The Des Moines Park and Recreation Department will again be sponsoring the Youth In Parks Summer Camp for youth, June 11 - August 17, 2007. Youth In Parks is a program targeted to meet the needs of young people going into grades 6-9. This program offers a structured, safe atmosphere for youth to explore the environment, develop new friendships, volunteer to help the community through work related projects, expand their leadership skills, and have fun through a variety of recreational opportunities!

Program hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with morning drop off from 7:00 - 8:00 a.m. and evening pick up from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m at Archie Brooks Community Center, 2100 SE 5th Street. The cost is $60 per week. Scholarships are available to qualifying families. Registration is limited to 28 participants per week. For more information, please call (515) 248-6314.
What about investment clubs?

Investment clubs can be a great way to increase economic development opportunities for our community. Families, fraternities, churches, neighborhood groups, all can gain greater position in the economic development struggle. While investment clubs have been around for sometime, the clubs are still in limited numbers in the black community.

Clubs can be setup that just invest in real estate deals, or online clubs, stock only clubs, what ever the members decide on as the investment strategy. To gain knowledge on starting and running a successful investment club can be daunting, but there are many resources available to the beginning investor. Sources on the internet, books, CD’s, seminars, and a host of other resources that a beginning investor can utilize to help launch a great club are available.

No matter what the income level an investment club can be a wise choice. The amount of research and planning in the beginning stages will pay big dividends for any investment club. The investment club is not a get rich quick scheme but a disciplined effort to create wealth. Most of us in the black community are just getting into our retirement, savings planning for the future. This fact makes the investment clubs a great option for most of us to seriously start to act on the need to have a retirement plan. Young or old this has proven to be as good an investment stratagem as many other investments.

Not only is it a must to invest in ones future, but an investment club can be lots of fun, bringing friends and family together for a great cause; the accumulation of wealth. So if you’re looking for a way to increase your wealth, and your social life, an investment club could just be the thing. There are thousands of people that have joined or started clubs, from stock market novices to financial pros.

You can go to proshare website to find out more information. Give it a chance it could be a blessing. Moving toward change JB. ..........
Top record chiefs remain silent as debate over rap lyrics continues to rapidly escalate

NEW YORK (AP) - Facing fierce criticism of sexist and depraved rap lyrics, top music industry executives planned a private meeting. They would discuss the issue, they said, and “announce initiatives” at a press conference afterward.

That was three weeks ago. The press conference was canceled, without explanation. And ever since, music’s gatekeepers have been silent.

Leaders of the four major record companies, which control nearly 90 percent of the market, may fear cracking the door to censorship. Others say the record chiefs are “scared to death” of further damaging sales in an industry already hobbled by digital downloading — or that they choose to remain in the shadows rather than protect “indefensible” lyrics.

Or perhaps they are leery of stepping into a racial minefield: While black rap artists recite those lyrics, the top executives are white — like the man who ignited the controversy, radio host Don Imus, fired for describing a women’s basketball team as “nappy-headed hos.”

“They want this whole thing to go away and keep doing what they’ve been doing, which is selling records,” said Don Gorder, chair of the Music Business/Management Department at the Berklee College of Music.

While music industry leaders remain reticent, others are reacting very publicly:

Ebony magazine pulled Grammy Award-winning rapper Ludacris from its June cover. Here he poses with the award for best rap song for “Release Therapy” and best rap song for “Money Maker” at the 49th Annual Grammy Awards on Feb. 11, 2007, in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Kevork Djansezian)

In the 1990s, the songs of the rap artists richest artists contained no curses or n-words. Percy Miller, whose son Romeo also is a recording artist, says he’s starting a new label for “street music without offensive lyrics.”

“I was once part of the problem and now it’s time to be part of the solution,” Miller, whose gangsta raps once sold millions of albums but have been met with indifference lately, told AllHipHop.com. “I am ready to take a stand by cleaning up my music and follow my son’s footsteps and make a clean rap album.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, who protested outside major record labels last week, is planning to lead busloads of protesters to music executives’ homes in the Hamptons over Memorial Day weekend.

“It’s indefensible,” Sharpton said of why the record executives keep silent. “They’re hoping it’ll go away. We’re not going anywhere. We plan to continue to march until those three words are gone, until those four companies agree in some way that the use of the words ‘nigga,’ ‘ho,’ and ‘bitch’ should be beneath our standards.”

Sharpton met recently with executives from Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group Corp., and Sony BMG Music Entertainment, who “expressed different measures of concern” but made no commitments, he said.

Those three companies, along with London-based EMI Group, in account for close to 90 percent of U.S. music sales through traditional distribution channels, said Jerry Goosby, who holds a chair in music industry studies at Loyola University.

Sharpton said there seems to be a double standard when it came to controversial lyrics. In the 1990s, the songs “They Don’t Care About Us” by Michael Jackson (which included terms like “Jew me” and “kike me”) and “Cop Killer” by rapper-turned actor Ice T drew a strong response from the industry. Jackson was even forced to re-record his song.

“I didn’t hear any of these guys jumping up talking about free speech when Michael’s record came out,” Sharpton said. “But you can talk about blacks and women? Why is it ‘nigger,’ ‘ho’ and ‘bitch’ is below our standard? You can’t have it where blacks are the only ones in America where there’s no standards.

Some in the music industry, such as Russell Simmons, one of hip-hop culture’s chief architects, have defended rappers’ free-speech rights. Simmons, who got rich by co-founding and then selling the seminal Def Jam label, recently called for the three words at the center of the debate to be treated the same as extreme profanities and consistently blanked out of “clean” and radio versions of songs.

The closest the industry has come to a public discussion is when Warner Music Group vice president Kevin Lilley appeared on Oprah Winfrey’s show and acknowledged “there’s a problem.”

At Universal, a division of the publicly traded French company Vivendi, chairman Doug Morris and president Zach Horowitz have declined repeated requests from The Associated Press to discuss the issue. Universal, in a partnership with Interscope Records, is home to hardcore rap superstars such as 50 Cent and Snoop Dogg.

