



# THE CAPITAL CITY COURIER

FEBRUARY 2011

## The Okey-Doke: How Mainstream Media Affects Our Minds, Thoughts and Actions

### Dr. Walter Milton, Achievement With a Capital "A"! - pg. 5

Dr. Walter Milton, Jr., is a native of Rochester, New York. He is the current Superintendent of District 186 Schools in Springfield, Illinois. He is a proud product of the State University of New York (SUNY) system. He earned a B.A. from the University of Albany and a M.S. from SUNY College at Brockport. He took post-graduate courses at the University of Rochester to receive his administrative certifications, including his superintendent's license.



### Russell Simmons, "Super Rich" Interview - pg. 7

Russell Wendell Simmons was born in Queens, New York on October 4, 1957, the middle of three sons to bless the marriage of Daniel and Evelyn Simmons, a public school administrator and NYC parks administrator, respectively. Russell and Rick Rubin co-founded Def Jam Records, the legendary hip-hop label, in 1984. Russell parlayed his success in music into several fashion lines, most notably, Phat Farm and Baby Phat.



### Judy Baar Topinka: Bringing Illi- nois Back in Balance!- pg. 18

Judy Baar Topinka is the Illinois State Comptroller and former Illinois State Treasurer, having served as Treasurer from 1995 to 2007. She was the first woman to become state treasurer, first to be elected to three consecutive terms and the first Republican to hold the post in more than thirty-two years.



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# FEBRUARY 2011

## FEATURE & COLUMN STORIES

- 5 IN THE NEWS:**  
Dean Williams, Putting People to Work in Central Illinois!
- 6 LIFESTYLES:**  
Dr. Walter Milton, Achievement With a Capital "A"!
- 7 RUSSELL SIMMONS**  
The "Super Rich" Interview by Kam Williams
- 9 WE NEED BLACK POWER**  
Not Endorsement Deals!
- 11 ASK SARNIA:**  
Ms. Cotton's Opinions
- 12 COVER STORY:**  
The Okey-Doke: How Mainstream Media Affects Our Minds, Thoughts and Actions
- 16 INSPIRATION:**  
Pray and Trust God, He's More Than the World Against You!
- 16 THE WINNING TEAM:**  
Aeneas & Tracy Williams,. Identify Your Vision!
- 17 FOR THE FELLAS**  
Real Men Know How to Show Up!
- 17 FOR THE SISTERS:**  
This Is A Season of LOVE!
- 18 JUDY BAA TOPINKA:**  
Bringing Illinois Back in Balance!
- 20 DR. PAUL MACH:**  
Circumventing Genetic Predisposition
- 21 OUR COMMUNITY:**  
Local Events, Comments and Announcements
- 22 GUEST EDITORIAL:**  
Gasoline Prices — Here We Go Again!
- 22 FITNESS:**  
The 3 "A's" of Fitness!

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# From The EDITOR

Michael Attma

**C**an Black Women Raise Black Boys to Be Strong Black Men? That question was a cover story for the Capital City Courier in September of 2006. Once again the question was asked, only this time in the form of a documentary written and produced by Norman Calmese. The documentary, which featured personalities such as comedian and activist Dick Gregory, film producer Janks Morton as well as a host of others, has spurred interesting debate both for and against women raising boys to be men. It is interesting to note that the majority of the comments that have been made by men that say women can't raise boys to be men were made by men that were raised in two parent households and therefore did not

have any experience with a man not being in the home. On the flip side, the majority of the comments that have been made that say women can raise boys to be men, came from successful men that were raised entirely by their mothers. Hopefully, the dialogue that has been created by this documentary can give hope to the single mothers that are raising their boys on their own as well as shed some light on the disconnect that exists between the two sides. To view the documentary trailer, go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiX0bPZXAn0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiX0bPZXAn0) or email Norman at [tinjks@yahoo.com](mailto:tinjks@yahoo.com).

About 20 years ago, I used to keep a list in my wallet of guys that I grew up with in the projects in St. Louis that had died. I remember when I finally stopped keeping the list there were 29 names on the list. None of the names that were on the list were guys that died from natural causes. Several were both shot and killed in either night club fights, gang fights, drug related fights or overdoses or suicide. Here I am now keeping a new list, with the cause of death in many instances being health-related. Within the last two weeks I have lost three friends, all from heart problems. In conversations with two other friends, one of their weight had ballooned to over 300 pounds and he had diabetes and had just spent ten days in the hospital with fluid on his lungs.

The other one had a near death as he was admitted to the hospital with two blood clots on his lungs. All of these men were ages 49 to 53. I want to stress to all the men out there to not forget to take care of yourself, and to maintain some type of exercise regimen as well as watch what you put in your body, be it food, drugs or alcohol. We only live once, and our bodies are a temple that should be taken care of. You owe it to yourself, your spouse or significant other and your children to be as healthy as you can.

Baseball season is just around the corner as Major League Baseball pitchers and catchers will be reporting to spring training in Florida and Arizona beginning February 13th. College and high school teams will also begin to gear up to get ready for seasons that will begin as early as March 18. What has been notably absent from major league, collegiate and high school teams is the presence of black baseball players. This downward spiral began about the mid '80's and has been going downhill ever since. I would especially urge more black kids to try out for their high school team. I have personally witnessed black kids that have the talent to be good baseball players not even try out for the team saying that baseball is too boring or they don't feel that they will get a fair chance at playing. One thing for sure is that if they

do have talent, someone will eventually see them. For those kids who want to go to college, baseball could be that avenue through a baseball scholarship. The last time I checked, the average salary for a major league baseball player was \$3.3 million dollars, not to mention that their careers are longer than both basketball and football players. Having said that, I would like to put in a shameless plug for Perfect Pitch Baseball and Softball School, a facility that I just recently opened in Springfield, Illinois. Visit our website at [www.aperfectpitchbaseball.com](http://www.aperfectpitchbaseball.com) or call us at 217.679.2111.

This month's cover story written by Kim Gordon is titled "The Okey-Doke: How Mainstream Media Affects Our Minds, Thoughts, and Actions." Also in this month's edition is an interview with Russell Simmons written by Kam Williams, and interviews with District 186 Superintendent Dr. Walter Milton and Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka written by yours truly, and an interview with photographer to the stars and Central Illinois Film Commission member Dean Williams written by Kim Conner.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

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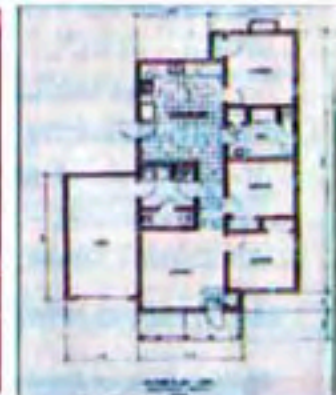
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**F**rom the “School of Hard Knocks”, self-taught photographer Dean Williams’ path is far from ordinary. He just always seemed to be in the right place and the right time, as fate would have it. He began taking pictures for the high school year book and newspaper as a freshman, just to get out of class early. Little did he know though, this seemingly insignificant decision would ultimately set the course for his life and career. Fast forward, today, he has over 40 years of experience in photography and over 30 years of experience in motion pictures. Williams’ goal and that of the Central Illinois Film Commission in Springfield is to put Illinois’ central region on the map in terms of film. He has worked as still photographer on films such as Coal Miner’s Daughter, Rocky V, Blues Brothers, Backdraft, Silkwood, Batman Returns, Poltergeist III, and favorite, Uncle Buck, as well as television shows, ER, Sister, Sister, and Extreme Makeover Home Edition. His photographs have landed on the covers of Newsweek, Life, People, Time Magazine, and TV Guide.

**Q.** How long have you been in the business?

**A.** *Photography since 1969 and Motion Pictures since 1978.*

**Q.** How did you get your start? What sparked your interest in photography?

**A.** *Taking pictures for the yearbook and newspaper as a freshman in high school, I learned that I could get out of class early and be the first in line for lunch. Eighty percent of those photos came out good, and the other 20% were no good, which wasn’t bad considering I received little or no training for the job. They just gave me a camera and basically told me to shoot. After high school, I joined the navy where I enrolled in the Naval School of Photography. I basically wanted to make more money. I got to know the programs to the extent that I could teach, becoming a certified instructor, earning a teaching certificate based on experience. I got a top secret clearance during the Cuban Missile Crisis to film John F. Kennedy. After the Navy, I worked for the Los Angeles Police Department, then the Illinois State Police as a civilian photographer. I kissed the state goodbye when I began working on NBC’s “Awakening Land”, a 3-part series starring Hal Holbrook. I was paid \$18,000 per movie over the course of three months. Then I worked on the Academy Award-winning film, “Coal Miner’s Daughter”.*

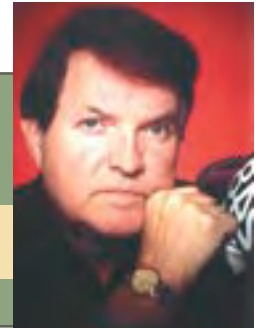
**Q.** As a still photographer, what do you do to prepare for a job?

**A.** *You break down the script first. You*

## IN THE NEWS

### Dean Williams — Putting People to Work on Film in Central Illinois

by Kimberly D. Conner



*establish the interior and exterior shots. You determine whether or not it’s day or night. Back in the day, you determined what type of film was to be used. The speed. What type of look? How much color? Etc.*

**Q.** A still photographer takes the still photos that are ultimately used for the promotion and release of the film. Do you have any say so as to which photos will be used? Are you able to make recommendations?

**A.** *Yes, absolutely. The still photographer determines what the movie poster will look like, what will appear on it, what the characters will be doing, basically establishing the concept. The still photographer must obtain the actors’ approval before the photographs can be used. The photographer takes 5,000 to 8,000 photos during the production. The photographer then sends 50 of the best photos to the movie studio. The studio picks 15 of those photos to use in the press kits that are sent all over the country to market and promote the film.*

**Q.** There was an incident in which production photos were allegedly leaked to the National Enquirer. Tell me about that, if you would. How did it happen? What can be done to prevent this from happening, as a still photographer?

**A.** *As a still photographer, we have to keep the photos private and the surprise of the film alive, prior to release. That’s very important. That incident took place on the set of “Batman Returns”. We got a phone call saying, “Give me \$50,000 or else.” The FBI came in to investigate possible copyright violations, as these photos were property of the movie studio. As it turns out, the stolen photos were not the photos that I had taken after all. The photos were stolen by a make-up trailer driver, along with the negatives, and leaked to the Enquirer. We speculate that that was why the sales from the movie “Batman Returns” were substantially lower than “Batman” the movie, a result of these leaked photos.*

**Q.** You’ve worked on over 150 motion pictures and television shows. Which was the greatest challenge and why?

**A.** *“Caddy Shack” because we had to recreate suburban Chicago in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Photographically, it was difficult to reproduce. We had to get rid*

*of the palm trees. Excess partying made it difficult as well. There were people doing drugs. At that time, that was not unusual. It was hard for them to focus. They were having way too much fun. As a result, they weren’t on point when it was time to film.*

**Q.** What’s your favorite, most memorable moment?

**A.** *On the set with George C. Scott. To see him direct all these wonderful actors, recognizable African-American actors. He was a perfectionist, watching him made the hair stand up on the back of our neck. It was my highest and lowest point because George got fired half way through the production of “Don’t Look Back – The Satchel Paige Story”, starring Louis Gossett, Jr. George was fired in the middle of the production for trying to do everything right.*

**Q.** Tell me about some of the connections you have made in the industry along the way.

**A.** *I met Oprah Winfrey 19 years ago on the television show, “Brewster’s Place”. I would later work as her personal photographer. I worked with Sylvester Stallone on “Rocky” and “Tango and Cash”, Michael Keaton in “Batman Returns”, Lou Gossett, Jr. in “The Satchel Paige Story”. I’ve worked with Robin Williams, Chevy Chase, Danny Glover, John Goodman, Joe Pesci, Kurt Russell, Patrick Swayze, John Candy, Val Kilmer, Cher, Mick Jagger, and many others.*

**Q.** Is there anything you would have done differently, in terms of your career?

**A.** *Absolutely. I would study the new technology. It came in and took over so quickly. People entrenched in film didn’t really see it coming. Digital is in. Film is out. There was no Photoshop then. Whatever you shot that day, that’s what you got.*

**Q.** Tell me about your affiliation with the Central Illinois Film Commission. What’s happening with film on a local level? Are there projects in the works?

