

# VOICERICHMOND

## The Richmond

SERVING RICHMOND, PETERSBURG AND 7 SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA COUNTIES

Vol. 25 No. 36 (2044 Edition)

Sept. 7 - 13, 2011

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## What could have been different in Irene's aftermath?

By Sylvina Pool

The aftermath of Hurricane Irene is still in the headlines, more than 10 days after the category 1 storm blew through Virginia, downing trees, some homes and rendering thousands powerless — as in without electricity. On Labor Day Monday, Dominion Virginia Power declared that almost all metro Richmond residents left in the dark by Hurricane Irene had power restored to their homes, and life was seemingly getting back to normal. This apparent normalcy has now opened up the floodgates of Monday morning quarterbacking, when everyone affected by the hurricane gets to criticize the government's response and offer suggestions on how things would have been done differently. Specifically in Richmond, some are wondering why city officials didn't have a stable distress plan in order to combat Irene's aftermath.

Mark Tavey, 56, who lives in Ford's trailer off Jefferson Davis Highway in South Richmond explained how he had to run an electrical cord across the street to turn the fan on at his house during the time he was without power.

"I am not well and I have been very, very sick," he said, adding that being without power was like being inside a car with the windows rolled up in the summer.

Tavey lives in Councilwoman Reva Trammell's 8th District. The councilwoman was not happy with the city's response to her constituents and others last week.

"I heard the mayor made a statement that he wasn't going to give away any ice because it was a waste," said Trammell. "People were asking me for ice in my district so that they could put their insulin on some ice. Thank God for Marty Jewell because he got the Red Cross to come and to at least feed the people.

"And did the mayor come over there? And then I saw him laughing on [TV]. What's so damn funny Mr. Mayor? There's not one



*Four-year-old Marcus and two-year-old Amaya Arrington posed for a photo at the Arthur Ashe Center in Richmond where their family sought shelter during Hurricane Irene.*

thing funny about this situation."

Trammell wondered if the storm had been a category 2 or 3 would people be getting pulled from the rubble?

"Wires down on houses, trees down, smashed cars," she said. "I have taken over 200 pictures of this. It's very sad. But no mayor, no mayor anywhere. We haven't heard anything from the mayor since before the earthquake."

The American Red Cross was helping people all along the eastern seaboard last week as residents coped with the devastation left by Hurricane Irene. Red Cross workers operated shelters in seven states, served meals, handed out relief supplies and offered emotional support. As of Sept. 2 the Red Cross said it had served more than one million meals and snacks in Virginia and New York. The organization operated nine kitchens capable of serving a total of about 150,000 hot meals each day operating in North Carolina, Virginia and New York.

Still, in the Richmond area, there were murmurs of lack of coordination between different feeding locations run by the city. One Highland Park resident, for example, said the city's efforts to feed residents at the Arthur Ashe Center was "disastrous" one day last week. Dinner that was supposed to be served at 6 p.m. was not served until 9 p.m. because there weren't enough residents to



*Alphonzo Williams (left) and Fred Justice seek shelter at the Arthur Ashe Center in Richmond during Hurricane Irene. PHOTOS: Linda McElroy*

be served, while in the South Side, residents did not have enough food.

"This was the most pathetic emergency response I have ever witnessed in my life," said Councilman E. Marty Jewell, who represents the city's 5th District. "I was very impressed with the city's Department of Public Works and how they took care of the roads with the downed trees. [However] the coordination has been god-awful and the communication has been even worse."

City officials did send out regular updates but the people who really needed the information were not getting any e-mails, he said.

They were not watching TV or listening to the radio, said Jewell. "They launched the emergency response plan through the watch commander at the police department. Press information was sent out the day of the storm. How much sense does that make?"

Jewell suggests that if you want to get to the people who need the service the most, you put the information out the day before; not the day of the emergency so that the

word can get out on what to expect.

"How in the hell do you expect people to get the information when you launch the information the day of the storm?" he wondered. "There should have been a better response and preparedness and there wasn't. They virtually did not have a plan. And the plan they did have was so totally short sighted that it's laughable, simply laughable."

Jewell pointed out that the city's charter names the mayor as the head of emergency management in Richmond.

"There was no sighting of this mayor for a once-in-a-lifetime earthquake response and in the same week we had a hurricane and there was no sighting of him until after it was over."

Meanwhile, the federal government, which usually gets criticized in these matters, fared much better last week. Gov. Bob McDonnell complimented President Barack Obama and FEMA on their help in responding to Hurricane Irene.

"It's been outstanding," said McDonnell on his monthly call-in show on WTOP radio.





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# Waller & Company Jewelers still standing strong after 111 years

By Brittini Palmer

For more than a century, Waller & Company Jewelers has served the Richmond area. The business, now located at 19 E. Broad Street, has been around since 1900, selling diamonds, watches, making jewelry repairs, and selling nalia for the nine Black Greek letter organizations.

“My grandfather started this business in 1900 on 1100 W. Leigh Street. In 1912 my grandfather moved the business to 504 N Hancock St, but what I remember is the year 1921 when my grandfather had his business at 1007 W. Leigh Street. At that time I was a young kid wiping showcases, I am now 73 years old,” said owner Richard A. Waller, Jr.

“I have five younger sisters. Two of my sisters are Deltas, and one is a AKA. They sell where they are too, we all support each other,” said Waller.

Waller & Company Jewelers is well known on local college campuses for its work with fraternities and sororities, especially those that are frequented by African Americans.

“It was an enlightening experience. The different items that were being sold caught my attention,” said Indria Savvoy, a senior at Virginia Union University and



Richard A. Waller, Jr.

a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. “The history behind Wallers has so much significance. Mr. Waller has excellent customer service. I never had a clue of the history until Mr. Waller told me his story.”

Waller’s story in the business began in 1956 when he completed high school. Decades later, in the 1980s, he bought the building on Broad Street in the early 1980’s. “This is our location and I plan to stay.

My sons, David, who is a graduate from Hampton University and Howard Law, and Richard, who graduated from VCU came back into the business after they successfully worked in their area of study. They are ready to run the business now,” said Waller.

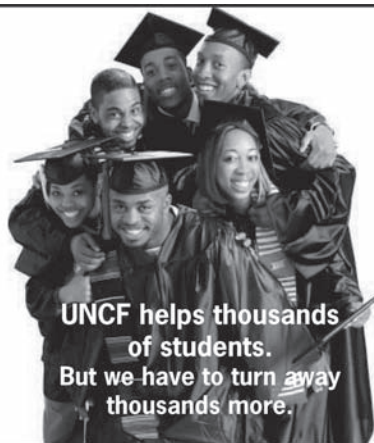
Although Waller & Company is a jewelry store, Waller and those who work there take inspiration seriously.

“I tell the young people ‘you can do it. it’s no excuse just because your father is not there, or you are from the other side of the tracks, or you didn’t go to college or you are Black. Make your disadvantages, advantages,’” said Waller.

Waller explained his father died when he was 17, and from there he cared for his five sisters.

“I got married at age 21 been married for almost 52 years. Personally I didn’t get the opportunity to go to college but I didn’t let that stop me from being successful in life,” said Waller.

“My favorite saying is John 3:16. We always have God in front of us, so we most certainly make an impact,” said Waller. “God has given us talent that we can prosper. It’s the matter of coming early and leaving late.....”



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# Constituents protest Cantor's rare public meetings & jobs crisis



Rep. Eric Cantor

“We’re going to find the money, we’re just going to need to make sure that there are savings elsewhere to do so.”

-Rep. Cantor

Protestors turned out in droves to protest Congressman Cantor's stance on issues. PHOTO: David Sachs

In what protestors called an increasingly rare appearance in his district, Rep. Eric Cantor (R-7th District) was met with more than 200 of his constituents who expressed anger about his “inattention to the jobs crisis, his brinkmanship on the debt ceiling deal and his controversial stance on disaster funding.”

Cantor's constituents took their concerns to him at his private quarterly Citizens Advisory Council meeting in Richmond last week. The campaign event, while described by Cantor as a “public event,” required constituents to jump through several hoops to attend, they said.

Candace Graham of Chesterfield was able to attend the event in spite of the hurdles.

“I only saw the event listed on the tea party website and that's how I knew it was happening,” she said. “After signing up for the Advisory Council, you had to know to call his staff so that they put you on the list since no event information was actually sent out.

“Our leaders in Washington work for us and we should not have to go to such lengths to be able to ask them a question. I'm surprised there wasn't someone asking for a secret password when I walked into the building!”

Some of the protestors alerted to the event by the progressive statewide grassroots

organization, Virginia Organizing, lamented that there is no end to the jobs crisis in sight as well as a growing discontent after a debt deal they believe will lead to further job losses. Unemployed workers and community members in Cantor's district have grown tired of his avoidance if them by seldomly holding public events or town halls.

In anticipation of many constituents being turned away at the door, organizers rented a ballroom in the hotel to hold a separate jobs rally. An hour prior to the start of Cantor's event, the hotel manager abruptly told the organizers they had two minutes to leave the ballroom. Undeterred, the constituents filled the median across the street from the hotel and chanted “Jobs Now!”

At the rally outside, unemployed Cantor constituents shared one story after the next of struggling to find work in the Richmond area.

“I have two masters degrees and a lifetime of experience but I have been out of work for over a year. It is tough for me to need charity when I am so used to helping provide for others in the past,” said Marie Coons. “But my Congressman, Rep. Cantor is deaf to people like me because he refuses to have a meeting about jobs.

“I signed up for his meeting but was denied access. Is it because I have not contributed to his campaign? Is it because I

am not a tea party member? Or is it because I am unemployed and he is hiding from people like me?”

“There are 40,000 unemployed people in this district and we cannot get a meeting by phone, in person or even a town hall meeting with Eric Cantor to talk about this crisis. These are our neighbors and friends and family who are struggling,” said constituent Marjorie Clark. “Now he won't even let us into his private meeting but stopped us from having our own meeting on jobs. What is he afraid of? Why won't he meet with us?”

On top of facing unemployment, many residents said they were still without power last week and are facing substantial damage to their property from Hurricane Irene. The expressed outrage over Cantor's widely-disseminated comments that disaster funding should be offset with spending cuts.

Cantor made his position known following tornadoes that devastated Joplin, Mo. and elsewhere in the spring and summer. He has repeated it in recent weeks, most notably after the Aug. 23 earthquake whose epicenter was in his district in Louisa County. While the devastation left behind by Hurricane Irene is far beyond that of those the preceding incidences, Cantor told Fox News that while “we're going to find the money, we're just going to need to make sure that there are savings elsewhere to do so.”

Those who were able to get inside the event last week said they found that Cantor cherry-picked which constituents would be allowed to ask questions.

“I had my hand up the entire time and watched as only Cantor supporters were chosen to ask questions. It seemed that only after clapping and smiling at everything that Cantor said was I handed the mic,” said Jeff Hunt of Richmond. “Finally, I was able to ask him why he does not support extending the payroll tax cut for a year. For a congressman who slavishly sticks to his tax cuts message, I cannot understand why he would not support a measure that cuts taxes for a majority of Americans and creates jobs.”

Last week, Cantor released a jobs memo that outlines a series of deregulations of environmental and safety protections. While rally goers were pleased that Cantor acknowledged the need for jobs, they were less than impressed with his “anemic” jobs outline.

“Rep. Cantor's ‘jobs memo’ will not create jobs, it will create sick kids and unsafe drinking water,” said Virginia Organizing Board member Ladelle McWhorter. “If Rep. Cantor was serious about creating jobs, he would end tax breaks and loopholes for CEOs, hedge fund managers and others, and make big, profitable corporations pay their fair share of taxes so America can invest in creating quality jobs here at home.”

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# Pardon the interruption

Considering the fact that Black people are so entrenched in the distractions of this world, I think it's appropriate that I beg your pardon, Black America, in order to get a few important points across. Although for 16 years now I have sounded the economic alarm via this newspaper column, four books, and numerous speaking engagements, it is shameful that we have failed to act upon the messages of our ancestors and contemporaries. There is still a need to "capture" our attention when it comes to economic empowerment.

By James Clingman

Seems we have to be tricked, embarrassed, and beat-up before we start running for true freedom. So can you spare a few moments to read this missive, Black America? I beg your pardon for the interruption.

Pardon the interruption of your sports conversations, brothers and sisters, but you are in big trouble. The players, coaches, and team owners have their millions and are very secure; your team is not even in the game.

Pardon the interruption to your anger or euphoria, and your inconsequential rhetoric on Libya; Black folks in this country are unemployed in some areas as high as 50 percent. You are still being discriminated against when it comes to access to business, contracts, capital, and justice.

Pardon the interruption of your obsession with Will and Jada splitting up, Kanye and Jay Z's new album, and Tiger's golf game, multi-millionaires every one of them. You are trying to pay your rent, hold on to your homes, and feed your families.