Warner chairman and chief executive Edgar Bronfman Jr. led a group of investors who bought Warner Music Group from Time Warner Inc. for more than $2 billion. Warner, which went public in 2005, recently announced sev-
Cisco accused of bias by U.S. agency

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - Cisco Systems Inc. has come under fire from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, who has accused the company of racial discrimination against five minority job applicants.

In rejecting four black applicants and one Asian American applicant the San Jose-based company “demonstrated an ongoing pattern and practice of not hiring qualified minority candidates based on their race, color and national origin (including Hispanics),” the EEOC said.

Cisco, the world’s largest networking equipment maker, has disputed the allegations. The company said that 43 percent of its roughly 28,500 U.S. workers identify themselves as ethnic minorities, and that minority hiring is growing faster than overall headcount growth.

“While we disagree with the allegations in this case, Cisco takes this issue very seriously,” the company said in a statement.

The allegations were included in letters sent to Cisco by the EEOC and made available by lawyers for four of the five applicants who had filed suit in federal court.

The letters urged Cisco to engage in settlement talks with the agency or risk facing a lawsuit. The EEOC’s letters did not outline any evidence in support of its findings.

The EEOC also claimed that a black applicant was interviewed for a job in a coffee shop parking lot by a Cisco manager wearing a gym suit. The applicant did not get the job.

Cisco said it employs 12,230 minority workers in the U.S. Of that, 10,152 are Asian, 1,242 are Hispanic and 758 are black. Cisco said the number of black employees increased by 12 percent over last year and is the company’s fastest-growing segment of new employees.

Facelift for theater done by black architect in early 1900s

PITTSBURGH (AP) - One of the last remaining pieces of early 20th century black architecture in western Pennsylvania will get a much-needed facelift paid for by a $200,000 Heinz Endowments grant.

Forty years of neglect and abandonment have left the New Granada Theater - a Hill District landmark that once housed popular shows, movies and dances - in a state of disrepair.

The grant, awarded Wednesday along with violation, it could be fined a maximum of $300,000 for each aggrieved employee, according to EEOC spokesman David Goldberg.

The applicants’ lawsuit claims they were passed over for jobs that were instead given to less-qualified white applicants. The plaintiffs claim they were denied employment despite scoring higher on an internal Cisco applicant ranking system than those who got jobs.

In seeking class-action status, the lawsuit criticizes Cisco’s “woefully inadequate African-American and other minority representation” and accuses the company of undermining a program it launched in 2004 to boost the recruitment of black workers.

“Cisco's diversity recruiting program was impossibly and purposely Byzantine,” the lawsuit states. The lawsuit claims a number of outside diversity consultants had either been fired or quit in protest of the company’s track record.

In one case, the lawsuit claims, Cisco had an outside diversity consultant fired after he complained that a black applicant was interviewed for a job in a coffee shop parking lot by a Cisco manager wearing a gym suit. The applicant did not get the job.

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Forty years of neglect and abandonment have left the New Granada Theater - a Hill District landmark that once housed popular shows, movies and dances - in a state of disrepair.

The grant, awarded Wednesday along with a $220,938 grant to the University of Iowa’s Museum of Art, will provide a much-needed facelift for the Hill Historic District landmark that once housed popular shows, movies and dances - in a state of disrepair.

The New Granada Theater, which opened in 1904, was once a hub of African American culture in Pittsburgh’s Hill District. The theater was frequented by celebrities such as Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong.

After many years of neglect and abandonment, the theater was purchased by a local nonprofit organization, the Hill District Organization, in 2002. The organization has been working to restore the theater for use as an cultural center.

The grant will fund repairs to the theater’s roof, windows, and doors, as well as the installation of new lighting and sound systems.

“I am thrilled that the New Granada Theater will be receiving this much-needed facelift,” said Mayor Bill Peduto in a press release.

The theater’s renovations are expected to be complete by late 2023, according to a spokesperson for the Hill District Organization.
Liberian president speaks to Langston U. graduates

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf makes a statement to reporters after her meeting with President Bush, not pictured, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2007. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

LANGSTON, Okla. (AP) - President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia told Langston University graduates Saturday that her life story is proof that one can achieve whatever one dreams, if sufficient effort is applied toward that goal.

Sirleaf, the first elected female head of state of any nation in Africa, became the first sitting president of any nation to visit Langston’s rural Logan County campus since the school opened in 1897. It was her second visit to Oklahoma in recent months; she also spoke at the University of Oklahoma last September.

“Every day is a day to praise, especially a day like this,” Langston President JoAnn Haysbert said after the university choir performed a Liberian praise song before Sirleaf’s address.

“It is an opportunity that is history in the making.”

Before her speech, Sirleaf and Haysbert signed a memorandum of understanding, under which Langston will offer a study-abroad program for its students to work with girls and women in Liberia and provide five scholarships for students from the west African nation to attend Langston.

“It is our firm belief that through this agreement, that Langston University will further endeavor to fulfill its mission of educating individuals to become global leaders, and at the same time educate them to become global leaders and help to meet the needs of nations throughout the world,” Haysbert said.

Langston, known for its goat research, also will assist Liberia’s Central Agriculture Research Institute in helping reinvigorate that nation’s agriculture sector.

“As we drove in and saw the vast, very impressive farms, we recognized the strength of Langston in agriculture,” Sirleaf said, noting that portion of the agreement could positively affect “thou- sandss and thousands of people.”

The university also will join with Liberian organizations to establish a Liberian Diaspora Summit and will encourage other historically black colleges and universities to assist in other collaborative efforts with Liberia’s government.

“We hope the exchange will be equally enriching on both sides,” Sirleaf said.

Sirleaf noted the importance of encouraging young Liberian females to pursue an education, something she said has not been often promoted because families with limited means usually choose to educate males.

“I now feel a part of UGA and I’m happy to count myself among guests or family.”

Sirleaf said she didn’t feel accepted by the university until 1997, when the school awarded her a doctorate in government.

Sirleaf, who was awarded a doctorate in government in 1997, was the first woman to head a Liberian government.

Said Early: “I was finally discovered.”

Early said she came to the university with a degree in music education in 1962, including her feeling of being ignored by all but her family and friends after her commencement ceremony.

