



JUNE 2011

THE CAPITAL CITY COURIER

If This is a Man's World,

What Would It Be Without A Woman or Girl?

Michael Kennedy Jr., Passing on The Legacy! Lessons my Father Taught Me! - pg. 5



Do children actually listen to their parents anymore? The Capital City Courier wanted to find out if second generation children of top business owners really listen to their parents? Do they appreciate the lessons they are taught and are they ready to take the legacy baton of their family-owned business into the future?

Tavis Smiley, The "Fail Up" Interview - pg. 7

From his celebrated conversations with world figures to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders as a broadcaster, author, publisher, advocate and philanthropist, Tavis Smiley continues to be a leading voice for change. He is currently the host of his late-night television talk show on PBS as well as the host of a couple of radio programs syndicated by Public Radio International:



Michael Miller, 300 Pounds Lighter and Much Happier - pg. 9



Michael Miller resides in Edwardsville, Illinois and is employed as the Director of Operations at the International House of Pancakes franchise in Springfield, Illinois. He recently underwent bariatric surgery and has, to date, lost over 300 pounds as a result of the surgery.

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From The EDITOR

Michael Pittman

How many times have you been somewhere and hear people say about a situation that is occurring that “This is the way we have always done it?” Throughout the course of our lives, we will all be faced with these “This is the way we have always done it!” occurrences. When I think about the trailblazers and creative people that have existed in our world and those

that are still a part of our society, I have to pause and think about these special people who never accepted “This is the way we have always done it!” and sought to change the world and our way of thinking. What would it have been like if Harriet Tubman accepted that “This is the way it has always been done!” or if A. Phillip Randolph, the Wright Brothers, Henry Ford, Caesar Chavez, Mother Jones, or scores of others who never accepted that type of thinking?

It was revealed to me recently that a person that I know quite well was physically abusing his wife. Needless to say, I was shocked, because this person and his wife are people that are well-respected in most circles. There was never any indication that this type of behavior was being exhibited by this person. I thought to myself, “How could this happen, and how and why has it been kept such a secret?” especially by the female that is being abused. I will be the first to admit that I don’t understand the psychological problems that go with most women

who are being abused when it comes to their refusal to leave their abuser as well as keeping it quiet so that no one knows. I also shudder to think of the permanent scarring that this leaves on the abused women as well as the children that live in the household and witness the abuse. These so-called “men” who put their hands on women are, in my opinion, nothing but COWARDS, and I call all of them out. Additionally, every case that involved women that are serving time in prison for killing their abusive boyfriends or husbands should also be looked at in a different light. Now, I’m not saying that two wrongs make a right, but I am now a firm believer that obviously, many of these battered women who have been sentenced to prison should not in some circumstances be serving time. That’s my opinion. What’s yours?

There is an old quote that says, “Never criticize an Indian until you’ve walked a mile in his moccasins.” It is so easy in this society to characterize people as less fortunate than ourselves who exhibit behavior that is not in line with what we feel is acceptable. How many times have we heard people be critical of some students that don’t perform well in school or exhibit appropriate behavior, or what about some low-income

individuals that are on some form of public assistance, and people refer to them as lazy and shiftless? What I am trying to say here is that everybody’s situation is different, and we should not be so quick to criticize others who don’t look, act, or feel the same way we do about certain things. One thing that this current economy has taught many people is that, although some of us came over here on different ships, many of us are in the same boat now.

This month’s cover story written by Kim Gordon is titled “If This Is A Man’s World, What Would It Be Without A Woman Or a Girl?” Also in this month’s edition are a story written by Kim Conner titled “Jekyll and Hyde – Domestic Abuse,” an interview with Tavis Smiley, written by Kam Williams, and an interview with Michael Miller, a recent bariatric surgery patient that has, to date, lost over 300 pounds, written by yours truly.

I hope you enjoy this month’s edition.

Michael Pittman
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JEKYLL AND HYDE

Domestic Violence... What's Done in the Dark?

by Kimberly D. Conner

A lot goes on behind closed doors. But, it's not until the laws gets involved, or the story hits the paper or the news, oftentimes, that domestic violence is brought to the light. Society has grown accustomed to keeping those types of things secret. "What goes on in this house stays in this house", is a familiar saying in America.

Researchers indicate that 1.3 million women are abused each year by a domestic partner. Half of these cases are witnessed by another individual, often the children. Abusers seek control, physically and/or verbally abuse, in an effort to rob a person of self esteem and feelings of self worth, drive and energy, by degrading and isolating the victim, and ultimately stripping away their support systems.

Domestic violence is far reaching; it does not discriminate with regards to race, color, or creed. Abusers don't fit a mold, despite the stereotypes. There is no profile. They are not confined to a particular line of work, or look a certain way. It doesn't matter what they wear, the kind of car they drive, abusers come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. You cannot look at a person and determine if they are an abuser. You just simply never know; it might surprise you to know. An abuser could

be a church pastor, an administrator, a law enforcement official, a prominent, community figure, or perhaps a neighbor or co-worker, an otherwise seemingly "normal" person; the ones we'd least likely suspect. More often than not, domestic abuse goes on right under our noses; it just goes unreported, for various reasons, many of them obvious. We are indeed finding that domestic violence is more prevalent than we once thought. It's apparent that domestic violence goes on everywhere, not only in socio-economically challenged households, as one would surmise, where there is the struggle with money and finances or the lack thereof, but domestic abuse also commonly occurs in prominent, wealthy families.

