Kiah Kitchen receives a gold medal in swimming

Kiah is on the Stormriders Swim Team at Roosevelt High School in the 8 and under age group. She received a Gold Medal in the 25 Butterfly with a time of 20.34, silver medals in the 25 Freestyle – time: 17.82, and 50 Freestyle - time :37.71 at the Two Rivers Swim Conference Championship held at East High School March 3, 2007.

Kiah is a third grader at St. Theresa’s.

Tuskegee Airmen to be honored with Congressional Gold Medal

WASHINGTON (AP) - Six decades after completing their World War II mission and coming home to a country that discriminated against them because they were black, the Tuskegee Airmen are getting high honors from Congress.


LOS ANGELES (AP) - A private group led by several prominent UCLA alumni has raised $1.75 million to bankroll scholarships for black freshmen, hoping the additional financial aid will help increase African American enrollment at the campus.

“We want to take finances out of the question for these students, to the extent we can,” said Los Angeles businesswoman Peter J. Taylor, who heads the fundraising group, along with leaders of UCLA’s Black Alumni Association.

The scholarships were being announced Thursday, the Los Angeles Times reported.

The number of black students at UCLA has been dropping for years. Last summer, only about 100 black students said they planned to enroll in the current freshman class of about 4,800 - the lowest figure in more than three decades.

The university implemented a new “holistic” approach to admissions last fall aimed at boosting minority enrollment.

Interim Chancellor Norman Abrams said the scholarship was an innovative way to approach the dwindling number of black students on campus. UCLA has no direct role in the funds.

The Tuskegee Airmen were recruited into an Army Air Corps program that trained blacks to fly and maintain combat aircraft. President Roosevelt had overruled his top generals and ordered that such a program be created.

But even after they were admitted, many commanders continued to believe the Tuskegee Airmen didn’t have the smarts, courage and patriotism to do what was being asked of them.

Nearly 1,000 fighter pilots trained as a segregated unit at Tuskegee, Ala., air base. Not allowed to practice or fight with their white counterparts, the Tuskegee Airmen distinguished themselves from the rest by painting the tails of their airplanes red, which led to them becoming known as the “Red Tails.”

Hundreds saw combat throughout Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, escorting bomber aircraft on missions and protecting them from the enemy. Dozens died in the fighting; others were held prisoners of war.

It long had been thought that the Tuskegee Airmen had amassed a perfect record of losing no bombers to the enemy during World War II. But new evidence suggests otherwise.

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- Booker T. Washington -

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Beliefs:

Our beliefs assist in determining our behaviors, and our mold. They form our life’s Journey, in the sense that whatever we believe dictates how we respond to the situations and people we meet in our life. If I believe that I will always find a way to succeed no matter what I do, I am more likely to do just that, than someone who believes they can never get what they really want.

Most of our beliefs are formed by the age of seven and are shaped by our parents or the equivalent of a parent. In most cases we don’t realize what our beliefs consist of and yet they influence us every second of every day. Every belief has a form/structure to it, which we can influence if we choose.

It’s a little like having a recording in our heads playing all the time. If the recording is working for us we keep it playing, updating it from time to time. If the recording starts to limit what we think of ourselves, we can take the whole recording out and re-record it so we have one that does work for us. It is a basis for what we understand the structure of what we hold in our thinking, we change it if we choose to.

The fact is beliefs give way to choices, and all of us are born with the ability to choose. Let's start choosing to win, for all of us.

Moving toward change JB...

Tuskegee Airmen, Cicero Satterfield, left, Lucius Theus, center, and Charles McGee, right, salute while posing for a group photo on the steps of the Capitol, Monday Dec. 18, 2006, in Montgomery, Ala. The three men took part in a ceremony kicking off a nationwide fundraising drive for a memorial to the Tuskegee Airmen. (AP Photo/Rob Carr)
Governor Chet Culver statement on Tuskegee Airmen receiving Congressional Gold Medal

Governor Culver issued a statement on the Tuskegee Airmen being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in Washington D.C. Iowa had more Tuskegee Airmen per capita than any other state. Twelve brave Iowans completed their training and served in the Army Air Corps program. Of the twelve Iowan natives, five are deceased.

The Tuskegee Airmen from Iowa: William V. Bibb *(Ottumwa), James E. Bowman (Des Moines - pictured), Russell L. Collins (Davenport), Maurice V. Esters *(Webster City), Joseph P. Gomer (Iowa Falls), Thurman E. Spriggs (Des Moines), Robert L. Martin (Dubuque), George R. Miller (Des Moines) Clarence A. Oliphant *(Council Bluffs), Robert M. Parkey *(Des Moines), Luther H. Smith (Des Moines), and Robert W. Williams *(Ottumwa) *Deceased

Statement from Gov. Culver

"I am thrilled to congratulate Des Moines’ James Bowman and his fellow Iowa airmen on this prestigious and long overdue honor. As members of the Tuskegee Airmen, these brave African American WWII veterans have waited more than 60 years to receive the most prestigious civilian medal that Congress bestows - the Congressional Gold Medal.