**A.** *I held the position of Executive Director. The Central Illinois Film Commission is a non-profit organization that develops and promotes film projects in Illinois’ central region. The Commission originated with volunteers, meeting once a month, now it*

*has over 300 members. There’s a growing production base in Central Illinois. The Commission has brought in \$6 million in production to Central Illinois, all paid jobs. “The Informant” was filmed in Springfield and Decatur. The film “Show Down” used a local crew. We’ve done commercials. Something brand new that the Springfield Film Commission is doing, previews and trailers for books. Instead of a foreword, there are now book trailers. At the end of the month, you will be able to watch the book trailer for the book “Killed by Indians 1871”, which is the story of a free slave that hauled freight to make enough money to free his wife, available nationwide at Barnes and Noble Book Stores.*

**Q.** What advice would you give young photographers and those that are interested in breaking into the movie industry?

**A.** *School is imperative. A professional camera doesn’t equal a professional photographer. There’s lighting and composition. You have to be an introvert. You’re seen by the paparazzi. Young people need to wear the proper attire. They have to have the right attitude. They have to have the knowledge to be a professional photographer. You have to be able to direct actors, position them, to make them look good, in other words.*

**Q.** I saw you recently at the screening of the candid documentary, “Can Black Women Raise Black Boys to be Strong Men?” by artist/director Norman Calmese. What role, if any, did you and the Central Illinois Film Commission play in bringing the documentary to screen?

**A.** *I was associate producer. We provided the lights, cameras, and dolly for the production.*

For more information about Dean Williams and available services, please visit the website at [www.deanwilliams.net](http://www.deanwilliams.net). To learn more about film production and to find out about opportunities to get involved in local film projects, please visit the Central Illinois Film Commission website at [www.centralillinoisfilm.com](http://www.centralillinoisfilm.com). The website contains a list of qualified filmmakers and other resources.

# LIFESTYLES

## Dr. Walter Milton Jr.: Achievement With a Capital “A”!

*Dr. Mike Pittman*

**D**r. Walter Milton, Jr., is a native of Rochester, New York. He is the current Superintendent of District 186 Schools in Springfield, Illinois. He is a proud product of the State University of New York (SUNY) system. He earned a B.A. from the University of Albany and a M.S. from SUNY College at Brockport. He took post-graduate courses at the University of Rochester to receive his administrative certifications, including his superintendent’s license. He holds a Doctorate of Education degree in leadership and policy from the University of Buffalo. He has been a teacher in two suburban districts; a principal in a large urban school district and the superintendent of Fallsburg Central District, Fallsburg, New York; Flint Community Schools, Flint, Michigan. He firmly believes in the value of instructional leadership and that the best superintendents remain teachers at heart. Doctor Milton is married to Lisa Petros and has four sons ages 22, 7, 4 and 2 years old.

**CCC:** What are the major challenges facing District 186?

**WM:** *One of the major challenges is to change the perception of the District. Some people can be*

*vocal at times; they have a misconception of our system, and I think that our challenge is to let them know that we’re much better than their perception may see us.*

**CCC:** How difficult is it to retain quality teachers when other Districts are looking for good teachers?

**WM:** *Well, that is a challenge. I talk to different Superintendent colleagues across the country, and one thing that I find is that if you look at our starting salary for teachers, it is much lower than other urban districts. So, I think that we have to make sure that we provide a wholesome opportunity not only to hire effective teachers, but also to retain them.*

**CCC:** What is your definition of a good teacher?

**WM:** *Someone who is passionate about their craft, and someone who is capable of moving the educational agenda; and someone who understands and who works everyday toward improving student achievement.*

**CCC:**

About forty percent of the District’s students are minorities, and yet minorities make up between 12 to 14 percent of the District’s population. Why do you think that is?

**WM:** *I think it’s a growing population. Our District is growing. We’re getting a significant amount of families moving into the area, and I know that we have received a good number of families that have come from different parts of the State to join us. I think that in some cases, Caucasian families look at other options, being private or parochial or what-have-you.*

**CCC:** You put a plan forward to do some upgrades. Can you tell us something about that plan?

**WM:** *We’re in the process of building a new Matheny-Withrow. We’re going to break ground next school year. Then we’re going to build a new Enos School. We have almost \$90 million dollars worth of work that will include H.V.A.C. and other components that will upgrade our schools. We are probably going to revisit that conversation about the new high school and the location of the new high school, but I think that before we get there, we are going to have to do the work that we already have on the docket.*

**CCC:** What has been a personal major challenge since becoming Superintendent?

**WM:** *That’s a great question. I think just really getting people to understand our agenda and getting the entire community to buy into our agenda and moving forward. I do want to say that if you compare Springfield to other urban districts, we fare well. Oftentimes, people want to compare us to the contiguous districts like the Chatham’s of world, the Rochester’s of the world and you can’t, you can’t compare us. If you look at sheer numbers, we are 4, 5, 6 times larger than those places. We’re headed toward 16,000 students. I think the second largest District in the County has about 4,000 students. There is this thing that you’re losing families, but I haven’t seen that yet. Sometimes we fall victim to just believing certain things that are just not accurate.*

**CCC:** It was reported in the daily newspaper on many occasions last year that Lanphier High School was beset with a myriad of problems. How are things there now?

**WM:** *Things are going excellently at Lanphier. One thing about leadership and my leadership style is whenever we can find an issue or challenge, we correct it right away. I think that Mr. Doss has come in and did an effective job. He has been able to build capacity there. He has a good relationship with the students and families. All those things are attributable to his leadership.*

**CCC:** How important are athletics in District 186?

**WM:** *I’ll put it in this order: Academics first, a great attitude, athletics and then the arts. I think that athletics is really an intrinsic piece of education for our young people. With me being a former student athlete, I know how important sports were to me, especially as I moved forward in my education. What we are trying to do here is to promote student athletes here, with students being first. That’s why we have increased the student grade point average at all of our buildings. We’re going to look at that again to see if we can go from a 2.3 G.P.A. to a 2.5 G.P.A with many of our athletes. One thing that I have found in getting our students recruited to major colleges since I’ve been here is one thing that they really like is our focus on academics for our athletes.*

**CCC:** If you had to give yourself a grade based on your performance as school Superintendent, what would it be?

**WM:** *Probably an A minus.*

**CCC:** How did you arrive at that grade?

**WM:** *I look at some of the data. Our drop-out rate has decreased, our achievement rate has increased. We have two schools that are ranked as two of the top schools in the nation. We have one school that’s getting ready to receive International status. We have a school at Lincoln Magnet that has received the Distinguished Technology Award. We’ve created a literacy intervention model that’s impacting more students than we have in the past. We have different alternative programs. Our bond rating is next to perfection with an AA, too. We have more students in dual credit and advanced AP courses. We have enhanced the District’s transfer policy. We have introduced this community to the Capital College Preparatory Academy, that’s doing well, the all-male academy and the all-female academy. We have a great partnership with S.I.U. School of Medicine with the Physicians Preparatory Pipeline Program. I could go on and on with those accolades. We have upgraded our District in terms of technology, really increasing the technological flair in our*



**R**ussell Wendell Simmons was born in Queens, New York on October 4, 1957, the middle of three sons to bless the marriage of Daniel and Evelyn Simmons, a public school administrator and NYC parks administrator, respectively. Russell and Rick Rubin co-founded Def Jam Records, the legendary hip-hop label, in 1984.

Russell parlayed his success in music into several fashion lines, most notably, Phat Farm and Baby Phat. Meanwhile, as Chairman and CEO of his umbrella organization, Rush Communications, he also ran an ad agency, produced movies and TV shows, and published a magazine.

*Forbes Magazine* recently named Simmons one of “Hollywood’s Most Influential Celebrities.” And *USA Today* dubbed him one of the “Top 25 Most Influential People of the Past 25 Years,” calling him a “hip-hop pioneer” for his groundbreaking vision that has influenced music, fashion, jewelry, finance, television and film, as well as the face of modern philanthropy.

From creating his seminal Def Jam Recordings to writing his *New York Times* best-seller “Do You! 12 Laws to Access the Power in You to Achieve Happiness and Success,” Russell is recognized globally for his influence and entrepreneurial approach to both business and philanthropy. Since giving back is of primary importance to him in all aspects of life, he has consistently leveraged his influence in the recording industry, fashion, television, financial services, and jewelry sectors to advance the interests of a host of charitable causes.

A devoted yogi, Russell also leads the non-profit division of his empire, Rush Community Affairs, and its ongoing commitment to empowering at-risk youth through education, the arts, and social engagement. Furthermore, he serves as UN Goodwill Ambassador for The Permanent Memorial to Honor the Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Here, he talks about his new book, “Super Rich: A Guide to Having It All,” a how-to tome which champions meditation over materialism as the path to true wealth.

**Kam Williams:** Hey Russell, thanks for the time. I don’t know if you remember me, but we met at that party you threw for Soledad O’Brien. I came over and told you I’d been trying to interview you for years. Thanks for finally hooking me up.

**Russell Simmons:** My man! Of course I remember you. I felt bad.

*How was that possible?*

**KW:** A lot of publicists have never heard of me.

**RS:** Well, it’s great to talk to you.

*What’s going on, baby?*

## INTERVIEW WITH KAM WILLIAMS

### Russell Simmons, The “Super Rich” Interview

**KW:** I didn’t get to tell you that I grew up in the same neck of the woods, in St. Albans, which is right next to Hollis.

**RS:** Yeah, same thing.

**KW:** What gave you the idea to write the book?

**RS:** Well, the last time I wrote a book (*Do You!*), I got a chance to pull together all these teachings and frame them in such a way that I could share them with other people. But honestly, I can look back on it, and admit that my motivation was a little bit selfish, because I needed to do this for my own evolu-

tion. It was a sort of a cleansing process. I expected that I could get the stuff out of me, and frame it, so I could understand it. But I didn’t appreciate the book’s potential to touch the lives of others until Oprah praised it. She was my first interview after it came out, and made it go to the top of the best-seller list. After that, people would come up to me and say that the book changed their lives. What could be more gratifying? So, that inspired me to write this book, with a little more selfless intention. This book is about remembering to remember, and the mantra to be a good giver. Good givers are great getters, and I just wanted to share that with people in a way that they could really digest it.

**KW:** I told my readers I was going to be speaking with you and they sent in plenty of questions. The first is from Attorney Bernadette Beekman, who gives you a big shout out as a girl from Hollis! She says: many people are so busy working they do not have time to breathe deeply or be present on a daily basis. In fact, I was speaking to a friend who is a yoga teacher-in-training yesterday and she said quite often, when she is at her full-time job at a nonprofit, she realizes that a whole day has gone by without her having breathed deeply. Russell, how, from a practical perspective, can people with worries and everyday jobs still seek a higher path?

**RS:** The whole book is about being conscious, and is filled with practices to bring you to presence. The book is dedicated to that mantra, that state of consciousness. We wish we could live in a state of nirvana, or a state of Christ consciousness, or a state of yoga, or Samadhi. All of them are one and the same: to be awake, to be present. That idea of Heaven on Earth is what I mean by *Super Rich*, and the ease that comes with needing nothing. Yoga can be defined as a state of needing nothing, and that’s what we’re looking for. So, this book is about moving towards that enlightenment.

**KW:** I learned a long time ago that happiness doesn’t come from the accumulation of material things.

**RS:** You can only sit your ass in one seat at a time.

**KW:** FSU grad Laz Lyles asks: What experience prompted the transformation of your personal ideas about wealth and got you on a spiritual path?

**RS:** We all want to operate in order. Sometimes we have to go through struggle to realize that. Your birth in the physical form is



Photo by Gerald Janssen

continued on page 8 >



## Russell Simmons, The “Super Rich” Interview

continued from page 7

to teach you to operate in order. I think that's the experience. Struggle is your great teacher. I'm an older person. I was a drug dealer. I was a gang member and a lot of other things. My evolution has been gradual. When I first started practicing yoga, I remember feeling really free of anxiety momentarily. So, my journey began when I found the easing of anxiety through the physical practice of yoga. Then, the yogi scripture taught me things that I knew in my heart were true, because the study of the scripture is really the study of the self. Then I saw that what's in the yogi scripture is also in the Bible, the Koran and the Torah, and that these practices do bring us to a more easy place. Yoga is defined as a state of needing nothing. And union with God happens, when the noise is gone.