“No one else spoke to me either before, during or after the ceremony or even acknowledged my presence,” Early told students receiving master’s, doctoral and education specialist degrees at Stegeman Coliseum.

“After that time I heard nothing from the University of Georgia. It was as if I never attended.”

Early, an Atlanta native, earned her bachelor’s degree from then-Clark College in 1957 and attended graduate school at the University of Michigan. She transferred to Georgia in 1961 after reading of Hunter-Gault being harassed on the UGA campus.

Early also faced harassment as the university’s first black gradu- ate student. A racial insult was painted on her car, her tires were slashed and students threw lemons at her in the dining hall.

Early was the first black student to join the school choir, but she said she soon learned she would be performing for all-white audi-ences.

“During my first quarter in 1961 I asked if my mother and her friends could attend a choral concert of which I was a participant,” she said. “I was told no. They said the university had only been integrated for the three African Americans who had been admitted.

“Years later they told me they could not protect my family and friends. ‘They have completely changed my outlook on the university,” Early said.

Early said she didn’t feel accepted by the university until 1997, when the university awarded her a doctorate in government.

“I now feel a part of UGA and I’m happy to count myself among the many thousands of active alumni.”

Early said the racially diverse class of graduates Saturday was evidence of progress.

“I realize some students feel we have not progressed enough, and with that I would agree,” she said.

“But when I look out on the audience, I cannot help but feel very proud,” she said. “We have made great advancement, in terms of the diversity of the students, faculty and administration. . . . We’re moving in the right direction.”

Early, who also received a specialist degree in music education from Georgia in 1967, was a music teacher, supervisor and coordi- nator in Atlanta public schools for 37 years.

She was named chairman of Clark Atlanta University’s music depart- ment in 1997 and retired in 2005.

Adams said her story may have been one final lesson for the spring graduates.

“We’re fortunate to learn from her lessons and her illustrious life and career,” Adams said.

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

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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.

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Arkansas police report rise in state ‘hate crimes’

LITTLE ROCK (AP) - Arkansas is in the minority of states without a hate crimes law, but police agencies in the state still must report incidences of hate crimes.

Federal law requires the collection of hate crime data. In Arkansas, data from law enforcement agencies are compiled by the Arkansas Crime Information Center and then transferred to the FBI.

Danny Bradley, president of the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police, says police want to report such crimes but find it hard to say what offenses are motivated by hate toward a person because of bias. He says the determination can be so subjective, especially when the state has no hate crimes law.

As it stands now, Bradley says, police agencies generally list a crime as a hate crime if someone offers some type of evidence that it was. If the state adopted a hate crimes law, there would be a higher standard to meet in reporting because the evidence would have to hold up before a jury.

In 2005, 66 police agencies in Arkansas reported 134 incidents with evidence of some type of crime against someone because of race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability. That figure was up from 2001, when two agencies reporting a combined three hate crimes, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

North Little Rock, where Bradley is police chief, reported no hate crimes in 2005, the latest year figures were compiled by the FBI. Bradley said his agency handled two hate crimes in 2006. One involved harassment of a homosexual; the other was an attack on a white man by two black males as part of a gang initiation.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, 45 states have some type of hate crime law. In Arkansas, an effort to pass a hate crimes law in the recent legislative session failed. Sen. Hank Wilkins, D-Pine Bluff, sponsored the bill.

Gov. Mike Beebe co-sponsored similar legislation when he was a state senator in 2001. It was also pushed by then-Attorney General Mark Pryor, who is now a U.S. senator.

Bradley says that even with a hate crimes law, evidence to gain a conviction is rarely available.
Famed Harlem church celebrates 200 years

NEW YORK (AP) - When the Abyssinian Baptist Church was founded, Thomas Jefferson was president. Abraham Lincoln was not born yet. Blacks were still enslaved, and would be for decades more.

A group of Ethiopian sea traders in lower Manhattan refused to participate in segregated church services and formed their own congregation, naming it for their homeland and taking many free blacks from other churches with them.

Two hundred years later, the church is going back to its roots - literally.

Come September, the Rev. Calvin O. Butts III will lead a pilgrimage of about 200 church members and dignitaries on a pilgrimage to Ethiopia to mark the bicentennial anniversary of the church.

The trip, he says, will highlight an observation that began on Tuesday and will end in November 2008, the actual 200th anniversary of the church.

“It was the first ‘mega church’ of 2,000 members in the country,” Butts said in an interview. “We want to celebrate what that experience means, we want to talk about community development, spiritual renewal, and of course the history of Abyssinian Baptist as the primary and premier religious institution in Harlem.”

Overall, Butts said, the bicentennial is intended to commemorate the spiritual, social and cultural history of the black community, and in particular “the significant role played by the churches as that community’s oldest and strongest institutions.”

Jefferson, president from 1801-1809, never visited the church, as far as is known, but President John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson did, as did Jimmy Carter as a candidate. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also made one appearance there in the late 1950s or early 1960s, Butts said.

The Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, pastor at the time, “was known then as ‘Mr. Civil Rights,’ but he acknowledged Dr. King,” he said. Butts said the planned pilgrimage to Ethiopia has several purposes, including “fellowship with the Ethiopians,” missionary work, the creation of an orphanage for the offspring of AIDS victims, and premier religious institution in Harlem.”

Summer Program Facilitator Wanted!!!

Employer: Girl Scouts of Moingona Council
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Girl Scouting is a values-based organization with the Promise and Law providing the framework and ethical code. The motivating force in Girl Scouting is a spiritual one. Each girl is encouraged to become a better member of her own religious group and to respect the varying beliefs and practices of others. Girl Scouts are members of a global movement, which encompasses a vast range of faiths. Virtually all world faiths are represented in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Each member interprets “God” in her own way and there is no requirement for affiliation with an organized religion. The values expressed in the Girl Scout Promise and Law serve as the foundation for all the activities in the Girl Scout Program.

