LAS VEGAS (AP) - A 22-year-old Virginia woman who said she once thought her only talent was singing is the newest Miss America, emerging from a field of 53 contestants.

Caressa Cameron, a broadcast journalism student at Virginia Commonwealth University, now plans a second year away from college as she travels extensively to raise money for charity and carry the 89-year-old pageant’s crown.

“I hope to gain inspiration, I hope to gain momentum so that when this 365 days is over, I can shoot through the moon,” Cameron told The Associated Press.

Cameron, the first black Miss America since Ericka Dunlap in 2005, says she wants to get a master’s degree and eventually become a news anchor.

Cameron, the daughter of a background researcher for the government and a contractor, said she was inspired to compete in pageants at age 14, when Miss Virginia 2003 Nancy Redd visited her school.

“At that time, all I knew that I could do was sing - that’s all I had,” the Fredericksburg, Virginia, native said.

Cameron said that after that visit, she decided to try out for a school musical, which snowballed into more opportunities in the arts, drama and other areas.

“More doors and more doors continued to open,” she said. “It’s so important that we reach our young people, because there are so many young people that are at the very same crossroads that I was at.”

“We need those people to let them know that just because your circumstances are a certain way, you don’t have to succumb to them,” she said. “You can do something amazing, like become Miss America.”

Cameron won the title and a $50,000 scholarship Saturday night after strutting in a skintight yellow dress, belting Beyonce’s “Listen” from “Dreamgirls” and advising parents to limit video games and television when asked about childhood obesity during an onstage interview.

“We need to get our kids back outside, playing with sticks in the street like I did when I was little,” she said. “Expand your mind, go outside and get to see what this world is like.”

Miss California Kristy Cavinder was the first runner-up, winning $25,000.

The young women who came out on stage at the beginning of the pageant and danced to “I Gotta Feeling” by the Black Eyed Peas are from all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

After a week of preliminary competition that counted 30 percent toward their final scores, they each introduced themselves to the crowd Saturday at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino.

The judges, the public and contestants themselves then trimmed the field over the next two hours.

Actor and “Extra” host Mario Lopez hosted the 89-year-old pageant with help from Clinton Kelly of TLC’s “What Not to Wear.” The pageant was broadcast live on TLC.

The panel of judges included conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh, actress Vivica Fox, musician Dave Koz, Miss America 2002 Katie Harman, gymnast Shawn Johnson and former “American Idol” finalist Brooke White. Comedian Paul Rodriguez was set to be a judge, but organizers said he pulled out because of a family emergency.

Each judge ranked their five favorites in order, and their ballots were used to pick Cameron as the winner. She was crowned by Miss America 2009 Katie Stam of Seymour, Ind.

Cameron won her state’s title on her fourth try, and said she saw pageantry as a way to raise money and awareness for her platform issue, AIDS awareness.

She said the issue is personal for her because her uncle died of AIDS and her family fostered a young girl who lived with the disease.

She was recognized by Congress in 2007 for her work to bring instant-result HIV testing to her home state.

During the Miss Virginia pageant last year, Cameron was asked her opinion about gay marriage, the same issue Miss California Carrie Prejean was asked about during the Miss USA pageant two months earlier.

Cameron said she believed marriage should be between a man and woman because of her religious beliefs, but she didn’t think there should be laws against gay marriage.

The crowning of a Miss America began in 1921 as a publicity stunt to persuade tourists on Atlantic City’s Boardwalk to stick around after Labor Day.

The bathing revue blossomed in the age of television into an American pop icon before fading in later years and losing it place on network TV in 2004. It moved to the Las Vegas Strip in 2006 in an attempt to reinvent itself and has found a home on cable television.
Sowing The Seed:

How can you really measure the success or failure of a sown seed? When it comes to developing a community, its economy, or a chamber of commerce, one way to do it is to sow a seed into different ventures. Some of the ventures may be for-profit some may be non-profit, faith based, or non-faith based, but the fact that a seed—financial—is the way to build an economy fast.

Just think, when you plant an apple tree (sow a seed) you water and feed the seed it grows into a tree, and starts to bare fruit. It will be almost impossible to count the fruit produced by a single seed. The fruit from that one sowing is infinite and always producing more. A bird picks up the fruit, carries it off and drops the seed in a different place. Another tree grows and produces fruit. Well this is the same concept for sowing a seed into an organization or business. This is the same concept for sowing seeds into our children, and looking for the fruit they then will produce. We have to start sowing people—it’s our charge—in order to succeed, educationally, economically, and politically.

Now not just sowing/planting, but nurturing the seed is a must—buying products and services from the business or organization in which you’ve sown your seed. This makes your seed multiply. Tell everybody you now or come in contact with about the business or organization your seed has been planted in, this helps the roots grow deep and strong.