Are people ever really what they seem? The incident involving televangelist Juanita Bynum shed light on this ominous problem, an insidious societal issue of domestic abuse in America. The two had a picture-perfect marriage. Before the wide-publicized assault in which he reportedly choked, kicked, and stomped Bynum, until hotel staff stopped him, husband, Bishop Thomas Weeks III, convincingly maintained a spotless public image. This hot August day, the two agreed to meet to discuss a possible reconciliation after a brief separation, but Weeks suddenly flipped like a switch, attacking her in a hotel parking lot. When the story hit the news, the public could not believe it, a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Gospel love affair" that left parishioners scrambling to make sense of the incident, wondering how they could have missed the signs, at a loss as to how the couple could seem so well put together and connected, yet the opposite was true. In fact, all hell was breaking loose behind closed doors. Essentially, they were living a double life, maintaining their public personas when a much different situation existed at home. In her own words, Bynum stated, "You don't call it abuse until it's a parking lot situation. The media referred to Weeks as the "Ike Turner of Gospel". How could an individual raise their hand to a woman and call themselves a man, much less, a man of God?

Domestic violence does not begin or end with Bynum and Weeks. Another prominent figure, New York television station founder Muzzammil Hassan, was convicted this year for the murder of his wife. Six days after she filed for divorce, he murdered her, stabbing her over 40 times before decapitating his wife of nine years. It took jurors less than one hour to deliberate. There was a history of abuse.

Four out of 10 families of police officers suffer from domestic violence, according

to two separate studies. Often, the abuse is covered up by the department, when it is reported, to preserve the officer's image, and to protect the department. During a seven year span, the L.A.P.D. investigated close to 230 cases of alleged domestic violence by a police officer. In one case, an officer received a 2 week suspension for battering. Another had the charges of domestic abuse expunged from his record, somehow. It may appear to the victim that the chips are stacked against them in that the offender has a gun and a badge, and knows how to manipulate circumstances in their favor. The bigger question is who will keep our communities safe when the police officers themselves fail to uphold the law in some cases?

Just over a year ago, prominent minister Bishop James Dixon was arrested for domestic violence against his wife. Senior Pastor of Community of Faith Church in Houston, TX, the "leader of the flock" was accused of assaulting the First Lady, the mother of his children. She accuses him of slamming her into the wall and throwing her to the ground. Though a witness corroborated his wife's story, the charges were dropped just months ago.

Domestic violence didn't begin or end with Ike Turner. A myriad of celebrities, actors, athletes, and rappers, have been arrested for domestic violence over the years. Football great Jim Brown was notorious for abusing women. So were Warren Moon and Sugar Ray Leonard. It's rumored that actor Wesley Snipes once struck actress Halle Berry so hard that it caused permanent hearing loss in one ear. Music producer Dr. Dre was also accused of domestic violence. In the controversial book, "Pound for Pound", the autobiography of boxer Sugar Ray Robinson, the implication is that Robinson abused his wife so bad that he caused her to miscarry five times. He was one thing before the crowd, a known fighter, but at home he was a beast, it seems.

Domestic abuse is an issue that continues to plague our communities. Life itself is more important than money or status. If you are a victim of domestic violence or if you know someone that is living in a violent domestic situation, help is available. I encourage you to seek assistance by contacting the National Domestic Violence Hotline, available 24/7, by calling (800) 799-SAFE (7233) or TTY (800) 787-3224. The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence can be reached at (800) 537-2238.

In Springfield, the Sojourn Shelter can be reached at (800) 435-7438. Statewide, the

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence can be reached by calling (217) 789-2830.

Remember to be watchful, mindful of our communities, and each other. If you detect signs of domestic violence against women and children, don't be afraid to get involved. Avoid getting caught in the cross-fire, trying to rescue someone that hasn't vowed to leave an abusive situation. While acting with the best of intentions, to help a friend or a relative, don't jeopardize your own safety. In some instances, it is not the victim whose life is taken, but the innocent people that come to the victims aid, that become victims, themselves. Call 9-1-1 in that case.

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Do children actually listen to their parents anymore? The Capital City Courier wanted to find out if second generation children of top business owners really listen to their parents? Do they appreciate the lessons they are taught and are they ready to take the legacy baton of their family-owned business into the future?

We met Michael Kennedy, Jr., second generation and President of KAI Design and Build, founded 31 years ago by Michael Kennedy, Sr. KAI is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri with offices in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. They specialize in design and build and perform architecture, engineering and program management and construction nationwide.

CCC: How do you feel having the responsibility of being President of your Dad's company?

MK: *Quite frankly, it is the wisdom he gave me throughout my life that prepared me for today. He transformed my life the most with lessons on communications, efficiency, religion, business, work ethic and relationships.*

CCC: You are an excellent communicator. How did he improve that?

MK: *My Dad would say, "If you can't communicate, then you can't lead, sell, borrow*

IN THE NEWS

Michael Kennedy, Jr., Passing On the Legacy: Lessons My Father Taught Me

by Mike Pittman

or trade." You see, my Dad can captivate an audience with imagery and imagination and point out the smallest detail.

CCC: You mentioned that work ethic was another lesson. Give us an example.

MK: *Before I start anything I do, I think of a lesson he taught me about the thoroughness of "sweeping the corners," which prompts me to review every detail before I move on to the next level.*

CCC: Are there any other authority figures that support the lessons your Dad taught you?

MK: *Yes, one in particular, Marcus Buckingham, internationally respected business consultant and author, says that everyone shouldn't spend time developing your weaknesses, but work on building your*

God-given talents; not only will you love what you do, but you will make more money doing what you would do for free because it comes easily to you and you want to do it!

CCC: You speak about God freely. That is unique in the business world, isn't it?