Job Title: Summer Program Facilitator
Job Type: Summer Employment
Schedule: Seasonal

Position Start Date: Pay Rate: $8/hour plus mileage
Hours Per Week: 30-40

How To Apply: Contact for additional info and application
Contact Name: Membership Specialist Lucia Leydens
Email: leydens@moingonagirlscouts.org
Phone: (515)278-2881
Fax: (515)278-5988

Job Description: The Summer Program Facilitator(s) will plan and implement the weekly programming for our traveling summer program. They will supervise Summer Program volunteer staff that will assist with the implementation of the programming. The facilitators will plan programming which revolves around the theme of the day and provides activities consistent with the age levels of the participants. Summer Program Facilitator(s) contracts will run from June 4th through August 10th, 2007.

Job Qualifications: Be at least 18 years of age. Be willing to learn the Girl Scout program and become a member. Strong human relations, conflict resolution, problem solving, and organizational skills. Ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds. Experience working with children. Ability to enjoy, respect and appreciate children. Must have reliable transportation. Must have a good driving record.

Florida A&M University interim president resigns

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) - Florida A&M University Interim President Castell Vaughn Bryant has resigned, according to a resignation letter sent to the board of trustees Friday.

Bryant’s resignation is effective May 31. James H. Ammons, the former FAMU provost, is expected to take over July 2.

In the letter, Bryant, who became the interim president in January 2005, thanked the trustees for their “good counsel and encouragement.

“At the same time, I believe we have agreed that under the circumstances, my decision may be what is best for the university,” Bryant said in the letter.

Pamela Bryant, a FAMU spokeswoman, said neither the school nor Castell Vaughn Bryant have any immediate comments on the resignation. She said the board of trustees will meet Monday.

The state’s only public historically black college has been plagued by scandal and financial mismanagement.

A preliminary audit of the budget year ending in June 2006 found problems with the school’s payroll and other areas.

Last year, the university suspended the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and five members who were charged with using wooden canes to beat a pledge during an initiation ritual. They were the first people charged with violating a new law that makes it a felony to engage in hazing that results in serious bodily injury.

Girl Scouts, continued

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Subscribe to Iowa Bystander today!
Iowa Bystander over the years has encouraged our readers to submit photos of their family functions, kids, social gatherings, or just interesting photos. The following was sent to us by “Evelyn” from her mini-vacation. Pictured are Reggie Rice from CAR WASH, and Scot Chase and Allyson Williams from the 90’s. Thanks Evelyn!
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Once again, KBIG-FM is on the move. This is our 30th year in business in the Cedar Valley. We have grown in many ways as reflected in this brochure.

With 10,000 watts of power covering a 60-mile radius, 20 employees, seven of whom are youth, we want to be poised to meet the challenges in providing programming that informs, educates and is self-empowering to the communities we serve.

Governed by a Board of Directors, KBIG-FM is the largest African American owned and operated, non-commercial, educational radio station in Iowa. We continue to be committed to our mission and motto: Communicate to Educate. We thankfully look back on our past and anticipate our future.

Together all things can be accomplished.

THE NEED

Our prediction that the 21st century would provide change, challenges, and opportunity has come true.

With your help we met the challenges of digital conversion that was mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). KBIG-FM now stands ready to launch The Power to Move II campaign, with a goal of $300,000, achievable with the help of individual and corporate support. One component of this campaign is the special Leadership Circle, comprised of African Americans, who are committed to promote and support KBIG-FM within the community.

THE VISION CONTINUES

In 1996, Dr. Ross Christensen stepped into the breach and headed what was to become a landmark in KBIG-FM's growth. Dr. Christensen, along with many others, supported the vision of KBIG-FM's Founder and CEO, James Porter, in order that the station could continue on the path of providing programming and information that educates the communities that serve in Northeast Iowa.

PROGRAMMING

Expand, expand, expand... but keep the gold! New programming is constantly coming to the KBIG-FM airwaves that interest our listening audience, such as Money Don't Grow on Trees, and Parents Love Your Children, but KBIG-FM also continues to provide listener favorites like Family Rewards of Life. January for School through 12 years-of-age, this program has been airing on KBIG-FM for more than 20 years. We listen to our listeners.

THE FUTURE

The Power to Move II campaign presents a threshold of unlimited possibilities for KBIG-FM. With the expansion of our new studio addition, KBIG-FM will generate additional revenue by producing studio services and expanded training opportunities to the community.

REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

KBIG-FM offers on-the-job training and hands-on experiences for youth, interns and adults. Eleven youth who trained during the past 18 months ranged from 14 to 20 years-of-age. Training encompasses: on-air announcing, (3) scripting, (1) engineering, (4) interviews, and (3) production. Interns can earn college credit and/or pay, if the budget allows, and adults who have trained at KBIG-FM have become producers and have created programs that speak to the needs of the communities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Thirty years of business in Waterloo, Iowa
- Incorporated - Cottage Street 3/17
- Application filed with FCC 5/89
- FCC Construction Permit granted 6/26/86
- Tower erected 7/20/96
- First test on air: equipment test 7/26/86
- Power is 5,000 watts
- Upgrade to 14,000 watts 7/1986
- Member-supported station of Corporation for Public Broadcasting 1981
- Power to Move Campaign established 1994
- Groundbreaking 10/23/94
- Construction begins 1/17/95
- 199-foot tower erected 2/28/96
- First day broadcast from Newell 2/23/96
- Mortgage Burning Ceremony 7/6/96
- Web site and On-Air streaming 12/03
- Internet streaming - worldwide 2005
- Virtual tour via Web-site
- Associate Member of National Public Radio
- Affiliate of American Urban Radio News
- Expanded political coverage
- Live sport coverage - local high school football and basketball
- Youth training and employment
- Successful Job Fair for the YAC
- and much more...