Remember we hold the key to our destiny and success. We can together build the best place to live in the country for black folks, it just takes——WE.

Change happened…Change Continues…Moving Toward Change…JB

African American Museum Announces Lecture Series


This lecture series extends statewide programming in conjunction with the opening of “Endless Possibilities,” the new permanent exhibit of the AAMI. The interactive series will enhance and build upon information provided within the new exhibit. Humanities scholars and community members will engage audiences with the African American experience and how it has shaped history and continues to impact our society today.

Lecture Series Schedule:

- Celeste Bembry, Songs of Endurance, February 9 in Dubuque
- Celeste Bembry, Songs of Endurance, February 15 in Waterloo
- Muhammad Chaichian, Racial Segregation in Rural South Carolina and Urban Iowa: Past Meets Present, February 16 in Cedar Rapids
- James Randall, Responding to Social Demands, February 17 in Keokuk

For more information on this lecture or others in this series please contact Statewide Program Director, Tyla Cole at 319-551-8672 or by email at tcole@blackiowa.org. This lecture series was made possible by a grant from Humanities Iowa.

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- By contacting your local Iowa Workforce Development Office
- Send a copy of your resume to: Firestone Agricultural Tire ATTN: Salary Human Resources 4600 N.W. 2nd Ave Des Moines, Ia. 50306

Note: If you are sending your resume by fax or by mail, please include the position for which you are applying. Positions are listed online and at the Iowa Workforce Development offices.

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

- Abraham Lincoln -
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February 4, 2010
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Legislative Update

By Rep. Ako Abdul-Samad

The 2010 legislative session continues to move at a fast pace. The Iowa House took another step to support veterans, military members and their families. House File 2110 provides unemployment insurance benefits for the spouses of military personnel forced to leave their job due to a military reassignment or a spouse called to active duty.

A subcommittee was held on my bill, House File 2071, and was passed out.

Now it will go to the full education committee. House File 2071 is a bill called “Iowa Opportunities Workforce Act.” This bill directs the board of directors of a community college and the state board of regents to adopt policies, to take effect not later than January 1, 2011, relating to an additional classification of students for purposes of determining tuition and fees that provide equal opportunity for granting resident status to certain individuals.

To meet the requirements of the policy, and individual must have attended an accredited school in this state for at least five years or received a high school equivalency diploma in this state, be accepted for enrollment in a public post secondary institution in this state, must not have been required to pay tuition to attend a public high school in this state, and must sign an affidavit, if the individual does not have a social security number, stating that the individual will pursue U.S. citizenship at the earliest possible time the individual is able to do so.

This bill will help increase our tax base, bring more money to our higher institutions of learning and help keep young adults in Iowa.

Also this week, Governor Culver released his budget plans for the state fiscal year 2011, which begins July 1, 2010. With Iowa still struggling due to the effects of the lingering national recession, the Governor proposed a lean budget that reflects the priorities for Iowans - helping middle class families, balancing the budget without raising taxes, maintaining quality schools, and creating good-paying jobs.

Representative Abdul-Samad serves on the following committees: Human Resources, Education, Transportation, Labor, and Administration & Rules. He is also an Assistant House Leader.

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

County Attorney Sarcone To Seek Re-election

County Attorney John Sarcone announced that he is seeking re-election to the Office of Polk County Attorney. Sarcone, a Democrat, is seeking a sixth term as the county’s chief law enforcement officer. He was first elected in 1990 and was re-elected in 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006, each time without opposition.

In his announcement, Sarcone stated: “I am very proud of our office staff and the professional manner in which they deal with the difficult problems presented to them in handling criminal, juvenile and civil cases. We will continue to have a close working relationship with area law enforcement in order to keep the citizens of Polk County safe and will continue to focus our efforts on prevention programs designed to keep children from getting caught up in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. The research is clear that children who stay in school stay out of the criminal court system.”

Sarcone placed particular emphasis on the fact that outside factors have never entered into the charging and disposition decisions made by the County Attorney’s Office and that whoever someone is or who their lawyer is does not factor into decisions of fairness and justice that are made daily by the office.

Sarcone cited numerous programs and initiatives that the County Attorney’s Office has created and maintained over the past nineteen years including the creation of an Elder Abuse Unit to investigate and prosecute financial and physical crimes perpetrated upon dependent adult and elderly victims, the implementation of a Truancy Court that holds parent accountable for their children’s school attendance, collaboration with the Courts and Correction’s officials to maintain a Youthful Offender Program and Juvenile and Adult Drug Courts that address the intensive needs of chronic substance abusers, a License Reimbursement Program that establishes and monitors fine payments so that when offenders drive they do so legally and insured, and a Fine Collection Program that has collected over one million dollars in overdue fines, fees and restitution. In addition to these and other initiatives, Sarcone stated that he is particularly proud of the work that the office has done in direct service to victims of crimes at all levels, including domestic abuse victims, sexual assault victims, and victims of fraud and exploitation.