Pardon the interruption to your wondering who will win the dancing and singing contests on television. You are doing the unemployment line-dance ("Now walk it out, y'all") and singing "Stormy Monday" Blues in response to your current economic condition.

Pardon the interruption to your unceasing and loyal dedication to making everyone else in this country wealthy by buying their stuff and boycotting your own. Even with nearly \$1 trillion in annual aggregate income, the wealth of Black people is 20 times less than that of whites.

Pardon the interruption to your fascination with other folks' hair. Paying hundreds of dollars for someone else's hair, as if God didn't know what He was doing when He gave you yours, is only exceeded on the ridiculous scale by the dollars it takes for you to "get it done."

Pardon the interruption to your penchant to have the best of everything, even at the highest prices. You are so silly to brag about how much you pay for things, while others brag about how little they pay for the same items. You love to go to bars and order whatever Champagne or Vodka some rapper might be drinking – even at hundreds of dollars per bottle. Only top-shelf for Black folks, despite the fact that you don't make or distribute most of the products you purchase. Veblen's "Conspicuous Consumption" concept ain't got nothin' on you.

Pardon the interruption to your shooting and robbing one another. It's not enough for you to be under assault by outsiders, you feel compelled to take out your frustrations on yourselves rather than work together for your own benefit. Young people running rampant, wielding guns and having no trepidation at firing them at one another, at the police, or anyone they come across, speaks volumes about the overall condition of your families, your leadership, and your collective internal integrity.

Pardon the interruption of your meaningless conversations about Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, MSNBC and Fox News, and your preference of one talking-head over the other.

See "PTI" on pg. 7



## The VOICE Unleashed

### Clarification of editorial

In the March 24-30, 2010, issue of The Richmond VOICE, we published an editorial describing our experience during, and our reaction to the verdict reached by the jury in the trial of a libel lawsuit brought against The Richmond VOICE's parent company and the author of a letter to the editor that we had earlier published here.

The judge in that trial, the Honorable Melvin R. Hughes, Jr., has objected that our editorial appeared to accuse him of impropriety. In particular, Judge Hughes is concerned that our reference to "the politics played in a courtroom—between judges and counsel" could have been understood by readers as an allegation by us that Judge Hughes was biased, disregarded evidence or that he was otherwise guilty of corruption or unethical conduct in his role as judge at trial of the case against us.

While we reserve our right to criticize the trial system generally, the record of the trial does not reflect, and we did not intend to imply that there was any corrupt, unethical or otherwise improper conduct on the part of Judge Hughes personally in our case, nor we did we intend to imply that he might somehow improperly have caused the jury to decide against us in that case.

While we did not anticipate that any reader might misunderstand our editorial as making any such allegations against Judge Hughes personally, in the event that any of our readers did think we were making such allegations, we want to correct the record, apologize to Judge Hughes, and express our regret for any offense we may have caused him in this regard.

**THE VOICE**  
The Voice Newspaper

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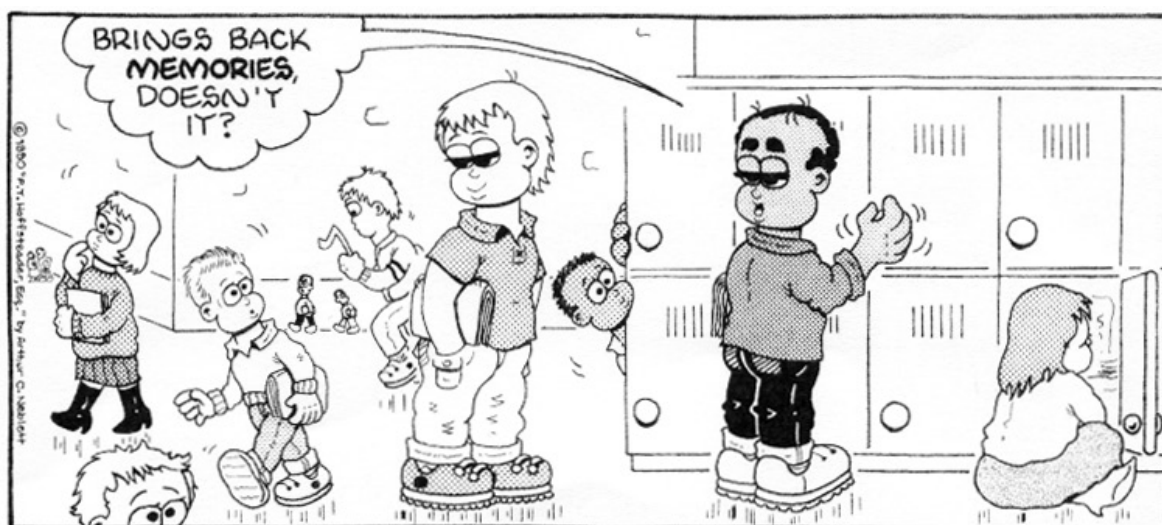
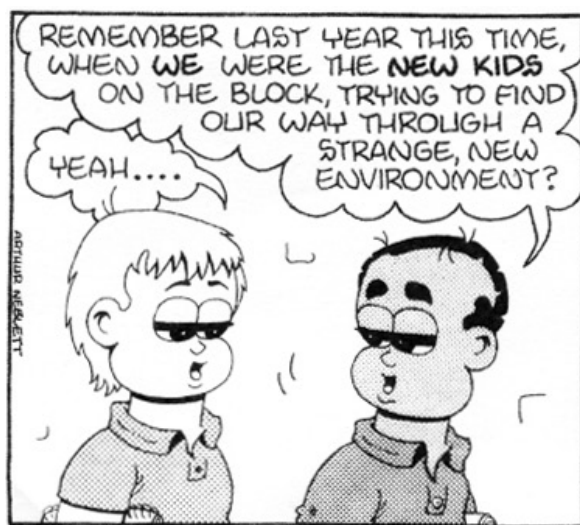
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P.T. Hoffstader, Esq.



## MLK Memorial left out...?

Like most Americans, I am thrilled about the new Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial. I have been reading eagerly about its design, its landscaping, its emotional and cultural impact. As I look at the official website, though, I find myself disappointed that the Chicago Freedom Movement isn't mentioned in the timeline of Dr. King's life.

In 1966, Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Chicago — his only northern civil rights campaign — to help spearhead the movement to end slums and create fair and open housing. The campaign was widely regarded as a failure — Dr. King was hit in the head with a rock during one of the increasingly volatile marches through white neighborhoods and the summit agreement he made with Mayor Daley never bore real fruit. Still, the Chicago Freedom Movement was an important one, one I believe ultimately led to the Fair Housing Act.

In stone, as in spirit, Dr. King is a towering presence. Imposing. But I think it's important for us to remember that he was also deeply human. I want to remember him on a small scale as well as a monumental one -- if we can think of him in all his human fragility, it can help us remember that we, too, have the capacity for compassion, for action

Gail Brandeis

## On USPS closings

As someone who uses the USPS a lot, to send mail, art, letters, books, etc, I'm very concerned about Post Office closings, too.

The zip codes for me, my son, my friends, are on that list of offices considered for closing in Richmond. Friends around the country have voiced concerns on all of our network sites, many living in small towns with only one post office, which is on the list to close. For everyone who is able to go on-line, here's a site where you can see

the latest information, and sign a petition. It's very important that we all voice our concerns. [Http://www.savethepostoffice.com](http://www.savethepostoffice.com)

Mim Scalin  
Richmond

## Discrimination exists

A piece by David Sirota in Salon struck a nerve with me. He makes the case that race discrimination still exists. Sad, but it's something that needs to be said over and over. I find the issue of whether any kind of discrimination still exists to be a continuing uphill battle when I represent employees in discrimination cases.

Truth be told, when I started handling employment discrimination matters 25 years ago, I figured I'd do it for a few years, then everyone would know the law and I'd have to find something else to do. Here I am, still handling discrimination cases. Instead of seeing them wane, I find that in some ways discrimination has gotten more blatant over the years.

If you don't believe that discrimination exists, here are some facts that prove my point.

Race/national origin discrimination: As of July 2011, 13.9 Americans were unemployed and 6.3 million of them were unemployed over 27 weeks. While 8.3 percent of whites are unemployed, compare that to 15.9 percent of African Americans and 11.3 percent for Hispanics. The use of credit history to screen applicants, which is still a widespread practice, can have a disproportionate impact on minorities and women.

The chance of an African American male born in 2001 of going to jail is 32 percent. Hispanic males have a 17 percent chance and white males have a 6 percent chance.

With the extreme disparity in arrest and incarceration rates among the races, EEOC has acknowledged that using arrest and convictions to exclude people from employment may have a disparate impact

on minorities. Yet most states still allow criminal records to be used to exclude otherwise qualified applicants, even if the crime had nothing to do with their ability or qualification to perform the particular job.

Donna Ballman

## Motes and beams

An iconic woman cradled her abdomen and revealed the life growing there, as vibrant and as certain as the crimson of her Lanvin gown.

Her husband is similarly eminent and, as they took to yet another of what, for them, must be an endless strait of red carpets, the radiant woman basked in the rarefied air that only exists under an arc of flashbulbs.

It was a seminal moment, not at all spontaneous but with just the right amount of coyness, delight, and pride.

Responses were immediate, and as polar as they were predictable. Opinions were divided along moral lines. The couple was applauded for being married before deciding to procreate. "They did it the way God intended" and "they did it the 'right way.'" Many offered up their hope that this would "start a trend" in the Black community, of valuing marriage.

By extension, unmarried mothers were inundated with presumptuous gloating. "This is what you should've done" "never have a child with a man who doesn't even offer to marry you" and "you'll never have this moment."

Every decision carries with it a value judgment. There is no sense in defending yourself against people who are certain they are better than you are. That is the worst kind of futility; it not only leaves you spent, but also unnerved and inadequate.

I am a third generation single mother [but] I am wise and intuitive; artful and accomplished; nurturing and nourishing.

Stacia Brown

## PTI Continued from page 6

They have their six and seven-figure salaries and can "talk" about your problems all day long. What do you have, and where will all the talk get you?

Pardon this interruption to your complacency, your apathy, your fear, your doubt, your perceived helplessness, hopelessness, and powerlessness. Pardon this interruption to your stream of consciousness, your psyche, and your apparent overwhelming desire to shut out reality. Pardon this interruption to your indifference and unresponsiveness to the life and death issues you face. Pardon this interruption to your proclivity toward the temporal, trivial, and the trifling things of this world. Pardon this interruption of your inclination to allow the silly and symbolic to take precedence over the serious and substantive. Pardon this interruption of your desire to continue majoring in the minors and getting caught-up in practices that matter little in the larger scheme of things.

Yes, pardon the interruption, Black America, but I just had to shake you once again; I just had to try to awaken you once again. I love you too much to let you stay in your comatose state, a state of inactivity and numbness. I care too much about our children's future to sit back and not speak out about our condition and not get involved in initiatives to improve our situation. I respect our elders and ancestors too much to ignore their sacrifices for our economic freedom, some having died "on their way to freedom." Are you on your way?

So, once again, for the umpteenth time, pardon my interruption of whatever you are hiding from or running from or afraid of. I hope you will forgive my intrusion into your fantasy world. But most of all, I hope you will move beyond the mundane and heed this call for appropriate action to economically empower yourself and our people.

# Does religion cause terrorism? It's complicated and opinions vary

By David Gibson

RNS - The shock of the 9/11 attacks was so great, and the personal losses so deep, that many people understandably sought simple answers for such overwhelming malevolence. What, they asked, would cause someone to hijack a plane of innocent civilians and fly it into a building?

Since Osama bin Laden's holy warriors carried out the attacks, some decided that Islam was clearly to blame, case closed. Others—especially the New Atheists who found a wide audience after 9/11—didn't stop at Islam and instead said that all religions are bad because they all inspire senseless violence.

In the decade since 9/11, however, experts in religion and terrorism have elaborated more complex theories for the role religion plays in global violence.

## Religion is not the problem

In general, scholars have concluded that

religion—be it Islam or any other faith—is neither the chicken nor the egg when it comes to creating terrorists. Rather, religion is one of many factors in the explosive brew of politics, culture and psychology that leads fanatics to target innocents—and take their own lives in the process.

“Religious violence has to stand in line with all sorts of other violence in the modern world,” said Charles Kurzman, a sociologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and author of “The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists.”

“Religion is not the problem,” agrees Mark Juergensmeyer, author of “Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence.”

“But it then becomes problematic because religion brings a whole host of absolutistic symbols and images and justifications” that act as an accelerant to terrorism.

## Sacred values

Yet even within that consensus view there is a surprisingly wide range of scholarly opinion about the connection between faith and violence—and how to combat such tendencies.

On one side of the spectrum there are those who argue that religion is being unfairly tarred as part of the terrorism dynamic. A leading proponent here is William T. Cavanaugh, a theologian at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., and author of “The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict.”