MK: *Not for my family. With the mantra "addition by subtraction," my dad would say, "There are two types of people: those who lift you up and those who pull you down. Let go of what you can't control and let God."*

CCC: When did you know you were ready to take a leadership role in the business?

MK: *I walked into his office and stared out the window and asked my Dad, "How do you do it?" The answer he gave me was, "You become too busy to think about it. If you're thinking about it too much, then you don't have enough to do. If you've run out of things to do, then pray and ask God what you should be doing or ask him to take care of it."*

CCC: But Michael, this sounds warm and fuzzy; how did these lessons translate to your heading one of the largest businesses in the country?

MK: *Incorporating several of my Dad's business philosophies: Be happy with your fair share. Cut a fair deal. Be a good partner. Never be a sheep. He would say, "Don't stand in line and don't know why." Risk avoidance requires being a planner. He taught me to learn the downside and make sure it works in a worst-case scenario before signing off on the deal.*

CCC: There is a lot of talk about giving back these days. How do you give back?

MK: *Giving back was a lesson learned as a child. The importance of charity and tithing has been ingrained in how we look at every blessing we receive. My Dad would say, "As you look at your take-home, understand that some of the money isn't yours. It's God's money. It's just like FICA. Personally, and as a corporation, we set aside a percentage of every dollar to go to tithing and our community partners through training, salary advancements, and other needs.*



CCC: How do relationships fit in your future plans?

MK: *I look forward to getting married and having a family. Dad tells me, "Find a woman like your mom; she's perfect." It is important to me that God is at the center of my relationships. You can't be the only one who wants it; your partner must as well.*

CCC: Do you think these lessons are sustaining?

MK: *I am still learning, but in a faster and more appreciative way. I assure you, I work every day to be the transformation of my Dad's wisdom.*

CCC: Yours is not a typical father-son relationship; can the average person relate to what you are saying?

MK: *I know that there are many circumstances that have placed children in a position not to have a father around, and especially not one like mine. So those of us who do, can do our part. For example, I am a mentor with four kids. Nothing stops anyone from being a father-like figure in helping others.*

CCC: Any closing remarks?

MK: *I would like to thank you for this stroll down memory lane. May I also say, "Thank you, Dad, for all you have taught me. I'm proud of you and love you. Happy Father's Day!"*

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Ever there was a person who, for over two decades, has tirelessly shown community respect, accessibility, generosity, and love, it's been Michael McMillan, the License Collector of the City of St. Louis.

As the youngest elected official in each position he has held, he consistently turns the mandates of each position into an advanced performance level that far exceeds expectations. Now serving as the License Collector of the City of St.

SPOTLIGHT

Michael P. McMillan, License Collector, City of St. Louis



David L. Steward, Founder & CEO, World Wide Technology, Inc. and Co-Sponsor; Jan Albus, Variety Club; Thelma Steward, 2010 Honoree; and Michael McMillan, STLCEF Board Chairman and License Collector, City of St. Louis.

Louis, McMillan collects over \$60 million dollars annually in revenue that is distributed to City agencies, such as the St. Louis Community College District, St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis Library and Missouri Botanical Gardens, for example. During his tenure, he has voluntarily disbursed over \$1.2 million dollars back into the city's general fund to help offset the city's revenue challenges. Those dollars help support services including those provided by the police and fire departments.

McMillan made 25 upgrades his first 20 months in office to assist businesses; improve record keeping and accountability systems of the office; and staff training for enhanced customer service. Website upgrades allowed customers to file on line without disrupting their business activities in order to come into City Hall and it allowed them the ability to pay by credit card or check. Other upgrades range from installing electronic bookkeeping and cash management systems to replace hand-entered ledgers. He increased accessibility to his office by hosting industry business briefing meetings for manufacturing, small businesses, hotels and restaurants. To combat predatory services that impact senior citizens, he produced a Senior Discount Book, created St. Louis Dine and City Vacations Programs that encourages St. Louis to stay in St. Louis for their special occasions; and created a Licensing Fair to allow businesses a second chance

opportunity to gain their licenses without penalties for one day in the year. As more and more citizens became victims of fraud, McMillan increased inspections to protect citizens against fraudulent, unlicensed businesses.

Problems of businesses can not be shouldered by one department alone. McMillan's office has taken a lead in creating collaborations with other City Hall departments to create better compliance continuity for businesses faced with various issues. To support the growth and retention of city businesses, he has organized collaborations of financial service providers and other city, regional, state and federal programs.

As a teenager, he was intimately involved in the Better Family Life youth programs and his own family's businesses. He gives credit to both for his sense of community, self-sufficiency and economic empowerment commitments. While a student at St. Louis University, he expanded those experiences by becoming the Founder of the Young Democrats. Followed by a position as Administrative Assistant to St. Louis' first African American Mayor, Freeman Bosley, Jr., McMillan ran for Alderman of the 19th Ward and won six consecutive times over a ten-year span. To his many credits, he initiated an inclusive minority participation goal in city contracts issued. He was Chairman of key committees such as the Convention, Tourism, Arts and Human-

ities Committee, and the African American Aldermanic Caucus. He served as a member on the Ways and Means Committee, the Housing, Urban Development and Zoning Committee, the Personnel Administration Committee, and the Public Utilities Committee the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.

While Alderman for the 19th Ward, McMillan was very active in revitalizing the city's largest and most diverse ward through educational development, housing construction and rehab, economic development, faith community development and overall neighborhood stabilization with over \$1.5 billion dollars in construction. Many of these investments are now coming to fruition, such as the Harrison Center Campus of the St. Louis Community College District.