Sarcone stressed that he encourages citizen access to the County Attorney’s Office, both directly and through the office web site. Sarcone said that the use of the web site has allowed the County Attorney’s Office to inform the public of what is happening in the courts, of services that are available to crime victims, and of basic information about the criminal justice system that the general citizenry needs to make informed decisions.

Sarcone promised that he will again run a grassroots campaign throughout Polk County designed to educate the public of the continued need for strong law enforcement and prosecution efforts and of the efforts he will continue to make to prevent crime at all levels and protect our most vulnerable citizens.

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“We 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
State Senator Matt McCoy

Protecting pets and pet owners

A bill designed to better protect pets and pet owners from irresponsible pet breeders is moving forward in the Legislature.

Last fall the bipartisan Care of Animals in Commercial Enterprises Study Committee unanimously recommended that state inspectors begin inspecting USDA-licensed dog breeders in response to complaints.

State action is needed because the USDA doesn’t have enough inspectors to get the job done. House Study Bill 604 solves that problem by modestly and responsibly raising fees on pet breeders—currently just $20 a year—to fund state inspectors from the Iowa Department of Agriculture.

Iowa has more than 20,000 dogs in breeding operations, making our state home to the nation’s third largest dog breeding industry. Yet we still haven’t followed the lead of our neighbors—Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska—which already provide state inspection of USDA-licensed breeders.

This new legislation will:
- Empower state agriculture inspectors to investigate complaints at Iowa’s federally licensed facilities.
- Increase penalties for unlicensed facilities and violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act.
- Increase enforcement of uncollected sales tax on the sale of dogs and cats.
- By cracking down on the bad actors in the industry, we’ll help responsible breeders and protect pet owners by making sure all companion animals raised in Iowa are healthy and safe.


Additional information

This is a legislative column by Senator Matt McCoy, representing western and southern portions of Des Moines. For newsletters, photos and further information, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/mccoy.

To contact Senator McCoy during the week, call the Senate Switchboard at 515-281-3371. On weekends he can be reached at home at 515-274-0561. E-mail him at mccoy@legis.state.ia.us.

Senator Matt McCoy is chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Budget Subcommittee and vice-chair of the Ways & Means and Appropriations committees. He also serves on the Commerce, Local Government, and Transportation committees.

State Senator Jack Hatch

New bills would save lives on Iowa roads

Cracking down on unsafe driving

On January 26, the Senate Transportation Committee heard testimony about the dangers of distracted driving from Colonel Pat Hargrave, chair of the committee.

The House and Senate Transportation committees recently heard from researchers at the University of Iowa and the University of North Carolina about strengthening our driver licensing system to better protect young drivers.

The researchers’ recommendations are included in a new bill (SSB 3071) that would:
- Restrict the number of passengers in teen cars. Teens are twice as likely to have an accident with two passengers as they are with one passenger and three times as likely to have an accident with three passengers. Under the bill, intermediate license holders could have only one passenger who is under 21 and not a sibling or member of the same household. The passenger restriction would also apply to school licenses.
- Limit driving without a parent after 11 p.m. Accidents among 16 and 17 year olds go up 300 percent between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Under the legislation, parents could sign a waiver for the teen to drive to work or school-related activities after 11 p.m.
- Extend the length of time for supervised driving. Right now, Iowa teens must hold an intermediate license for six months. Our new bill would increase the time to 12 months so that young drivers can get experience in all seasons and road conditions. Imagine driving in Iowa’s recent blizzard conditions if you had only been taught to drive during the summer.
- Increase enforcement of uncollected sales tax on the sale of cigarettes. Under the legislation, parents could sign a waiver for the teen to drive to work or school-related activities after 11 p.m.
- Limit driving without a parent after 11 p.m. Accidents among 16 and 17 year olds go up 300 percent between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Under the legislation, parents could sign a waiver for the teen to drive to work or school-related activities after 11 p.m.
- Enhancing penalties for running red lights

The Senate Judiciary Committee recently passed SF 2109, which increases penalties for drivers who kill or seriously injure someone while running a red light.

The current penalty for running a red light is a $35 fine. Under the proposed legislation, if a driver runs a red light and someone is seriously injured as a result, the driver will be subject to a fine of up to $500 and/or suspension of driving privileges for up to 90 days. If someone dies as a result of a driver running a red light, the fine can be up to $1,000 and suspension of driving privileges for up to 180 days.