Your contributions will make it happen

For more information call Jim or Sue Porter at 319-236-9165
Outraged and betrayed by the Des Moines School Board

A commentary from MaryAnn Spicer • President Sisters On Target

I feel like I am in a spinning soap opera where the characters play switch and the others follow then the viewer has to keep up with which one shows more compassion and holds the genuine interest of the people to heart. Well, at the Des Moines School Board meeting on May 15, 2007 which was untimelined and held at Hoyt Middle School this is exactly what happened. The update on Edmunds was placed at the end of a short agenda. Board Member Dick Murphy stated Edmunds is going to be more of the same then I am not for keeping it open. Now that is a fair statement, but the crashing blow was Murphy continuing to state that he would like to see the educational program offerings in terms of what will be the design of Edmunds Elementary will it be technological, will it be more of the fine arts just what it will be? Murphy was asking that the Edmunds Advisory group and the administration meet and come up with an educational plan to bring back to the board before he blesses the community with his vote in June and if that cannot be done extend the vote until sometime in August. Of course, this was just the type of opening that the rest of the nay sayers needed. Phil Roeder jumped in with more educational design questions followed by Connie Boesen who stated there was no money allocated for the new design of Edmunds so thoughts would have to be on resources and there certainly was no money toward this project from the one cent sales tax. Here is a fine example of taxation without representation! Then there was Jeanette Woods adding more to the indecisiveness followed by Jinny Strong who reinforced what the others wanted to say all along, but needed a pitch hitter with Marc Ward agreeing. Then there was this breath of reasoning with a no you won’t go there from Teree Caldwell-Johnson who stated I hope we are not holding Edmunds to a double standard by having them come back to the board with a complete educational package of their redesign when we just approved the Walnut Street School with no such educational proposal. Good for Teree! An independent thinker who smells something really rotten going on and had the presence of mind to call a spade a spade! Community, this is my birds eye view after sitting and monitoring this board for the last seven years. I am outraged that at first they dangle a carrot in front of the community, put us on the head and say go to work and come up with some new and innovative ideas and just when the district might do something that shows a caring spirit they pull the rug right from under the entire project with well we need more assurances that this will not be more of the same. As an educator there is no way the newly formed advisory group for Edmunds can come up with an educational plan by June nor by August. There is no work to be done from reviewing other successful models across the state and outside the state to taking a successful educational design and reshaping it to give it the best fit for the students and neighborhood at Edmunds Elementary as well as assessing the needs of the students to assure that whatever model is the correct model. Certainly all educators know you cannot redesign a school and come up with a model in one to three months. All we can do is work at a skeleton outline of what Edmunds can and should to be successfully fulfill the dreams of all students who attend that school. So, shame on the des Moines School Board that thinks Edmunds must be held to a higher standard before sanctioning whether to keep it open. So, I say every administrator that would stand with Board Member Teree Caldwell-Johnson and say it is wrong to hold Edmunds to a different standard than others that have come before this board. So, yes, you darn right I am outraged! If you too are outraged that Edmunds is held to a different standard for requests that come before the Des Moines School Board than send an email to The Des Moines School Board Members expressing your concern and ask them to accept the proposal of Superintendent Seehring to keep Edmunds open while the administration continues to work on a new and improved design!

New Walking Club Forming

Looking to get fit after a winter of putting on unwanted pounds but you just don’t know where to start? Do you work out better if you have someone working out with you? Are you ready to shed that extra weight and live a healthier lifestyle? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions an area walking club will be forming next month. Walking is one of the best ways to get fit and shed that extra weight. We’ll also discuss how to eat healthier.

So if you’re interested call Jonathan at 515-471-3092 or email him at jon_narcisse@yahoo.com.
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Barack Obama, dedicated, fiber, substance and charisma

A commentary by Charles “Allen” Spencer

What are the priorities? Which domestic issues are most important to the American people? When are we going to realize that we live and are part of a global society? Respect that others have culture differences and opinions that may not always be the same as ours. There are many pressing issues facing all of us today. We need to ask all the candidates how they plan to address the issues that are affecting us and positioning future generations to deal with these travesties. The policy makers that we’ve elected to represent the best interest of all of us have no clue to the reality of the state we are in. It’s as if they are totally isolated, or is it that there own self interest has made them oblivious to the fact that their decisions are wrong?

Barack Obama last Friday the eleventh at the main Library downtown displayed the “dedication, fiber and substance” to address the issues we face. He has the “charisma” to deliver the truths that need to be said and acted upon. This man who could have went into private practice after leaving Harvard Law school at the top of his class sacrificed the potential of partnering in a large law firm to reach out and serve the underserved populace in our society.

The “charisma” the excitement that he brings out in people when he talks very candidly about the problems plaguing America, the “fiber and substance” of his discussions undeniably touch all segments of people.

Statistical facts may change, but the truth never changes and we must ask all the candidates the hard questions to gauge if they are “dedicated” have the “fiber and substance” to deliver the truth, the “charisma” that exudes from them to be, believable.

E-mail: asab23spencer@yahoo.com

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Sleep requirements for children

It is important to know that there is no magical number of sleep hours required by all children of a certain age; it very much depends on your individual child.

A newborn can sleep for sixteen to twenty hours a day.

Infants will tend to sleep three to five hours during the day and ten hours at night.

Toddlers require ten to thirteen hours of sleep a day. A bedtime routine will help a child relax and get ready to sleep.

Preschoolers will usually need ten to twelve hours, and it is normal for them to gradually ease out of the afternoon naps.

School age children need nine to ten hours of sleep, and parents need to make sure that the homework routine allows for those hours of rest. Often it does not, and that results in falling asleep in class, difficulty waking in the morning, and inability to concentrate.

Older children may get by with eight hours of sleep. If your child is active, though, that may not be enough, and fatigue may set in during the school day. A good test is to ask your teenager how many hours of sleep they get before they feel ready to sleep.

Barack Obama last Friday the eleventh at the main Library downtown displayed the “dedication, fiber and substance” to address the issues we face. He has the “charisma” to deliver the truths that need to be said and acted upon. This man who could have went into private practice after leaving Harvard Law school at the top of his class sacrificed the potential of partnering in a large law firm to reach out and serve the underserved populace in our society.

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Weekly Meditation

When Trouble Comes…

Read Psalm 46:1-7

Verses of Concentration: 1 & 7

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Lord of Host is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge” – Psalm 46:1, 7

When trouble comes in the life of the believer, what do we do? Are we handling things the way of the world, getting frustrated, ready to give up or give in? Do we lose focus or insight of the matter at hand? Do we allow the cares and concerns of this world, or those in this world, to overtake us?