"These American heroes bravely defended our country despite being discriminated against because of their race. They defended the United States during WWII with honor and courage, even as their fellow Americans subjected them to bigotry and hate. These pilots were well-educated, well-trained and amassed an outstanding war record and as Governor of Iowa, I want to thank them for their outstanding service to our country.

"I wish to congratulate Dr. Bowman and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen. Through their actions and accomplishments, their collective light continues to shine. It shined brightly during what was a dark period in our nation’s history and it shines brightly today. The Congressional Gold Medal is a token of the country’s gratitude, and it’s never too late to say two simple words - thank you.”

Statement of Senator Tom Harkin on Tuskegee Airmen receiving Congressional Gold Medal

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Tom Harkin (pictured) released the following statement on the Tuskegee Airmen receiving the Congressional Gold Medal:

"I applaud Iowa’s own Jim Bowman and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen on receiving the Congressional Gold Medal. Jim and his colleagues exemplify the courage, strength and honor of all of our brave servicemen and women, and their efforts contributed significantly to the Allies’ success in World War II.

"After the war, Jim went on to become Assistant Superintendent of the Des Moines Public School System. He continues to be active in the community. He serves on the board at the Fort Des Moines Museum. And, of course, he is an authentic American hero.

"But the action of Jim and his fellow airmen, 12 of whom were from Iowa, went beyond successful sorties. The highly trained pilots, navigators, bombardiers and gunnery crews broke down race barriers and blazed a new trail for African Americans both in the military and throughout America. Their accomplishments in the skies above Europe and North Africa initiated slow but steady changes to deplorable segregation policies here at home.

"Our recognition of Jim Bowman and the Tuskegee Airmen and their historic contributions to this country is long overdue. I commend them on receiving Congress’s highest civilian honor.”
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April 2, 2007

Partnership to Conduct Campaign to Increase Individual Preparedness

During the first week of April (April 4 - April 9, 2007) a partnership of eleven organizations will conduct a campaign, “Disaster Readiness: Take the First Step”. The American Red Cross, Animal Rescue League, Blank Park Zoo, Creative Community Options, Des Moines Police Department, Des Moines Public Schools, Easter Seals Iowa, Link Associates, Polk County Emergency Management, Polk County Health Department and Polk County Health Services will conduct parallel, coordinated campaigns to increase the number of individuals and households better prepared to respond to a disaster. Collectively, the partnership will try to reach 2500 people.

“Our organizational response plans are dependent on our people being prepared. Being prepared means having a plan. But few of our employees have a plan,” said Linda Young-Streit, Executive Director, Link Associates.

Without assurances that their family is safe, many people won’t come to work during a disaster. Others may come to work but will find it hard to be focused on the task at hand. Through a non-scientific survey Polk County Health Department learned (from over 700 respondents) that almost everyone (96%) believes “every household needs a plan in order to be prepared for a natural disaster, pandemic or other emergency.” But, barely one in five (20.7%) households has a plan.

Terri Henkels, Polk County Health Department Director said, “People aren’t sure how to get started. Each day of the week, we’ll identify something specific and simple for them to do.” Throughout the week the partner organizations will be sharing ideas and resources with each other. Where possible, activities will be coordinated. Each day’s activities will be posted on the Polk County Health Department web site (www.polkcounty.iowa.gov/health).

“So instead of, are you prepared, it is more important to ask, are you better prepared. At the end of the week more people will be better prepared,” A.J. Mumm Polk County Emergency Management Coordinator.

The events of “Disaster Readiness: Take the First Step” are being held in conjunction with National Public Health Week and National Severe Weather Awareness Week.

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Meeting

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) meets 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 3, at the AARP, 600 East Court, Des Moines.

Prior to the call to order, Jill Olsen, Ph.D. will present “Female Superintendents of Education in Iowa” to commission members, staff, and guests at 10:10 a.m.

At 1:30 p.m., a public hearing on pay equity will commence. The ICSW welcomes testimony from Iowans on their experiences with wage discrimination, either written or oral. Those who wish to present in the oral discussion (for no longer than 15 minutes) on April 3 should call or write for scheduling on the agenda. Deadline for scheduling oral discussion is 12 noon, Wednesday, March 28: Lori SchraderBachar at 515/281-4470, 800-558-4427, or lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov.

Those who would prefer to submit written comment must have the material in the office by 4:30 p.m., Thursday, March 29: Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319 or lori.schraderbachar@iowa.gov.

The ICSW is a state advocacy agency that works to equalize women’s opportunities and to promote full participation by women in the economic, political, and social life of the state.

The meetings are open to the public. The ICSW meets at sites accessible for people with mobility limitations. If other accommodations are needed, please contact the office prior to the meeting. For further information, contact Lori M. SchraderBachar at 515/281-4470 or 800-558-4427.