Read the full bill at http://tiny.cc/SF2109.

Additional information

This is a legislative column by Senator Jack Hatch representing central Des Moines. For newsletters, photos and further information, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/hatch.

To contact Senator Hatch during the week, call the Senate Switchboard at 515-281-3371. On weekends he can be reached at home at 515-243-2033. E-mail him at jack.hatch@legis.state.ia.us.

Elpis Fellowship - Weekly Meditation

“Assured By Divine Ability”

Scripture Reading: Romans 4:19-21 • Meditation: Romans 4:21

If you wait on the Lord, He will strengthen your heart. He will heal and deliver you. He will lift you up and break all your chains that bind you. He will give you the garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. He will keep His promises no matter what, but you have to play the part in loving and trusting Him...which strengthens your faith.

When we believe God’s promises we are counted as righteous. We cannot earn righteousness, it comes only through faith. By faith we understand the universe was formed by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of what was invisible. God wants us to understand that just because we can’t see it, does not mean He won’t do it.

Sarah believed God was capable of giving her a child, regardless of what the circumstances looked like. When she believed beyond conception, God multiplied her blessing. The enemy didn’t want that to happen, but God kept His promise to her.

Whatevver God gives you, He wants it to be multiplied in the womb of your spirit. And when you bring it forth, it shall be greater. The enemy wants to multiply and fill your life with fear; but know that God wants to set you free from fear and fill you with faith. God has promised to give us the desires of our hearts, and He always...keeps His promises!

New Normal: Remember in the midst of it all that our assurance comes from God and our faith in God!

Lucille Floyd

“Growing Together In The Things Of God”

Appel To Seek Re-election To Iowa State Senate

State Senator Staci Appel of Warren County announced that she is running for re-election to the Iowa Senate in 2010 and will continue to listen and represent our district.

“I am running for re-election to the State Senate so that I can continue to listen and represent our children and families of Iowa. Every day of my first term, I have worked to make a positive difference in the lives of citizens in Warren, Madison and Dallas counties. I have been able to do that by listening and taking action.” Appel said.

Appel sees our children as Iowa’s future and that’s why she has been a leading advocate for Iowa children. She has supported efforts to provide more opportunities for children of all ages.

“I will continue to work hard to promote policies that create high-paying jobs in our local communities, increase student achievement, make Iowa a leader in the development of renewable fuels, and ensure affordable and accessible healthcare for all Iowans,” said Appel.

Appel pointed to several accomplishments by the Legislature, including:

• Expanding early childhood educational opportunities
• Increased funding for our local public schools and teachers
• Making healthcare affordable and accessible for more Iowa children
• Balancing the state’s budget without raising taxes
• Increasing the state’s minimum wage for thousands of working Iowans
• Making tuition more affordable at our community colleges and universities

Appel pledged to continue to travel throughout the district to listen and reach out to her constituents.

Latham Talks National Security On February Show

Iowa Congressman Tom Latham leads a discussion on national defense during the latest episode of the Congressional Report, Latham’s monthly television show that airs throughout Iowa and is available online.

Tom Donnelly of the American Enterprise Institute joined Congressman Latham to discuss national security and national defense with a heavy emphasis on U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The informative episode also delves into Iraq and other areas of the Middle East that have an impact on U.S. national security.

“National defense is an extraordinarily complex and important issue,” Congressman Latham said. “Protecting our country and its citizens requires constant vigilance and innovation.”

During the half-hour interview, Congressman Latham addressed the Afghanistan strategy adopted by President Obama and the emerging threat of terrorism in Yemen.

Donnelly said the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have presented unique challenges to the U.S. military, requiring it to innovate in how it conducts its operations.

“Our military has really adapted amazingly well in learning how to do irregular warfare and counterinsurgency going back to the Iraq surge and even arguably before that,” he said.

But he stressed that the United States will likely have to sustain a long-term presence in Afghanistan to achieve victory.

The “Congressional Report” airs statewide on Iowa on Mediacom Channel 22 on Wednesdays at 4 p.m. and on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. Episodes of the television show are also available on Congressman Latham’s Web site, www.LathamHouseGo.com. They are also on his YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/user/CongressmanTomLatham.

Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. — Martin Luther King, Jr.

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WASHINGTON (AP) - A judge on Monday threw out a lawsuit by eight members of the nation’s oldest black sorority, who accused the group’s president of taking hundreds of thousands of dollars in improper compensation and spending sorority money on a wax statue of herself and other questionable purposes.