Just because trouble comes, doesn’t mean we have to take it laying down. Although we find ourselves not able to escape from encountering trouble or challenges in life, Jesus has given us the power and authority to exist in the midst thereof, and He’s already made a way of escape – The Lord of Host is with us!

John 16:33, Jesus reminds us “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Jesus is still saying to us today that “in this world”, we will have tribulation or trouble, “but in Him”, we have peace.

So, when trouble arises, “know God is your refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble” and find strength and resolve to run to Him. For the righteous run to Him and He delivers us from them all! Our ways should reflect His ways. We live in this world, but we are not of this world!

As God was with Jacob, He’s with us, our very present and He’s already with us!

Elpis Fellowship
Gerome Linley

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Moriah: Continued from page 1

countries. The Hunger Banquet held April 28 raised $1,650 for Kids Against Hunger and 16,850 meals were packaged to be sent to Tanzania to feed AIDS orphans and street children.

Last summer, Moriah attended Harvard University’s summer scholar program, but has decided to enroll at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. in the fall. She hopes to be a feature twirler with the school’s band. Moriah has competed on the national level in baton and dance. She is proud to be a member of the regional and national award-winning competition dance team from Becky Nalevanko’s Dance & Tumbling Studio.

Moriah is also a member of the 2007 We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution program State Champion Team, a co-captain and assistant choreographer of the Midwest National Cheer Competition. Currently competing on the national level in baton and dance. She is a charter member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, membership recipient from the College Planning Center; Cornel West, professor of religion and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, who has written a Mass composition for the celebration; Gerome West, professor of religion and seeking independence for his and other African nations.

1975, age 81, after a lifetime of defying invaders and seeking independence for his and other African nations. and the celebration of Abyssinian Baptist Church Day.

Bloomberg prepared a proclamation declaring the Abyssinian church’s two centuries of history.

Dr. Gerome Linley
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Harlem Church: Continued from page 7

times, and a ceremony at the grave of Ethiopia’s legendary Emperor, Haile Selassie, who died in 1975, age 81, after a lifetime of defying invaders and seeking independence for his and other African nations.

The platform guest list for Tuesday’s kickoff included Gov. Eliot Spitzer, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Rep. Charles Rangel. While not expected to be present, Mayor Michael Bloomberg prepared a proclamation declaring Abyssinian Baptist Church Day.

Others on the program were Wynton Marsalis, artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, who has written a Mass composition for the celebration; Cornel West, professor of religion and African American Studies at Princeton University, and Howard Dodson, chief of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which will present a special exhibit for the bicentennial.

West and Maya Angelou are among five co-authors of a book, “Witness,” that traces the Abyssinian church’s two centuries of history.

The church occupied at least two different sites in lower Manhattan before Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Sr., moved it uptown to Harlem in 1923, according to Tai Foster, a church spokesman.

Today, the congregation is about 4,000, the largest black congregation in New York state. It is one of several Harlem churches whose dynamic, music-filled Sunday services draw crowds of European tourists.

“They come out of curiosity, and then they tell their friends back in Italy, France and Israel, and we welcome them as well,” Butts said.

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Subscribe to Iowa Bystander!
DMACC President Denson receives prestigious award

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) President Rob Denson has received a prestigious award from the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society.

Denson received the Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction at the 89th Annual PTK International Convention recently held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tenn.

The Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction is awarded to a college president or campus Chief Executive Officer who has made outstanding efforts toward promoting the goals of Phi Theta Kappa. The Shirley B. Gordon Award is named for the President Emeritus of Highland Community College, now serving as chairman of the Phi Theta Kappa Board of Directors.

DMACC President Denson personally assisted PTK in January of 2006. Denson drove the DMACC semi-truck from Des Moines to St. Paul to deliver 18,000 textbooks the Iowa Region of PTK had collected in support of a project called, “Pages of Promise.” The textbooks were shipped to African colleges whose supplies range from meager to non-existent.

Thanks to Denson’s generosity and PTK’s involvement, Pages of Promise was able to collect and transport a record number of textbooks, which are now being used by school children in Africa.

Denson was also cited for his involvement in other PTK activities. He supports the chapter by ensuring funding for chapter advisers and members to attend PTK programs and meetings. He signs letters of invitation to eligible students and attends all PTK induction ceremonies at all six DMACC campuses. He nominates students for the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship Program, all-USA Academic Team and the Coca-Cola Two-Year Scholarship Program. He also encourages universities to increase their scholarship support for transferring members of Phi Theta Kappa.

Denson was presented the award by PTK Executive Director Rod Risley. “We are pleased to recognize Dr. Rob Denson for his outstanding support of Phi Theta Kappa,” said Risley. “His efforts on behalf of the Des Moines Area Community College chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, and of our regional and international programs, have provided opportunities for excellence for numerous students and faculty members. The Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction acknowledges these individuals who exemplify the very best in college administrators who are student focused.”

Phi Theta Kappa is the oldest and largest honor society serving two-year and community colleges in the United States, Canada, Germany, U.S. territorial possessions, the British Virgin Islands and the Republic of Palau. Nearly 100,000 students are inducted annually in the Society’s 1,200 chapters.

DMACC is committed to educating, training and encouraging success for students of all ages. DMACC is Iowa’s largest community college, annually serving nearly 28,000 students enrolled in credit classes and more than 32,000 students in non-credit programs on six campuses and many other locations across Central Iowa.

Des Moines Area Community College Boone Campus Math and Physics Instructor and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Iowa Regional Coordinator Nancy Woods (right) was named the Distinguished Regional Coordinator Award recipient at the recent PTK International Convention held in Nashville. Congratulating Woods is Preston Schmidt, a PTK International Vice President from North Dakota. In addition, DMACC Carroll Campus PTK Beta Theta Xi Vice President Joshua Smouse of Coon Rapids received the Distinguished Chapter Office Award. Also, Iowa Association of Community College President’s Executive Director Dr. R. Gene Gardner received the 2007 State Community College Director Award of Distinction.

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) President Rob Denson (right) receives congratulations for being named the recipient of the 2007 Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction from the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society by PTK Executive Director Rod Risley (left) and former Vice President Al Gore. Gore was the keynote speaker at the recent PTK International Convention held in Nashville, Tennessee.