Agenda

10:10 a.m. Female Superintendents of Education in Iowa Dr. Jill Olsen
10:30 Call to Order Holly Sagar
Approval of Agenda
Approval of Minutes: February 6, 2007
10:35 Finance Report Mike Whitley
FY07 Finance Report
FY08 Budget Request
10:50 Chair’s Report Holly Sagar
NACW: Delegate, Resolutions
11:00 Executive Director’s Report Charlotte Nelson
11:45 Legislative Committee Report Matt Wissing
12:30 p.m. Lunch Break
1:30 Wage Equity Public Hearing
3:30 Adjournment

It’s a sad dog won’t wag its own tail!

We complain because the “mainstream” media and the entertainment community portray Black youth in a negative light. We know the truth, however. We have kids in our community doing some amazing things. At Iowa Bystander we want to celebrate those accomplishments. To tell your child’s story email it and photos to iowabystanderarticles@yahoo.com.

“It put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it and, above all, accurately so they will be guided by it’s light.”

- Joseph Pulitzer
DMACC Urban Campus to show documentary on coffee farmers

As people in developed countries sip lattes, Ethiopian coffee growers struggle to make a profit, earning only a fraction of their beans’ worth. Des Moines Area Community College’s (DMACC’s) Urban Campus, DMACC’s Diversity Commission and statewide Iowa Public Television are co-sponsoring a free screening of the documentary Black Gold, which depicts one man’s fight for a fair price, exposing the truths behind the buying, selling and consuming of one of the world’s most traded commodities. In addition, there will be a panel discussion on fair trade within the coffee industry.

Black Gold will be shown starting at 1 p.m., Sat., Apr. 14 at the DMACC Urban Campus Bldg. #1, Rooms 124-126. The 77-minute documentary by Nick Francis and Marc Francis shows how multinational companies have made coffee the second most valuable trading commodity in the world. But as westerners enjoy designer lattes, impoverished Ethiopian coffee growers suffer the bitter taste of injustice. Black Gold traces one man’s fight for fair trade in an eye-opening expose of the $80-billion coffee industry.

Following the free screening, DMACC Anthropology Instructor and Diversity Commission member Lee Searels will moderate a panel discussion on the documentary with five people who are knowledgeable on the coffee industry in Central Iowa. The panelists include:

· Tim Hintz, former barista and now coffee roaster for Friedrich’s Coffee
· Kathy Mahler, project coordinator of Don Justo Coffee with Dignity, who buys from a coffee farmer in El Salvador and direct markets to churches, businesses and individuals
· Julie McGuire, owner of Zanzibar’s Coffee Adventure
· Tim Mooney of Global Building Group, a non-profit organization selling Ugandan coffee to raise money to build a girls school in Uganda
· Christine McNunn, owner of Fair World Gallery, a Valley Junction business specializing in fair trade and earth friendly items

Black Gold will be broadcast at 10:30 p.m., Sun., Apr. 22 on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens on statewide Iowa Public Television.

The screening and panel discussion at the DMACC Urban Campus are free and open to the public. Free coffee will also be served.

What do you think?
Submit your insights and issues with a photo to:

iowabystanderarticles@yahoo.com

Iowa Bystander Mission
The responsibility of the Black press is to empower the Black community through meaningful communication and leadership nurturing, and to keep the Black community informed of those issues most vital to us as a people.

Iowa Bystander
President & CEO • Jonathan R. Narcisse
Publisher • Jerald Brantley, Sr.
Associate Publisher • Gaynelle Narcisse

Guidelines For Submitting Copy:
Iowa Bystander is published weekly. Copy must be typed. Editorials, news items and press releases should be 500 words or less. Public service announcements, thank you notes, etc...should be 300 words or less. All copy is subject to the editorial policy of Iowa Bystander.

Pictures submitted with articles become the property of Iowa Bystander unless otherwise specified at the time of submission. All photos should clearly identify those in the picture, their order and the relevance of the photo.

Finally, all submitted copy or photos should contain a phone number and the name of the contact person who can be reached if questions arise.

Iowa Bystander Is Published Weekly By:
New Iowa Bystander Company
P.O. Box AR • Des Moines, IA 50303
Phone: 515-280-8092 or 515-471-5092
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“I have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends.”

-- Mary McLeod Bethune

Iowa Civil Rights Commission

Working Toward A State Free of Discrimination

Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws
Education and Training for Groups, Individuals and Organizations
Raising the Profile of Civil Rights and Diversity

For more information, or questions, or concerns, please contact us at:
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
515-281-4121 or 1-800-457-4416
www.state.ia.us/government/crc

Tobacco free Workplaces

Since July 2006, when the Des Moines hospitals implemented a “tobacco-free campus policy,” more and more businesses in Iowa are taking notice. Currently, more than 70 Iowa hospitals are tobacco-free campuses with several more looking at changing their policy within the next year.

The hospitals set the stage for other Iowa businesses to strengthen their current tobacco policy, as well. Since 2005, many large and small companies have followed suit and mandated “tobacco-free campus” policies. Such businesses include EMCO, Holmes Murphy, GuideOne and Lutheran Services of Iowa.