In a 17-page opinion, D.C. Superior Court Judge Natalia M. Combs Greene said the plaintiffs failed to prove they were entitled to relief, in large part because their lawsuit against Chicago-based Alpha Kappa Alpha and its president, Barbara McKinzie (pictured), was the wrong kind of legal action. Combs Greene suggested they should have filed a shareholder derivative suit, which allows shareholders to sue on behalf of a corporation after first meeting certain requirements.

“This case is largely about several disgruntled AKA members disillusioned with what they see as an increasingly opaque, authoritarian, and self-serving leadership in their organization. Based on the voluminous record, questions may exist as to the propriety of the Directorate’s actions,” the judge wrote.

“The question remains, however, whether such behavior warrants judicial intervention – particularly given the fact Plaintiffs appear to have attempted to circumvent the requirements of a shareholder derivative suit.”

Combs Greene said the lawsuit was short on specifics and long on “hyperbolic allegations riddled with buzz words.”

“The sorority sisters who filed the lawsuit in June sought to remove McKinzie. They questioned the legitimacy of $375,000 in compensation that she received in 2007, saying it was never approved by members and that past presidents have received only small stipends. The plaintiffs also alleged that McKinzie bought designer clothing, jewelry and lingerie with the sorority credit card, then redeemed points on the card to buy other luxuries.

As for the wax statue commissioned for the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore, McKinzie has said the sorority spent $45,000 on two figures - one of her and one of the group’s first international president, the late Nellie Quander.

Most of the sorority’s revenue comes from member dues and registration fees for membership meetings, the plaintiffs said.

“The plaintiffs’ attorney, Edward W. Gray Jr., said his clients are considering their options.

“The plaintiffs are utterly resolute and are determined to continue to fight,” he said. AKA said the ruling reiterates that McKinzie has led the group “with the utmost integrity and professionalism.”

“We have said from the outset that once all of the facts surrounding this matter were examined in court, each and every one of the frivolous and false accusations made in the complaint would ultimately be dismissed,” McKinzie and AKA lawyer Dale Cooter said in a statement. AKA, founded in 1908 at Howard University in Washington, boasts a worldwide membership of 250,000 women, including prominent black businesswomen and such luminaries as author Toni Morrison.

The lawsuit caused a stir among sorority sisters, with people on both sides taking to online forums and supporters of the plaintiffs packing into court hearings wearing pink and green, the sorority’s colors.

For Your Information, Please

CA Guard gets first black, female leader

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) - The first black woman to head the National Guard in any state has taken charge in California.

Brigadier General Mary Kight (kite) was sworn in Tuesday by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at a former Air Force base outside Sacramento.

She is also the first woman to lead the 21,000 members of the state’s Army and Air National Guard.

Schwarzenegger called the 59-year-old Kight a pioneer for breaking gender and racial barriers. She has spent nearly 25 years with the California guard after seven years in the Air Force.

She assumes command from General William Wade, who is leaving to help command a North Atlantic Treaty Organization force in Italy.

Civil rights icon Lowery hospitalized

ATLANTA (AP) - Civil rights icon Joseph Lowery is in an Atlanta hospital because of respiratory problems.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports that a friend of the 88-year-old says Lowery was admitted to a hospital on Saturday and placed in an intensive care unit as a precaution.

The newspaper reports that Lowery’s friend David Stokes says Lowery is doing better and expects to be released from the hospital on Monday.

A hospital spokesman declined to comment to The Associated Press.

Lowery was a co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and served as its president from 1977 to 1997. He delivered the benediction at the inauguration of President Barack Obama.

NC museum opens on 50th anniversary of sit-in

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) - Franklin McCain says the best feeling of his life came from sitting on a lunch counter stool.

That stool was at a segregated counter the Woolworth store in downtown Greensboro. McCain and three other black freshmen at North Carolina A&T State University sat down and demanded service 50 years ago, on Feb. 1, 1960.

It took six months, but by the end of July, the lunch counter was desegregated. The actions of McCain, Joseph McNeil, David Richmond and Ezell Blair Jr. sparked a wave of civil rights protests that changed America.

On Monday, the International Civil Rights Center and Museum opened on the site of the former store. Its star attraction: the original stools and counter where the four sat and demanded service.

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Give your Home Another Chance
FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) - Filmmaker Spike Lee issued a wake-up call to Generation Y before a full house at NAU’s Atrium Auditorium.

The director of “Do the Right Thing” and “When the Levees Broke” said an entire generation of black and Latino youth is seemingly unwilling to pursue an education because they believe it carries a social stigma.

“We have young black kids and some Hispanic kids - smart kids - who fail class on purpose or who act dumb on purpose. In their misguided minds, if you speak correct English, you are acting white, you are a sell-out, you are an Oreoz,” Lee said. “But if you are on the corner, smoking a joint and drinking a 40 with you pants below your ass holding your privates - you a gangster.”