GLOBAL MATERNAL HEALTH

Speaker: Maureen McCue, MD PhD

Date: June 9th, 2007

Place: Lounge Room, Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church

24th and Cottage Grove, Des Moines, IA 50311

Dr. Maureen McCue has traveled and worked extensively as a peace activist, researcher, and physician. She was an International Chair of Physicians for Social Responsibility, a founding member and former director of the University of Iowa Global Health Studies Program, where she remains active on governing boards, and a founding member and current chair of the UI Center for Human Rights.

She has helped organize many forums on cross cultural, global health, and refugee health issues and has been invited to participate in several Soviet Union, Nicaragua, Cuba, Ecuador and Bangladesh.
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Executive Director
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Des Moines, IA 50314
(515) 233-7817
Fax: (515) 233-6316
E-mail: ebarnes@willkiehouse.org

If you would like to place your business card or your organization’s business card in Iowa Bystander call Jonathan at 515-471-5092 or 515-280-8092.
Church Listings & Weekly Schedules

Burns United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Curtis DeVance, JD, MDIV, Pastor
811 Crocker Street
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: Church 515-244-5883

Church Schedule:
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 12:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Corinthian Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Lee Zachary Maxey, Pastor
814 South Street
Des Moines, IA 50309-1207
Phone: 515-243-4073

Church Business Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Transportation to Sunday School and Morning Worship Service
Verna Smith: 515-243-8470

“...how are they to hear without a preacher? Romans 10:14

Burns United Methodist Church
Address: 811 Crocker Street • DSM, IA 50309
Phone: Church 515-244-5883
Pastor: Rev. Curtis DeVance, JD, MDIV
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 12:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church
Address: 814 South Street • DSM, IA 50309
Phone: 515-243-4073
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Lee Zachary Maxey
Sunday Morning Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Church School: 9:15 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service: 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
Website: www.corinthianbaptismdsm.org

New Friendship Church of God In Christ
Address: 1317 Forest Avenue • DSM, IA 50314
Phone: 515-243-7097
Pastor: Rev. R.L. Daye
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Tuesday: Prayer Service at 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday: Bible Study at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: Prayer Service at 7:00 p.m.
Thursday: Pastoral Teaching at 9:30 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study Led By Pastor: 7:00 p.m.

King of Kings Missionary Baptist Church
Address: 619 S.E. 15th Street • DSM, IA
Phone: 515-282-3425
Pastor: Rev. Irvin Lewis, Sr.
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday: Prayer and Bible Study 6:00 p.m.

Maple Street Missionary Baptist Church
Address: 1552 E. Maple Street • DSM, IA 50316
Phone: 515-262-1931
Pastor: Rev. Keith A. Ratliff, Sr.
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

Mount Hebron Missionary Baptist Church
Address: 1338-9th Street • DSM, IA 50314
Phone: 515-280-9163
Pastor: Rev. Bobby Young
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Church School: 9:30 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Philadelphia SDA Church
Address: 1639 Garfield Avenue • DSM, IA 50316
Phone: 515-262-7467
Pastor: Rev. Marlon T. Perkins, Sr.
Sabbath (Saturday) Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sabbath (Saturday) Church School: 9:30 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting Service: 6:30 p.m.
Sunday Radio Ministry: 9:00 a.m., Praise 940 AM
Email Address: sdaphiladelphia@msn.com

St. Paul A.M.E. Church
Address: 1601 Crocker Street • DSM, IA 50309
Phone: 515-284-4419
Pastor: Rev. H. I. Thomas
Sabbath (Saturday) Church School: 9:30 a.m., Praise 940 AM
Union Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Henry Isaiah Thomas, Pastor
E. University & McCormick Street
Des Moines, IA 50316
Phone: 515-262-1785
Transportation to Sunday School and Morning Worship Service
Bro. Donnie Williams: 244-4833 or Bro. Larry Welch: 771-4441
Mission Statement: Our mission is to win the lost, build the believer and equip the worker so as to make disciples who can make disciples.

Church Schedule:
Sundays - Worship at 8:00 a.m. & at 10:40 a.m.
Sundays - Christian Education at 9:30 a.m.
Sundays - 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.

Send your church news to: iowabystanderarticles@yahoo.com

Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church
Rev. Marlon T. Perkins, Sr., Pastor
1639 Garfield Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50316
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 258

Des Moines, Iowa 50301
Phone: 515-262-3802
Email: sdaphiladelphia@msn.com

Church Schedule:
Sundays: 9:00 a.m.
Children’s Church
Praise & Worship
New Membership Class
Training or Minister/Evangelist
Nursery Available

Sundays 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship
Children’s Church
Nursery Available

Tuesdays 6:00 p.m.
Praise Dance rehearsal

Wednesdays 5:30 p.m.
Women’s Ministry
6:00 p.m. Youth Choir Rehearsal

Thursdays 6:00 p.m.
Aerobics
7:00 p.m. Unity Choir Rehearsal

Saturday Men’s Ministry - 1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month at 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. Traditional Service
For information please call 515-288-4419.
Oprah calls on graduates to live their dreams, serve others

WASHINGTON (AP) - The hope of her grandmother, a servant in 1950s Mississippi, was that the young Oprah Winfrey would “get some good white folks” to work for, the star talk-show host recalled Saturday.

“I regret that she didn’t live past 1963 and see that I did get some really good white folks - working for me,” Winfrey told an estimated 30,000 people gathered for graduation ceremonies at Howard University, one of the nation’s most prominent historically black universities.

Winfrey repeatedly drew big cheers from the moment she took the stage on the university’s main quadrangle to address the 2,300 members of the class of 2007 - 50 years after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Howard’s commencement.

“I stand here as a symbol of what is possible when you believe in the dream of your own life,” Winfrey said. “Don’t be afraid. All you need to do is know who you are.”

The 53-year-old, whose show has remained the top-rated talk show for 20 consecutive seasons, said her success comes from maintaining her principles and serving others.

“My integrity is not for sale, and neither is yours,” Winfrey said, recalling times when she was under pressure to change course or avoid topics to help boost television ratings or keep advertisers. “Do not be a slave to any form of selling out.”