**KW:** Children's book author Irene Smalls asks: When you were growing up what did you want to do?

**RS:** I didn't know what I wanted to be. Remember *The Message* by Grandmaster Flash? [Sings] “You see the drug dealers counting twenties and tens, and you want to grow up to be just like them.” I saw people hanging on the corner. I didn't know any better. I was lucky enough to go to college and start to feel differently. There, I developed the courage to do something original that I was passionate about, which was music and hip-hop. I started throwing parties, and became an entrepreneur of sorts. It just kinda evolved. I didn't have a drive to be anything in particular until I found a passion, which is what this book is about. Finding a dharma, a way to really give. But I wasn't fortunate enough to have something I wanted to be all my life, until I started to achieve it.

**KW:** Harriet Pakula Teweles says: Jerry Lewis used to sing a song that said, “Money isn't everything ... unless you're very poor.” How ‘easy’ is it to give this kind of spiritual advice when you're rolling in dough?

**RS:** Well, there's a story in the book about a guy who lives in a shanty house. He knows he's got to find some bread and water each day, yet his mind's at ease. God always provides, and he lived to be 100. Then, by contrast, there's the anxiety-prone billionaire who's always worried about the stock market and ends up dying in his fifties. So, you have to ask yourself, “What do we want money for? What does it do for us?” If you say money makes us happy, then examine that. Is it the toys? Is it the simplicity, the ease that money can provide? That's not the ease that we're seeking. It has to be to calm the mind. I say this because, when you need nothing, you can operate from abundance. Jesus taught two sermons. One for the masses, which said, if you act in accordance with these laws, then God will take care of you. The second one said, “Operate from abundance if you can.” So, the anxiety-filled followers were able to pay their taxes by listening to Jesus. But His disciples only needed to put their all into service. I have so many illustrative stories I could relate, like Puffy's, who on the way up wanted

to make sure he was doing everybody's job. He enjoyed the work, but not because he was going to get this or that. That's the real rap.

**KW:** Larry Greenberg asks: Do you have any advice for an aspiring film maker living on ramen?

**RS:** Larry, stay on your hustle. You ain't gonna starve no matter what happens. Living on ramen! My guess is he's most likely overweight. We suffer from neediness, when in fact we already have everything. If he's focused on being a filmmaker, and not anxiety-filled and worried about living on ramen, he will make headway. And in no case will he starve. What is he looking for?

**KW:** Filmmaker/Author/Professor Hisani Dubose asks: What is the most effective way to raise money for indie movie projects in 2011. What does someone like him look for before investing?

**RS:** Big buzz. Shoot a good little pilot to get it off the ground. Everything requires that you do the work. And if you do good enough work that people start to be inspired by it, then they join on. No one signs on just because you have an idea.

You have to keep building any business, to make it attractive. If you throw a record out the window and it don't stick, you gotta keep pushing it. Then, one day, it's on the radio, listeners start requesting it, and people come looking for you. You can't chase people down with your idea; you have to turn it into equity first.

**KW:** Kristopher Seals asks: What are some ways a person can start up a business with little available capital? What are some of the biggest obstacles facing minorities looking to enter the business arena?

**RS:** I can tell you that there's something about black culture that's infectious, that crosses all boundaries, that gives you an edge. If he's open to integrate, then give him a job. No company that markets any product can operate without input from black people. There's a void, a white space. Fill that. Don't carry the burden. A lot of time black people only speak to each other instead of to the whole room. We gotta get out of that habit.

**KW:** Dante Lee, author of “Black Business Secrets,” asks: What was your most fatal business decision? And what is the biggest business lesson you've learned?

**RS:** I learn from every bad decision, so none of them are my worst. When I lost the Beastie Boys, I learned that you have to have patience when you're developing artists.

**KW:** Ola Jackson asks: “How does your spirituality and belief in Buddhism conflict with the opulent lifestyle of self-indulgence and materialism associated with rap music.

**RS:** I think rappers are truth-tellers. I don't think mainstream American culture is any closer to the simplicity that I'm advocating. I'm not a Buddhist, by the way. Long before there was a Buddhist faith, there were the Yoga Sutras. Those teachings are more

prescriptions for happiness, than religious dogma. As you know, I'm not a religious man, although I do work promoting dialogue among all religions as Chairman of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding.

**KW:** Legist/Editor Patricia Turnier says: In the past, we saw more rap songs about socially-conscious themes, such as MC Lyte's “Eyes Are the Soul,” Tupac's “Brenda's Got a Baby” and Queen Latifah's “Ladies First.” What needs to be done to bring back this type of hip-hop?

**RS:** Well, I think the climate changes in society. Themes come and go, and rappers are only reflections of that. Right now, we're very fearful, because the economy is very bad... People are struggling... and that's fertile ground for some of the negativity that you're hearing on some of the records.

**KW:** Professor Mia Mask asks: Isn't there a contradiction between the messages in your book and the messages in rap music?

**RS:** Why does she think I'm an ambassador for rap? Jesus hung out with the wine bibbers, but his message wasn't advocating getting drunk. I have one foot in pop culture and one foot in the real world, which is spiritual. I know what's real, and I know that pop culture can be frivolous. But I think American culture, in general, is frivolous. And I certainly don't think that rap culture is any more frivolous than mainstream American culture. I don't think hip-hop is as unconscious either. Rappers may say things that shock you, but I think they are poets who hold a higher moral ground than the rest of American society. That's my opinion. Just because Kanye West said “George Bush doesn't like black people,” doesn't mean it's true, but it does mean that a lot of people shared that thought.

**KW:** Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

**RS:** No, I just go to work everyday, and I try to give and be a servant, although I might forget at times. But I know my mission. Through meditation and prayer, I find myself present, awake and giving for some part of the day. The most I can hope for is to become a better servant.

**KW:** When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

**RS:** That's a good question. I'm not quite sure. Different things at different times.

**KW:** The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

**RS:** Yes, I guess I'm afraid sometimes. But I generally rid myself of it. I don't carry a lot of fear around with me.

**KW:** The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

**RS:** Yeah, I can say I'm mostly happy. Compared to what? Am I eternally blissful? No. But do I find moments when I'm ecstatic about being alive? Yes! And I have those moments more and more often the more I meditate, prac-

tice yoga, and live by these principles.

**KW:** The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?

**RS:** A few minutes ago being interviewed by Sean Hannity. He says such things. You have to learn to laugh all the time. It's a practice of life. It's a practice of happiness. In yoga, you smile and breathe in every pose.

**KW:** What is your guiltiest pleasure?

**RS:** I'm on a liquid diet, but I'm going to have some popcorn at the movies.

**KW:** The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

**RS:** “An Offering of Leaves” by Lady Ruth, who is a yoga teacher.

**KW:** The music maven Heather Covington question: What are you listening to on your iPod?

**RS:** Krishna Das' Greatest Hits. And I've been listening to a lot of Public Enemy.

**KW:** What is your favorite dish to cook?

**RS:** I like to put spinach on top of olive oil, and just let it wilt for a second. And then put vegan chicken nuggets on top of it. I'm not a big chef.

**KW:** The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

**RS:** It still is Tommy Hilfiger, even though he's not hot right now. He still inspires me the most.

**KW:** If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

**RS:** World peace in spirit.

**KW:** The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

**RS:** I don't know. I don't have one.

**KW:** The Flex Alexander question: How do you get through the tough times?

**RS:** I don't miss my prayers and I don't miss my yoga. Those things are important to me.

**KW:** What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

**RS:** Keep your head down and put one foot in front of the other. That's how I got where I got.

**KW:** The Cornel West question: What price are you willing to pay for a cause that's bigger than your own self interests?

**RS:** I'm not sure. I should say my life, but I don't know. I can't say my life right now.

**KW:** The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?

**RS:** As a philanthropist, as a giver.

**KW:** Well thanks for the interview, Russell. I really appreciate it.

**RS:** It's been a real pleasure speaking with you. You have my number now, Kam, don't hesitate to call if you need anything.

# WE NEED BLACK POWER

## Not Endorsement Deals

by *Demetrious Johnson*



**D**oes Black History Month hold any real significance for blacks -- or is it merely an attempt to pacify and appease an outspoken, downtrodden, disenfranchised community?

Black History Month has its roots in Negro History Week, established in 1926 by historian Carter G. Woodson to commemorate the births of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Woodson hoped one day to eliminate the "Week" part, that black history would become as fundamental to American history as the Civil War.

Nearly 80 years on, we remain light years away from Woodson's ideal. The nonstop barrage of TV public service announcements, museum exhibits, lectures, tours and book promotions do little to construct, let alone connect Americans to, a deeper understanding of the importance of black contributions to this country -- even within the black community.

A growing number of angry voices say, too, that Black History Month is a waste. That confining the celebration of black achievement to the coldest, shortest month of the year constitutes a slap in the face. A bandage. High visibility for a measly four weeks, then virtually ignored thereafter.

John Wiley Price, the sole black county commissioner in Dallas, Texas, boycotts the month entirely, refusing all invitations to speak. "I'm not going to be, as the kids say, 'pimped' during the month of February," Price declared.

Should we ditch Black History Month? Or, if we eliminate it entirely, do we wind up diminishing ourselves? And just who should be responsible for educating blacks about their past? White America?

### I DON'T THINK SO!

First, blacks' contributions to this country deserve to be recognized. The achievements, sacrifices, trials-by-fire of our black leaders should be taught. Integrated into our psyche and collective wisdom. And in this, the black community, itself, needs to lead the charge.

Second, black athletes, especially, can make a huge impact. I do not expect them to possess the same selfless dedication of a Dr. Martin Luther King, Miss Rosa Parks, Malcolm X or Harriet Tubman. But, black sports stars' larger-than-life presence on the national stage, the hero worship by our youth, ensures that whatever those players talk about, people will listen.

Black athletes command the kind

of clout that can do more than sell Nikes. They can bring sharp focus to the legacy of debilitating policies and issues demoralizing blacks today. Through their words, through their actions, black athletes can teach, and not just one month out of the year.

Remember Tommie Smith and John Carlos? The two fastest men on the planet?

After winning the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the 200 meters at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, Smith and Carlos ascended the podium for the national anthem, bowed their heads and raised their black glove-clad fists in the air in silence.

Americans, aghast and terrified by the stark image, widely interpreted it as an arrogant display of "black power" and allegiance to the Black Panthers. Smith and Carlos were summarily demonized by everyone. Very few people, even in the black community, bothered to ask the men "Why?"

Had they done so, they would have learned that Smith and Carlos were not disrespecting the U.S., they were protesting against racism. The racism that meant "none could truly have a day in the sun without education, housing and employment."

To them, medals were an unfulfilling carrot on a stick. "If you can't give your wife or son or daughter what they need to live," Carlos explains, "after a while, you try to escape who you are. That's why people turn to drugs and why our communities have been destroyed. That's why there was a revolt . . . winning a medal ain't going to save your momma."

So, the two strode up to the podium barefoot, wearing black shirts, gloves and beads. Barefoot, to inform the world that in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, South Central Los Angeles and Chicago, blacks still walked in poverty with no clothes on their backs, no shoes for their kids. Beads, to commemorate those black men "lynched, hung, tarred, thrown off the side of boats or killed that no one said a prayer for."

That is deep. Powerful. So, yeah. Black Power, if you will -- but, of an educational and societal heroic kind, rather than of a militarily violent mind.

Then, too, there were the black American Football League players who boycotted the 1967 All-Star game in New Orleans to draw attention to Louisiana's segregationist policies. These brave athletes refused to give the state, by their presence at the game, even the appearance of credibility.

Their risk was big. The AFL (precursor to the American Football Conference), recruited heavily from small black colleges, at a time when the NFL only grudgingly drafted black players. "We'll start signing Negroes," Washington Redskins owner

George Preston Marshall once chided, "when the Harlem Globetrotters start signing whites."

The players' protest could have jeopardized the AFL's future draft decisions, not to mention their own jobs. Still, they willingly risked losing it all for the sake of doing the right thing.

Black heroes such as these, and color-barrier breakers like Fritz Pollard (football), Jackie Robinson (baseball), Charlie Wiggins (auto racing) and Tiger Woods (golf), lead by example. They bring black history to life. They teach us, inspire us and infuse our legacy into the mainstream of America.

Unfortunately, few black sports superstars today would ever risk losing their endorsement deals, let alone their careers, to stand up for their own. Look at Michael Jordan. When asked to endorse a black candidate for Senator against the racist incumbent, Jesse Helms, in his home state of North Carolina, Jordan declined. Why? "Republicans buy sneakers, too."