He contended that an entire generation has seemingly forgotten that slaves were either whipped, castrated or hanged for secretly learning how to read and teaching other slaves.

“And if the master was having a bad day, you might get all three,” Lee said. “They were willing to die to teach other slaves how to read and write. And now we are at a point where young black minds are willing to fail class on purpose because they feel if you get A’s and speak correctly, you are acting white.”

Lee said many of his movies contain the phrase “Wake up” as a reminder that the social and racial issues explored in his films are still deeply rooted in American society.

He said he is not convinced that American society has eliminated racism despite the election of Barack Obama, the nation’s first black president.

Most of Lee’s 40-minute speech was autobiographical. He touched on his family, his films and his education.

More than 1,400 crowded into Atrium to hear him speak, and another 350 heard him via a remote audio feed in nearby Cline Library.

After his speech, Lee spent a half-hour answering questions, mostly from students. The social activist appeared to be humbled by an NAU graduate student named Stephen Hinkle.

Hinkle, who has autism, explained to Lee that his mother was advised to institutionalize him at the age of

5. He asked Lee whether he supported disability rights, noting that 73 percent of adults with disabilities are unemployed.

Lee, who started years ago in Nike commercials as the fast-talking Mars Blackman, paused before admitting he knew very little about the disability rights movement.

“But you are a Hollywood producer, and you blew me out of the water,” Lee said.

Lee was brought to campus by the NAU Martin-Springer Institute to be its headline speaker for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Lee was chosen for his advocacy for Hurricane Katrina victims, his candid portrayal of the challenges facing some African-Americans and his relentless focus on prejudice and racial stereotypes,” Jane Marks, director of the NAU Martin-Springer Institute, stated in an earlier press release.

This year the institute is focusing on refugees and displaced people. The banquet will be held at The Assembly Hall, 1250 NE 56th St. in Pleasant Hill. For information or to purchase tickets contact Gretchen Woods at 515.254.1947 or gretchenahw@peoplepc.com or at 515.480.4813.
Legislature focuses on a responsible budget, key priorities

Everything the Legislature will do this session is shaped by the deep, lingering national recession. Middle-class Iowans, small businesses and other employers have been hit hard. The state of Iowa is feeling the pinch too. That’s why Republicans and Democrats at the Iowa Capitol are continuing to closely examine all state spending and tighten the state’s budget belt. This includes:

- Holding the line or cutting spending for most state programs and services.
- Not raising taxes on Iowans.
- Rethinking and reorganizing how state government works.
- Saving taxpayers $60 million a year by approving an early retirement program.
- Considering reforms to corporate tax incentives, including cutting spending on tax breaks and ensuring more accountability for taxpayers.

All of these elements and more were included in a budget proposal outlined January 27 by Governor Culver. His plan responds to the concerns of Iowans who want a responsible state budget that focuses limited resources on creating good-paying jobs, maintaining a strong education system and ensuring quality health care for more Iowans.

In the coming weeks, legislators will examine the details of the Governor’s plan. As we move ahead with developing our own plan, I want to hear your suggestions for how we can best balance the state budget, provide essential services to Iowans, and lay the foundation for a strong recovery from the national recession.

Tougher offender law is a success

Iowa’s law enforcement community is praising the state’s new, sex offender law, which makes it easier to keep track of offenders. The new law, which went into effect in 2009, requires sex offenders to report to the county sheriff in person more frequently and to provide more detailed information on their whereabouts. In addition, sex offenders whose crimes are against children are prohibited from working at or loitering near schools, daycare centers or other places intended primarily for kids.

The law is living up to its promise of being safer, stronger and smarter for Iowans, according to three law enforcement professionals—Jasper County Sheriff Mike Balmer, Warren County Deputy Brian Vos and Lieutenant Joe Simon of Polk County—as well as representatives of the County Attorneys Association and the Iowa Department of Public Safety. They said sex offenders are now registering on time, more often and voluntarily; sheriffs departments are getting fewer bad addresses from offenders; and offenders are paying their registration fees.

Additional information

This is a legislative column by Senator Dick Dearden, representing the east side of Des Moines and Pleasant Hill. Photos and further information are at www.senate.iowa.gov/dearden.

To contact Senator Dearden during the week, call the Senate Switchboard at 515-281-3371. On weekends he can be reached at home at 515-262-1203. E-mail him at dick.dearden@iowa.state.us.

Senator Dick Dearden is chair of the Natural Resources Committee. He also serves on the Appropriations, Ethics, Labor & Business Relations, Rules & Administration, and State Government committees.