Winfrey recalled how early in her career at a TV station in Baltimore, executives told her she was “too big” and “too black” and “too emotional.” She said they tried to have her TV name changed to “Susie” because it would be more familiar, but she refused. Finally Winfrey was put on a talk show, she said, to run out her contract.

“And that was the beginning of my story,” she added. Winfrey also spoke of what she called a crisis with the nation’s black youth.

“They don’t know what you know. They’re failing and they’re failing. They’re dropping out at rates of 50 percent and higher because we, our generation, didn’t teach them who they are,” Winfrey said. “We have a responsibility to raise them up, to lift them up, to save them, to liberate them from themselves.”

Hugh Duckett, 38, of Baltimore, graduated with his wife Diane Duckett. They both earned master’s degrees in divinity and are associate ministers in Catonsville, Md.

“Oprah’s speech was powerful,” he said. “She showed us what our vision is and our call to give back - to be the men and women that God called us to be.”

Mothers, fathers, sisters and cousins crowded onto the Howard University campus. Some 18,000 people sat on the quadrangle, while others filled the football stadium and 10 other sites on campus, university spokeswoman J.J. Pryor said.

Rhonda Williams traveled from Cleveland to see her 21-year-old daughter Ashley Williams graduate with an accounting degree. She said Winfrey’s opening of an academy for girls in South Africa was inspiring for her as a teacher.

Winfrey was awarded an honorary doctorate in humanities for her generosity, which Howard President H. Patrick Swygert said “inspires all of us to grow.”

“You see with a journalistic eye and intellect, but you tell the complete story with your heart,” he told her.

The new degree drew calls of “Doctor Oprah” from the crowd.

When it came time for her to speak, Winfrey echoed African American presidential candidate’s remarks were about Mitt Romney, a Mormon who is seeking the Republican presidential nomination in 2008. Sharpton said that “as for the one Mormon running for office, those who really believe in God will defeat him anyway, so don’t worry about that, that’s a temporary situation.”

Sharpton says the remark was distorted for political purposes and has apologized to “regular Mormons” for the slight.

He later told a web site editor that he “wasn’t saying that Mormons didn’t believe in God, I was saying that we weren’t going to have to rely on atheists” to defeat Romney.

Sharpton has not apologized to Romney, but called for a “dialogue or reconciliation.”

A Romney spokesman has said nothing constructive would be accomplished by meeting with Sharpton. Romney has called Sharpton’s remarks bigoted.

Sharpton has also raised questions about Romney’s views on the way African-American Mormons were treated by their church before 1978, when only white men were allowed to hold certain religious offices.

It’s unclear if Sharpton plans to raise that issue with church officials in a meeting. It’s also unclear which officials would attend the meeting. Over the telephone, Sharpton spoke with Russell M. Nelson and Henry B. Eyring, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the second-tier of church leadership. 

Mormon church leaders to meet with Sharpton

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - Leaders for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Rev. Al Sharpton are planning an in-person meeting, a church spokesman said.

Sharpton asked for the meeting during a telephone apology he gave to two church elders last week after he said during a debate that Mormons don’t believe in God.

“My integrity is not for sale, and neither is yours,” Winfrey said, recalling times when she was under pressure to change course or avoid topics to help boost television ratings or keep advertisers. “Do not be a slave to any form of selling out.”

Winfrey recalled how early in her career at a TV station in Baltimore, executives told her she was “too big” and “too black” and “too emotional.” She said they tried to have her TV name changed to “Susie” because it would be more familiar, but she refused. Finally Winfrey was put on a talk show, she said, to run out her contract.

“And that was the beginning of my story,” she added. Winfrey also spoke of what she called a crisis with the nation’s black youth.

“They don’t know what you know. They’re failing and they’re failing. They’re dropping out at rates of 50 percent and higher because we, our generation, didn’t teach them who they are,” Winfrey said. “We have a responsibility to raise them up, to lift them up, to save them, to liberate them from themselves.”

Hugh Duckett, 38, of Baltimore, graduated with his wife Diane Duckett. They both earned master’s degrees in divinity and are associate ministers in Catonsville, Md.

“Oprah’s speech was powerful,” he said. “She showed us what our vision is and our call to give back - to be the men and women that God called us to be.”

Mothers, fathers, sisters and cousins crowded onto the Howard University campus. Some 18,000 people sat on the quadrangle, while others filled the football stadium and 10 other sites on campus, university spokeswoman J.J. Pryor said.

Rhonda Williams traveled from Cleveland to see her 21-year-old daughter Ashley Williams graduate with an accounting degree. She said Winfrey’s opening of an academy for girls in South Africa was inspiring for her as a teacher.

Winfrey was awarded an honorary doctorate in humanities for her generosity, which Howard President H. Patrick Swygert said “inspires all of us to grow.”

“You see with a journalistic eye and intellect, but you tell the complete story with your heart,” he told her.

The new degree drew calls of “Doctor Oprah” from the crowd.

When it came time for her to speak, Winfrey echoed African American presidential candidate’s remarks were about Mitt Romney, a Mormon who is seeking the Republican presidential nomination in 2008. Sharpton said that “as for the one Mormon running for office, those who really believe in God will defeat him anyway, so don’t worry about that, that’s a temporary situation.”

Sharpton says the remark was distorted for political purposes and has apologized to “regular Mormons” for the slight.

He later told a web site editor that he “wasn’t saying that Mormons didn’t believe in God, I was saying that we weren’t going to have to rely on atheists” to defeat Romney.

Sharpton has not apologized to Romney, but called for a “dialogue or reconciliation.”

A Romney spokesman has said nothing constructive would be accomplished by meeting with Sharpton. Romney has called Sharpton’s remarks bigoted.

Sharpton has also raised questions about Romney’s views on the way African-American Mormons were treated by their church before 1978, when only white men were allowed to hold certain religious offices.

It’s unclear if Sharpton plans to raise that issue with church officials in a meeting. It’s also unclear which officials would attend the meeting. Over the telephone, Sharpton spoke with Russell M. Nelson and Henry B. Eyring, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the second-tier of church leadership.