On the other pole are those like James W. Jones of Rutgers University, author of “Blood That Cries Out From the Earth: The Psychology of Religious Terrorism,” who argues that much of contemporary terrorism has a uniquely “religious nature” because it is motivated by “sacred values.”

“It is not simply the same old terrorism

with a different motivation or rhetoric,” Jones told a forum on religion and violence last April at New York's Fordham University. “Research suggests that sacred motivations make a big difference.”

As a result, Jones said, religiously motivated terrorist groups are more dangerous and harder to subdue.

Still, some researchers have found that the most religious Muslims can also be the most resistant to radicalization. David Schanzer, director of the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security in Durham, N.C., studied 188 cases of Muslim Americans who have been connected to terrorism activities, and found that none were raised with “traditional, intensive religious training.” Instead, they “adopted fundamentalist views as they radicalized.”

See **“It's Complicated”** on pg. 21

## Hood Temple A.M.E. Zion welcomes pastor

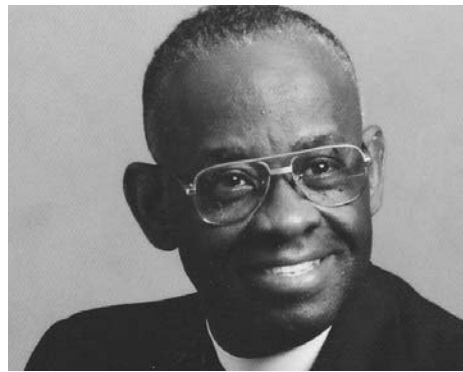
Bishop Warren M. Brown, presiding prelate of the Mid-Atlantic II Episcopal District, which includes the Virginia Conference, recently made the pastoral appointment of Rev. Dr. Edmund H. Whitley, Sr., to the historic Hood Temple A.M.E. Zion Church.

Whitley comes to Hood Temple after 18 years as the successful presiding elder of the Norfolk District of the Virginia Conference. The senior presiding elder of the Mid-Atlantic II Episcopal District.

The new pastor serves the A.M.E. Zion Church as the Chaplain of the Presiding Elders Council of the AME Zion Church. He serves on the Home Mission and Church Extension Board of the AME Zion Church. He also serves as a trustee of Dinwiddie Institute in Dinwiddie, VA. He was elected to serve the A.M.E. Zion Church General Conference in July 2012.

“Our new pastor has traveled extensively across the United States and abroad as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” according to the church located at 16 West Clay St. in Richmond.

Whitley is a native of Williamston, N.C. who graduated from the E. J. Hayes High School in Williamston, N.C. He continued his education at Elizabeth City State College (now university) and Knoxville College in Tennessee. He also served in the United States Army and was honorably



*Rev. Dr. Edmund Whitley, Sr.*

discharged. He holds several degrees, including a doctor of divinity and an honoris causa from the Richmond Virginia Seminary.

Whitley, an active member of Doris Masonic Lodge No. 28 in Durham, N.C., is married to the former Catherine Hopkins of Jamesville, N.C. She serves as the Norfolk District president of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary of the church. She also was elected a delegate to the General Conference 2012 in Charlotte, N.C. They are parents of three adult children, and six grandchildren.

“Hood Temple is proud to have this seasoned, dedicated and respected pastor at the helm of the old ship of Zion in the city of Richmond,” according to the church. “Eyes have not seen nor ears heard what the Lord has in store for those that love Him.”

## The ROC to host event for would-be leaders

On Sept. 15, The Richmond Outreach Center (ROC), a non-denominational, independent church, will kick off its First Annual School of ROC Conference for up-and-coming influential leaders, pastors, and laymen.

This event, hosted by Executive Director Pastor Geronimo Aguilar, will feature classes centered on a curriculum teaching proven outreach techniques to grow and expand charitable non-profit organizations and churches. The event will last through Sunday, Sept. 18 and will feature keynote speaker Rev. Jonathan Falwell, senior pastor of one of the largest churches in the country, with a membership of over 20,000.

Crime in Richmond has significantly been reduced since The ROC opened its doors in 2001. At The ROC's grand opening of their new church headquarters in April 2010, Gov. Bob McDonnell stated, “I've seen, during my time as the attorney general, the community come together in such an incredible way.

“The ministries in Essex Village and Southwood, leading to a 35 percent reduction in crime in the area and more young people going to school with the dropout and truancy rate going down considerably, are the fruit of what God has done through this ministry,” according to the church. “This is exactly what we need to be doing: People of faith working together with the government



*Rev. Jonathan Falwell*

and with the church to make a difference in people's lives.”

The church notes that the School of ROC will be an innovative and incontrovertible approach to furthering and increasing the positive change Richmond has seen the past couple of years by featuring classes such as, Sports: The Best Bait for Your Roughest Kids, City Relationships, Marketing and Funding Your Organization, and more.

“Anyone compelled to make a difference in the city is welcomed and encouraged to attend,” notes the church, which a per person donation to attend.

The ROC notes that its primary purpose is serving individuals in the community. With over 10,000 in weekly attendance, hundreds of volunteers and a dedicated staff utilize every available resource to provide basic needs to sustain positive change in Richmond.



## Keeping the Faith

### I remember

I was in the hardware store when I first heard the news, though I did not know what I was hearing. As the cashier tallied my purchase, I overheard a reporter on the store's radio make the peculiar announcement that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. At the time, I thought of it as little more than a curiosity. How wrong I was.

By **Ronnie McBrayer**



It's been ten years since that September morning, and still I can recall the horror and heroics of that day. The pancaking towers, the daring and duty-bound firefighters, the dust-soaked city of New York, and the ash-covered-walking-wounded, stumbling like ghosts through Manhattan.

Each September since 9/11, when the proper and solemn remembrance ceremonies begin, I am tempted to believe the now faded bumper stickers that were so common in the months following the tragedy: The stickers read, "We Will Never Forget." Not true. We will forget.

No, those who lived in the cities directly attacked will never forget. Those who huddled around television sets as bewildered and confused witnesses will never forget. And of course, those who buried their loved ones murdered in the attacks would easier forget their own names as forget that Tuesday morning.

But those following us will forget. They are not calloused or forgetful. They are simply too young. Most of the students who entered college this fall were in elementary school ten years ago, and many of this generation (including my own children), were even younger or not yet born.

This is more than a generation that thinks Starbucks and cell phones were created shortly after Adam and Eve; that can text eighty words a minute, but can't write in cursive; that has never known the limitation of having only three network television channels, and can't imagine life without Google and YouTube. This is a generation that will come to maturity in the shadow of a dreadful event not even in their collective memory.

Yes, I want my children (and the generations to come) to remember and reflect upon these events. I want them to forever hold in their memory the suffering and injustice of that day and the days that have followed. But I do not want them to cloud their memories with the notion that

the "world was changed forever on 9/11," for it was not.

Violence, retaliation, the suffering of the innocent, and the struggle for power have been around for all of human history. 9/11, rather than changing that status quo, was another brutal, heart-rending chapter in the same narrative. To say that 9/11 is the defining, irreversible mark on human history is to give evil and injustice far too much credit; and for followers of Jesus to say such a thing, it is a loss faith.

Consider, that whenever Christians gather, they gather to remember, celebrate, and hopefully integrate into their lives a profound event from the past, an event to which the Eucharist and the Creeds point: "Jesus Christ was crucified, dead, and was buried; but on the third day he rose again."

Our faith informs us that Jesus took all the hate, evil, retaliation, death, and rejection the world could muster, and when the world had done its worst, he responded with his best. He overcame all of these with resurrected life, goodness, and hope. This is the defining event of our past, the memory we will never forget, and the trajectory for our future.

Yes, I will bow my head and say a prayer for those taken away from us a decade ago. I will give thanks for the rescue workers, the firefighters, and those who tried to save and serve the hurt and dying. I will ask God to assuage the sorrow of the families and friends left to grieve.

But when I am finished praying, I will work for peace; I will seek to overcome evil with good; I will pursue the example of Jesus; and I will teach my children to remember properly. Remember that grace, not hate, will have the final word.

*McBrayer is the author of "Leaving Religion, Following Jesus." He writes and speaks about life, faith, and Christ-centered spirituality. Visit his website at [www.ronniemcbrayer.net](http://www.ronniemcbrayer.net).*

## Sapp to record 1st album since wife's death

Marvin Sapp, whose wife passed away in 2010, has announced plans to record songs for a new album expected to be released in 2012.

Sapp, who wowed fans with his 2010 "Here I Am" album, will be recording his next body of work live on Oct. 7, at Evangel Cathedral in Upper Marlboro, Md., near Washington, D.C.

The album was expected to address how Sapp overcame the loss of several people in his life, including wife MaLinda Sapp, who passed away in September 2010 due to complications from colon cancer.

The focus of this record is how you can come through situations and still remain on top. It's about how the enemy has a way of hitting you with stuff to cause you to fold and buckle, but I'm still standing," said Sapp.

Sapp noted that although the album would be recorded live "some will sound like it's studio. We're gonna mix it up."

As for why Sapp, pastor of Lighthouse

Full Life Center Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., planned to record the music at a church in Maryland, the minister said Washington, D.C., is home to some of his biggest supporters.

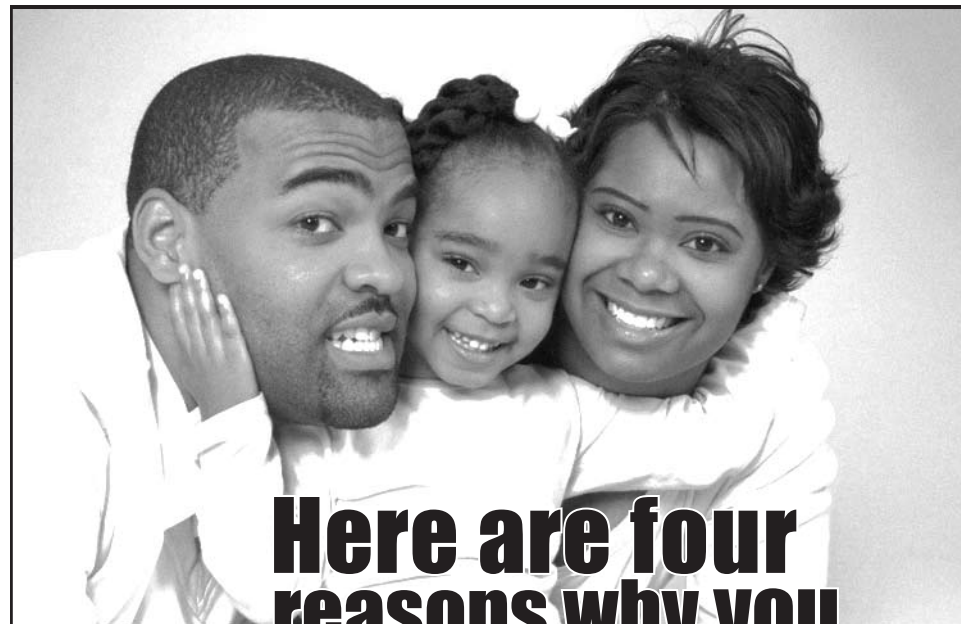
"D.C. is one of my largest audiences. They buy tons of records of mine in Washington D.C. ... So we're going to do something different and see how it works," he said.

The gospel album to be released in 2012 will be Sapp's seventh, according to his official music website.

Sapp's 2007 album "Thirsty" went gold and won seven Gospel Stellar Awards in 2009. His 2010 album, "Here I Am," won several Stellar awards and a Dove Award. "Here I Am" was also recorded live.

Sapp debuted in the 90s as a gospel singer with the group Commissioned before launching his solo career in 1996.

"I am a preacher, called by God, who happens to sing," was how Sapp defined his ministry.



# Here are four reasons why you should \*adopt.

- \* Help reduce the number of children in the VA Foster Care System.
- \* Children deserve a loving, nurturing and permanent family.
- \* Bring home a companion for an only child.
- \* **Children have brighter futures when they have roots.**



**Virginia One Church, One Child**  
 1214 West Graham Road, Suite 2  
 Richmond, Virginia 23220  
 (804) 329-3420



# Feds loosen rules on cutting special education spending

By Nirvi Shah

School districts that want to reduce special education spending from one year to the next without restoring what was cut now have the blessing of the U.S. Department of Education.

In the past, federal law was interpreted to mean that once a district set its special education budget, it could not be reduced permanently except for very specific reasons. One of those exceptions to the so-called maintenance-of-effort rule were limited to decreased expenses, such as when an experienced, highly paid special education teacher retired or a high-needs student left a district. Cutting the special education budget for other reasons meant a district was running the risk of losing its share of federal funds.

But a letter to the National Association of State Directors of Special Education in June from the Education Department, now says otherwise.

A school district “is not obligated to expend at least the amount expended in the last fiscal year for which it met the maintenance-of-effort requirement. In other words, each year’s [district] maintenance-of-effort obligation is based on the actual amount expended in the immediate prior fiscal year,” wrote Melody Musgrove, the director of the office of special education programs.