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Community Forums Set For 2011 School Budget Discussion

Des Moines Public Schools will hold a series of community forums to discuss next year’s budget (fiscal year 2011). Forums will be held on the following dates and will last approximately an hour:

- Tuesday, Feb. 9, Central Campus Boardroom, 1800 Grand Ave., 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 11, Callanan Middle School, Media Center, 3010 Center St., 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 18, Greater Des Moines Partnership, 700 Locust St., Suite 100, Arthur Davis Room, 11:45 a.m.
- Tuesday, Feb. 23, Goodwin Middle School, Library, 3300 E. 29th St., 6 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 25, Lincoln High School, Commons Area, 2600 SW 39th St., 6 p.m.

The public is encouraged to attend a forum to talk with district representatives and school board members about concerns, as well as to have questions answered. The first forum, Tuesday, Feb. 9, also will be a live broadcast on cable Channel 12.

Questions will be taken from the audience attending that evening, as well as from callers.

The forum will then be rebroadcast on Channel 12 for a few weeks.

“While there are still a lot of unknown variables and the budget picture will keep evolving over the weeks and months to come, we want to clearly convey to everyone the unprecedented magnitude of what the district faces,” said Dr. Nancy Sebring, superintendent.

In addition to the five community forums already scheduled to discuss next year’s school budget (fiscal year 2011), Des Moines Public Schools urges those unable to attend a forum to provide a written comment to the district by e-mailing budget2011@dmps.k12.ia.us or writing to DMPS, 901 Walnut St., Des Moines, IA 50312, Attn: budget 2011 Comment.

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 & Publisher • Jerald Brantley, Sr. Associate Publisher • Gaynelle Narcisse

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EEO/AA
Black History Month Events Scheduled
At Iowa State University Beginning Feb. 8th

For more than 30 years, the United States has recognized February as Black History Month. To help celebrate the month this year, Iowa State University offers a variety of events. All are free and open to the public.

Jeff Johnson (pictured), a journalist, social activist and political commentator, will speak on “Unclaimed Legacy: Who Will Lead?” at 8:00 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8th, in the Memorial Union Great Hall.

Originally known as “Cousin Jeff,” Johnson has earned a reputation as the “conscience voice” of BET networks. He is committed to fostering broad-based communication about issues related to race, politics, pop culture and socioeconomic class. Johnson’s new book, “Everything I’m Not Made Me Everything I Am,” is a call to service for the post-Civil Rights generation.

Johnson has worked as a senior advisor for media and youth outreach for People for the American Way, national director of the Youth and College Division of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and as the vice president of Russell Simmons’ Hip Hop Summit Action Network.

Spoken word artist and community leader Lyfe will present a one-man show, “Is Everybody Stupid (?)” at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10th, in the Memorial Union Cardinal Room. The multimedia, interactive show is a daring, fast-paced and detailed look into American apathy, disengagement and ignorance. From commercial Hip Hop defining white youth’s notions of the African American experience to the commodification of poverty to Obama’s ascendency to the White House, Lyfe’s powerful session engages and transforms participants with his critical and creative analysis.

Lyfe’s artistic work includes his 2006 debut album, “spreadword,” and his latest, “Prince Cometh.” He also authored a play, “Who’s Krazy?” and a forthcoming book, “Potols and Prayers.” Lyfe has performed in Russell Simmons’ Def Poetry Jam on HBO, and at more than 60 universities. He also works with local organizations addressing the educational, social and political needs of young people in San Francisco and Oakland.

Veteran standup comic Reese Waters will perform at 9:00 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25th, at the Maintenance Shop. Waters can be seen on Comedy Central’s “Michael and Michael Have Issues.” In March 2009, he was featured as one of 10 comedians to watch in New York Magazine. Reese has appeared at the Montreal Comedy Festival. In March 2009, he was featured as one of 10 comedians to watch in New York Magazine.

Lyfe’s multimedia presentation provides background information on the Homestead Act, post-slavery reconstruction programs, and the Indian Wars to illustrate how racially discriminatory federal land policies of the 19th century directly established established established African American communities. Luckye is a hip hop theater artist who weaves storytelling, spoken word poetry, dance, acting and hip hop music into compelling narratives of personal and political transformation.

His diverse performance locations have included the WTO demonstrations on the streets of Seattle, Café Cantante in Havana, Cuba, and the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York City. His presentation is part of the Iowa State Conference on Race and Ethnicity, ISCORE 2010. For a full schedule of events and registration information, visit www.iscore.iastate.edu <http://www.iscore.iastate.edu/ >

Black History Month events at ISU are cosponsored by Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Planning Committee; African American Studies Program; Black Graduate Student Association; Black Student Alliance; Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics; Center for American Intercultural Studies; the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Design, Engineering, Human Sciences, and Liberal Arts and Sciences; Dean of Students; ISU Difficult Dialogues; ISCORE; Margaret Sloss Women’s Center; Multicultural Student Affairs; the departments of Music, and Philosophy and Religious Studies; Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost; Office of the President; Phi Beta Sigma; Student Union Board; and the committee on Lectures, which is funded by the Government of the Study Body.