I will be the first to tell you, from experience, money -- and its illusion of inclusion -- is hard to resist.

First, when you come out of college after 21 years of second-class citizenry, you get hooked up with a white agent by your white coach (because, shamefully, only three NCAA Division I head coaches are black). You get drafted by a pro team owned by a white guy (because only one major sports team has a black majority owner), and now the money starts rolling in. Your white agent introduces you to your new, white accountant and public relations adviser. You begin to develop a lot of white friends.

Next, your team introduces you to a

white real estate agent to help you find a nice house in a nice neighborhood. The broker advises against moving into a black neighborhood, or simply neglects to show you homes in mixed areas.

Your white agent then recommends you start a foundation to "improve" (i.e., "soften") your image. Your agent escorts you to affluent (white) events and gives you the false impression that you are accepted by the white community as this great, non-threatening, assimilated player. Your conversion is complete; you leave the community forever.

For example, Toby Wright, a former St. Louis Ram strong safety, created the "Wright to Dream Foundation." But, rather than sponsoring disadvantaged black kids, he chose to sponsor the all-white football league in Oakville, Illinois (a nearly all-white community), including their year-end banquet.

Kevin Carter, a Tennessee Titan and former Ram defensive end, used to hold his football camp in affluent areas of predominantly white St. Louis County, rather than in the deprived, predominantly black areas of the City.

### YOU CAN CHOOSE DIFFERENTLY.

I am not saying blacks should cross white folks off their list. I am no hypocrite. I played pro football for the Lions and Chargers, and I still have my white lawyer and white accountant. But, I also have a black attorney and my adviser is a collective of family and close friends, black and white.

But to me, black athletes who are in the enviable position to make a difference, have a responsibility to step up and teach. Lead. Inspire. The black community.

Unfortunately, our black hero pool appears depleted. There are no more Muhammad Ali's who refuse to fight in unjust wars; it's me first, my people last. When the brash, outspoken broadcaster and former NBA great, Charles Barkley, admits he is not a role model for kids, you know which kids he is talking about.

We should never forget that America was built on the backs of black slave labor. Our freedom, paid for with the blood of brave men and women who risked everything to further the struggle for liberty and equality for all.

Black athletes need to speak out for people who can't, 12 months out of every year. It is our responsibility. Our history. God, give us heroes who will lead!

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## Dr. Walter Milton Jr., Achievement with a Capital “A”

continued from page 6

**District.** *Our District has received financial recognition status from the State Board of Education for the past four years. I've worked really hard to maintain a really positive relationship with our Board members. I encourage Board members to visit our schools and really get involved in with the day-to-day process of what's going on in our District. We have student engagement initiatives such as the Real Men Read Program that's going really well. There is something called Coaches' Corner, where student athletes have an opportunity to talk about their experiences with the game for that week or the upcoming game. We have a strong approach to the ADVID program, promoting college and education for many of our students. We have a strong parent and community involvement relationship. I meet with about 50 parents every month to talk about critical issues going on in our District and the movement of our District. Like I said, we have almost \$96 million dollars in facilities projects. We replaced the roofs at ten buildings, done tuck pointing, asbestos abatement. It could go on and on as you could see. I have worked hard. I know my craft. I'm entering my ninth year as a school Superintendent, and I really know what it is going to take to move this agenda. My goal is to make sure all of our students are capable to participate in a global world.*

**CCC:** I spoke with Dr. Steve Perry, who runs the highly recognized preparatory academy in Connecticut, and he told me that it was harder to fire ineffective teachers. What's your take on that?

**WM:** *Well, I think that it is challenging, however it can be done. Since I've been here, we had to let go some ineffective teachers. The thing is, you want to make sure that you evaluate them in the first three years of their tenure before they're given tenure. The other way is to have a copious documentation so that you can have your facts when you move toward terminating them. It's going to require a lot of hard work, but I think our children are worth it.*

**CCC:** Where would you like to see the District at five years from now?

**WM:** *I probably would like to see our population continue to increase. Also, our larger population of students that are academically astute, schools that are welcoming in a sense that these children are valuable to me. When I go to different parts of the country and different parts of the State in the County, you see nice facilities and you say to yourself, our kids deserve the same thing. It just bothers me sometimes that we short-change the students here by saying what they don't need, and I believe our children need the same thing.*

**CCC:** Do you have any other ambitions outside of being District 186 Superintendent?

**WM:** *Yeah, I probably do. One day down the road, I would like to design my own educational management company, leading a team of deep thinkers that can go to large urban school districts and help them in terms of curriculum and structural issues, finance, technology, parent relations and all of those things. I do want to reiterate that's well down the road.*

**CCC:** How difficult is it being a progressive, forward-thinker in a community that is as conservative as Springfield?

**WM:** *Well, I tell you it's challenging because I just have to make sure I operate on placing value on our young people. Because I think that if we don't move as the time moves, we are setting our young people up for failure. When they compete against kids from across the State, when they go to college, they're going to compete with kids that have had the opportunity to be in progressive school districts. I can say that because I've experienced that. When I look at the districts in which I led and which I was a part of in New York, they were very different, very progressive, very focused with kids' desires. For example, you had the school of the arts, school of finance, school of business and the school of biology, preparing young people for being doctors. So, you had all these school that were kids' desires to help them with their future aspirations. I think that Springfield has the potential to be that, but it's really going to require us to remain open.*

**CCC:** What's your opinion on the lack of involvement of black parents in the educational system in Springfield?

**WM:** *Sometimes when we fall victim to that, we don't give the credit to the black parents that are involved, we just focus on the ones who are not. That could be the case, but I think that it's imperative that our district has a relationship that is going to be positive. Oftentimes many parents, black, white or indifferent, may not have had a good experience with schools themselves. It may have been that when they were students, they had some problems in their lives and they didn't feel welcome. So, we have to make sure that we understand that and we understand the dynamics that many of our parents are facing. One thing that I did when I first came here in the first year or so is that I did home visits, and that was something that was pretty popular. I noticed that many of our schools began to do home visits, going into the homes of the kids in the neighborhood so that they could get a better understanding of the environments or the cultures that our students have come from. I think that we definitely are going to have to improve in that process, but I think at the same time, we have to recognize those parents that are involved.*

**CCC:** Do you have anything else

that you would like to add?

**WM:** *I think that as our district continues to improve, I would encourage the community to become ambassadors for Springfield Public Schools. I think that our school system has the ability to be a top-notch urban school system in North America. I think that it's going to require us to change our thinking on one end, and to recognize that there are major things that are going on here and we are impacting the lives of many students positively. You know we have students that are entering into the Harvard's*

*of the world, the Brown University's of the world, the University of Penn's of the world, major colleges and universities across this country. People need to understand that we are turning out great and phenomenal students. One other thing I would like to add is that the district has the highest bond rating ever in the history of the District.*

**CCC:** Dr. Milton, thanks for the time.

**WM:** *No problem, Mike. Thank you for the interview.*

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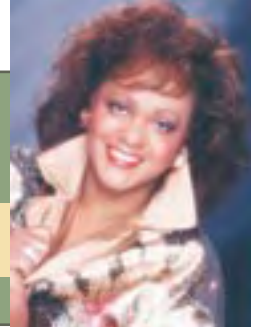
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# ASK SARNIA

by Sarnia Cotton

**Q.** Me and my 'sweetie' moved in together six months ago. No Problems. Then, three months ago his best friend needed a place to stay to "get through a rough spot." No problem, EXCEPT that the rough spot seems to be expanding, with no end in sight. We now have a roommate. The guy is not a slob and he is very respectful of me and my needs for privacy. I just don't like the situation. Should I have a talk with him and ask him what he thinks his moving date might be, even if he has to move in with some other friend(s)? I already know that my sweetie is too nice to ask his best friend to move. How can I/we move him out without hurting his feelings?

**A.** Surely having a second roommate was not your intention when you signed the lease/mortgage six months ago. However, in my opinion, there could be two extenuating circumstances that affect the potential outcomes of your "situation" that I suggest you consider before making any 'moves'. First, consider the financial status of your second roommate – is he employed, not employed, or unemployable. In this current econ-

omy, the last two conditions very well could be true and they will seriously impact the longevity of your current arrangement. You can be sure that for you to essentially 'kick-out' your sweetie's unemployable best friend that there will be some residual effect, including Karma. Second, something for you to consider is if you might be feeling a bit displaced ... because your sweetie and his best friend do things together (e.g., watch or play sports) which decreases the one-on-one time that the two of you no longer have. The closeness that you felt when it was just the two of you may now feel diminished. The reality is that nothing has changed except that now he lives with you. As time went on the probability that your sweetie would have been spending the same amount of time with his friend is high. In my opinion, have a talk with your sweetie and get his

input on what to do about your houseguest's extended stay. He may be in total agreement with you but needs you to be the heavy, i.e., bearer of the notice of eviction. Once you've fully assessed the situation, if the roommate is truly without resources please remember that anyone's circumstances can change at any time, for better or worse.

**Q.** My children – three - have different fathers. My first son's dad has nothing to do with us. He is at the age where he resents the other's dads. He gets depressed when the other's dad comes around and spends time with them. I hurt for him. What can be done to help him until he gets old enough to not care?

**A.** This is really an unfortunate situation, and really needs handling with care. Talk as much as possible to your son at his level of understanding, and affirm that the situation is what it is. Be extremely supportive and let him know that you love and care about him. If he continues to become depressed and angry about this and other situations, please seek professional counseling for him.

Questions may be submitted to [asksarnia@yahoo.com](mailto:asksarnia@yahoo.com)



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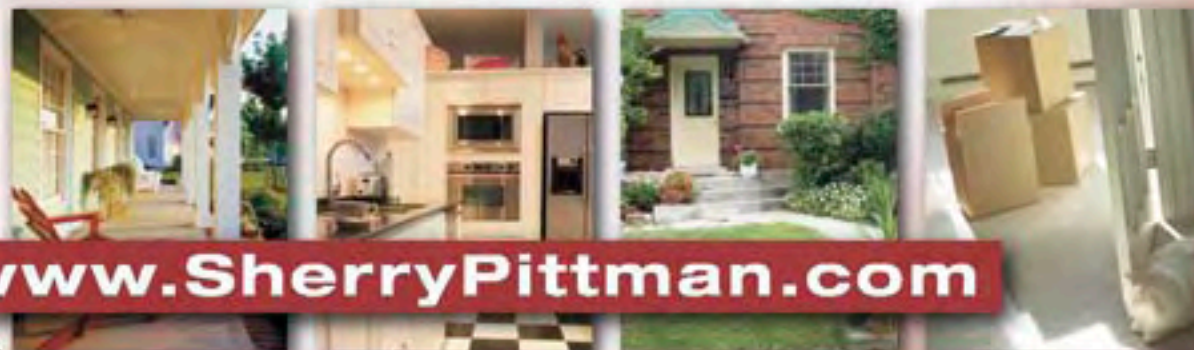


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## COVER STORY

by Kim Gordon

# THE OKEY-DOKE:

## HOW MAINSTREAM MEDIA AFFECTS OUR MINDS, THOUGHTS, AND ACTIONS

**S**tanding in front of us, the magician shows us the brightly shining coin that he holds in one hand. In one fluid motion, he grabs the coin with the other hand and sweeps it away. However, he opens that hand to reveal the coin has disappeared, and when we look at his other hand, the coin is not there either. It's magic! A recent documentary on how the brain works demonstrated that the human brain is attracted to movement. It's a survival mechanism that helped our ancestors recognize the tiger in the bush in time to start running. Our eyes follow the magician's hand as it sweeps away, supposedly with the coin. We don't even notice the other hand that drops the coin into his pocket. In other words, we are hard-wired to fall for the okey-doke.

Now, while I still can't explain how Criss Angel does some of his split-second tricks, I would like to think that I have a skeptical mind and can recognize most cases of wool being pulled over my eyes. I think I come by it honestly, though. Once you've reached a certain age, especially if you have lived through such notorious wool-pullings as Watergate and the Vietnam War, you begin to recognize when your trusted leaders are leading you astray. After that, you watch the daily news with a jaundiced eye. And you question everything...as well you should. Last month, we discussed swindles,

scams, and pyramid schemes that can cause a hefty dent in your wallet. (See "Swindlers' List: Are There Thieves in the Temple?" Capital City Courier, January 2011.) This time, we're looking at the attempts to sway your opinions and wash your brain. And, believe me, the human mind is big business. A lot of money goes into getting you to think a certain way and moving you away from the courses of action that might be detrimental to the powers that be. For, as Gil Scott-Heron put it, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." So, sitting in your living room and watching mainstream media, you will not know that a cultural revolution is taking place and your world is being changed all around you. Sitting in front of the television that lulls you to sleep with its programming that holds no meaning in the real world (even "reality TV" is contrived!), or reading the watered-down and soft-peddled newspaper and magazine articles that are copied and distributed to subscribing newspapers and magazines around the world, we have to wonder why so many of us continue to swallow the blue pill and go back to the dream world the Matrix offers?