That means that if districts lower their special education spending for any reason, whether or not it’s because of one of the exceptions built into federal law, the education department says it’s now permissible to never resume spending at the previously higher level.

The shift has special education advocates worried. The maintenance-of-effort provision was built into special education spending rules to buffer students with disabilities from changes in services triggered by the ups and downs of public spending and politics.

“In essence, what the department has done by issuing this interpretation, they have created one more way in which [districts] can reduce their local spending, which is not articulated either in statute or regulation,” said Candace Cortiella, who runs the website IDEA Money Watch, which tracks special education spending.

Recently, Kathleen B. Boundy, a co-director of the Center for Law and



*Sasha Pudelski*



*Lindsay Jones*

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“Fairness dictates that all programs and populations share in the burden of cuts, rather than holding a single program exempt from the cuts.”

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*-Sasha Pudelski*

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Education, based in Boston, sent Musgrove and OSEP Deputy Director Ruth E. Ryder a letter challenging their new position about school districts’ responsibilities regarding special education spending. Boundy asked that the guidance be rescinded.

“This is illogical and is not consistent with the language of the statute. This is not a matter of interpretation, but a misreading or misapplication of the law,” Boundy said. “School districts are required to maintain the level of special education expenditures from year to year based on a notion that costs rarely decrease, the population of eligible children is predictable, and Congress in granting ... funds for the education of children with disabilities mandated that these federal dollars were being used to pay for the excess costs of educating this vulnerable population of children, not as a substitute for local and state funding for the education of these children.”

#### **Recession no excuse**

The U.S. Education Department said it is still reviewing Boundy’s letter. But, in an e-mail last week, federal education officials said they think school districts’ obligation to provide students with disabilities a free, appropriate education as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act will keep them from cutting spending haphazardly.

“We have some confidence that [districts] will continue to provide the funding needed to meet the ... obligation,” the e-mail said. “Historically, because the cost of services has increased, most [districts] have needed to provide at least as much funding as in the prior year to meet this obligation. It would not be appropriate for a [district] to reduce spending simply because of ‘financially challenging times.’”

However, the American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, Va., estimates that 10 percent of the nation’s school districts will not be able to keep special education spending level this year, and 15 percent of districts won’t be able to do so next year.

School administrators have been forced to cut to the bone when it comes to general education costs, but current IDEA [maintenance-of-effort] requirements prohibit them from making the same difficult cuts to special education. Our members think this is inherently unfair,” said Sasha Pudelski, a legislative specialist for the AASA.

“Fairness dictates that all programs and populations share in the burden of cuts, rather than holding a single program exempt from the cuts,” she continued. “If

the situation was reversed and special education budgets received all the cuts while general education students’ budgets were left entirely intact, parents and school leaders would never stand for that. Our members don’t understand why the reverse is somehow acceptable.”

Special education budgets haven’t gone entirely untouched, however. Seven states—Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, and West Virginia—have requested permission to cut spending on students with disabilities, on the basis of unforeseen declines in financial resources, exercising an option that had never been used by any state. Some have been granted their wishes.

“You can only protect this pot of money so carefully for so long before people are going to be upset,” said Nancy Reder, the deputy executive director for governmental relations for the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, in Alexandria, Va. Bill East, the executive director of the group, wrote the letter to Musgrove in February that triggered the Education Department’s informal guidance about districts’ abilities to reduce special education spending.

“At the same time,” added Reder. “I don’t want services for kids to be cut.”

Part of the solution is a bigger federal contribution to special education budgets, said Lindsay Jones, the senior director of policy and advocacy services for the Council for Exceptional Children, in Arlington, Va.

“CEC has long advocated for full funding for IDEA,” Jones said.

When the law was crafted, it allowed the federal government to contribute up to 40 percent of the cost of educating students with disabilities. The current federal contribution is 16.5 percent. Over the years, members of Congress have proposed many bills that would increase the share of federal spending on students with disabilities, but none has passed both chambers.

“Everybody is taking a magnifying glass to their budgets,” Jones said. “We can try to be as efficient as possible, but at the end of the day, these are individual services, and there are lots of individualized needs for technology that are expensive.”



RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Welcome Back!

A Message From  
Superintendent Dr. Yvonne W. Brandon



# the Choice

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year, a time for Richmond Public Schools to continue its mission of student achievement, responsible action and fiscal accountability.

As we look forward to another outstanding year, we should also take a moment to review last year's noteworthy accomplishments, including the district's historic achievement of having 100 percent of its schools fully accredited based on the state's Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. When you consider almost a decade ago just 19 percent of Richmond's schools earned full accreditation, the significance of this accomplishment cannot be overstated.

While standardized test scores are the most prevalent tools to measure student achievement, there are certainly other ways to gauge success. For example, the on-time graduation rates for Franklin Military Academy, Thomas Jefferson, Richmond Community and Open high schools all exceeded the statewide average of 85.5 percent, with the district posting an overall increase of six percent. Our 2011 high school valedictorians posted a combined grade point average of 4.46, led by Thomas Jefferson graduate Kristen Simms, one of only eight Virginia students to receive the 2011 Gates Millennium Scholarship. Richmond City students also won awards at the Technology Student Association (TSA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) state conferences. And Ian Fraser, a seventh-grader at Lucille Brown Middle School, advanced to this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee after winning this year's regional contest.

Several Richmond City schools and educators earned individual honors last school year, including Brown Middle School science teacher LaTonya Waller's selection as Virginia's Teacher of the Year. Ms. Waller made history by being the first Richmond City teacher to win the award. Several schools were also recognized for excellence. Bellevue Elementary was named a Virginia Title I Distinguished School and a National Blue Ribbon School while Mary Munford Elementary received the 2011

Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. Also, J.E.B. Stuart Elementary was one of only four schools in Virginia to receive a 2011 grant from the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries, and two Richmond City middle schools, Albert Hill and Lucille Brown, placed among the top three in this year's Virginia Council on Economic Education (VCEE) Stock Market Game.

Other individual honorees included teachers Jeffrey Dean Hall, Emily Betts and Barry Gabay – all R.E.B. Awards for Teaching Excellence recipients. The awards included cash grants to fund postgraduate studies, professional development or world travel. At the district level, Richmond Community High School music teacher Gregory McCallum was named the city's 2011 Teacher of the Year.

This school year, we will continue our focus on middle school reform as we open Higher Achievement after-school programs at Boushall and Henderson middle schools. These centers, made possible through our partnership with Higher Achievement and a three-year, \$1 million grant from Altria, will provide students with a structured, safe environment for homework assistance and other academic enrichment opportunities.

The 2011-2012 school year will also mark the first time that students in grades six through 12 will be enrolled in Franklin Military Academy as the expansion of that program comes to its fruition.

And finally, many of you have already received the district's 2010-2015 Strategic Plan: The Gateway to Infinite Possibilities. The plan was developed and based on input from more than 500 of your fellow citizens who participated in community summits and served on action teams. We thank all who took part in this community-led initiative. The goals set forth by this plan are aggressive, bold, critical and completely within our reach, if we will only extend ourselves to our full potential. By doing so, we will recognize the promise of our students and fully develop their potential to lead extraordinary, honorable, productive and personally rewarding lives, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

## Dates to Remember

[www.richmond.k12.va.us](http://www.richmond.k12.va.us)



### The Choice Campaign Kickoff

Please Join

Superintendent Yvonne W. Brandon and special guests at the 3rd District Choice Campaign Kickoff

**Saturday, October 1, 2011**  
10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

**Kickoff at Henderson MS and John Marshall HS**  
4319 Old Brook Road  
with a Festival to include a Back-to-School Rally at the  
**Richmond Technical Center**  
2020 Westwood Avenue



### Coffee, Tea & the Superintendent

Join Superintendent Dr. Yvonne W. Brandon September 16, 2011 for a series of intimate discussions about the direction for the upcoming school year and new projects underway designed to continue the district's trajectory of growth. Sessions will be held throughout the day. We hope to see you there!!

### PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCE

**October 14-15, 2011**  
**March 10-11, 2012**

**Locations:**  
Summer Hill Elementary School  
Media Center  
9:00 a.m.

Armstrong High School  
Media Center  
3:00 p.m.



## RPS Call Center

**(804) 354-1122**

RPS will operate a call center from Monday, August 29 through Friday, Sept. 9. 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.  
**The number is (804) 354-1122.**



# Black love festival promotes culture amid trying times

What do you do when you are frustrated about the violence and hatred that get much of the attention regarding the Black community? One organization dealt with it by starting a festival to celebrate the community. The festival, currently in its fourth year, will be held in the Randolph community of Richmond.

The Black Community Love Festival was created because of the perceived increasing lack of consciousness and self esteem in the Black community, said Pastor James Henry Harris of Second Baptist Church in Richmond's Randolph community.

There are many issues that impact the Black community. However, at the top of the list would be violence, Black-on-Black

crime, high school drop out rates, increasing number of Black males incarcerated and health and wellness of children, youth and adults.

Organizers note the Black Community Love Festival is designed to create educational and social activities for all people to learn from and enjoy. This year, the festival will highlight a variety of music, featuring Richmond's own God's Image, whose single "Forever We Will Worship" made it to the Billboard charts. In an effort to help those in need, a clothes giveaway also will be held. In addition, educational workshops, a health fair, basketball competition, and games, rides and free haircuts for the kids will

be offered. Various vendors also will be at the festival. Food vendors will offer barbeque ribs, fish and other tasty items for sale.

The festival will be celebrated all weekend, Saturday, Sept. 17, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Sept. 18, at 10 a.m. Activities will center around Second Baptist, 1400 Idlewood Avenue. At 10 a.m. Sunday, the festival will continue, with

worship at Second Baptist, focusing on the theme of love.

"The entire Richmond area is invited to join us," said Pastor Harris, who notes that Black Community Love Festival is committed to providing positive self-esteem activities that encourage dialogue and self-reflection, resulting in respect and love for self and others.

For more information, call 804-353-7682.

## Soul singer claims Jay-Z and Kanye illegally sampled track



*Syl Johnson, left, is not happy with popular rappers Kanye West and Jay-Z.*

NNPA - As Jay-Z and Kanye West celebrate the recent success of their album "Watch the Throne," the rappers may face a lawsuit from a Chicago soul singer who claims the pair illegally sampled one of his songs from the 1960s.

According to the music, film and photography preservation company The Numero Uno Group, singer Syl Johnson said the hip-hop duo illegally sampled his 1967 track "Different Strokes" for their song "The Joy."

The latter track was originally intended to appear on the deluxe edition of West's 2010 album "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy," but was used instead as a bonus track on the deluxe edition of "Watch The Throne." West is credited as the producer of the track, though it was in fact produced by Pete Rock.

The Numero Uno Group said the sample wasn't cleared in time for West's album last year, and they were erroneously named as the

publishers of the song on this year's album.

The company recently Tweeted, "Hey [Kanye West and Jay-Z], thanks for illegally sampling Syl Johnson on 'The Joy' and then crediting us(?). Have your lawyers call our lawyer." Their post on the situation has since been removed.

Johnson voiced his frustrations to Chicago NBC affiliate WMAQ, saying that West should have approached him first before using the song because they know each other personally. The rapper collaborated with Johnson's daughter Syleena for his 2004 hit "All Falls Down."

"He knows my daughter—they came up together," he told WMAQ. "Mr. West should have come to me. I don't like going through this. I'm not dying to get on TV or go to court."

According to MTV, "Watch the Throne" has already gone gold with more than 600,000 copies sold to date. Johnson is seeking compensation through a hearing or settlement.

## Ask Gwendolyn Baines

### My contractor was a con

Dear Gwendolyn:

Last winter I experienced roof damage to my house. Because my insurance deductible was more than the cost of repair, I did not file a claim. Instead, I sought the service of a contractor. I did not have him to sign a contract. When the job was completed, I paid him cash in full. Two weeks later he returned drunk, using profanity and swearing that I never paid him. It was a frightening ordeal. Since my mother taught us to pay a fool, again he was paid.

Gwendolyn, my regular contractor was having surgery and not available. Therefore, I was desperate for someone because I did not want the damage to cause a leakage into my house. What did I do wrong? This con answered my ad in the neighborhood shopper newspaper. It is unbelievable how people are taken advantage of – and the law doesn't seem to care.

Susan

Dear Susan:

You are wrong. The law does care, but people like yourself don't do your part. First of all, no job is too small that a 'contract' is not needed. And, never pay anyone without having a signed receipt to state payment received.

I personally managed the complete building of my own house. I will share with you what I learned to do and what not to do.