The Fort Des Moines Museum Presents:
The Underground Railroad In Iowa Tour

It’s all aboard on Saturday, February 6th at 11:00 a.m. at the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center, 75 East Army Post Road in Des Moines for a presentation by Iowa historian, G. Galen Berries. Join us to learn about Iowa’s many stations on the Underground Railroad, a network of men and women, many being Quakers, who actively assisted runaway slaves to reach Canada and freedom. This free activity is sponsored by Humanities Iowa. For more information call 515-282-8060, or visit www.fortdesmoines.org.

Iowa Bystander Church Directory

...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. Dr. Willy L. Mafuta
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 12:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Jubilee United Methodist Church
Address: 1621 E. 4th Street • Waterloo, IA 50703
Phone: Church: 319-234-5307
Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.

Maple Street Missionary Baptist Church
Address: 1852 E. Maple Street • DSM, IA 50316
Phone: 515-262-1931
Pastor: Rev. Keith A. Ratliff, Sr.
Sunday Morning Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.
Free Medical Clinic: 1st, 3rd & 5th Tuesdays - 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 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 School: 9:30 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study: 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

Union Missionary Baptist Church
Address: E Univ. & McCormick • DSM, IA 50316
Phone: 262-1785
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Henry L. Thomas
Sunday Morning Worship: 8:00 a.m., 10:40 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer and Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

Cornerstone Family Church
3114 SW 61st Street
Des Moines, IA 50321
Phone: 515-243-2852

Business Office
Monday – Friday: 8:30-4:40
Church Office 515-243-2852 ext 75

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Transportation to Sunday worship services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Wednesdays
Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.
SpiritLife 7:00 p.m.
One Youth 7:00 p.m.

 Saturdays
Worship at 6:00 p.m.
Merge – Ministry for Singles over 30
2nd Saturday of each month 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Radio Ministry
Fri. 11:30 a.m. & Sun. 7:30 a.m. on Praise 940 AM
Website: www.cornerstonefamilychurch.org

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Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer and Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

...how shall they preach, except they be sent? Romans 10:15

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Individuals should submit a letter of interest and resume for each administrative position interested in by 4pm on February 26 to Celeste Kelling, Director, Human Resources Management, 901 Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50309, or fax to 515-242-8251.

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"Let our first act every morning be this resolve: I shall not fear anyone on earth. I shall fear only God. I shall not bear ill-will towards anyone. I shall not submit to injustice from anyone. I shall conquer un-truth, I shall put up with all suffering."

-Gandhi
REQUEST FOR BIDS
SECTION 3 SUBCONTRACTORS
General contractor for the rehabilitation of Homes of Oakridge, Des Moines, IA, is seeking certified Section 3 subcontractors to submit bids for the following work: masonry restoration, landscaping, fence installation, site drainage, and exterior carpentry. For information regarding this project contact Taylor Hunt at Yarco Company, Inc., at 816-300-0680 or email at thunt@yarco.com prior to February 22, 2010.

Who would guess that central Iowa is home to the National Texting Champion? Kate Moore, 15, of Des Moines holds the title. She is a sophomore at Roosevelt High School and was at the Statehouse January 28 to share her story, and some pointers, with her State Senator, Jack Hatch. The two had a speed texting contest, which Kate won handily. The good news is Kate doesn’t plan to do any texting when she gets behind the wheel of a car, which studies show to be one of the most dangerous distractions for a driver. Several bills to reduce distracted driving and keep our roads safer will be considered in the Legislature this year.

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Greetings Community:
The Iowa/Nebraska State Conference Youth & College Division invites you to join us in celebrating the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) during NAACP Week, February 7-12, 2010.
The NAACP begins its next 100 years of Civil Rights advocacy. Leadership during this next century will come from the Iowa/Nebraska State Conference Youth & College units beginning on Sunday, February 7th during morning worship reach out where an appeal will be made for membership.
Throughout the week, suggested activities will encourage interest and involvement with the NAACP. Iowans and Nebraskans will be encouraged to continue in the work, recommit to the cause or become engaged in the purpose of equality for all.
We all need to match our interest with the work of the organization and do our parts. Join the adult chapter, join or charter a Youth Council or College Chapter. Spread the word. Share in the vision of the NAACP.
Carissa Smith is the State Conference Youth President, Mrs. Gretchen Woods is the State Conference Youth Advisor and Rev. Keith A. Ratliff, Sr. is the State Conference President.

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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