His community service and governmental leadership has been acknowledged by the White House, United States House of Representatives, and The Missouri House and Senate. Recently, he was selected among 8 people nationwide, and the only African

government execution, business climate, race relations and religious affairs, while serving as an Ambassador for the U.S. in sharing information with them. The East St. Louis Chapter of the NAACP, the third oldest and largest in the country, recently honored him with their prestigious Regional Inclusive Leadership Award. Preceding this award, the St. Louis Business Journal bestowed a similar Inclusive Leadership Award. Ambassador Andrew Young presented him with the Ambassador Andrew Young Ethics Award for Community Service. He hosted a delegation of Malaysian dignitaries who a month making them familiar with city government operations. Since then, he has been apart of a delegation of Alumni from the American Council of Young Political Leaders to visit Malaysia. The Regional Council of Growth and Commerce Association invited him to be part of a delegation to China. Previously, he went to Moscow on a similar junket.

Michael McMillan inspires unity as a public servant crossing all boundaries with



Dr. Lillian Parks receives Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition to the 80 gifts and 32 official tributes, she is presented with a portrait by Willy Price and a black mink tote bag with an accompanying mink cosmetic bag inside.

American, as a recipient of the Eisenhower International Fellowship to study abroad. His fellowship assignment was Ireland and Paris where he met with numerous dignitaries and officials to learn their government practices regarding their health care systems,

his all inclusive leadership by example style. He works to advance a sense of worthiness, economic empowerment and enhanced quality of life for over 10,000 underserved people,

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From his celebrated conversations with world figures to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders as a broadcaster, author, publisher, advocate and philanthropist, Tavis Smiley continues to be a leading voice for change. He is currently the host of his late-night television talk show on PBS as well as the host of a couple of radio programs syndicated by Public Radio International: “The Tavis Smiley Show” and “Smiley and West” alongside Dr. Cornel West.

This year, Tavis is celebrating his 20th year in broadcasting, and in conjunction with that anniversary he’s just published, “FAIL UP: 20 Lessons on Building Success from Failure.” In this revealing memoir, he recounts 20 instances of perceived “failures” which were, in

INTERVIEW WITH KAM WILLIAMS

Tavis Smiley, “Fail Up”



fact, valuable “lessons” that shaped the principles and practices he employs every day.

Kam Williams: Hi Tavis, thanks for the interview.

Tavis Smiley: My pleasure, man.

KW: I loved FAIL UP. I have to start by asking, who is the celebrity you

refer to as “Mr. X” in the book?

TS: *Mr. X is Mr. X! I can't tell you who he is, but the whole point of that story is a lesson I learned about how mistakes you make early in life can follow you. I wasn't even in the broadcast business at the time. So, be careful about gossiping because loose lips really do sink ships. Now that I'm in the business, and people talk about me, I know what it feels like to be the victim of gossip. Mr. X is a major Hollywood player, but he won't even come on my show. I had to learn those two lessons the hard way.*

KW: Who was the other mysterious figure in the book who sent you that 8-page letter criticizing you about Obama? Let me guess.

Was it Oprah?

TS: *Ha-ha-ha! That's another person I can't reveal, only*

because I do still regard her as a friend. She was wrong and what she wrote hurt me and brought me to tears. I included it in the book to make the point that sometimes even your friends don't understand your calling, your purpose, your vocation. But you have to stand in your truth anyway, and they will eventually come around to understanding you, if you do it lovingly.

KW: How hard was it for you to open up about your failures?

TS: *Very! This is my 15th book. None of the others required me to be this transparent, this open, this honest or this authentic. It was a very painful process, yet I thought it was important, because I feel blessed to be in the broadcast business for 20 years. I believe that when you're this blessed, you have an obligation to pay it forward. That's what life is all about ultimately. What better*



continued on page 8 >

Tavis Smiley, “Fail Up”

continued from page 7

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way to celebrate 20 years than by sharing the lessons I learned from my 20 biggest failings!

KW: Jimmy Bayan asks: Looking over your life with a searchlight, if you had a chance to live five minutes of your life over, which ones would it be?

TS: Wow! I don't think I'd live anything over, even though I've made a lot of mistakes. As I say in the book, while I didn't understand it at the time, in retrospect I have learned how to see failure as a friend. So, I'm not one to

live a life of regrets. I try to learn from my mistakes, but I'll take my life the way it is.

KW: Robin Beckham asks: What are your thoughts about President Obama's re-election campaign? It is being reported that you are not an Obama supporter. Is that true? What are your expectations of and hopes for the Obama Administration as it relates to opportunities for black people?

TS: I believed that President Obama was a good choice a couple of years ago because I felt

that, as a black man, if he could win, it would open up progressive possibilities in this country for a lot of people. That was my major reason for believing his candidacy was a good thing. However, I don't endorse candidates, given the type of work that I do. My job is to hold people accountable. I held him accountable when he ran in 2008, and I'm going to do it again this time. I respect the President because I know he has a lot on his plate. But at the end of the day, for me it fundamentally all comes down to whether he's going to side with the strong or with the weak. When Wall Street needed his help, he responded. Black folks need his help in a major way, but he's afraid to speak out forcefully on the issue of unemployment, even though African-Americans supported him the most, and are now hurting the most. I don't want the Obama era to be more about symbolism than substance when it comes to black people. I love him, but I love black people even more. So, I'm going to keep raising issues to hold him accountable. I just want the President to stand up and fight more forcefully for the least among us, the poor folks and the black folks, in the way that he has for his more powerful constituencies.

KW: I want to know, when is he going to end these wars? The money invested in guns and bombs and destruction only serves to spread pain and devastation. Just think what good we could be doing if we spent as many billions on housing, education and healthcare.