1) If the repairs are at an address where you do not reside, then never give the contractor



the key to the house or renovation project. Too often the contractor sends someone else and never checks when project is completed;

2) Make a contract and have the contractor to read it back to you – not so much to see if he/she understands, but to verify if the contractor can read;

3) Check the boards at large stores that sell building supplies. Usually, people who leave their card there are good. When stores are told of a complaint, the company or individual's card is removed;

4) Purchase the material to be used. This avoids contractors getting more than is needed – and sell the overage to someone else;

5) The internet is a source to find reputable workers and their credentials can also be checked on-line;

6) A referral from someone who had a good experience.

Susan, this is the most important of all: Now think about it. The best way to know if a contractor is shady is when asked to give a quote, the reply is "O..., I'll do you right!"



# Kemba Smith has her say in “Poster Child” memoir

BAW - Kemba Smith recently turned 40. It has been a decade since she walked out of a Connecticut prison, freed after serving six and half years and before President Bill Clinton signed an executive clemency releasing her. The son she gave birth to while in prison, before her case became a cause célèbre, is 16 and a high school senior. And finally, after returning to college to get her undergraduate degree, marrying, giving birth to a daughter and settling into her life, Smith has written her memoir, aptly called “Poster Child: The Kemba Smith Story.”

The description on the cover of the book sums up her difficult story of growing up: “It was easy falling in love with a drug dealer. The hard part was paying for his crimes.”

Smith had been a Hampton University student when she started dating the head of a \$4 million crack cocaine ring. Eventually, she was charged with the crimes of her lover, who was killed before police could apprehend him. She was sentenced to 24.5 years and would still be in prison today if media coverage and her faithful parents hadn’t attracted to her case a groundswell of national and international support. Smith was labeled the “poster child” for calling attention to the trend of giving harsh sentences to first time, non-violent offenders, especially “girlfriends” of drug dealers.

Now she is hoping readers of her book, “especially young men and women,” she says, are reminded of the importance of making the best of your opportunities and making healthy choices as it relates to relationships.

“The overall message is a message of hope and inspiration,” Smith said. “You can



*Kemba Smith*

go through the storm and valleys and come out on top.”

Smith opens “Poster Child” with the painful details of giving birth while being held in jail, awaiting her trial. The baby’s father, the drug dealer who called himself Khalif, had just been murdered, and Smith knows her pre-sentence report says she could spend years in prison. In labor and in handcuffs, she rides to the hospital in a sheriff’s squad car, endures child birth with police officers in the room and shortly thereafter, a marshal orders her feet and hands shackled. Then she has to release her son to the care of her parents.

Smith writes, “The mere thought of watching him leave my hospital room was too much. So, I just quietly hugged and kissed my baby. I knew I’d see him and hug him again someday. Maybe it wouldn’t be soon, but I was definitely going to hold him

again.”

In her book, Smith chronicles the journey that led her, a child raised in a strict upbringing, to a relationship with a drug dealer. It is the story of a young woman with low self-esteem who is gradually seduced by an older, streetwise man who is articulate and has the money to impress her with gifts. Quickly, the relationship turns abusive. Smith writes of beatings exacted whenever she doesn’t do as Khalif believes she should.

“He grabbed me by my collar and swung me onto the floor. He punched me, threw me across the bed and beat me until I couldn’t move,” she wrote. At times, she thought he was going to kill her. Yet she did not leave.

While, at times, it’s difficult to understand why Smith didn’t run, anyone who knows the signs of abuse and the manner in which victims react will find this story is not unusual. Smith stays even when it is obvious that Khalif is sleeping with her best friend. She stays even when she is fairly certain he has killed another friend of theirs.

Today, she says, “Initially, I thought I loved him, and unfortunately, I thought if I could stay with him, I could help change him, and we could have a big house and kids. Whenever he escalated the abuse to a certain force, I would freeze. I felt under his control and that nothing could protect me or my family. Love transitioned into fear.”

Eventually, in “Poster Child,” you can feel Smith’s world closing in on her. The police are getting closer, her conscience is suffocating her with its barrages, and her own will to live differently is trying to surface. In a final act of desperation, she flees with Khalif.

Ironically, her tortured lover-abuser, who

knows things will probably end badly, saves her by sending her home to her parents. Instead of an end to a nightmare, though, her arrival home is the start of the dark story that many people know from magazines and newspapers. Smith, who pled guilty expecting to accept the lenient offer made by a prosecutor, finds the offer has been snatched from under her, and she’s facing decades of incarceration.

In her book, she offers readers an up-close look at the barren and abusive life of prison, as well as at the sisterhood that develops between kindred spirits, often mothers serving long sentences for non-violent drug related crimes.

Smith’s release from prison shortly before Christmas of 2000 was joyful, yet she soon discovered it was fraught too with challenges.

She was unpacking her suitcase while her son, Armani, watched.

Armani turns 17 in December, and Smith says he is “talking about going to college for international studies and eventually international law.”

In 2005, Smith married Patrick Pradia, an air traffic controller. Together, they have a 17-month-old daughter, Phoenix. The family lives in Indianapolis.

On Dec. 22, Smith will mark her 11th year of freedom. While she was incarcerated her parents started the Kemba Smith Foundation as a vehicle for them to work for her freedom, as well as to educate the public about sentencing laws. Now Smith also works through the foundation, which provides services that include mentoring for young people with incarcerated parents and education about issues such as drug abuse and AIDS.



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# Blacks less likely than whites to get NIH grants, study finds

By Rob Stein

WP - Black scientists are significantly less likely than white researchers to win grants from the National Institutes of Health, according to an audit recently released that confirmed disturbing suspicions inside the agency about a lingering bias against African Americans.

The analysis of data from more than 40,000 researchers who submitted more than 80,000 grant applications to NIH between 2000 and 2006 found that only about 16 percent of those from Black applicants were approved, compared with about 29 percent of those from white scientists.



Donna K. Ginther

Even after the researchers accounted for other factors that could help explain the discrepancy, such as differences in scientists' education and training, African American applicants were still about 10 percentage points less likely than whites to get NIH funding, the researchers reported. About 27 percent of white applicants' requests were successful, compared with only about 17 percent of African Americans'.

Asians applying for money appeared to be slightly less likely than whites to get grants, but that gap disappeared when the researchers matched equally qualified white and Asian U.S. citizens. Hispanics were about as successful as whites.

The findings are troubling because they indicate that race remains a significant factor in who gets funding for research into diabetes, cancer, heart disease and other

See "NIH Grants" on pg. 21

## Can pain relievers do more harm than good?

When it comes to relieving the common headache or body aches, it seems as if the cure may be worse for you than the pain it's supposed to relieve.

Consumption of NSAIDs – common pain relievers like ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and acetaminophen (Excedrin) – has grown to 70 million prescriptions and 30 billion over-the-counter sales annually. That statistic is disturbing to Michael Sheehan, founder of natural medications company BioResource Inc., because of a study from the Archives of Internal Medicine (AIM) that reveals NSAIDs may play a part in the development of heart disease.

"The risks of NSAIDs are a growing concern," said Sheehan. "The fact that they may contribute to heart problems is a wake-up call the public needs to take seriously."

According to the American Heart Association, about 785,000 Americans suffer a first heart attack each year, and another 470,000 who have already had one or more heart attacks experience another episode. The AHA also revealed that in 2010, heart disease cost the United States \$316.4 billion. This total includes the cost of healthcare services, medications, and lost productivity.

The AIM study found that heart failure patients who used NSAIDs may be at an increased risk for side effects and other dangers. The article concluded that NSAIDs "are harmful to heart-failure

patients," reporting that individuals who received the medications were subject to "dose-related increases in risk of death and re-hospitalization for heart failure."

Research also showed that, with prolonged use, NSAIDs can cause potential side effects that include upset stomach, nausea, vomiting, heartburn, headache, diarrhea, constipation, drowsiness, unusual fatigue, stomach pain, swelling of feet or ankles, ringing in ears, vision changes, joint pain, muscle pain and weakness, easy bruising, bleeding, persistent sore throat, and fever.

"The nature of these recent revelations, combined with the pervasive use of NSAIDs, should make people stand up and notice," added Sheehan. "There are good signs, however, that more Americans are seeking natural options to pain pills."

"A recent National Institutes of Health study revealed that the number of men seeking information on alternatives to traditional pharmaceuticals and treatments rose by 18 percent between 2002 and 2007."

"This trend indicates Americans are getting smarter about taking responsibility for their personal health. The truth is there are dozens of natural substitutes for NSAIDs, and many of these remedies lack the potentially harmful side effects and risks associated with NSAIDs. With new, safer choices available, perhaps the need to use NSAIDs will diminish in the future."

## Save the Date Upcoming Free Health Seminars

The VCU Medical Center will be offering the following free seminars at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden's Education and Library Complex, located at 1800 Lakeside Avenue. **Registration is required.** Free parking available. **PLUS**, if you come early, you can tour the gardens before the seminar for free.

**Call (804) 828-0123 to reserve your spot today.**

**September 13 | 5:30 p.m.**

### Prostate Health

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Join Drs. Mitchell Anscher and Vernon Orton as they discuss recent developments to make radiation treatments for prostate cancer safer as well as minimally invasive treatments for prostate cancer.

**September 20 | 5:30 p.m.**

### Hypertension Care

Join Dr. Domenic Sica, director of the Hypertension Clinic, as he discusses the latest advances in hypertension care, including how best to diagnose and treat elevated blood pressures.

**September 27 | 5:30 p.m.**

### Everything You Need to Know About Thyroid Disease

Join Dr. David Gardner, from the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, as he talks about functional and anatomic disorders of the thyroid, their symptoms and how they are evaluated and treated.

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# Channeling childhood for a better and cleaner Chesapeake

By Sara Kaplaniak

BJN - One of the joys of parenting involves repeating your own mom and dad, as when you say, "Clean up that mess!" Then a disagreement ensues between siblings until mom intervenes.

Oddly enough, this came to mind while reading about Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts. The scenario's the same; it just involves a different cast of characters.

Instead of children overlooking their toys scattered about the house, we have farmers, builders, municipalities and homeowners failing to notice that certain land-based activities compromise the Chesapeake Bay. Instead of a mom called in to mediate, we have the judicial system.

Because time-outs don't work in the world of politics and government, bickering about cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay ends up in the courts. For example, in 2009, 54 municipalities sued the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection in an effort to overturn the state's Bay cleanup plan. Last year, the National Association of Home Builders filed suit against new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules aimed at curbing the flow of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment into the Bay. The American Farm Bureau Federation, the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and other farming groups are also suing to block the EPA rules.

In response, environmental groups have intervened in court on behalf of the EPA for enforcing the Clean Water Act, which requires states to establish pollution limits, or "Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL)," for bodies of water not meeting water quality standards. The EPA did just that last December. In the absence of satisfactory progress in restoring the Chesapeake Bay, the agency exercised its authority and instituted a TMDL for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries

The EPA's TMDL outlines how much nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution the six Chesapeake Bay states, including Virginia, can contribute to the streams and rivers that flow into the Bay. The limits aim to reduce these pollutants by 25 percent by 2025. The EPA's plan also establishes milestones for progress and consequences for failure in meeting them. States and localities must specify in detail how they will enforce and achieve reductions.

But it doesn't have to be this bureaucratic and burdensome. We live in an age of mind-



*A cleaner Chesapeake Bay results in abundant and healthier seafood*

blowing technology and creative thinking – a powerful combination that is taking root in my state of Pennsylvania where the Susquehanna River serves as a primary polluter of the Chesapeake Bay.

For example, Pennsylvania has proposed a Baywide Agricultural Technology Fund to assist farmers, who represent a primary source of targeted pollutants, with employing innovative improvements that reduce pollution harming the Chesapeake Bay. One emerging technology this fund would support separates nitrogen and phosphorous from manure before runoff enters the watershed. Another proposes to convert this waste into energy. These technologies would help farmers meet government regulations during tough times, reduce dependence on oil and gas and create a cleaner, greener world for all of us.

Additionally, Pennsylvania hosts its second round of Nutrient Credit Trading auctions this fall. Nutrient trading, a market-based financial mechanism for reducing pollution, provides incentives for taking actions that go beyond statutory or regulatory requirements. Those who achieve this goal can trade their "nutrient reduction credits" with others who may need a little more time to meet federal, state or local requirements.

These transactions are handled by the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST), working in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection. PENNVEST acts as a clearinghouse for credits, entering

into contracts to both buy and sell credits at annual auctions. This "cap and trade" approach has gained steam around the world in reducing carbon emissions released into the air and may also have a role to play in making Chesapeake Bay waters a little cleaner. That's because "green" solutions

like trading nutrient credits costs less than engineering solutions that get passed on to taxpayers.

Simpler approaches to cleaning up the Bay work too, as seen with "Treevitalize," a public-private partnership formed in Pennsylvania to restore tree cover in metropolitan areas. Not only do trees create a prettier and more peaceful world, they also filter water and air and control storm water and erosion. Without a doubt, more trees in the watershed's urban and suburban neighborhoods would benefit the Bay.