Here, at the Capital City Courier, we offer red pills. Pills that say, "Wake up! This is what's going on. This is what is coming to bite you!" Put aside the Bachelors and Bachelorettes, step away from the Bad Girls Club, stop trying to keep up with the Kardashians, and tell Flava we don't care who he loves this week. There

are steamrollers headed for you. Start asking questions. Like, why does the Tea Party of Tennessee want to pass a law that erases all mention of slavery and Native Americans from U.S. history textbooks? That's right. They want to have all history textbooks rewritten to take out the parts that would "besmirch the image of the Founding Fathers." And that would mean not talking about slavery at all. Because, as we all know, the Founding Fathers owned slaves, like George Washington, who even sent slave-catchers to apprehend an elderly Black woman, in her eighties, who had escaped from his slaveowning grip. Heaven forbid she should enjoy a few of her golden years in freedom. But, under the proposed Tea Party law, schoolchildren...our children and grandchildren and future generations... would never know about that because they would never know this country was built on the blood, sweat, and tears of others. In fact, they would probably think Black people fell out of the sky, because all mention of the Middle Passage and the abduction of millions of Blacks from their homes would evaporate overnight. Children would also think that the land on which this country is built just magically appeared, because any mention of its theft from the Native Americans would also be erased from history. We mustn't besmirch the image of, not only the Founding Fathers, but of lesser-known folks such as Lord Jeffrey Amherst (after whom several New England towns in Massachu-

setts, New York, and New Hampshire are named). Lord Amherst is most famous for devising a plan to rid the land of the indigenous people without risking any White lives. Under the guise of helping them, he gave the Native Americans blankets that were infected with smallpox, thereby wiping out whole villages at a time. No, we wouldn't want to tarnish his sterling image.

Now, most of us realize that a lot of the members of the conservative Tea Party are simply trying to legitimize bigotry through political means, which can be dangerous, especially when they get their names on the ballot. With some of them successfully voted into offices, they could begin to do serious damage. Much like the state of Arizona, forerunner in the race to divide the races, who, along with its initial refusal to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a holiday and its attempts to turn Arizona into a South Africa in which people of color would have to carry a pass proving U.S. citizenship in order to walk the streets, just keeps pushing the manila envelope. In 2010, Arizona's governor announced that funding would be taken away from any schools that offered courses that are designed to promote solidarity among a particular ethnic group...in other words, Black Studies or Hispanic Studies classes that attempt to add a little color to the standard history texts. The history books

*continued on page 13* >

The Okey-Doke: How Mainstream Media Affects Our Minds, Thoughts and Actions continued from page 12


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have changed a bit since my grade school days, where I can recall reading about the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving Day feast provided by the “Indians,” only to turn the page to read about General Custer being massacred at Little Big Horn by the wild and savage “Indians” who, apparently, were in the habit of ambushing and scalping the poor settlers. Wait a minute...I think there’s a page missing! And while history textbooks have gotten better, there is still a lot of history that’s not included. That’s why ethnic studies are so important, and to have states try to undo that progress and...

along with Tea Party attempts at white-washing...take us right back to where we started and beyond is just unacceptable.

Hopefully, we are not headed in the direction foretold by Ray Bradbury’s story, “Fahrenheit 451,” in which books were banned as being dangerous to the power structure. In the story, children were raised on the state-sanctioned propaganda, while an underground group of people tried to hide the forbidden knowledge contained in books from the firemen, whose job it was to burn the books when they found them. Seriously, though; have we learned nothing from

history? In the dark ages of Europe, the common people were banned from reading the Bible because it might give them “ideas.” (Like, why the lords and ladies of the manor got to take everything while the serfs ate dirt?) The peasants had to receive their religious instruction from the priests. During slavery, Blacks were not allowed to learn to read for the same reasons, causing many to risk their lives for the simple act that we now take for granted and so often under-use.

Okey-dokey is a colloquial phrase meaning “correct.” It is often shortened to “OK.” However, okey-dokey has also come to mean the “status quo,” or keeping things as they are, which is also a way of saying we are being “strung along.” We fall for the okey-doke when we allow others to tell us what to think, how to believe, what to watch, how to spend our money, and who to vote for. (“Guess I’ll vote for that there Sarah Palin; after all, she’s got her own TV show!”) Sorry to digress a bit here, but it’s that kind of thinking that puts actors into the White House and the Governor’s Mansion. Does the media understand this? YES! It’s a well-known fact that people will often vote for the familiar face; that’s why politicians spend so much money (an ugly amount of money that could be better used!) to buy ads to get their faces in your face. But, just because you portray a hero onscreen, someone who fights the bad guys, that doesn’t mean you have any idea what it takes to handle a political office and run the affairs of a state or a country so that state or country does not wind up billions of dollars in the hole!

The state of affairs throughout the country, in particular the financial mess, is all throughout the media. Various reasons have been cited in the mainstream media, but few sources are willing to discuss the greed, waste, incompetence, bad decisions, and astonishing mismanagement that have led to the loss of jobs, loss of homes, and loss of income that run through this country like an infection that has gotten out of control. And I strongly recommend a shot of penicillin! We need someone with the guts and insight to take the politicians, leaders, and corporate CEO’s to task for putting the almighty dollar ahead

of the public welfare (greed), for allowing healthcare costs to get so high that people can barely afford to die, much less get better (waste), and for flirting with the “easy money” by sending our jobs to places that don’t give a crap about us (bad decisions).

The advertising industry is a multi-billion dollar a year business. Billions of dollars are spent in an effort to tell you how to think. And with so much money riding on how you act and what direction you go, nothing is left to chance. This is why you have to take everything presented to you with a grain of salt. Even what I tell you. Although I will say this, I am not “ beholden” to any organization with any type of motive, and the Courier is not in anybody’s pocket. But you always need to judge for yourself, and ask “Why? What does this person or company stand to gain from telling me this?” Usually, it’s money and/or power. The power that comes from controlling how people live, and the money that comes from what people spend to try and escape how they live. Because the biggest con in a capitalistic society is the belief that stems from the fiction of Horatio Alger...the story of rags to riches; that we could one day work our way up to being among the wealthy who have nothing to worry about and plenty of leisure time to not have to worry about it. We’re all struggling to escape our lives that range from poverty and homelessness to slaving away too many hours for too little pay. It doesn’t have to be that way. There are plenty of resources and wealth in this world, but it’s concentrated in the hands of the few. The most recent figures that I’ve read are that 70% of the world’s wealth resides in the hands of 20% of its population; and here in America, 1% of the population owns more financial wealth than the other 95% of the people combined. UNICEF estimates that between 20,000 to 30,000 children under the age of five die of easily preventable diseases in the Third World each day, and more than one billion people in the world are chronically malnourished. Yet, it takes research to dig up these facts; no one comes on the nightly news to present us



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*continued on page 14* >



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with this information, along with a plan to more equitably distribute resources so that people can simply live. Instead, we are bombarded with ads and commercials telling us we need to go out and buy the bigger, better, faster, updated, new and improved “what-chamacallit” in order to achieve happiness.

Just take a look around you and you’ll see that you’re surrounded by an ocean of billboards, magazine and newspaper ads, computer pop-ups, and even cell phone screensavers. Many of us are walking advertisements, from our hats that announce the type of beer we drink to our shoes that reflect how much money we’re willing to spend. Madison Avenue makes sure we focus on what they deem as important. In the movie, “Zeitgeist: Moving Forward,” we learn that most corporations now spend more money on advertising than on making the actual product. And advertising is becoming a more sophisticated and tricky business, with expensive studies being conducted to determine what will influence you, the consumer, to buy certain products. There’s even an academic discipline known as “media psychology” that looks at the impact of various forms of the media on human experiences and perceptions. Advertising companies understand the power of peer pressure (“You don’t want to be the only one on the block still driving/using/playing with/talking on that old thing!”), scarcity (“There are only one


hundred of these in the entire world, that’s why it’s so expensive!”), even controversy (“Everybody’s talking about it, so I had to see what it’s all about!”) to get you to do what they want. Nothing is left to chance.

And just as the form and structure of advertising is selected to achieve a goal (the massive increase in consumerism that we have seen over the past few decades), the presentation of the news is carefully constructed and edited to influence our way of thinking and acting. Consider this from “Survival Strategies For Africans in America,” by Anthony T. Browder, in the chapter regarding the esoteric meaning of numbers: “The number ‘four’ symbolizes a foundation or base. It also represents the four points of the compass and the four sides of the pyramid which face North, East, West, and South. Each side is separate from the other, but if you climb to the top of the pyramid, all four sides come together. That is where the eye of God opens, and knowledge, or reason, is attained. {Consider the pyramid with the all-seeing eye on the back of the dollar bill.} The initials of the four directions --NEWS-- represent a similar gathering of knowledge from the four directions which informs and enlightens.” This “news” that is obtained through the eye of God at the top of the pyramid can be used either for your enlightenment or for your detriment, to keep you enslaved and slaving away for the enrichment of others. Is the



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news that gets delivered to your television, to your doorstep, to your email, your cell phone, or your desktop really giving you information that will help you navigate your way through a hostile system populated by loan sharks, crooked lawyers, unjust employers, and a legal system filled with loopholes and landmines? Or is it helping you and your children to fall through the cracks into poverty and despair?

Look at the slant of most stories. Try to decipher what it is that they want you to believe. If we consider the healthcare field, for example, most news stories talk about this or that disease in terms of numbers (how many new cases are popping up each year) and breakthroughs in drugs to manage the condition. You never hear about scientists working on a possible cure, or exactly what is the cause of the disease so that you could avoid it or cure it yourself. The scientists are working on the drug to manage it so that you can live with it. You see, there’s no money in the cure. Or as one doctor put it, “If I cure you, there’s no reason for you to come back!” Instead, you’re given pills to take several times a day and a prescription to refill at the end of the month. (See “Death in a Bottle: Are the Drugs That Save Our Lives Killing Us?” Capital City Courier, August 2009.) Insurance companies also don’t want a cure, because if there was a known cure for many diseases, people would stop paying the

“just in case” premiums. Until then, the insurance companies will continue to take in the money and pay out for the maintenance drugs and the occasional surgery.

There are stories about the increase in violent crimes and the pollution of our water supply, all of which are horrible. But keep in mind that violent crimes increase in a society where the division between the “haves” and the “have-nots” is the widest, such as is happening in our country today. There is much talk about the destruction of the middle class, but very little discussion of the underlying causes, its relationship to crime, and what can be done to rectify it. Instead, there are more prisons being built...as the Department of Corrections in many states faces budget cuts...and prisons are being turned over to private, “for profit” corporations that make money off of the increase in prisoners. It’s similar to the “for profit” corporations that are taking over the public schools and the dilemma faced by the educational system. (See “Why Can’t Tyrone Read? Is the Educational System Failing Our Children?” Capital City Courier, November 2010.) And the pollution of our water supply has led to the bottled water industry that is hugely profitable to someone.