Many other businesses are in the process of strengthening their policy.

A tobacco-free campus means no form of tobacco use is prohibited anywhere on the company property. This includes indoors, outdoors and in vehicles. Most businesses take 6 months to 1 year to implement such a policy and spend that time educating employees about tobacco use and creating opportunities for tobacco-using employees to quit. Although it is not a requirement that users quit at most companies, it is required employees do not use tobacco during company time or on company property.

Businesses make the decision to change their tobacco policy for one of two reasons: health or finances. Tobacco, especially cigarette smoking, has an enormous toll on business and industry based on health care costs, disability and decreased productivity time.

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids, Iowa incurs $1 billion in annual health care costs directly caused by smoking. A smoker can cost an employer nearly $6,000 more per year than a non-smoker.

Unfortunately, the human toll is great, as well. With 20% of Iowans smokers, 4,500 Iowans will die every year due to their own smoking.

Secondhand smoke is also an issue for some worksites. According to the latest Surgeon General’s report on secondhand smoke, there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure. The report concludes that the only way to protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke is to require tobacco-free workplaces and public places.

Research shows when tobacco-free environments are established, that is the incentive for many users to finally quit.

If you or your company is considering or interested in making your workplace tobacco-free, please call the American Lung Association at 515-309-9507 and ask to speak to Kerry Wise at extension 238.

Follow quarterback Bret Meyers and the ISU Cyclones at CycloneNation.com

Correction: In the last Bystander, the smoking cessation article lists the Quitline number as 1-866-QUIT-NOW. This number is incorrect, the correct number is 1-800-QUIT-NOW. The number listed is a diet number.
Polk County Health Department to hold workshop on living with chronic health conditions

Polk County Health Department will begin a workshop “Successful Living with Chronic Conditions” on Thursday, April 5, 2007. The workshop will be held at Norwoodville Community Center, 3077 NE 46th Avenue in Des Moines, from 10am-1:30pm, once a week for six weeks. Registration is $10.

“People with chronic health conditions face challenges every day. By attending the workshop people will learn how behavioral changes can help them manage their disease and improve the quality of their lives” said Tammy Keiter, Polk County Health Department Planning Specialist.

Older adults are disproportionately affected by chronic diseases and conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, and heart diseases, as well as by disabilities that result from injuries such as falls. According to the 2004 Behavioral Risk factor Surveillance System, a significant percentage of Iowans ages 65-74 years reported having risk factors for having chronic diseases that could negatively impact their quality of life and health care utilization.

“This research-based workshop empowers people to take control of their health. It has been proven effective in reducing the risk of future disease and disability,” said Ms. Keiter.

The workshop is a 15 hour course taught by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are living with a long-term health condition. The program is appropriate for anyone living with long-term health challenges.

“The program has helped thousands of people overcome frustration, anger, and depression that may accompany any chronic health problem” said Terri Henkels, Polk County Health Department Director.

For more information or to register for the workshop contact the Polk County Health Department at 515-286-3767 or visit www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health.

State’s black residents dying prematurely from diabetes

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) - A new report from the Connecticut Health Foundation found that black people in Connecticut are dying prematurely from diabetes at a higher rate than whites, Hispanics and Asians.

Blacks in the state die before the age of 75 from diabetes nearly three times more often than whites, according to the 264-page report.

“That’s a real issue, I think,” said author Lorenz “Larry” Finison. “It is, we believe, bound to get worse because of the rates of increasing normal weight and obesity. It is not just a Connecticut problem, it is a national problem.”

The foundation put together the Community Health Data Scan for Connecticut to help set funding and public policy priorities. The report, which focuses on racial and ethnic health disparities, recommends that the state fund diabetes prevention programs targeting black residents.

“The causal factors for diabetes, such as obesity, are becoming more prevalent in all age groups and in the whole population,” the report reads.

“This is a ‘ticking time bomb’ for the current and future adult population.”

Dr. A. Dennis McBride, director of the Milford Public Health Department, said there are complex reasons - such as access to medical care, treatment and food choices - why one racial group may be more prone to diabetes than another. But he said rising obesity rates lead to greater rates of diabetes.

More than 53 percent of Connecticut adults were overweight as of 2000. The definitions of overweight and obese are based on body mass index, a measure of body fat that takes height and weight into account.

The report also found that nearly 31 percent of blacks 18 and older are considered obese under national guidelines, compared with nearly 16 percent of whites, nearly 22 percent of Hispanics, and 4.2 percent of Asians.

Connecticut’s urban centers had more than twice the percentage of obese adults as the state’s wealthy suburbs, the report said. Bridgeport in particular had a high percentage of overweight and obese adults. More than two-thirds of the city’s adult residents were overweight and a quarter were obese.

Being overweight or obese also puts people at risk for other chronic diseases, including hypertension, heart disease, gall bladder disease and osteoarthritis.

The report warned that although immigrants to the state are less obese than people born in the U.S., this advantage appears to be disappearing as people assimilate into American culture.