So why does the EPA need to regulate what most desire – clean water for drinking, swimming, fishing, supporting wildlife, nourishing livestock, and promoting general health and spiritual renewal? Why do regulations and lawsuits outweigh creative solutions?

In answer, look no further than your own home where your young children are more likely to point fingers or endure timeouts before taking messes into their own hands. You can only hope that as grownups, and our future decision makers, they will eventually take responsibility for their actions in intelligent and creative ways. Parents might consider leading the way.

## Va. youth invited to fight obesity

Children and youth across Virginia once again have the opportunity to become "Health Heroes" by learning about childhood obesity, designing programs to address it and implementing the programs in their communities.

Kicking off the fourth year, Youth Service America and UnitedHealthcare are calling all "Health Heroes" to apply for 2012 UnitedHealth HEROES grants.

UnitedHealth HEROES is a service-learning, health literacy initiative designed to encourage young people, working with educators and youth leaders, to create and implement local hands-on programs to fight childhood obesity. As childhood obesity rates are increasing, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) is taking the fight to Virginia and offering UnitedHealth HEROES grants to schools and youth-focused, community center-based programs.

Grants of up to \$1,000 will be awarded to programs that demonstrate

a clear understanding of the health risks associated with childhood obesity; propose creative solutions to fighting obesity in their schools and communities; and can be easily implemented, scaled and measured. In addition, each grant also engages participating youth in service-learning, an effective teaching and learning strategy that supports student academic achievement, and helps students develop their workplace readiness skills.

For an application, visit [www.YSA.org/HEROES](http://www.YSA.org/HEROES). The website also contains more information about the program as well as "First Responders: Youth Addressing Childhood Obesity Through Service-Learning," a step-by-step manual that helps youth, parents, teachers and other volunteers deploy YSA service-learning models to fight childhood obesity in their communities.

Applications must be submitted online before midnight, Oct. 17, 2011. Grant recipients will be notified in December and January.



## Sept. 8

### Pandurangi at NAMI-CVA

The National Alliance on Mental Illness-Central Virginia Chapter (NAMI-CVA) will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 8 at the Weinstein JCC on 5403 Monument Ave., Richmond. Dr. Ananda Pandurangi, newly appointed vice chairman, VCU Dept. of Psychiatry, and a national NAMI winner of the 2011 Exemplary Psychiatrist Award, will speak. Dr. Pandurangi was awarded for his exceptional contributions that improve the lives of people living with serious mental illness to include treatment, research and receiving almost \$1 million in new funding for research.

The meeting is free and open to the public. For further information contact 804-285-1749.

### JTCC Meeting

The public is invited to attend the upcoming meeting of the John Tyler Community College Board on Thursday, Sept. 8, at 3 p.m. The meeting will take place at the college's Chester Campus, located at 13101 Jefferson Davis Highway, in the Nicholas Student Center, room N102a. A sign-up sheet will be made available 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting for those persons interested in addressing the board.

## Sept. 10

### Women's Seminar

LINC will present a seminar for women cancer patients, survivors, their families and caregivers on Saturday, Sept. 10 at 9 a.m. in the 4th floor auditorium, the Atrium building at Johnston Willis Hospital. The seminar will be four hours long and is entitled "Women - The Financial Heart of the Home." Topics to be discussed are: Financial Planning for Women, Debt Management for Women, The Legalities of Reconstruction and Lymphedema, and Live Through This: Managing the Cancer Change-a life coaching session.

The seminar is free but registration is required by either calling 804-562-0592 ext. 2 or e-mailing [education@cancerlinc.org](mailto:education@cancerlinc.org).

There is free parking at the hospital. Enter via the Atrium doorway and take the elevators to the 4th floor. Turn left and follow the hall to the Atrium Auditorium. Coffee and sweet rolls will be available before 9 a.m. and a box lunch will be served at noon. The seminar will adjourn at 1 p.m. Door prizes will also be given.

## Sept. 13

### How Top-Quality Nonprofits Are Run

VAFRE will welcome Peter Brinckerhoff for his workshop, "Leading Your Not for Profit in the 21st Century," on Tuesday, Sept. 13, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., at The Virginia Historical Society, 428 North Boulevard, Richmond.

This fast-paced morning is based on Brinckerhoff's award winning book "Mission-Based Management." He will cover all the key elements of successful not-for-profit organizations found in his award-winning book, giving participants insight into how top-quality not-for-profits are really run. Discover what works, what doesn't, and how to ensure that your organization is one of the ones that works. Topics include: Mission Statements, Building Better Boards, Staff Management, The Wired Not-for-Profit, Mission-Based Marketing, Financial Empowerment, Planning, and Social Entrepreneurship.

Register online at [www.vafre.org](http://www.vafre.org). Organizations that register more than one representative will receive a discount on the cost of the workshop.

### "Extreme" Season Finale

You're invited to be a part of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Weightloss Edition" finale, filming the big reveal of a Washington D.C. resident's year long weight loss journey. This will take place outdoors on Tuesday, Sept. 13 from 2 - 5 p.m. at the Newseum, 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. Park at central parking across the street at 601 Pennsylvania Ave. and save your wristband for free parking. Dress in nice/casual attire with no logos, all black, or all white.

Interested in attending this filming? Send an RSVP e-mail to: [WDCFinale@gmail.com](mailto:WDCFinale@gmail.com). Include your full name, e-mail address, phone number, and the number of people in your party so the details for the shoot are forwarded as they are available.

## Sept. 14

On Wednesday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m. at the Science Museum of Virginia, 2500 W. Broad St., Richmond, Falls of the James Group, Sierra Club presents "Bringing Offshore Wind to Virginia - What will it take?"

If Virginia is to be an early leader in the manufacturing of off shore wind turbines, ship building to install and service the turbines, and in the deployment of wind farms off the coast of Virginia Beach, we need to get it blowing. Virginia has the opportunity to create 10,000 career length good paying jobs in this emerging industry. So, what will it take to make this happen? Find out what must be done and what you can do to help.

## Sept. 16

### Back to the Basics Boot Camp Conference

Wings of Faith Ministries will host the Back to the Basics Boot Camp Conference Sept. 16 at 7 p.m. and Sept. 17 at 10 a.m. The event that promises to turn "saints into soldiers" will feature host, Bishop Antonio Tucker, Sr., of Wings of Faith Ministries, Rev. Damian Balts of Olive Branch Baptist Church, Petersburg; Apostle Walter G. Pope of Power Praise Ministries in Franklin; Elder Maniel Pugh of Zion Hill Temple in Hopewell, Apostle-elect Ernest Tarver of Church of God in Christ in Macon, GA; and sponsor, Chief Apostle-elect Anjenette Hodges of Safe Haven of Faith Ministry in Petersburg.

Wings of Faith is located at 2155 N. Jamestown Drive, Petersburg. For more information, call 804-467-4726.

## Sept. 17

### Hooray for Hopewell Festival

Enjoy free admission, live entertainment featuring Casper and The Janitors and more on Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. and Sept. 18 from noon - 5 p.m. in downtown Hopewell. The event will also feature children's activities including the petting zoo and Learning Safari from Reston Park, Jonathan the Juggler, and fabulous face-painting by Cotton Candy Clown. There will be arts and crafts both days along with food vendors, and all kinds of exhibits and displays. Bring lawn chairs but no pets. For further information, call 804-452-1822.

### Free GED Testing in September

In September, GED tests are free. The usual cost is \$58, but first-time test takers who register in September will pay nothing to take the test. Chesterfield County Public Schools is able to offer free tests for a limited time thanks to a grant from the Virginia Department of Education.

Here's how to register for a GED test:

- Pre-register at [www.ged123.org](http://www.ged123.org) and print out the verification form.
- Bring that verification form and a driver's license or other government-issued ID to the Adult Continuing Education Office at the Chesterfield Technical Center, 10101 Courthouse Road, during registration hours: 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

Tests are offered each week through December, and GED seekers will select a test date during the registration process. To pursue a GED, adults must be at least 18 and officially withdrawn from school. There is no prerequisite to taking the GED test, but classes and a learning lab, which are not free, are available for GED seekers who need preparation. For more information, call 804-768-6140 or go online to [chesterfield.k12.va.us](http://chesterfield.k12.va.us).

*Send free community events at least two weeks prior to the event to: [editor@voicenewspaper.com](mailto:editor@voicenewspaper.com).*

*We reserve the right to edit all submissions for space, clarity, style and grammar. Flyers will not be accepted.*

# ACLU seeks details on nationwide government phone tracking

In a massive coordinated information-seeking campaign, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Virginia and 33 other affiliates across the nation have sent requests to more than 375 local law enforcement agencies large and small demanding to know when, why and how they are using cell phone location data to track Americans. The Virginia affiliate submitted its request to the Fairfax County Police Department.

“Cell phones today are an everyday accessory for most people,” said ACLU of Virginia Legal Director Rebecca Glenberg. “The idea of law enforcement engaging in unfettered cell phone location monitoring of Americans without probable cause or a warrant raises major privacy concerns.”

The campaign is one of the largest coordinated information act requests in American history. The requests, being filed under the states’ freedom of information laws, are an effort to strip away the secrecy that has surrounded law enforcement use of cell phone tracking capabilities.

“The ability to access cell phone location data is an incredibly powerful tool and its use is shrouded in secrecy. The public has a right to know how and under what circumstances their location information is being accessed by the government,” said Catherine Crump, staff attorney for the ACLU Speech, Privacy and Technology Project. “A detailed history of someone’s movements is extremely personal and is the kind of information the Constitution protects.”

Law enforcement agencies are being asked for information including:

- whether law enforcement agents demonstrate probable cause and obtain a warrant to access cell phone location data;
- statistics on how frequently law enforcement agencies obtain cell phone location data;
- how much money law enforcement agencies spend tracking cell phones; and
- other policies and procedures used for acquiring location data.

Law enforcement’s use of cell phone location data has been widespread for years, although it has become increasingly controversial. Just last week, the general counsel of the National Security Agency suggested to members of Congress that the NSA might have the authority to collect the location information of American citizens inside the U.S. Also, this spring, researchers revealed that iPhones were collecting and storing location information in unknown files on the phone.

During the 2011 session, the Virginia General Assembly considered a bill that would prohibit the placement of electronic tracking devices on motor vehicles without the permission of the vehicle’s owner, unless placed by the vehicle manufacturer, law enforcement, or a parent of a minor. The ACLU of Virginia advocated for an amendment requiring law enforcement to first obtain a warrant. The bill passed the House of Delegates, but failed in the Senate Courts of Justice Committee.

While the legislature may again consider such a bill in the 2012 session, it is unlikely to pass one with a case pending in the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court has agreed to decide whether police need a warrant to



*The ACLU says privacy on cell phones is still governed by a law written in 1986 and that it most definitely is not a matter of entertainment.*

place a GPS tracking device on a person’s vehicle. While that case does not involve cell phones, it could influence the rules police have to follow for cell phone tracking.

Congress is considering the Geolocation Privacy and Surveillance Act, a bill supported by the ACLU that would require police to get a warrant to obtain personal location information. The bill would protect both historical and real-time location data, and would also require customers’ consent for telecommunications companies to collect location data.

The ACLU requests are part of its Demand Your dotRights Campaign, the


organization’s campaign to make sure that as technology advances, privacy rights are not left behind.

Requests were also filed by ACLU affiliates in Alabama, Arizona, Northern California, Southern California, San Diego and Imperial Counties, Connecticut, Washington D.C., Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Eastern Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

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# President Obama looks to spur private sector hiring

WASHINGTON — Limited in his ability to create jobs through direct spending, President Barack Obama is considering measures to encourage the private sector to free up its cash reserves and hire more workers to ease the nation's unemployment crush.

As Obama prepares to unveil a new jobs agenda this week, his aides are reviewing options that would provide tax incentives to employers who expand their payrolls. That approach is a more indirect effort to spur the economy and relies less on government intervention and massive public works projects.

Among the proposals circulating in the White House is a \$33 billion tax credit that Obama first proposed early last year but that Congress whittled into a smaller one-year package.

Under one version of the plan, employers would receive a tax credit of up to \$5,000, subtracted from their share of federal payroll taxes, for every net new hire. White House officials caution that the overall jobs plan is still subject to change.

The tax credit, however, is a relatively untested idea. Congress passed a version in March 2010, known as the HIRE Act, which provided \$13 billion in tax credits to qualified employers who hired new workers. But there is no government data to track its success.

"The HIRE Act was very small," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics and an occasional adviser to Democrats and Republicans. "It really didn't add to payrolls."

"It would have to be bigger," he added. "Something more along the lines that the Obama administration proposed in 2010."

While promising a major jobs package, Obama is hamstrung by budget cuts and a tight debt ceiling that he had a hand in negotiating.

As a result, economists predict that while the president's initiatives could eliminate some drag on the economy and maintain the status quo, they won't be enough to propel it to new heights.