As much as some people might dislike him and his tactics, filmmaker Michael Moore is always accurate in his facts and in bringing those facts to the attention of the world. His latest documentary, “Capitalism:



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A Love Story," is filled with information that both shocks and disgusts you about the heartlessness and ruthlessness in this financial climate. One thing that he pointed out is the practice that some corporations have of secretly taking out insurance policies on their employees, with the company as the beneficiary. They are called "dead peasant" life insurance policies, which tells you what they think of the people who slave away most of their lives for the company. The examples included a woman whose husband died of brain cancer, and while she was struggling to get the money together for his funeral, she discovered his company had one of these "dead peasant" policies on him that netted the company \$1.5 million. None of that money went to her. WalMart was one such company, until they eventually stopped the practice. However, many companies continue to insure employees without their knowledge or consent, and those policies can remain in force even after the employee has left or been fired. Some grieving family members have been able to successfully sue for a portion of the money these corporations have made off their deceased relatives. So, if you would like to know whether your employer is one of those companies...some of the names of companies believed to be the beneficiaries of employees' policies include Avon, Ameritech, Walgreen Company, Coca-Cola Company, Eastman Kodak Company, Bank of America, Bank One Corp., Charming Shoppes, Inc., Citibank, N.A., GTE Corporation, and JP Morgan Chase & Co., just to name a few that I recognize...check out this

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The media has the power to affect, not only our thoughts, but our actions and how we live. "Juneteenth" represents what has to be one of the most obvious and malicious misrepresentations of news that we've faced in this country. On September 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, with an effective date of January 1, 1863. The southern states didn't agree with or like it, and Texas decided not to cooperate. So, for two years, Blacks in Texas were intentionally not informed of the Proclamation or their newfound freedom, and were worked (and paid nothing) as if they were still slaves. Finally, on June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger and 2,000 federal troops were sent to take control of Texas and enforce the law. It was then that Blacks in Texas were at last given the news that the rest of the country had known: that they were free and had been for two years. Despite the ugliness of this deception (that would have gone on indefinitely had not federal troops stepped in), Blacks in Texas and across the country have embraced "Juneteenth" as a holiday worthy of celebrating. It represents the moment that the last of our people finally came up out of slavery, triumphing over those who would have held us in that state forever.

Another example of the media's influence on our actions is the 1938 radio broadcast, "War of the Worlds." The Columbia Broadcasting System produced a Halloween program that was directed and narrated by Orson Welles. The program was performed as a series of simulated live-

news bulletins announcing that UFO's had landed. Each bulletin told more of the story as the invaders from outer space "took over" more of the planet and fighting them seemed impossible. At the beginning, intermission, and again at the end of the program, an announcer reminded the listening audience that this was only a work of fiction, however many people only heard part of the broadcast and believed that Earth had really been invaded by Martians. A panic ensued, with people fleeing the area and police stations being flooded with calls from anxious and frightened listeners. Many grabbed their guns and headed for the hills. Someone shot a neighbor's water tower, believing it to be one of the Martian tripods. One woman took poison (she lived). The broadcast was the first of its kind, and people were used to accepting

news reports as being reliable. The panic could have been a lot worse, had the broadcast been more widely distributed.

But the mainstream media has its limitations, as people have discovered. Many who feel disenfranchised and excluded are making their voices heard, at least among themselves and the audiences that they feel they represent. Indigenous and minority populations find that the only way to get their issues out and discuss them openly is to control some portion of the media for themselves. Small, "underground" and alternative news bulletins and newspapers as well as local radio and television broadcasts are ways to accomplish this, and follow a tradition that spans the last century. There's always the concern that those voices that say they speak for the minority truly reflect the minority view. Still, we need more of these outlets that tell the truth.

The important thing to remember is to be very critical of the messages that are being beamed into your home and into your brain. Whose purpose do they serve, and what purpose do they have? Are there smaller, alternative sources of news that don't "push an agenda" or try to sway your opinion? Be sure to keep an eye on the magician's other hand, the one he's not moving to distract you. If you pay close attention to the issues of the day, and learn to read between the lines, pretty soon, you'll find you've become immune to the okey-doke!

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# INSPIRATION

## Pray and Trust God, He's More Than the World Against You!

by Sherry Pittman

It's a dark, cold, wintery night. You're alone in the car as it climbs the steep, ice covered highway hill that leads to the icy bridge across the frigid waters. Going back or pulling over to the side just is not an option. So forging ahead up the hill, seemingly uncontrollably, the vehicle moves closer and closer to the slippery frozen bridge. Thankfully, the vehicle seems to glide in a straight line across the bridge. Every fiber of your being waits with great anxiety for the safe arrival to the land that is just at the end of the bridge. The vehicle continues to move as though it has a mind of its own. Just as it appears that the vehicle is passing the water beneath and nearing land, the only visible welcoming party is pitch darkness. It is as if the entire other side is experiencing a total black out. The fears of the past have now given way to the fear of the future. John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have

the light of life." No matter what your situation looks like, cry out to and trust God, He's more than the world against you.

You're out in nature for a little walk but a storm comes up quickly, flood waters, somehow, rise quickly. You attempt to look for your vehicle, but find the waters are creeping up the road that leads to where you parked your vehicle. You wonder if you could possibly still make it to your car to get out before it's too late. When you step your foot into where the water just meets land, to your surprise, the land starts to move under your foot. Just then you notice a wooden fence within arm's reach. They are rough pieces of wood which could easily splinter your hands, but they may be your only chance to push yourself out of harms' way. Not only are they loaded with splinters, but you notice that they also have nails driven through them and are sticking out on the other side. You take the chance, because it's all you have and the ground is giving way. You grab two

pieces of the fence and use them to hoister yourself up from the moving ground. Just at the moment you notice that the higher ground you were trying to move towards is also giving away and you are about to be swallowed up by what seems to be a major earthquake. Ps. 46:1-3 "I am your refuge and your strength. Even though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, do not fear. I am an ever present help in trouble." No matter what your situation looks like, cry out to and trust God, He's more than the world against you.

In the face of fear, to insure our safety, we must instinctively do certain things quickly. One, we need to cry out to the Lord God Almighty. Call Him whatever name you like, Jesus, God, Lord, Savior, Father, etc., but do call on Him like never before. Two, put your trust in Him. In the face of fear, we need to already have a strong and confident relationship with our maker through His word and prior experiences. Today is a perfect day to pray,

trust and draw closer to your maker.

In another passage, He reminds us that he has not given us the spirit of fear but of love power and a sound mind. Love, because He has already demonstrated his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. It was only by the Spirit of God that we received this truth and therefore we have also received the spirit of love. Power, because when we receive the truth that Jesus died for us, we also receive the powerful peace, among other things, that comes with the truth. The natural man, without the Spirit of God, cannot understand this peace. And we receive a sound mind because the powerful peace He gives enables us to not panic and to be deeply assured through the good, bad and the ugly that we can pray and trust Him to be more than the world against us!

*Sherry Pittman is a monthly staff writer for the Capital City Courier Newspaper. In addition to public speaking, she hosts two television shows "Heart to Heart" and "House to House." She is a licensed real estate broker and holds a Bachelor of Science in Speech Communications and can be reached for speaking engagements or comments and questions at [SPittman@ameritech.net](mailto:SPittman@ameritech.net) or 217.528.2998*

### HE SAID:

One of the keys to an enjoyable and fulfilling marriage, is when the husband identifies a vision for his family. Vision is when we give a clear picture of what we desire to accomplish in our marriage and family. My vision is that Tracy and I, and our four children, individually and collectively fulfill our potential, regardless of fear and obstacles that would try to hinder this process. As a husband, I recognize that my wife has individual goals and assignments that she is passionate about fulfilling. A part of my role is to encourage her in using her gifts and challenge her to overcome fear of getting out of her comfort zone to reach her potential. She does the same for me at times when fear tries to creep in to hinder me from carrying out my dreams. Together, we are inspiring one another to the vision and being an example for our children to follow. When our wives are given the vision, they can see where we are going as a family and it sets the culture in our home. For instance, if one of our children is gifted in the arts, and decides not to participate in a great opportunity to develop that gift because



# THE WINNING TEAM

## Identify Your Vision

by Aeneas & Tracy Williams

of fear or peer pressure, my wife and I are together on the decision to encourage him/her to press on regardless of these feelings. When my wife and I have the same vision, she won't give in to the tears of our child! When given vision, we know where we are going as a family and can enjoy the benefits of fulfilling our potential together.

### SHE SAID:

When there is a vision for the family, it really does set the culture of the home. As a wife, I appreciate knowing the direction that my husband and I are going and where we are taking our children. Women instinctively, when

given a vision, will come up with creative ideas to carry it out. When this gift in the wife is realized, it can be a true blessing to her husband and family. Now wives, we have to be so careful, that if our husbands don't have a vision for the family or has not articulated it, that we don't get frustrated and try to nag him or push him to get one. As a wife, you have an incredible power to stir up gifts and abilities in your husband that he may not have been aware of himself.

Ladies, if there is no vision, you can ask your husband a series of questions to help him identify a vision. At the proper time, you can ask the question, "Honey, what are some of the goals that you have set for our marriage and family, and how can I help you in fulfilling them?" You will be surprised at the conversation that will ensue as a result of you trying to tap into in your husband's heart towards your marriage and family.

*Aeneas Williams, played 14 years in the NFL as a cornerback and safety for the Arizona Cardinals and the St. Louis Rams. Pastor Aeneas and his wife, Tracy, founded Spirit of the Lord Family Church, currently located at 206 Emerling Dr. St. Louis, MO. two years ago. The Williams' have shared marital concepts and mentored couples since Aeneas was a football rookie. The couple resides in Creve Coeur, MO. with their four children. To purchase Pastor Aeneas Williams book IT TAKES RESPECT go to [www.slfchurch.com](http://www.slfchurch.com) click on book cover on the home page. Also you can follow Pastor Aeneas on twitter Aeneas35 and he also keeps a blog at [pastoraeneas.com](http://pastoraeneas.com)*

# FOR THE FELLAS

## Real Men Know How to Show Up!

by Jack A. Daniels



typically go out to breakfast after attending church on Sunday mornings. As I was sitting waiting on my meal, I couldn't help but to eavesdrop on the conversation that was occurring between the father and daughter sitting diagonally across from my booth. I found myself extremely curious about the elderly gentlemen's depiction of his life journey. He spoke about all of the odd jobs he worked throughout his life in order to maintain and provide a living for his family. All the pains, prejudices and stresses he endured and never shared because he wanted to shield his children from those truths. He spoke with such reverence, gratitude, dignity and conviction. He was so grateful that the one of his children who he worked so hard to provide for was appreciative enough to take time out of their busy schedule and spend time with what he deemed, "a feeble, fragile and forgotten about old man." After I finished my breakfast, I went over, firmly shook his hand, introduced myself and thanked him for paving the way for me and countless other brothers of my generation. I went on to tell him, "It's not because you're so big or

because you're so small, rather it's because I truly appreciate your presence." "Its folks like you that have sincerely taught us lessons about what it means to show up."

Have you ever looked a real man in the eye and saw the essence of his existence? How many men can you count in your circle of influence who can exude the equivalence of excellence? How many truly live by example and show up everyday despite the discontentment, disappointment and discouragement of their mitigating circumstances. One of my favorite subjects to talk about is courage. It's a rare commodity in today's society because many of us are not bold or daring enough to take on the challenges of what it takes for true bravery. The greatest stories ever told are typically about male heroes who either left, lost or risked everything they had in the name of love. Of course that concept is easy to understand when you're talking about epic blockbuster movies like Star Wars, Superman, Braveheart, Gladiator, etc. However, when you're referring to real life examples that exemplify the mental and moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear or difficulty, our examples become scarce.

Fellas, I assure you that we're in the presence of courageousness and greatness everyday. That greatness I speak of isn't representative of the protagonists that perpetuate the existence of modern day movie heroism, but I assure you they do exist. Similar to my breakfast encounter with Mr. Clayton, there are multiple men and women who should share our celebratory gratitude and acknowledgement of their ability to continue showing up. There are countless courageous elderly individuals who deserve our appreciation for carrying the burdens of bravery on their backs so we could enjoy life as we know it today. The lessons they've vicariously shown us speak volumes about how the simple things throughout our lives' can and do count for something. Their presence gave us the presents of freedom, education, equality, justice and so on. It takes courage to show up everyday and be told you don't count, you're worthless, you're less than a man or you'll never amount to anything. Thank God for the Ralph Ellisons' who told them, "Even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play." The Maya Angelous' who told them, "we were born with potential."

The Du Bois' who told them how to be ready at any moment to be able to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.

Fellas I implore and challenge you as real men to now show up for them. Show up by setting good examples for the generations below you. Be men of courage. Show up for fidelity, show up for responsibility, show up for love, honesty, leadership, integrity, show up for your children, show up for education, work, to vote, court, business ownership, family, church...show up for life! So the next time you see one of our common everyday elderly Black heroes who helped pave the way for us to have the opportunity to show up, its your responsibility as a real man to pay homage by introducing yourself, firmly shaking their hand, looking them straight in the eyes and sincerely thanking them for having the audacity, boldness and courage to show up everyday! Show up, show love and show respect to the courageousness that helped catapult and cultivate the culture in which we enjoy today.