Other recommendations from the report include ensuring that all state residents have a place to turn for primary medical care other than hospital emergency rooms; changing the culture around binge drinking and smoking, especially among young adults; and supporting out-of-school programs that help reduce teen pregnancy, and promote the use of seat belts and bicycle helmets.

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily difference we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee. – Marian Wright Edelman –
ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) - Walt Disney Co.’s 1946 film “Song of the South” was historic. It was Disney’s first big live-action picture and produced one of the company’s most famous songs - the Oscar-winning “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah.” It also carries the story line of the Splash Mountain ride at its theme parks.

But the movie remains hidden in the Disney archives - never released on video in the United States and criticized as racist for its depiction of Southern plantation blacks. The film’s 60th anniversary passed last year without a whisper of official rerelease, which is unusual for Disney, but President and CEO Bob Iger recently said the company was reconsidering.

The film’s reissue would surely spark debate, but it could also sell big. Nearly 115,000 people have signed an online petition urging Disney to make the movie available, and out-of-print international copies routinely sell online for $50-$90, some even more than $100.

Iger was answering a shareholder’s inquiry about the movie for the second year in a row at Disney’s annual meeting in New Orleans. This month the Disney chief made a rerelease sound more possible.

“As the question of ‘Song of the South’ comes up periodically, in fact it was raised at last year’s annual meeting ...” Iger said. “And since that time, we’ve decided to take a look at it again because we’ve had numerous requests about bringing it out. Our concern was that a film that was made so many decades ago being brought out today perhaps could be either misinterpreted or that it would be somewhat challenging in terms of providing the appropriate context.”

“Song of the South” was re-shown in theaters in 1956, 1972 and 1986. Both animated and live-action, it tells the story of a young white boy, Johnny, who goes to live on his grandparents’ Georgia plantation when his parents split up. Johnny is charmed by Uncle Remus - a popular black servant - and his fables of Beere Rabbit, Beer Bear and Beer Fox, which are actual black folk tales.

Remus’ stories include the famous “tar baby,” a phrase Republican presidential hopefuls John McCain and Mitt Romney were recently criticized for using to describe difficult situations. In “Song of the South,” it was a trick Beer Fox and Beer Bear used to catch the rabbit - dressing a lump of hot tar as a person to ensnare their prey. To some, it is now a derogatory term for blacks, regardless of context.

The movie doesn’t reveal whether it takes place before or after the Civil War, and never refers to blacks on the plantation as slaves. It makes clear they work for the family, living down dirt roads in wood shacks while the white characters stay in a mansion. Remus and other black characters’ dialogue is full of “ain’t nevers,” “ain’t nobodys,” “you tells,” and “dem days’s.”

“In today’s environment, ‘Song of the South’ probably doesn’t have a lot of meaning, especially to the younger audiences,” said James Pappas, associate professor of African-American Studies at the University of New York at Buffalo. “Older audiences probably would have more of a connect-
Pilates course taught by DMU physical therapist is open to all

Does the swimsuit season loom ominously? Do you need to stretch your muscles before hitting the trails on foot or bike? The upcoming Pilates course at Des Moines University (DMU) can help you get ready.

Kari Smith, D.P.T., is a trained Pilates instructor and physical therapist at DMU. She will teach three 12-week Pilates classes, beginning in April, that focus on strengthening the abdominals, spinal muscles, pelvic floor and diaphragm. These classes are open to men and women of all ages and any skill level.

“Pilates suits all ages and stages because it is non-impact, non-aerobic and enhances the mind and body connection,” Smith explained. “By focusing on correct movement patterns, core stabilization and postural correction, it strengthens the abdominal and back muscles for people with poor posture, arthritis, sports injuries or back pain.”

The classes will include plenty of repetition to improve participants’ movement abilities, as well as variations geared for differing skill levels. Class sizes are small so each participant gets personal feedback from Smith about correct movement patterns.

“The Pilates method is great for the prevention and rehabilitation of back injuries. In order to prevent reoccurrence of back pain, it is essential to retrain the deep abdominal and spinal muscles along with the pelvic floor and diaphragm,” Smith added.

The classes will be in Des Moines University’s state-of-the-art wellness center at 3300 Grand Avenue. Each twelve-week session costs $100, or $50 for Des Moines University alumni, faculty, staff and students. To register, visit www.dmu.edu/RSVP/Pilates/. For more information about registering, contact Kari Smith at 271.1717.

Available classes:

- Tuesdays, 4:30 – 5:15 p.m., April 10 – June 26
- Tuesdays, 5:30 – 6:15 p.m., April 10 – June 26
- Thursdays, 12:50 – 1:35 p.m., April 12 – June 28

Former gang member opens L.A. airwaves to sounds from the street

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Curtis confides in a quavering voice that he’s been feeling sad and lonely as one of the only college students living in a violent housing project.

He’s dialed up Bo Taylor, a street-wise radio host who uses his show to converse with and counsel gang members, their worried mothers and others crowding in the dark corners of this sprawling city.