Still, the president predicted his plan could push the economy to grow 1 percent to 1.5 percent faster.

"That could mean half a million to a million additional jobs," he said last week in an interview with radio talk show host Tom Joyner.

Obama's jobs package is designed to



*President Obama calls on Congress to move forward to pass a clean extension of the Surface Transportation Bill, among other things.*

supplement other proposals already in the pipeline, including free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama and the renewal of a highway construction bill.

Obama has called on Congress to pass federal highway legislation before the current law expires Sept. 30. Seeking to blunt congressional partisanship, the president will be joined by the leaders of two occasionally warring factions — AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and David Chavern, chief operating officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

At a minimum, the president's jobs plan will call on Congress to extend current payroll tax cuts and jobless benefits, spend money for new construction projects and offer incentives to businesses to hire more workers.

"We don't have magic bullets, but what we do have, I think, is the capacity to do some things right now that would make a big difference," Obama told Joyner.

The labor movement is wary.

"This is a moment that working people and quite frankly history will judge President Obama on his presidency," Trumka said recently. "Will he commit all his energy and focus on bold solutions on the job crisis or will he continue to work with the tea party to offer cuts to middle class programs like Social Security all the

while pretending that the deficit is where our economic problems really lie."

Obama faces a divided Congress, where Republicans, demanding fiscal austerity, reject the notion that short-term infusions of taxpayer money into the economy can prod a sluggish recovery. Moreover, a large package even half the size of the \$825 billion stimulus Congress approved in 2009 would move the government closer to its new debt ceiling before the November 2012 election, something Obama is determined to avoid.

The president is certain to call for extending a one-year payroll tax cut for workers and unemployment benefits that expire in January, at a combined cost of about \$175 billion.

Obama also has promoted the creation of an "infrastructure bank," a fund that would be seeded by the government but fed by private investment to pay for major road, bridge and other public construction. Even advocates of the plan, however, say that proposal probably would not be in place to generate jobs for about two years.

"A big chunk of the loss of employment was in the construction industry," Obama said on Joyner's talk show. "Well, the fact of the matter is that although the housing market is going to take some time to recover, we've got a lot of stuff that needs

to get done. There are schools all across the country that right now you could put people to work fixing up. There are roads and bridges right now that need to be improved."

Among other measures under consideration, but not yet decided:

— A major school construction initiative of up to \$50 billion. Its advocates include Vice President Joe Biden's former chief economic adviser, Jared Bernstein, who monitored progress of the 2009 stimulus. Bernstein said school construction and renovation would be far more labor intensive than some of the public projects paid for by the stimulus. "We kind of thought during the recovery act that we would see 50 hard hats and 10 machines, and it ended up being the other way around at some of these sites," he said.

— Encouraging corporations to bring into the United States some of their foreign sources of income at preferential tax rates in exchange for job creation measures. Some White House officials are not too enthusiastic about this idea, however, because they believe it can be easily abused.

— Tying unemployment insurance payments to on-the-job training. Obama has applauded a program under way in Georgia in which jobless benefits go to employers who hire the unemployed as trainees.

# Gov. Rick Scott takes the piss out of Florida taxpayers

By Adam Weinstein

Florida's neophyte Republican governor, tea-party-friendly Rick Scott, signed a bill back in June requiring the state's welfare recipients to undergo drug-testing urinalysis before collecting their monthly assistance check of around \$241-to-\$303. The measure, he said, would save taxpayer money by barring drug addicts from getting the dole.

"Studies show that people that are on welfare are higher users of drugs than people not on welfare," he said.

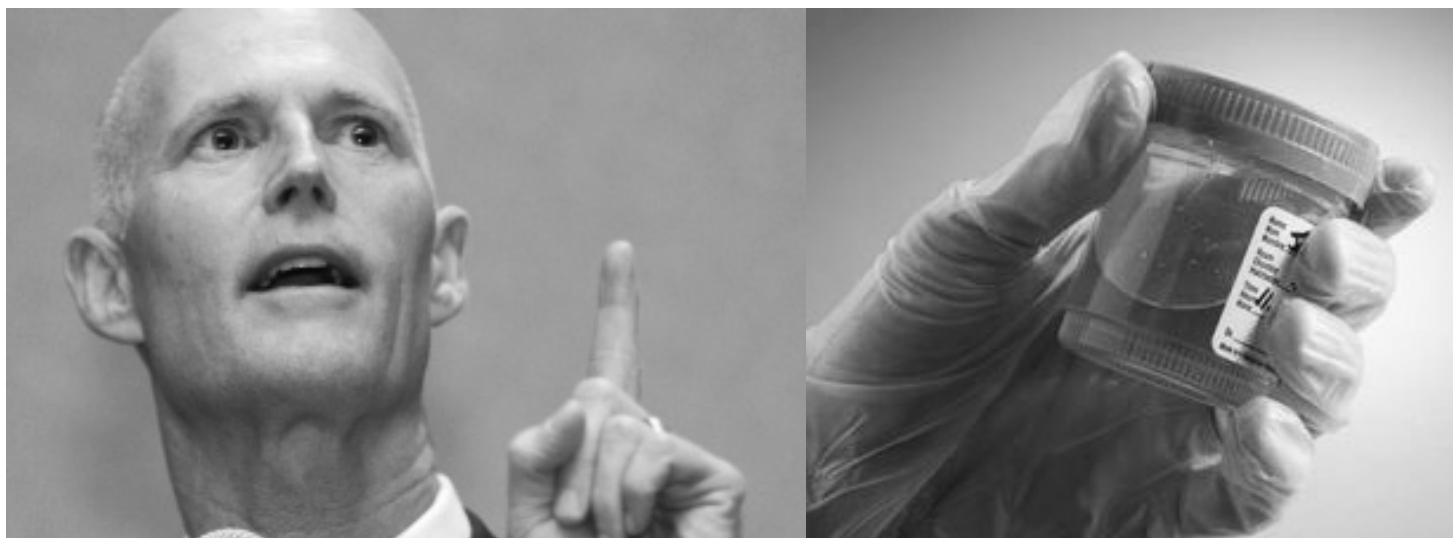
Florida's welfare recipients are proving that Scott's assumption wasn't worth a warm bucket of pee. Now, the state is effectively being forced to pay for 11.5 gallons of welfare applicants' drug-free urine every month, to the tune of around \$34,000.

Of the 1,000 or so recipients who have taken the required drug tests, at their own expense, since early July, only 2 percent have tested positive for drugs, according to the Tampa Tribune. That's well below the national population's average, and it's so low that the testing plan—which was expected to cost \$187 million by some analysts' estimates—could end up costing taxpayers even more in the long run.

The way it was supposed to work, according to Scott and other supporters, was this: Everyone who took the test at a state-approved private lab would have to pay for it out of pocket.

Never mind where a poor Floridian is supposed to scrape together 25 to 30 percent of their monthly benefit on their own. If they tested negative for illegal drugs, they'd be reimbursed for the urinalysis, anywhere from \$10 to \$82, in their welfare check. Drug addicts would be out the testing cost and barred from receiving benefits for a year. The theory, then, was that the presumably huge population of drug-addled free riders would be kicked off the bus, and Florida would reap the savings. The plan was briefly held up when it came to light that a health care firm started by Scott, Solantic, could get a contract for the urinalysis.

But with 96 percent of applicants passing the test with flying colors and another 2 percent getting inconclusive results, the state is having to buy back a lot of clean pee: 11.5 gallons at \$34,300 every month, assuming an average sample size of 1.5 ounces and an average test price of \$35. Not only that, but Florida's rules allow



*Fla. Gov. Rick Scott is getting criticized for signing legislation mandating drug testing for welfare applicants.*

parents who fail the test to designate another adult who can collect the benefits on behalf of any dependent children. And since the state's welfare program is oriented toward families, it seems likely that most of the failures' benefits will still be paid out to someone. Given the scarce numbers offered by the Florida Department of Children and Families, it's also not immediately clear whether the amount of applicants for assistance changed significantly after the whiz quizzes were instituted.

Local reporters around the state have run smaller investigations and found the economics to be grim. TV station WFTV found that 40 applicants were tested in Central Florida, and two popped positive for drugs. The testing cost to taxpayers was at least \$1,140; the theoretical savings in benefits to the two who failed was \$240—at most.

"We have a diminishing amount of returns for our tax dollars," ACLU spokesman attorney Derek Brett, an opponent of the drug plan, told WFTV. "Do we want our governor throwing our precious tax dollars into a program that has already been proven not to work?"

The Tribune engaged in some creative accounting to show that the testing program could still show a modest net savings on benefits payments, of roughly \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year in total, or half of what most senior staffers in Gov. Scott's office make. But that doesn't take into account the state's costs to process the test results and administer the program, which nobody seems to know yet—least of all the governor who sold state residents on the idea.

"We don't have a dollar cost estimate at

this time," Scott's spokesman said on June 6...five six days after Scott signed the bill into law. Florida requires all state ballot initiatives to be accompanied by an estimate of the proposals' financial impacts; Scott and the legislature, though, don't have to do any such calculations for their bills.

Despite Florida conservatives' miscalculations—miscalculations that critics say are based on bogus stereotypes—many states are considering following its lead on drug tests

for welfare applicants. Last spring, Idaho's Legislature commissioned a study on the subject, which found that the plan would end up costing more than it took in.

But then, Idaho analysts also assumed the state would put its failures in publicly financed drug-counseling programs. By contrast, Florida's welfare information site stresses that the state "does not pay or reimburse for the cost of drug treatment programs."

## Black Democrat faces tough race

After making history this week as the first Black candidate to win a major-party nomination for Mississippi governor, Democrat Johnny DuPree now faces the tough reality of trying to win a general election against a better-known, better-funded GOP candidate in a strongly Republican state.

DuPree, the mayor of Mississippi's third-largest city, Hattiesburg, said he's not daunted because he has usually been outspent in campaigns. He said he plans to continue running a race-neutral campaign focused on jobs and education.

"We're in the race to try to make a difference for the citizens of Mississippi," the 57-year-old DuPree said after winning the Democratic primary runoff recently. "Our first priority is not the finances."

An expert on Black political participation said last week that DuPree has little chance of defeating the Republican nominee, Lt. Gov. Phil Bryant, in the Nov. 8 general election.

"My guess is if the odds-makers were putting odds on this, it would probably

be something like 100-to-1," said David Bositis, senior political analyst for the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. "Mississippi isn't ready to elect a Black candidate to major statewide office."

Bositis, who has spent more than two decades researching voting trends, said Mississippi is one of several Deep South states that has developed re-segregated electoral patterns, "with the Republican Party being the white people's party and pretty much just African Americans being the Democratic Party."

Mississippi's current governor, Republican Haley Barbour, is limited to two terms and couldn't seek re-election this year.

Republicans have held the Mississippi Governor's Mansion four of the past five terms, and the state has voted Republican in every presidential race since 1980.

With a population that's 37 percent Black, Mississippi now has more Black elected officials than any state in the nation, according to the joint center.



## From Wire Reports

**Irene cost Bahamas govt. nearly \$37 million**

Hurricane Irene caused nearly \$37 million in government losses in The Bahamas, a regional insurance body has estimated.

But the country will not receive any payout from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) as the damage is not considered significant enough for The Bahamas to qualify, according to Simon Young, CEO of Caribbean Risk Managers, the facility supervisor of CCRIF.

The CCRIF, which is a non-profit risk pooling facility owned and operated by Caribbean governments, said its board and team share the belief of the Bahamian government that the impact of Hurricane Irene was not as bad as had been feared.

Bahamas Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham declared last week that the country was not devastated by the storm.

“Early damage reports indicate low to

moderate impacts except for some southern and eastern islands in The Bahamas, which lay directly on Irene’s path,” said a statement from CCRIF.

“Critical tourism infrastructure, on which these countries largely depend for economic activity, was not badly affected. The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism indicated that the major tourism areas of Nassau/Paradise Island and Grand Bahama have seen a quick return to normal operations.”

The Bahamas is one of six member states in the region impacted by the storm. Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; Haiti; St. Kitts and Nevis; and the Turks and Caicos Islands will also not benefit from the policy.

Since CCRIF’s inception in 2007, it has paid out just under \$33 million to seven members states.

**Clinton aide named as Haiti’s 3rd PM pick**

A recent top aide to former U.S. President Bill Clinton in his work as the U.N. special envoy for Haiti is being nominated to be Haitian prime minister.

Saurel Jacinthe, president of the Chamber of Deputies, told members of the press that Haitian President Michel Martelly picked Garry Conille as his third nominee for Haiti’s head of government.

The decision comes more than three months after Martelly took office. The entertainer-turned-president has struggled to install a government because parliament has rejected his first two nominees for prime minister.

Martelly’s first pick, an entrepreneur, was turned down because of questions over his citizenship and taxes. The second pick, a former justice minister, angered some lawmakers because he was accused of prosecuting supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide when he oversaw the judiciary in the middle of the last decade.