TS: I couldn't agree with you more.

KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier asks: What message do you want the readers to take away from your latest book?

TS: The simple message that the great Nobel laureate Samuel Beckett delivered years ago: "Try again! Fail again! Fail better!" I love that. I believe there is nothing we endure in life that you can't recover from. Failure is not fatal. Everyone has the capacity to fail up.

KW: Judyth Piazza asks: How important is it to have a mentor, and who are some of yours?

TS: I believe mentors are terribly important.

My two best mentors, one dead, one living, are Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dr. Cornel West. Even though he died when I was a young child, I regard Dr. King as a mentor and I consider him the greatest American we've ever produced. Dr. West is my living mentor, and a dear and abiding friend. Much of what I've learned about loving and serving people, and about appreciating humanity, comes from my relationship with Dr. West.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman asks: What do you have to say to encourage all the men in jail, so that they can take away a message of hope from your sharing your life experiences?

TS: That even behind bars, even on Death Row, you can fail up, because life is about committing ourselves on a daily basis to the best in us. Freedom is a state of mind. Freedom is an attitude. Freedom is a spirit. You may be behind bars, but you still have the capacity to be free. I've visited some people behind bars who are freer than Negroes I see running around every day. Being in jail, or poor, or uneducated doesn't determine how free you can be. There are really only two types of people. Either you're running scared or you're running free. I choose to run free, and you can, too, no matter what your circumstances in life.

KW: Nick Antoine asks: Who was your favorite interview of all time?

TS: My short answer is: My favorite interview is always the next one. And that's not a way of avoiding the question. It's a way of saying that I so love what you and I do, Kam, that I can't wait to get to the next one. So, that's my honest answer.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: When an interview's not face-to-face, do you think a person can more easily evade a question because of the lack of eye contact?

TS: They could, if I let them. But after 20 years, I've gotten pretty good at preventing people from dodging questions. [Laughs]

KW: Thanks for another great interview, Tavis. **TS:** Kam, you've always been so nice to me, and so kind to me. I always love talking to you, and I especially enjoy reading the interviews you do with other people. Thank you for the work you do, and thanks for interviewing me again.

KW: Maybe we can get together the next time you're in town visiting Dr. West at Princeton.

TS: We'll make it happen.

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MY SOURCE MUSIC



Classical, Jazz, Blues, Roots & More

Michael Miller resides in Edwardsville, Illinois and is employed as the Director of Operations at the International House of Pancakes franchise in Springfield, Illinois. He recently underwent bariatric surgery and has, to date, lost over 300 pounds as a result of the surgery. Michael and his wife, Tina, have been married 17 years and have a ten-year-old son named Skylar.

LIFESTYLES

Michael Miller: 300 Pounds Lighter and Much Happier!

by Horace Kelly



CCC: Why and when did you decide to have gastric by-pass surgery?

MM: *Probably about three years ago, I had just decided and found out that insurance covered the surgery so I said, "Let's go for it."*

CCC: How long did the surgery take? And what are the side effects? And did you have any side effects?

MM: *The surgery itself was about five hours. It took about nine months to follow the program and to get ready for the surgery. There have been no side effects after the surgery, and if I had to do it again, I would do it in a minute.*

CCC: You said that it took about nine months; what did those nine months consist of?

MM: *It was part of the Memorial Hospital Bariatric Program here in Springfield with Dr. Hammer, and you go in and they do some initial evaluations to make sure that you fit their numbers. I had to lose weight; I had to get on a certain diet and program. I had to have weigh-ins every week just to make sure I was meeting their program requirements. I had to have psychiatric evaluations and nutritional evaluations all before I could have surgery.*

CCC: What was your weight prior to deciding that you wanted to have this surgery done?

MM: *I was probably about 505-510 lbs.*

CCC: So, in essence, you lost 300 lbs.?

MM: *That's correct.*

CCC: What does your diet consist of now?

MM: *Protein shakes, protein bars, meal bars. A little bit of food here and*

there, some turkey, some chicken, things like that. Not a lot of anything.

CCC: Has your appetite changed as a result of the surgery, or has your desire for food changed?

MM: *For the first twenty-four months after surgery, you don't have an appetite at all, so you're never hungry. I try to make other conscientious choices for food now.*

CCC: So, being a restaurant manager hasn't been a struggle for you, being around all of this food?

MM: *No, I don't generally eat here at all.*

CCC: Describe your childhood? Were you obese as a child, or did obesity run in your family?

MM: *I was larger after about 7th or 8th grade, but I wasn't really big until well after high school. Then I got to be really big. I went through a divorce, and I think that put a lot of undue stress on me at that point in time.*

CCC: At what point in your life did you feel that you really "ballooned," if you will?

MM: *I was a little big, but not really big after high school. It was probably in the last fifteen years that I got really big, and I don't know if there was one contributing factor to that. I didn't pay much attention to anything; then next thing you know, there you are.*

CCC: When you were at your heaviest, what did your daily diet consist of?

MM: *I was eating between 7-8000 calories a day. Or anything I could put in. You know, bad stuff, fast food, McDonald's, I used to eat 3 or 4 burgers, fries, shakes, probably drank a half-gallon of milk a day, chips, cookies, all kinds of really bad stuff. It's been three years now, I really don't remember, but I know it was really bad.*

CCC: Did you consider yourself an emotional eater?

MM: *Food consumed me more when*



continued on page 10 >

Michael Miller, 300 Pounds Lighter and Much Happier!

continued from page 9

I was bored because I would always want to go eat something.

CCC: Did you have any siblings that had weight issues? What about your parents?