Awake and alone in their homes, cars or prison cells, listeners like Curtis are using the former gang member’s program on R&B station V100-FM to sound off about increasing street violence, poverty and friction with police.

“I love God, but I’m where I hate life right now,” says Curtis, who does not give his last name.

Taylor, 41, who served time in a juvenile hall, says he understands.

“People will always knock you for being you. Knock you for doing good,” Taylor says. “You’re the first one to come out of projects and go to college, the first one to come out of your family and make something out of yourself.” You’ve got it bad, man. Nobody wants you to be successful.”

Taylor doesn’t try to offer advice. In the early Sunday morning hours when his show airs, he says, it can be enough for distraught callers to know they aren’t alone.

With a sandpaper voice, a criminal past and a tendency to leave thick chunks of dead air during the midnight to 2 a.m. show, Taylor is unlike most others on mainstream commercial radio. And the audience he’s after and the subjects he addresses typically are anathema in a dense media market scrapping for ad dollars with market-tested playlists and golden-throated deejays.

It took three years for Taylor and his producer, an established figure in black talk radio who refused to allow his name to be used for this story, to convince the station to give Taylor a forum. The show has been on the air for a little more than a month and station officials say they are pleased so far.

“This show is about what’s directly affecting the community and that’s something that resonates deeply with our listeners and connects us closer to the community,” assistant program director Taiwala Sharp said.

The Bo Taylor Show debuted as heightened violence between Hispanic and black street gangs ignited fears that violence would spread across the city. Outside the studio, Taylor works to develop truces and cease-fires between rival gangs.

He was instrumental in brokering a truce between the Crips and Bloods more than a decade ago.

Taylor refuses to disclose details of his own previous gang ties, fearful that doing so would somehow glorify his criminal past. The father of four instead regularly offers anecdotes about his current activism and self-reform.

“You and I haven’t been listening in on a conversation that one of us used to be a part of,” Taylor says. “It’s like listening in on a conversation that one of us would normally hear, said civil rights attorney Connie Rice, a guest that night. “You’re not going to only hear from gang members, but you are going to hear from shot-callers in gangs calling from prisons.”

Someone who identifies himself as “Bow Wow” calls into the show. Taylor tells listeners at the start of one show.

The actor/activist returns the compliment.

“The only way we can all be peaceful in the city is if we all come together and realize the only way we can all be free, the only way we can all be peaceful in the city is find some common ground,” Taylor told listeners at the start of one show.

On the air one night, he offers condolences for community activist Cynthia Mendenhall. One of her sons was killed in a drive-by shooting last summer, the other shot and killed himself in December as police chased him for driving erratically.

“I don’t know what it would be like to lose both your sons and keep soldiering on,” Taylor said. “I don’t know if you’re up and listening, but I hope the word is getting to you.”

Another show followed an announcement of a new citywide anti-gang initiative that calls for making a list of the city’s most dangerous gangs.

The bald-and-tattooed host opened up the lines to gang members who lambasted the plan as bad policy. They warned that gangs left off the list would feel affronted and try to raise their profile with stepped up violence.

“It’s like listening in on a conversation that one of us would normally hear,” said civil rights attorney Connie Rice, a guest that night. “You’re not going to only hear from gang members, but you are going to hear from shot-callers in gangs calling from prisons.”

Taylor cuts off “Bow Wow” and announces a celebrity caller: It turns out “Lethal Weapon” star Danny Glover has been listening in.

“It’s people like you that give me inspiration and help me know that I’m not alone,” Taylor tells him.

The actor/activist returns the compliment.

“It’s vice versa as well, Bo,” Glover says. “You and your brother trying to keep peace in the neighborhood, as a friend of mine says, are trying to tame a lion with a switch. You know that gives me inspiration.”
WANTED: EDITOR

Merit Media Group is currently looking for an editor to wordsmith content for our various publications including Cyclone Nation, El Comunicador, The Independent Iowan, Education Times in Iowa and Cyclone Times. If you are interested please contact Jonathan at 515-471-5092 or 515-280-8092.
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Producer/Host of “Like It Is”
WASU-FM, Jonesboro, Arkansas

B.S., Radio/Television - Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
M.A., English/Communications - Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
M.A., Heritage Studies - Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AK
M.A., PhD of Philosophy, Heritage Studies - Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas

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Jimmie Porter • Founder and CEO
Salisbury House Schedule

April 5 at 8 p.m.
Chamber Music at Salisbury House: “Songfest” featuring tenor Edwin Griffith (pictured right).
Ed Griffith continues to delight central Iowa audiences, this time with English and American songs and operatic scenes featuring the music of Benjamin Britten, Henry Purcell, Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland and more. Doors open for reception at 7:30. Dessert following concert. Tickets $25. For reservations call 274.1777 or www.salisburyhouse.org