*"Keep the faith, keep making it happen and remember to stay out of your own way!"*

*Jack A. Daniels is the Author of "The Man's Handbook for Choosing the Right Woman" Speaker, Syndicated Columnist and Counselor based in Atlanta, GA. Go to [www.100hearts.net](http://www.100hearts.net) for more information about his powerful new docu-series & project for women, "Healing 100 Hearts in 100 Days Challenge." Jack can be contacted for interviews, speaking engagements, questions or comments concerning this column @ [www.presspause.org](http://www.presspause.org)*

People take marriage for granted. Many who are married want to get out. Many who are not married want to be married. Each couple and person has his or her own reasons for the desire to marry or not to marry. Marriage is the greatest relationship between two people. Parent and child is the second greatest. While we love our children and we love our parents the most challenging and most spoken of relationship in the Word of God next to your human love for GOD is the relationship between a man and a woman (his wife) who he is to love with all his heart as she is to respect him. Each has a role of submission. He (the man) must submit to the High power while she submits to her leader, her mate and her husband. People hate to submit, thus love fades rapidly rendering love and God almost obsolete.

When you say "I DO", you are saying I do plan to work hard and be open and honest with this person. You say I do plan to respect, care for, provide and pray with this person. God honors this. When two people choose to come together before God and their family and say, "We are going to

# FOR THE SISTERS

## This Is a Season of LOVE

by Letrice Raaw'el Ware



try to make this work together as hard as it may become"- you show others how to trust in God and how to stand on commitment. You demonstrate love. Haven't you heard that God is love? So you demonstrate God.

Society devalues human life and relationships? The world and society promotes lust, cohabitation, abortions, deception, and self satisfaction. I am guilty of falling into some of these traps myself but like you, "I" want to do better and I am working on it. I first had to learn to love myself and appreciate "why" I was created. I recognize that as a woman I have a particular role based on the divine hierarchy that GOD established.

Marriage is about satisfying and serving the other person. Marriage is about honoring God. People are so quick to jump into things without thinking. Why is it

that we so quickly choose to do what is wrong but delay doing what is right? And as contradicting as it sounds, "waiting" for the right time and person may be what are right instead of quickly jumping into something that will only last temporarily.

Money and material things have replaced love. The documentary Soul Mate by Andrea Whitely depicts a group of successful women who go home to big beautiful homes all along yet they desire a "soul mate". They long for companionship and an intimate fulfilling relationship. Those who couldn't or haven't yet found it in the opposite sex pour all their focus and energy into GOD and are yet fulfilled (for God is Love).

Find joy within you. Do not seek to please yourself externally in unhealthy ways. People look for things to satisfy an

inner hunger by filling it with external things that satisfy. Drugs, alcohol and sex can become abusive unhealthy things. JOY is a choice. Joy is something that lives on the inside of you that must be activated. The more peaceful and filled with love you are the more you can pour into someone else. The less love, joy an peace you have the more you seek it out. Greater is "it" {he} that is within you than he that is in the world. The world will never satisfy you.

*Happy Valentines and Black History month- Be Blessed & Not Stressed.*

*- Raaw'el Letrice Ware  
~raawwords@yahoo.com  
or find me on Facebook*

# JUDY BAAR TOPINKA

## Bringing Illinois Back in Balance!

by Mike Pittman

**J**udy Baar Topinka is the Illinois State Comptroller and former Illinois State Treasurer, having served as Treasurer from 1995 to

2007. She was the first woman to become state treasurer, first to be elected to three consecutive terms and the first Republican to hold the post in more than thirty-two years. During her last term, she was the only elected statewide official from the Republican Party, in Illinois. She is also the last Republican to have been elected to a statewide office in Illinois.

Topinka was born in the Chi-

cago suburb of Riverside, Illinois, to William and Lillian Baar, the children of Czech and Slovak immigrants. [2] She graduated in 1962 from Ferry Hall School in Lake Forest and entered Northwestern University in Evanston. Topinka received a

Bachelor of Science degree in journalism from the university's Medill School. She is an alumna of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority. After leaving Northwestern, Topinka became a reporter for several suburban Chicago newspapers and rose through the ranks to become an editor. On the side, Topinka established her own public relations business, through which she began a career in

consulting for various political candidates

**CCC:** How did you first get involved in politics?

**JBT:** *I was a newspaper reporter. I was just taking care of people and doing things for people and I had a State Representative say, "Why don't you just run; you're doing it anyway?" That was the first thing. The second thing was when I was a newspaper reporter, I could see a lot of corruption and that bothered me. So, I figured if I got in, I could stop that kind of stuff and show people that they could have clean government and they would not have to put up with that type of stuff; and that there were choices, and when there were choices, you needed to support an honest candidate. So, I got into it. I'm the only one in my family in politics. I'm not part of a dynasty by a long-shot. It's just me.*

**CCC:** What offices have you held over the years?

**JBT:** *I'm still a Township Republican Committeeman, I've been that for a long time. I was a State Representative for four years, I was a State Senator for ten years, I was State Treasurer for twelve years, and then, of course, I ran for Governor against Blagojevich, and quite frankly, I would do it again tomorrow if I thought I could take him out, because he's a bad, bad man who has done horrible things to this State, and I feel good that at least I tried to take him out. I ran for Comptroller and now I'm the Comptroller. Now, I want to combine the two offices and hopefully save the State twelve million dollars a year.*

**CCC:** Why did you decide to get back into politics?

**JBT:** *Frankly, retirement is a lot easier, but I kept watching on television, listening to the radio and reading in the paper what was going on, and it was just driving me crazy that I could not impact it because I was on the outside. If you have standing in terms of holding public office, then you can fight back, and that's why I decided to run. Especially in a fiscal office, this is where the rubber meets the road. We're the ones that pay the bills, and it's a very important office right now. I'm trying to see if we can make suggestions to the Governor and the Legislature on where we can do cuts, because you can't just do it by raising*

*taxes on people. You can't dig your way out that way; you're going to have to make some cuts. Let's get about our business and start identifying what cuts that we can make that will have the least amount of pain for people, because there will be some that will be painful down the road, but if nothing else, let's go after the cuts we can make that are not going to effect people's lives too very much.*

**CCC:** There have been several vendors that haven't been paid in several months. What message would you like to convey to those vendors?

**JBT:** *What we are trying to do for those folks who have been hanging without getting paid, is that by law, we have to pay a full bill when we pay, which means when we don't have a lot of money, we might not be able to pay the full bill amount to a vendor. So, we are going to put in legislation that would allow for us to do a partial payment. So, at least we could give vendors something to hang onto in a predictable fashion so that they could make book on it and budget on it, and you wouldn't have it all over the map. It still wouldn't be a total payment, which still has to get done. But at least we could kind of get there and not leave them hanging.*

**CCC:** There was a story on 60 Minutes recently that identified Illinois as a deadbeat State. What is your feeling on that?

**JBT:** *Oh, I know which one you're talking about. It is a deadbeat State, how can you deny it? You have the Governor of New Jersey blasting radio announcements all over saying that businesses should not be billed on the taxes of this State, people are crying about what their tax rates are going to go up to, especially the middle and lower class in terms of monies that they make. People that are not making a lot of money are going to take a big hit here. We haven't paid out bills. We owe about seven billion dollars in terms of bills. We've got almost \$80 billion dollars worth of unfunded pension funds. So yes, we're a deadbeat State. No question. We've got to start trying to solve our own problems. Which means, "No thank you, Congress; do not give us the option for bankruptcy." We do not wish to declare bankruptcy, or we will lose our credit rating completely and we will never get anybody to invest in Illinois, and we will just go down like a fast spiral. We have to clean up our own mess, and it's time to clean it up.*

**CCC:** How can the State dig itself out of this massive amount of debt?

**JBT:** *Well, it's going to have to start making some cuts. It can't be all things to all people. I have to pat Governor Quinn and the Legislature on the back. The Governor has a bill on his desk pertaining to free rides for seniors. That bill would save us almost \$40 million dollars. We've got all these programs that Blagojevich started which just spiked*

*continued on page 19 >*



# Judy Baar Topinka, Bringing Illinois Back in Balance!

continued from page 18



**Mortgage Relief Project**

## An Outreach Event...

Governor Pat Quinn has established the Mortgage Relief Project to help you take advantage of new government programs that can help you lower your mortgage payment, avoid foreclosure and keep your home.

Hosted by Springfield Mayor Frank Edwards

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Free housing counseling will be available. Be sure to bring your latest mortgage documents, two recent pay stubs and your driver's license.

**For Additional Information:**  
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or toll-free at 1-800-562-8785 or [www.idfpr.com](http://www.idfpr.com)

Logos: Pat Quinn, Governor of Illinois; IDFPR; ILLINOIS HOUSING; LISA MADRAN; Frank Edwards, Mayor.

good way of getting things done. People see things if they work, or maybe there can be an improvement and they can make those recommendations. I'm going to take good ideas whenever I can get them. Whether they be Republican, Democrat, Independent or on the street. Let's make things move. Let's be the greatest we can possibly be.

**CCC:** Did I hear you say that it will take four years for the State to catch up on its bills?

**JBT:** It's probably going to take longer than four years to play catch-up, especially if you're looking at the pension fund. This did not happen overnight. It's going to take us our first full four years of trying to make cuts, trying to get the office efficient, trying to get through the Treasurer's office, and so on. We will have our hands full. This office is not something that can run on autopilot. It's going to take a lot of effort.

**CCC:** You said that you are the only one in your family that's in politics. Do your children have any interest in politics?

**JBT:** My son has an interest in politics. He certainly keeps track of it, and he is involved on that front. But I think that if he and his wife have this discussion, she may not be all that thrilled of his going into politics. She said that when she married him, she knew that he was in the Army, and that was tough enough. That would be up to them. If he wants to, I would certainly be supportive. He has the brains, the compassion and the drive for it. He is a real sweetheart. It can be very abusive. And you would have to be willing to take a lot of body blows, and I would not want to see him take those. I've had my share. I'm a mom. I'm protective.

**CCC:** Do you think that George Ryan should be released from prison?

**JBT:** I think something could be worked out with the Corrections Department that would allow him to come out in the daytime to be with his wife out of compassion and mercy, and then maybe go to jail at night. This doesn't have to be a cut-and-dry, all-black all-white decision here. When does punishment stop being punishment and when does it become revenge? I think that we are at that point. I feel terrible for Laura Lynn Ryan, and for their whole family and all that has transpired. I would like to think that he would like to spend her final moments with her. No one should have to die alone, if they can avoid it.

**CCC:** A few years back, you proposed the sale of the Abraham Lincoln Hotel for ten million dollars, and just recently it sold for less than that. What is your feeling on that?

**JBT:** Well, first and foremost, we have to understand that the hotels were not mine.

They came to pass from then-Treasurer Jerry Consentino and Governor Jim Thompson with a direct loan from the State. At the time that we proposed getting rid of the hotels, we were told by the Auditor General that we should get them off our books. These things were just eating us out of house and home, and that's what I tried to do. We went to an appraiser and they gave us twenty-five cents on the dollar. That was the best that we could get. I had all the media beat me over the head saying twenty-cents wasn't enough, and now ten years later say that I was right. Well, fine. I was right. The deal to get rid of them was lost until Alexi Giannoulias came in, and he settled. By that time, we had lost somewhere over fifty million dollars by keeping these things on the books for 20 extra years when we didn't need to.

**CCC:** Do you have anything else you would like to add?

**JBT:** Nothing other than I'm feeling good to be talking to you. Love it. Looking forward to seeing you and putting things together. Maybe we can get something going. Any advice that you have that you can share with me, I am certainly open for business.

**CCC:** Judy, thank you for the interview.

**JBT:** You're welcome.

up everything that he put forward. It hit up our pension fund, it hit up our G.R.F. One of the things he signed is the change in Medicaid to insure that people receiving funding are truly eligible. This isn't Give-away City. It's not a charity bazaar. It's a State. It's got to run like a State. Those are the kinds of things that we need to look at.

**CCC:** Do you have any ambitions to run for Governor again?

**JBT:** No, I'm not going to run for Governor. I've done that. If the same situation would have existed now like it did in the past, I still would have gone after Blagojevich. Because, I think he was a disaster for this State and we are going to be paying for that for years to come. And that's really sad, because the man had so much money, \$27 million dollars he could beat me, who was supported in 72 counties, and because of Cook County it automatically trounced us. That's a bad thing that Cook County so dominates the State it negates everything in Central, Southern and Western Illinois. It's a pity. It's just terrible.