MM: *No, not at all; my parents were a little heavy. It's all about food choices and eating more food than you're using as far as calories go. Lack of exercise and a sedentary lifestyle, and not doing what you are supposed to be doing.*

CCC: How has your family life differed, now that you have lost 300 lbs.?

MM: *I have so much more energy, and I am awake more. Before, I would sleep and I didn't want to do anything; now I am up early in the morning going all day long. I am not really tired. I have a better temperament and personality. I am nicer to people; before...well, just being tired and all those things. I can spend more time*

with my son and we can do more things.

CCC: Do you have an exercise regimen now that you follow?

MM: *I do exercise now, about a half-hour a day, and it kind of varies as to what it is. All during, prior to, and after the surgery, it was mostly walking and now we do walking and bicycling.*

CCC: Do you have to have any follow-up surgeries since you've had your surgery done?

MM: *You do annual check ups, the first year after your surgery, you do it 30 days, then you do it 6 months, then you do it a year and then it's one year after that always. There is nothing required after surgery; I will probably have cosmetic surgery for skin removal. It won't be covered by insurance, so it's going to be a little while before I have that surgery. Some people get infections when that happens right away.*

CCC: What were the initial risks involved prior to you having the surgery?

MM: *Well, there is one good thing about the Memorial Program in that they try to eliminate the high-risk people because they have such a hard program to get accepted into it. But it's like any surgery where you are going to get knocked out and they are going to cut you open. You can have infections, you can have a blockage, you can die of a heart attack, all those normal surgery-related possibilities.*

CCC: Has your weight loss been a motivating factor to people that know you or to other people that you come into contact with?

MM: *It's been really interesting because I see people that I haven't seen in several years and I say, "Don't I know you?" Some people take inspiration by it; some people don't even understand what has happened. It's just overwhelming to them to think what has transpired.*

CCC: Did you have anybody else that you talk with that had this surgery to help you make up your mind?

MM: *Nope, I just saw the program and knew what it could do and said, "I'm going to do it." Then, once you get started, you pretty much made the decision to get stuff done. That's the key to anything. That's what I was always taught growing up. If you get something started, you're halfway there.*

CCC: What advice would you give now to other morbidly-obese people?

MM: *Check into surgery; it'll change your life forever. It's a great thing. It*

overwhelmingly changed my life.

CCC: Do you think you had the willpower to lose the weight any other way?

MM: *I've lost it before, but you gain it right back. This is a life-changing event; not only does it change you mentally, but it changes you physically. It changes your body so you don't absorb calories, you don't absorb nutrition either, but you don't absorb calories. You can't hold as much food, so you can't eat as much, and it changes you mentally because you've accomplished so much.*

CCC: So, what exactly did they do in the surgery? Did they remove part of your stomach?

MM: *They don't remove it, but they bypass it. They take some of your small intestine and attach it further up on your stomach, and make a little pouch the size of a ping-pong ball. Right after surgery, you hold about a quarter of a cup of food, if you're lucky. Here I am 18-20 months out, I can barely eat a couple of smoothies. Prior to that, I was eating tons and tons of food.*

CCC: Prior to the surgery, did you have any ailments such as high blood pressure or diabetes?

MM: *No, I didn't have any of those; the only thing I had was sleep apnea. And I'll have that for the rest of my life, but that's not necessarily related to the weight.*

CCC: You talked about skin removal; what exactly would that consist of?

MM: *I really don't know; I haven't checked into it too much. I understand they just go in and cut the excess skin off, and sew you back together and send you on your way. I want to get it done.*

CCC: There's no other way to tighten up the skin?

MM: *It'll be like that forever unless you get it cut off.*

CCC: I've heard that there is a market for cut-off skin.

MM: *There's a doctor in St. Louis who does surgery a couple times a year and removes the skin and donates it to medical science and he really doesn't charge. But I haven't found out anything out about that yet.*

CCC: How does your wife feel about your weight loss?

MM: *It makes my wife feel a little insecure.*

She's always heard stories about people who've had the surgery that are going to run off and find new girlfriends and make a whole new life. So, she's a little insecure about the weight loss. She knows it's a good thing, but it worries her. I tell her that it's nothing to worry about. I've been married 17 years.

CCC: Is there anything else you would like to add?

MM: *Just that bariatric surgery was a life-changing experience. The amount of energy added as a result of the surgery lets me know that I can do anything that I want to do. Forever and ever and ever.*

CCC: Michael, thank you for the interview and best of luck to you.

MM: *Thank you for taking the time to interview me.*

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INSPIRATION

Did You Know?

by Sherry Pittman

Did you know that we all make mistakes called sin? Some lie, some still, some cheat and some do all of these so much more.

We only need to look at the news for daily reminders of man's failures. There are countless examples of men cheating on their wives and vice versa. Some not only steal money from the rich and not give it to the poor but also lie their way through it all. Murderers, and on and on the list goes.

But did you know that not only is there a natural or manmade price for our wrong doings (God calls them sin), but there is a spiritual price for "sin" as well? That price is eternal death; that is, a life lived forever without light, without peace, and without hope. Oh I know, some of you say that's what

"life" is like now! Though it may be difficult to imagine, there is an eternal death, which is far worse than where you and I may live today.

But did you know that because of God's love for us, He has made a way for us to have eternal life and not eternal death? In other words, God has sent his son to pay the price for our sins. God says we can be released or forgiven for the price of sin (eternal death) if we just admit we did wrong and accept his plan.

Did you know that God sent his son to the "death price" of sin for you and me? It's like someone taking the fall for you. You know what I mean, the other person acts like they did the wrong you're blamed for and they pay the price for you. Well, that's just what the Son of God did (we call him Jesus) for each of us.