April 6 at 8 p.m.
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April 4 at 8 p.m.
Chamber Music at Salisbury House: “From Salisbury House with Love” featuring the Dan Knight Trio (pictured bottom). This performance will feature the premiere of the Apotheosis Suite followed by the Whitman Suite, written for solo piano and spoken word, from the works of poet Walt Whitman. Both works by composer Dan Knight.
Doors open for reception at 7:30. Dessert following concert. Tickets $25. For reservations call 274.1777 or www.salisburyhouse.org

May 2 at 7:30 p.m.
History Series at Salisbury House: “Eleanor Roosevelt: Human Rights Then and Now” with historian and author Dr. Allida Black.
Dr. Black will present new insights into the life and work of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Doors open for reception at 6:45. Dessert following lecture. Tickets $10. Students 18 and under free. For reservations call 274.1777 or www.salisburyhouse.org

April 15 at 2 p.m.
Tea at the Castle, featuring hatmaker Donna Scarfe who will display her creations and share tips for making and wearing hats. Tea, pastries and savouries served. Tickets $20. For reservations call 274.1777.

May 20 at 2 p.m.
Tea at the Castle, featuring Jane Cox appearing as American poet Emily Dickinson, sharing insight into her reclusive life and enduring works. Tea, pastries and savouries served. Tickets $20. For reservations call 274.1777.

Black History Month Reflections

A commentary by Hayle Caldwell

There’s never a shortage of events and celebration commemorating Black History Month. But who appreciates it more? White people or Black people?

This past February, I recognized Black History Month by attending three observances:

“I’ll Make Me a World in Iowa”

The coming together of influential Black Iowan leaders and “regular” citizens. This event had everything from actors to praise dancers to Mary Kay consultants to county physicians to sweet potato pie.

It was a family friendly affair with lots of opportunity for hands-on learning. Racial, cultural, and socio-economic diversity prevailed amongst the attendees.

Underground Railroad Lecture

Fascinating! History inflates the Midwest’s contribution to the Underground Railroad; however, it did pass through southern Iowa. The lecturer was an older White gentleman; the audience of nearly 100 people was White as well, save eight Black people including myself. One thought I took away from the lecture was that slave-owners thought slavery was a “kind and benevolent institution. Why would anyone run away from it?”

Book-signing/Reading by a Black Male Author

This observance took place at the local public library and was well publicized by various media outlets. The book was the real-life tale of a lynching in modern day Alabama. The author read amazing accounts of the family and friends who survived the lynching victim.

Although only 20 or so people turned out (only seven were Black), the author was gracious through the question and answer period...even staying afterward to chat with the crowd after the book-signing.

Each event was distinct and honored Black History in a different way. Sadly, the Black community overall was willy-nilly with showing its support.

If a son is shot or a boyfriend is beaten by the police or a daughter is profiled, we all (NAACP, Rainbow Coalition, ABC/DEF, you name it!) jump on the bandwagon. But when a daughter is profiled, we all (NAACP, Rainbow Coalition, ABC/DEF, you name it!) jump on the bandwagon. But who appreciates it more? White people or Black people?

Use the opportunities that have already been designated to network and learn from one another.

Burns United Methodist Church

Holy Week Activities

Sunday, April 1, 2007 Palm Sunday Service
Rev. Curtis DeVance preaching at 11:00 a.m.
Holy Week Services
Maundy Thursday, April 5, 2007: 6 p.m. – Fellowship potluck; Seder Meal; and, Foot-washing Liturgy
Good Friday: 12 Noon Rev. Curtis DeVance leads off preaching Jesus’ Seven Last Words at the Des Moines Black Ministerial Alliance’s Good Friday Service at the Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church, 1639 Garfield Ave 6 p.m. Foot of the Cross dramatization at Burns, 811 Crocker St
Good Friday Drama-ization
“Foot of The Cross”
Friday: April 6th, 2007 7:00 p.m.
Burns United Methodist Church 811 Crocker Street, Des Moines Iowa 50309 Pastor: Rev. Curtis DeVance followed by kick-off of 24-hour Prayer Vigil
Holy Saturday Continuing Prayer Vigil
Easter Sunrise Service and Breakfast: 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at Burns Christian Education Easter Program: 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Resurrection Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m., Rev. DeVance preaching

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No Justice, No Peace, Just Selling Out!

A commentary by Les Cason, Jr.

I find it real interesting eight years after the death of Charles Lovelady African Americans in Des Moines have not learned their lesson in regards to Charles Lovelady!

African Americans are still trying to frequent White Night Clubs which do not want them! On one hand you have African Americans trying to get in and hang out with White People and on the other hand you have White Night Club owners telling African Americans you are not wanted through use of an inconsistently applied and racist dress code, verbal and physical harassment by the club staff and White costumers!

You would think Africans American would learn the lesson by now - White Club owners do not want you in their establishment.

African Americans in this town fail to realize White Club owners do have the right to refuse service to anyone! African Americans have the right to not frequent establishments that practice racism. White Bar owners do exercise the right to refuse service to African Americans. It is a shame African Americans do not exercise the right to boycott White Clubs that practice racism.