**CCC:** Speaking of Cook County, you probably ran better than any other Republican Candidate in Cook County. What do you attribute that to?

**JBT:** Well, I live in Cook County. Second of all, I live in the suburbs, so we have a very good suburban vote, and you have got to carry the Cook County suburbs and a portion of the collar counties if you intend to win, because you have to hold off the City of Chicago in my case which is so strongly Democratic. The fact that I don't have a "D" behind my name automatically gets loads of people voting against me, even if they don't know me or know what I stand for or anything. They vote Democrat by habit, and it's very hard to break that habit and say, "Look folks, you have choices here. Come on. Look at what people have to offer and be a little more picky and choosy, then you might get something for your money."

**CCC:** How would you describe your management style?

**JBT:** My management style is to get very good people to run the office, and I tell them where they ought to be going and where they want to wind up at the end. And then I tell them to be creative and find a way; if they have good ideas that they have to share them with me. I'm connected to everybody now at the Comptroller's office. Anybody at the Comptroller's office will be able to get in touch with me if they have a great idea, so you get a real good exchange of ideas going up and down the food chain. It's a



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# DR. PAUL MACH

## Circumventing Genetic Predisposition

**D**o not read this unless you are ready to be responsible for your health! Current research shows nutrition and other environmental factors positively influence the expression of genes for health or negatively influence genetic expression that leads to chronic illness. Nutritional genomics (“nutrigenomics”) is the “junction between health, diet, and genomics”—how nutritive substances and phytochemicals affect genetic expression within human cells. This growing field of research recognizes that nutritional optimization can maintain and extend a state of optimal health even in genetically predisposed individuals.

Therapies applying basic and advanced nutrigenomics, specific diet, supplement and evaluative principals to improve your health and reverse chronic illness should be implemented by anyone wanting to live longer, perform better and decrease their negative genetic predispositions.

Modifying Biological Genetic Signals Western diets, stress, foods of convenience, vitamin and nutrient inadequacies and other unhealthy dietary and lifestyle behaviors can “muddle” genetic expression signals sent to cells throughout the body; fostering negative genetic (phenotypic) expression that leads to a weakened physical state, fatigue, premature aging and illness. What people eat, what they are exposed to and daily behaviors does have a direct influence on how they perform and feel. Specific eating and lifestyle patterns allows you to

increase health on a biochemical level.

Modifying dietary signals with proper Diet, Vitamins and Nutrients Appropriate foods, vitamin, mineral and nutrient supplementation offers an adjunct approach for peak performance, weight loss and energy. Nutritive supplementation is formulated with macro- and micronutrients that are recognized by scientific principles to support individualized dietary management and is to be administered under the supervision of a trained physician or licensed health-care practitioner. New generations of vitamins, nutrients, medicinal foods and nutraceuticals are formulated with specific applications for advanced nutritional support. These products may offer a greater degree of effectiveness than dietary changes alone—helping “boost” the positive cellular signals. Test don’t guess. Laboratory tests assay deficiencies in each individual allowing the practitioner to address the individualized needs specifically with a customized approach.

8 Precursors Inhibiting Optimal Athletic Performance Improve your bodies functionality by intervening at multiple levels to improve core clinical imbalances. We all know a healthy body (at a biochemical and cellular level) performs better. These MUST be addressed for optimization!

- Hormonal and neurotransmitter imbalances
- Oxidation-reduction imbalances and mitochondriopathy
- Detoxification, toxicity and biotransformational imbalances
- Immune imbalances

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- Inflammatory imbalances
  - Digestive, absorptive, and microbiological imbalances
  - Imbalances from lifestyle, vitamin- mineral and nutrient deficiencies or excesses, cellular membrane function or organ system issues.
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# OUR COMMUNITY

## Local Events, Comments and Announcements



### “STARTING YOUR BUSINESS IN ILLINOIS” WORKSHOPS BEING OFFERED BY ISBDC AT LLCC IN FEBRUARY

#### REGISTRATIONS BEING ACCEPTED NOW FOR FREE WORKSHOP

The Illinois Small Business Development Center (ISBDC) at Lincoln Land Community College invites prospective business owners to attend a “Starting Your Business in Illinois” workshop in February. Workshop topics include preparing a business plan, financing your business, what legal form to choose (proprietorship, partnership, corporation), how to get a business name registered, taxes and more.

Registrations are being accepted for the February workshops. There is no charge for the workshop; however, registration is required due to limited seating. The workshop is being offered the following dates and times:

Wednesday, Feb. 16—1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at LLCC’s Capital City Training Center, 130 W. Mason St., Springfield. To register, call the ISBDC at 217.544.7232.

Monday, Feb. 28—1 to 3 p.m. at the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, 155 W. Morton St., Jacksonville. To register, call the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce at 217.245.2174.

For more information about other programs and services at the Illinois Small Business Development Center at LLCC, call 217.544.7232.

### AAUW BRANCH MEETING PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

The American Association of University Women, Springfield branch, will be hosting an informational event on Thursday, February 17, 2011 at 7pm. The location will be the American Lung Association, 3000 Kelly Lane, Springfield, IL (from Wabash Avenue, turn North on Archer Elevator Rd. to Alex Blvd. and turn West one block to Kelly.) This event is free of charge and open to the public.

Three prominent state legislative observers, Amanda Vinicky, Charlie Wheeler, and Kent Redfield will discuss elements of the 2010 election, its results, and issues anticipated to be priorities in the next two years.

For further information on this event, please email Mary Ann Merano at [mamerano@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mamerano@sbcglobal.net).

### BASIC HOME MAINTENANCE CLASS

TSP-HOPE, Inc., a non-profit organization committed to increasing homeownership in Springfield by bridging the gap between homebuyers and resources, is hosting a free Basic Home Maintenance class. Classes are provided by TSP-HOPE, Inc. and available for free to all Sangamon County residents. Classes are scheduled to meet once a week beginning Tuesday, February 15, 2011. All classes will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will continue for seven consecutive weeks. Sessions will be held at TSP-HOPE, Inc. located at 1507 East Cook Street. Off-street parking is provided in the rear of the facility.

Certificates of completion will be issued at the close of the last session to all who have completed the seven-week course. The course will cover the basics of Electrical, Plumbing, Weatherization, and Structural Repair. A Weatherization book and a Weatherization kit will be provided to all participants by CWLP’s Energy Services Office who has now partnered with TSP-HOPE, Inc. in assisting residents with education to empower them with the knowledge of maintaining their homes at a lower cost.

All class materials will be provided for all enrollees free of charge.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Basic Home Maintenance classes or TSP-HOPE, Inc. should call (217) 523-6960 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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# EDITORIAL

## Gasoline Prices — Here we go Again

by James Clingman

**D**epending on where you live, if you drive something other than an electric automobile, you are feeling the results of rising oil prices, and subsequent gasoline prices. Haven't we been at this place before? Didn't we complain and moan about the high price of gas a couple of years ago? We even organized "Gas Out Day" in an effort to get lower prices at the pump. What happened? Why are we back at the same place once again so soon?

Excuses abound for the latest rip-off of consumers by...hmmm, I wonder whom — or what. Some attribute escalating gasoline prices to simple supply and demand; others say it's the OPEC oil cartel; still others blame the speculators who bet on future oil prices; some say it's government taxes levied on each gallon we purchase; and a few "insiders" say it's all in the hands of the IMF and the World Bank. Whoever or whatever it is, I know it's sure taking a

chunk out of my pocket. How about you?

What's the little guy to do? Is there no answer, no way to ease the pain at the pump? Of course, we can always find ways to drive less and make sure we are not frivolously taking "old Betsy" out for a spin; you know, like our parents did in the "good old days" when gas was 30 cents a gallon. Conservation will surely decrease demand, but will that bring the price down, per basic economics, as we have been taught in school? Some say, "Absolutely not."

If there is a hidden hand controlling oil and gas prices, and there probably is, the little people have virtually no chance of impacting prices. You know how greedy those hidden hand folks are — they used to want billions, but now it's trillions in profits.

Back to solutions. Conservation if definitely within our personal control. Then there is collective leverage through an affinity program of some kind. Maybe local groups can organize thousands of consumers and make a commitment to

purchase gas from a few selected stations, that is, if those stations offer some kind of group discount. Organizations like the Collective Empowerment Group, headquartered in Prince Georges County Maryland, could lead the way.

I have said before: If gas prices are too high, just increase the supply. How? By refusing to patronize certain brands or stations, on a local level, those stations will surely have a greater supply on hand and will more than likely be a bit more amenable to offering better prices per gallon. Gotta sell that stuff to somebody.

In Great Britain it takes about 70 pounds to fill up the average gas tank. Convert that to U.S. dollars and it's about \$112.00. Looks like we may be headed that way, folks. Are you ready? You better hurry up and buy yourself a bicycle or a moped or something more economical.

The bottom-line is this: Somebody out there is manipulating the price of oil. The good news is that big bad China is

making a move that will at least curtail our fuel demise in the short run. A recent report disclosed that China is taking actions that will lower the price of oil on the world market. It reported, "Crude prices dropped early in the day, slumping after reports from China that the government was taking more steps to discourage risky bank lending."

"China is one of the largest oil consumers in the world, but a recent crackdown on bank lending has raised fears that China's economic recovery — and its appetite for oil — could falter," the report continued. It just goes to show you what collective leverage is all about.

Yes, we are being ripped off and, knowing that, what sacrifices are we willing to make to respond to it? This is a personal decision we all must make, and then we must be disciplined enough to follow through on whatever solution we pursue. The oil thieves count on us to just whine and complain, and then go to the gas pump to fill up. Maybe \$5.00 per gallon gas will change our complacency into creativity when it comes to how much we spend on gasoline, as well as where we spend our dollars.

**I**t amazes me that only 30% of people in American exercise on a regular basis. How often should you exercise? The frequency of your workouts will depend on your fitness level and your schedule. Beginners should start with three non-consecutive days of cardio and work their way up to more frequent sessions. The general guidelines are:

- To maintain current fitness level: two-four days a week (at least 20 minutes)
- To lose weight: four or more days a week (at least 30 minutes)
- To train as an athlete: six days a week.

I have come up with the three A's of fitness to help you get started or maintain your exercise program. Exercising is a good habit that helps almost everyone. The benefits provided are too long to list in this article.

I encourage you to be movement minded. Every day do something to move your body, whether it's playing with the kids, shoveling the snow, or training for a marathon. Becoming movement minded is the main thing,



# FITNESS

## The 3 "A's" of Fitness

by Lyle Johnson CPT

and it must become a lifelong mindset.

### ACTIVITY —

You will have a better chance of sticking with your exercise program if you get involved with an activity you enjoy. There are many ways to exercise ranging from the latest trends such as Zumba and Kettlebell training to the oldest form of exercise — walking. The word "walking" is listed in the Bible 244 times and experts say that Jesus walked an average of 20 miles per day. Starting a walking club at work or church would be a step in the right direction.

### ATTITUDE —

I have come to find out that one of the reasons why so many of my clients succeed in their fitness goals is attitude. Each and

every one of them have an "I will succeed come hell or high water attitude." This is one of the most important characteristics needed to succeed. Of all the clients I've trained, every one of the top success stories had an attitude - right from the start — that nothing was going to stand in their way.

Remember no matter what your goal or goals are "the difference between try and triumph is a little umph." - Author Unknown

### ACTION —

Nothing is going to happen to your body if you do not take positive action. It doesn't do you any good to have heard all of that information on how to build a good solid physical body. You want to take care of your body. You want to live longer and you want to be more active and powerful in your living. You must avoid time killers. Doubt must be buried with faith, fear must

be destroyed with confidence and procrastination must be defeated with action.

*Lyle Johnson is a certified personal trainer and owner of St. Louis based MVP Fitness; he gives workshops and runs MVP Boot Camp.*

*He is also the author of Get Fit 4 Christ. Before engaging in any exercise program, consult with your doctor. The materials and comments discussed in this article are to be considered general information only and may not apply to your particular health situation. For more information, log onto [www.getfit4christ.com](http://www.getfit4christ.com) or [www.mvpfitness.net](http://www.mvpfitness.net). He can be reached at [lyle@mvpfitness.net](mailto:lyle@mvpfitness.net) or call 866.487.4MVP (4687).*

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# Superior Walls<sup>®</sup>

by *Precast Concrete Solutions*

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Superior Walls of America manufacturers are independently owned and operated.



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Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday: 3:30 - 9:00 p.m. • Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Sundays - By Appointment