The failure to install a prime minister has put reconstruction efforts from last year’s devastating earthquake on hold.

Conille, 45, could meet opposition as he goes before parliament for approval.

Lawmakers are almost certain to raise questions over his eligibility because he has not lived in Haiti for five consecutive years, a constitutional requirement for the post. The Martelly administration will likely argue that he is exempt from the residency requirement because he has been working

for the United Nations.

Conille is a seasoned development worker. With a master’s degree from the University of North Carolina and a doctorate from the State University of Haiti, he began his career with the U.N. in 1999 and served in Ethiopia and, until June, in Niger.

After last year’s earthquake, Conille worked as chief of staff for Clinton in his position as U.N. special envoy. The former U.S. leader also is co-chairman of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, which is in charge of coordinating earthquake reconstruction efforts.

If approved as prime minister, Conille would assume responsibilities as the other co-chairman on the reconstruction panel, which has drawn heavy criticism for making little visible progress since the January 2010 disaster.



*Garry Conille*

**More than 100 lynched in two months**

More than 100 people have been lynched in Kenya in the last two months, raising concerns that mob violence has become commonplace in the East African nation.

The victims were cornered by crowds and stoned, set ablaze, bludgeoned with clubs or hacked with machetes.

Many of them were suspected of committing petty crimes like burglary, pickpocketing, mugging as well as snatching handbags and mobile phones on the streets.

In all cases reported, no one was prosecuted in court, because nobody volunteered to give evidence to police or stand as witness in court.

Police recorded 60 incidents in August alone, in which 57 victims died.

Another 47 people were killed in July in similar incidents, usually categorized as “mob injustice” by the police.

Police spokesman Eric Kiraithe described it as a worrying that Kenyans have embraced the “culture of taking the law into their own hands.”

“The reports we’ve received from field officers are disturbing,” he said. “Even in cases where officers arrive at a scene in 10 minutes, everybody becomes a spectator, nobody says he or she saw it happen.”

In such scenarios, Kiraithe said, it becomes almost impossible to prosecute.

In the event the matter is taken to court, culprits would be charged with murder, a capital offense which requires a higher threshold of evidence, because the prosecution must prove its case beyond reasonable doubt.

Around the capital city of Nairobi, many of the cases were reported in slum areas and the victims were mainly suspected of theft.

But in rural areas, besides suspected thieves, those lynched were victims of land disputes as well as others accused of practising witchcraft.

Victims of rural mobs faced machete-wielding killers unlike those in urban centers where many died of stoning or burning.

**Libya forces extend Sirte surrender deadline**

Anti-Gaddafi forces have extended a deadline for loyalists to surrender peacefully in the Libyan city of Sirte.

The authorities had threatened a full military assault for Sept. 3, but officials said they will allow loyalists another week to negotiate a settlement.

Fighters have encircled Sirte, one of the last places under the control of forces loyal to Col. Muammar Gaddafi.

The NTC is likely to ask western diplomats for their continued help in security matters, as well as their advice on a future transition to democracy.

The NTC controls most of the country, after a dramatic assault on Tripoli two weeks ago in which the capital fell after an operation co-ordinated with NATO airstrikes.

Fugitive ex-leader Gaddafi has not been seen in public for months, with rumours spreading that he has taken refuge in Sirte, Bani Walid or Sabha - the only three places still loyal to him.

Sirte, the colonel’s birthplace and the home of his tribe, is the main target for the NTC fighters stationed east and west of the city. They have staked out an approach from the south as they aim to force Gaddafi loyalists to surrender.

Tribal elders have been negotiating with



*Col. Muammar Gaddafi*

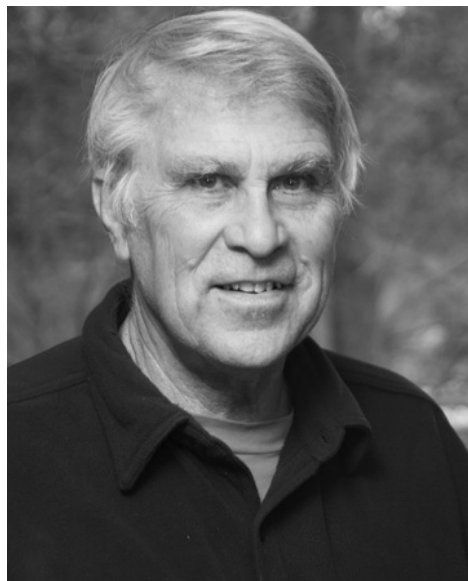
both sides to avoid bloodshed in the city.

Witnesses say the elders now accept that the NTC has won the battle for control of the country, but they have not yet persuaded the most zealous Gaddafi loyalists to surrender.

NTC spokesman Mohammad Zawawi said that the deadline had been extended because there had been progress in the negotiations. The message has also been broadcast on local radio, but it remains to be seen whether fighters on the ground will be happy to wait for another week.

## It's Complicated

From Page 8



*Mark Juergensmeyer*

### The Prozac effect

One of the more intriguing theories about religious motivations for terrorism is set out by Georgetown University theologian Ariel Glucklich in his book, "Dying for Heaven: Holy Pleasure and Suicide Bombers—Why the Best Qualities of Religion Are Also Its Most Dangerous."

"The biggest myth about religion and violence, I believe, is that religion teaches hatred," Glucklich said. "I think the violence comes from a kind of love or desire for love for one's own group and a willingness to do whatever it takes to obtain it."

Glucklich calls it "the Prozac effect." While he readily concedes that some religions do, in fact, cause hatred, often "the roots of religious violence (are) buried somewhere in the positive aspects of religion," he said.

Glucklich says he's not blaming religion per se, but rather religion's "socialization" effect. In other words, when societies break down, individuals are susceptible to charismatic leaders who preach a perverted kind of religion.

"The reason we are seeing this with Muslims today is the social one," Glucklich said, "not doctrinal."

### Making war, not love

Jessica Stern, author of "Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill," has come at it a different way. Stern argues that for many Muslim youths, the idea of terrorism under the guise of "jihad" became a "global fad" akin to gangsta rap. In short, it's less a religious phenomenon than "a cool way of expressing dissatisfaction



*Jessica Stern*

with a power elite."

"Jihad has become a millenarian movement with mass appeal, similar, in many ways, to earlier global movements such as the anarchists of the 19th century or even the peace movement of the 1960s and '70s," Stern wrote in 2006. "But today's radical youth are expressing their dissatisfaction with the status quo by making war, not love."

Viewing terrorists as a kind of inverted hippie or as a victim of "Prozac piety" might seem to some to be a distraction, but the research is less an intellectual exercise than an attempt to better understand the roots of faith-based terrorism in hopes of preventing it.

Juergensmeyer, who advises the Obama administration on fighting terrorism, echoes the prevailing consensus when he says that a military-only approach to counterterrorism only gives religious fanatics the martyrdom and affirmation they seek. More effective, he says, are "counter-radicalization" tactics that engage and thwart extremism before it metastasizes.

### It isn't going away

Still, the task of understanding and combating religiously fueled violence promises to be a long and difficult one. Because religions do not provide blank checks for using violence, terrorists are constantly forced to improvise their justifications by picking and choosing among scriptures and doctrines and traditions, says Charles Kimball, author of a new book, "When Religion Becomes Lethal."

And that requires greater understanding of the phenomenon and sophisticated solutions—whether we like it or not. "Even if you think religion is nonsense, it isn't going to go away," Kimball adds. "So how do we negotiate that?"

## NIH Grants

From Page 14

health problems from the premier funder of biomedical research, the researchers said.

"We have a very serious issue," said Donna K. Ginther, director of the University of Kansas Center of Science, Technology and Economic Policy, who led the study published in the journal *Science*. "Science needs to reflect the diversity and power and potential of the population."

NIH's internal auditing had indicated that there might be a problem with bias in its scientific review process. The agency initiated and helped fund the study to investigate those concerns. Officials agreed the new findings were alarming and outlined steps the \$31 billion agency will take to try to address the problem.

"This situation is not acceptable," NIH Director Francis S. Collins told reporters during a telephone briefing. "This data is deeply troubling."

For the study, Ginther and colleagues analyzed data collected by the NIH from all scientists with doctorates applying for the most common grants the agency hands out. The data included the applicants' race and were combined with information garnered from other sources, including where researchers were educated, their training, whether they had applied for grants before and whether they served on NIH committees.

Only 1.4 percent of applications came from African American scientists, even though they account for about 12 percent of the U.S. population, the researchers found. Moreover, the applications from these scientists tended to receive poorer scores than those from whites, resulting in bleaker chances of getting funded.

"Our research says, 'If you hold everything else constant and the only thing different between these two investigators is the color of their skin, that person is less likely to get funded,'" Ginther said.

Ginther and her colleagues tried several methods to explain the discrepancy, including analyzing whether differences in the topics being proposed for study by blacks or the types of studies they hoped to conduct might be playing a role, but they did not identify any clear explanation. The researchers speculated, however, that several factors could be playing a role. Black scientists, for example, might not be as plugged into professional "peer-review" networks that judge scientific proposals as white researchers. They might also tend to

work at institutions that offer less support.

"I don't think it's overt racism. I'm not thinking someone is going through the applications and saying: 'Black, do not fund,'" Ginther said. "But it could be a matter of networks — that these investigators are not as well connected as others. Or it could be the resources of their home institutions in preparing the applications."

NIH officials agreed and said they were taking steps to boost the number of black scientists on NIH committees that review grant proposals. Having served on such a committee appears to increase the chances of a researcher later getting a grant, the study found.

"It is a very valuable learning experience in terms of figuring out what works and what doesn't work in your own application," Collins said.

Collins said he has also asked two "high-level" NIH advisory groups to investigate: the NIH Diversity Task Force and the newly formed external Diversity in Biomedical Research Working Group, which will report back to him by June.

In addition, the agency planned to conduct more research to try to determine whether NIH reviewers are biased against blacks. Although an applicant's race is removed before reviewers see applications, evaluators might be able to figure it out through a scientist's name, where they work or simply because they know who they are.

For example, the NIH plans to conduct experiments in which all information that might indicate the race of the applicants, such as their names and where they work, are hidden to see whether that affects how applicants are evaluated. Another study might assess the ability of reviewers to infer the race of applicants. Reviewers might also receive sensitivity training.

"I would like not to believe that is intentional bias, but I can't exclude, after talking to lots of colleagues, the possibility that even today, in 2011, in our society, there is still an unconscious, insidious form bias that subtly influences opinions of people," Collins said. "That may be very disturbing for people in the scientific community to contemplate, but I think we have to think that's one of the possibilities."

NIH officials said they had shared their findings with other federal agencies, such as the National Science Foundation, to alert them to the possibility that a similar bias might be affecting their grant-making systems.





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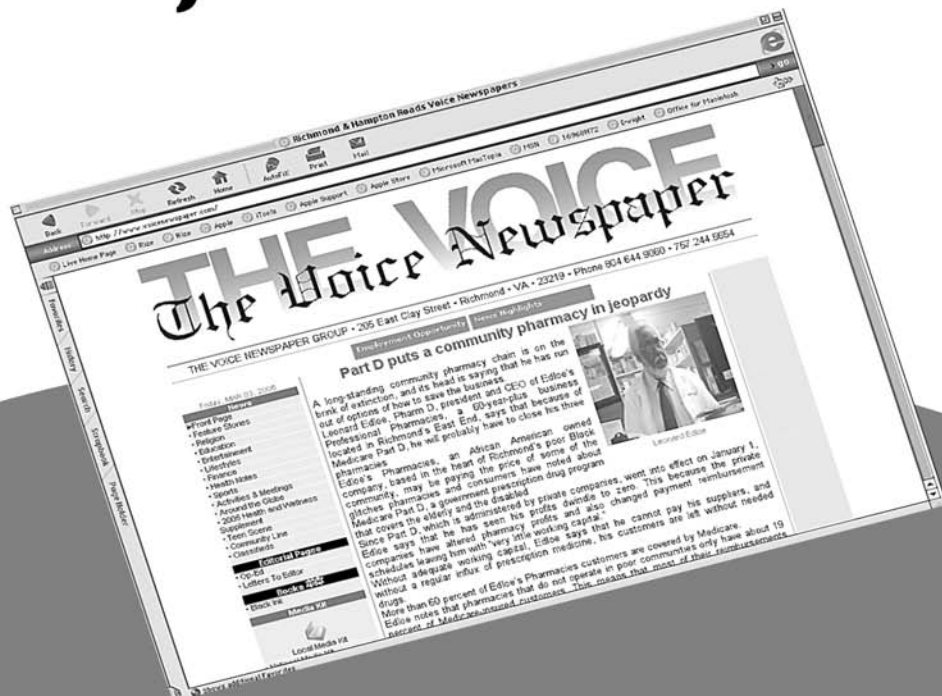
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