Jerald Brantley said it best - one of the best ways we can excrise our rights is through the means of our dollars that go into these businesses everyday. We do not have to spend our money where we are disrespected!

A law was passed after Charles Lovelady was murdered. This law requires all bar owners to have their security staffed trained before they can work in a bar. A law is only as effective as the individuals enforcing the law. Wayne Ford could do better and petition the new Governor to reopen the case. Bring the case back to the courts of the two White men who murdered Charles Lovelady?

Getting a law passed is easy. Asking for justice, that is hard and it takes courage. The type of courage our Black leadership seems to lack.

Civil Rights cases have been re-opened, tried and the criminals found guilty. Megar Evers is one example and Mrs. Evers never gave up until she got justice. She did not sit back and walk around the courthouse singing “No Justice, No peace.” She went after the justice and got it.

While Double Jeopardy may be attached they could be tried in criminal court the same way the four officers in L.A. were prosecuted for the beating of Rodney King. Two of the officers were found guilty.

My point is anything is possible when you have the heart and desire to go after it which Black leadership does not have.

What came out of Charles Lovelady’s death?

African Americans are still trying to get in to White Clubs. To this day African Americans are harassed, verbally or physically assaulted or both at these establishments. The law has not been enforced.

My point is justice will only come when you go after it. Wishing, praying, singing and shouting for it will not get you justice. One must go after Justice by any means necessary. Black Leadership allowed two racist Whites boys to get away with murder. Which will leave the door open for this to happen again because Black Leadership opted for the payout instead of holding out for justice.

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Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. --Mark 10:14

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The programs are hosted by Jonathan Narcisse, president of the State of Black Iowa Initiative.

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Wednesdays - Mid-Day Prayer Meeting at 12:00 p.m. and Prayer Meeting & Bible Study at 7:00 p.m.
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) Youth Service 1st & 3rd Sunday 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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PHILADELPHIA (AP) - The inner-city youth swimming program here could have inspired many movies, with its stories of children jumping into the pool as novices and climbing out with college scholarships and foundations for greater success.

But when Lionsgate decided to make a film about the program, it chose to focus on the coach and founder, Jim Ellis.

“Pride” depicts Ellis’ first year working for the Philadelphia Department of Recreation, when he turned a group of inner city black kids with no formal training into an official swim team.

“I had to watch it three or four times before I realized it was really about me, not just my team,” Ellis said. “That was heavy.”

He might have known it was coming, though. Actor Terrence Howard, now his Hollywood alter-ego, had spent about two months with him, observing the 5 a.m. and after-school practices and taking Ellis’ coaching advice on his own strokes.

The experience showed Howard that to play Ellis, “you just have to care.”

“I tried to find his spirit, his motivation, and look at some of the people he was impressed by - (Supreme Court Justice) Thurgood Marshall and (football star) Jim Brown - and try and emulate some of them at the same time,” said the actor known for his Oscar-nominated performance in “Hustle & Flow.”

Ellis’ career began when his father pushed him off a boat at age 6 and told him to stay afloat. The sport came easily to him.

Ellis, 59. “It’s tough love, but like eating vegetables, I try to make them see all this hard work is good for you.”

His real life is less sensational than the movie may lead viewers to believe. He has never punched a racist cop, come close to drowning a drug lord or romanced a city councilwoman who held the fate of his rec center in her hands.

Instead, he has seen communities come together around pizza and pretzel sales to support the team, put his swimmers up in borrowed tents in his parents’ basement in Pittsburgh for a meet there, and held back tears when his team received a standing ovation as two of his swimmers broke records and qualified for the Olympic trials in one night.

Like the movie, however, in the early years his team was occasionally met with condescension from more established programs, mostly out of state, and the perception that black athletes are better football or basketball players than swimmers.

“We’d get remarks like, ‘the gym is down the hall,’ or ‘the football field is down the way,’” Ellis said. “We actually got more strength from that. It made us more determined to be successful.”

Success came quickly, then became the norm. A number of his swimmers have come close to making the U.S. Olympic team, and hundreds have earned college scholarships because of their talent in the pool.

Jason Webb, 32, credits his 20 years of swimming for Ellis with getting him into one of Philadelphia’s top charter schools and winning him a full scholarship to the University of Virginia.

“The vision he had for me made me into the swimmer I was and the man I am,” said the Philadelphia emergency room nurse.

“Some people were swimming, but I’d be lying if I said there weren’t any life lessons. He just told me to leave it all out there and have no regrets - give all you can whether in the pool, the classroom or other parts of life.”

Ellis is still looking ahead. He said he hopes the movie will inspire a wealthy philanthropist to build top-flight pools in the inner city, or barring that, will at least spur more people to take up swimming.

His biggest hopes, of course, are for his own team.

“I still don’t have a world record or an American record. I’ve never sent anyone to the Olympics,” Ellis said. “Yeah, there’s still a lot to do.”

Elisia Pride portrays Sojourner Truth, abolitionist and women’s rights advocate, in A Woman Called Truth, Mar. 30-Apr. 15, at The Des Moines Playhouse.

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