of Texas, Arkansas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma.) Please keep in mind that the youth meetings started at 7:00 a.m. I was so proud to see our Youth Council members demonstrating their skills: Arleya Horne-Region VI Chair, Keith Hamilton-Region VI Co-Chair, Jasmine Hamilton-Rules Committee, and Dominique Walker-Credentials Committee. Kudos to them and their mentors: hard-working Youth Council Advisor, Regina Horne-Espree, assisted by Tamala Hamilton and Lillie Fuller Spears.

At the Youth Night Public Mass Meeting, a panel including Noelle LuSane, Congressman Donald Payne’s staff director, and Jeff Johnson, BET News commentator, challenge the audience to use a variety of media to get informed, research the issues impacting African people in the diaspora, learn a second language, travel abroad to delve deeply in another culture, and find an issue with which you can passionately become involved.

The following represent a sampling of the Resolutions [R] and serious issues receiving a positive vote from the delegates during the legislative sessions:

- Civil Rights: R#1 – Recognition of the role of black veterans in the civil rights movement and the need to provide advocacy, service, and support for them when they are transitioning back into their communities.
- Affirmative Action: R#1 – Ending state rollbacks of affirmative action programs as there is a clear and continuing need for them.
- Commemorative: R#1 – Acknowledgement of the First National Monument in Darien, GA, dedicate March 3, 2009, as one of the locations having a large slave trade and a recommendation that NAACP units throughout the nation identify and recognize slavery monuments.
- Criminal Justice: R#2 – Call for an end to Prison-Based Gerrymandering. The U.S. Census traditionally counts prisoners as residents of the prisons where they are incarcerated and not from where they formerly resided and will return upon release. This methodology results in an artificial reduction in the population of urban neighborhoods from which most prisoners come, and swells the population for the rural communities where most prisons are located. These artificially inflated district populations provide additional political clout to congressional representatives making decisions regarding monetary allocations. This in turn affects prison staffing and salaries. R#3 – Reaffirming the 2008 Resolution regarding Abolition of Life without Parole (LWP) for Juveniles. The U.S. is the world leader in the number of children imprisoned for life without possibility of parole for crimes committed as juveniles. Only the U.S. and Somalia failed to ratify the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child which banned LWP for juveniles.
- Economic Development: R#1 – Call on the U.S. Congress to conduct a comprehensive study of the racial disparities in credit reports because such reports affect qualifying for insurance, obtaining a mortgage, and securing employment.
- Employment: R#1 – Opposition to the use of credit reports in hiring as a form of economic discrimination. There is no correlation between credit history and job performance. According to the Texas Department of Insurance, African Americans have credit scores 10% to 35% lower than whites.

Legislative: R#14 – Introduced by U.S. Representative John Conyers as H.R. 676-The United States National Health Care Act. The financial burden of illness causes half of all bankruptcies in the U.S. In 2004, the World Health Organization ranked the U.S. 43rd in total life expectancy and ranked it near the bottom of healthy life expectancy at the age of 60.

Maria Stevenson Greene

Editor’s Note: Part II will appear in the December newsletter. To read the complete article now go to: www.naacp-sanantonio.org.

Highlights of Recent Meetings

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May 13: By consensus the general membership approved the action proposed by the Executive Committee requesting to have a meeting with Mr. Richard Perez, President of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce concerning expanding the tone of diversity in a recent Chamber of Commerce promotional brochure. President Marvinette Smith will be joined by Rev. M. Ahmad Rashad Berry, Mr. Oliver Hill, and Mrs. Rita Randle.

The Health Committee Chair, Mrs. Deloris Mosley, announced that members would monitor blood pressure during the Cherice Cochrane Meningitis Walk. WIN (Women in the NAACP) Committee Chair, Mrs. Patricia Bratcher, in her written report, stated that eight WIN memberships were gained at the Mother of the Year breakfast honoring Mrs. Katie Jones. Reservations had been made for 50 participants, but there were six additional guests. Youth Council Advisor, Mrs. Regina Horne-Espree, reported that Youth Council members recently elected new officers: XXXX. The group will participate in the March of Dimes Walk on May 16th. A request was approved to provide \$3000 to send three Youth Council member delegates and one adult chaperone to the NAACP National Convention.

New members Ms. Althea Casey and Mrs. Patricia Cormier were welcomed. Mrs. Cormier is already an active member of the Freedom Fund Dinner Planning Committee. Ms. Tawanda Porter from the George Gervin Center began working as the office receptionist. Subscribing Silver Life Member, Mr. Donald Hunt, shared information regarding the San Antonio Chapter of Blacks in Government.

June 11: Kathy Clay Little of the African American Reflections newspaper was hosting the annual Juneteenth Freedom Dinner. The NAACP was being honored in observance of its centennial anniversary. The Branch gave approval for the San Antonio Branch to support the dinner with at least one table underwritten by individual ticket purchases. Mr. Joe Scott volunteered to obtain two additional tables in the name of the NAACP.

The Health Committee sponsored a presentation by special guest Chaplain Jossh Carmen who discussed the Hospice program. Rev. M. Ahmad Rashad Berry reported on the NAACP's support for a student involved in a profanity incident at New Braunfels High School.

An additional \$1110 was allocated to fund Youth Council member delegates and one adult chaperone.

July 9: President Smith reported on a proposal for the city to sell five parcels in the St. Paul Square complex along the Commerce Street corridor and a small building and parking lot on Center Street. In regard to this issue she delivered prepared remarks at two city-sponsored hearings. (See insert A for the full text of her statement.) Without dissent the body voted in support of the position taken by President Smith regarding St. Paul Square. Mrs. Smith also reported that St. Philip's College faculty members had requested NAACP involvement regarding the proposed mass community college merger. The issue will be addressed by Vice President Gloria Chandler. A letter will be drafted to Mr. James Howard, Chair of the SAISD Board of Trustees in regard to the proposed closing of Sam Houston High School.

The Economic Development Committee announced a "How To" workshop on doing business with VIA is scheduled for September 24 at VIA's San Pedro headquarters. Press and Publicity Chair, Sloan Blocker, reported that the digital TV conversion issue was now featured on the home page of the website as the coupon program entered its final weeks. He passed out 2"x 3 1/2" Branch information cards containing key contact information for the organization. The discussion was favorable to the concept of the card and the body decided to print more cards following refinement of the design and content, and a printing cost analysis.

The State Convention will be held at the Austin Hilton October 1-3, 2009.

Citizens Urged to Document Police Misconduct with Camera Phones

The National NAACP is seeking to expand its database on incidents of police misconduct by promoting a new online reporting program called the Mobile Form. Not only have they established a quick and convenient way to submit an abbreviated report using cell phones with web access, the site even allows photos and video clips of the incident to be attached to the report. Photos and video taken with camera phones can provide compelling accounts of an event. Using the Web Form, a more detailed report can be completed on your computer and emailed, mailed, or faxed to headquarters.