Did you know that even though Jesus took the blame and paid the death price for us that God raised Jesus from the dead? (That's another way of saying "you can't keep

a good man down" or the resurrection).

So the price of our wrong doings, death, has been paid by another, Jesus the Son of God

Did you know that all we need to do to start walking right before God is to acknowledge with our mouth (we called that confession) these basic truths?

If you've never admitted that you have done wrong, just take a moment right now and admitted it out loud. Just a simple statement of this truth is what God wants to hear from you right now. If you need to be forgiven again and again, He's waiting to hear from you too!

If you never knew that God loved you so very much that He made a plan of escape from eternal death through the shed blood of Jesus, his death, burial and resurrection, then today can be your fresh new start! Just say right now, right where you are, "God, I admit I have sinned and I believe that you sent your Son to die for my sins and that

you raised Him from the dead. Now, God come live in my heart today!" It's just that simple! If you prayed that prayer out loud and truly believe in your heart then guess what? You've just received eternal life!

If you've tried to walk perfect before God and found it impossible, just know that He is always there to help you get up and get going again. Just simple admit you fell down and ask Him to forgive you and get going again. Ask Him to help you in any area where you need help. He is always there to forgive you and help you get up and going again.

But regardless of your being new to all this or old, find a Bible (Basic Instructions before Leaving Earth) teaching place of worship (sometimes called "church") and begin learning more and more about God's plan for your life and how He wants you to live your life. Did you know He's made lots of wonderful plans with just you in mind? Find out more today by studying His word called the "Bible"!

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 or 217.528.2998

HE SAID:

My wife, Tracy and I have been married for 18 years and have been blessed with four beautiful children. We have chosen the title "The Winning Team" for this column because I believe a healthy marriage is truly a winning team. There is nothing that can't be overcome together! When I say "healthy", that does not mean that they don't face the same challenges that losing teams do. As an NFL player for 14 years, I played on both losing and winning teams and I can tell you it feels a lot better after a win! But the unique secret I found out while on both types of teams is that they both experienced similar challenges. It was "the perspective" that the winning teams chose to have in difficult times of that helped us overcome and press on to victory. That perspective was that no matter how bad it looked, even if we were down three touchdowns, we knew we were going to win. So it is with life in marriage. If the two of you stay together with the vision that no matter how many fumbles and dropped catches may happen in your lives, you will choose the perspective that "we are in it (marriage) to win it (life)!" Unlike football, when the game clock says zero the game is



THE WINNING TEAM

A Healthy Marriage!

by Aeneas & Tracy Williams

over. In marriage, as long as you have breath, you have an opportunity to turn any game around to win in your marriage and family!

SHE SAID:

We truly are winners, when we join together, with the perspective, that no matter what happens, "we win"! I would like to build on this point with the concept of "stories". We all love stories, right?! Well, I am a true movie buff, especially of romantic movies. I can watch love stories

any day, any time! One thing I have found to be true in marriage, is that once the vows have been recited, whether with deep reflection or with haste in the moment, at that time in space, two stories are being meshed together to make one adventurous, dramatic, romantic narrative that will forever be recognized and recorded. You and your spouse have a story that is unfolding everyday that you choose to walk together in this adventure called life. As in every good story, there are highs and lows, causing you to laugh with the humor in life, but also cry with the dramatic turns that happen to each of us. And in every story, rest assured there will be a climax in your relationship; a challenge that will arise that will determine your fortitude as a person and your commitment to seeing the longevity of your story unfold. Whether there is hard-

ship due to family squabbles, an adulterous affair, a financial collapse, whatever the challenge, you together can overcome and live out a story of love that is truly unconditional! Embrace your story and make it a great one!

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.slchurch.com click on book cover on the home page.

Also you can follow Pastor Aeneas on twitter [Aeneas35](https://twitter.com/Aeneas35) and he also keeps a blog at pastoraeneas.com



COVER STORY

by Kim Gordon

IF THIS IS A MAN'S WORLD, WHAT WOULD IT BE WITHOUT A WOMAN OR A GIRL?

In Greek mythology, Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love, had a remarkably handsome child...a son named Hermaphroditus. When this child was a teenager, he attracted the amorous attentions of a water nymph, Salmacis, who tried to seduce him. Even though he rejected her, she wrapped herself around him and prayed to the gods that they should never be parted. Her wish was granted, and the gods transformed the pair into one body with both characteristics of male and female. As usual, mythology was society's way of trying to explain things found in nature, and this was their explanation for real-life hermaphrodites, people whose bodies contain both male and female genitalia. It's estimated that nearly 1.7% of the world's population is intersex, with both sexes in one body. And there are many medical stories of parents having to make a decision...one way or the other...in the case of "ambiguous" sex organs. However, Mother Nature usually comes up with a pretty clear-cut product, either male or female.

Interestingly enough, Greek mythology also provides us with another tale of male/female uncertainty. Tiresias was a blind prophet of the god, Apollo, at Thebes. Accord-

ing to the story, one day he came upon two snakes that were copulating and he forcibly separated them with his staff. This angered Hera, the goddess of marriage, and as a punishment, she turned him into a woman. He thus spent seven years living as a woman, during which time he married and had children. There are different stories regarding the reason for his blindness. In one version, Tiresias, as a man, stumbled upon a pool in which the goddess, Athena, was bathing and was struck blind for daring to see the goddess naked. Another version again involves Hera, who was having a heated argument with her husband, Zeus, over which of the two sexes received the most enjoyment from sex, men or women. Hera insisted it was men, while Zeus stated women enjoyed sex more. They decided to visit the elderly Tiresias and let him settle the argument, since he had been both male and female. Tiresias sided with Zeus in saying that sex was more pleasurable for women, and in anger, Hera struck him blind. (The poor guy was always getting on her bad side!) Zeus, who couldn't reverse Hera's curse, softened it by giving the old man the gift of prophecy.

While it is fantasy, there are certain elements that come from a much older source. The story features the coupling snakes intertwined around the staff, which are similar to the serpents and staff represented in the

caduceus, symbol of the healing powers originally attributed to the Kemetian (Egyptian) father of medicine, Imhotep; the blindness that makes a seer more "accurate," because he then sees with his "inner eyes" as opposed to his outer, physical ones; and the dual nature of the shaman, who is said to exist in two worlds at once and to see both the world of the flesh and that of the spirit. It's this duality that is recognized in ancient cultures throughout the world as the necessity of balance in the universe; without the darkness of night, how would we know to rejoice at the coming light of day? And without women, what would a man's world be?

I'M SUPER BAD!

When things have been a certain way, it often seems as if they've been that way forever. That's why we tend to think that the disrespect of women that is practiced in a few high-profile societies is and has always been the norm; societies that place women in the category of servants and beasts of burden, suitable only for use and abuse. But, this isn't the case. In fact, for thousands of years, many cultures were matrilineal, where women worked, lived, and fought alongside men and were thought of as equal to men. Women in these societies owned property, which was passed

from mother to daughter, and marriage (or "matrimony," which used to mean the inheritance of property from the mother, just like "patrimony" means the inheritance of property from the father) was the only way that men in those societies could gain control of property. Children belonged to the mother and her clan or kin-group; "illegitimacy" was an unknown concept. And the feminine contribution was of equal value, as bringers of new life, healers, and intelligent co-designers of social structure.

In ancient Kemet, men and women adhered to the tenets set forth by the embodiment of female wisdom, the goddess Maat. Maat was pictured as a woman seated on the throne of Justice, holding a set of scales and wearing a single feather which was used in the afterlife to weigh the deceased person's heart in order to judge if it was free of malice and "light as a feather." The 42 Laws of Maat followed by these African people would later form the basis for the Ten Commandments, and included such declarations as "I have not stolen," "I have not slain men or women," "I have not committed adultery," "I have not falsely accused anyone," "I have not made anyone cry," and even "I have not stolen anyone's land." These were the statements the person had to be prepared to

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make in the afterlife, while his or her heart was being weighed against Maat's feather of Truth.

Most Native American tribal societies had a council of elderly women who made the major decisions for the group and who elected the tribe's "sachem," or "chief." This chief acted, not as a leader, but as a servant of the people's will and a diplomat to serve as a go-between with outsiders. The chief was the first person to deal with foreigners, and he served at the discretion of the council, who could impeach him at any time if they felt he was not fulfilling his duties.

Many African cultures had women who stood on equal ground with the men, even when it came to war. Nubian queens known as "Kentaktes" displayed such brilliant military strategies that they successfully repelled such armies as those of the Greek Alexander and the Roman Augustus Caesar and kept Nubia from being invaded by those countries. (See "Why Is It So Hard For Black Women to Lose Weight?" Capital City Courier, March 2007.) The Fon people of Dahomey had an army numbering in the thousands and a special force of 5,000 highly-skilled women who were called the Black Amazons for their fierce fighting style of hand-to-hand combat. In their native Fon language, they were called "Mino," which means "Our Mothers."

Individual women have demonstrated bravery and proven themselves more than capable on the battlefield and in defense of their country. The Angolan queen, Nzingha, was a persistent thorn in the sides of the Portuguese who attempted to depopulate the Kongo to fill their slave ships in the 1600's. They were constantly losing captives to Nzingha's armies; she would sneak in while they slept at night and free as many prisoners as she could. She ambushed the "marches" to the slave ships and set people free. She sent spies to infiltrate the armed guards (brainwashed Blacks and "collaborators" who served the Portuguese) in order to inspire some national pride in them and get them to turn on their masters. Nzingha was never captured, dying a peaceful death in her eighties. Also in the Kongo, Kimpa Vita (called Dona Beatriz by the Portuguese) was a prophetess who continued the resistance against the Portuguese slave-traders in the 1700's. In 688 AD, Dahia-al-Kahina, Moorish leader of the African resistance in Mauritania, fought the Arab invasion, pushing the Arab army back northward until her eventual defeat in 705. Titina Sila was a freedom fighter in Guinea-Bissau during their war of independence from Portugal. She was famed as a guerilla leader in the 1960's at the age of 18, and the

date of her death, January 30, is celebrated as National Women's Day in Guinea-Bissau.

THE PAYBACK

Sometimes courage comes in doing a difficult deed because you feel in your soul that, while the act itself is terrible, not to act is far worse. During slavery, women were often forced to make horrendous choices, as their loved ones were sold away or killed and children were ripped from their arms. When faced with compulsive sex through rape, beatings, or threats, many women had to submit, not only to the slaveholder, but to anyone in close proximity, since rape of a slave was not recognized by law. Some women, after enduring such tortures, self-destructed, committing suicide. Others couldn't stand the thought of that happening to their children, and they either used herbal forms of birth control or killed newborn babies and children to prevent them from falling into the hands of men with evil in their hearts. Toni Morrison's novel, "Beloved," is based on the true story of Margaret Garner, a woman who escaped from slavery with her children. Her old master tracked her down, and when she saw him coming for them, she took a knife and cut her

children's throats. She would rather see them dead than returned to a life of slavery. Often, the child was the light-skinned product of the slaveholder's rape and therefore it was a constant reminder (of his infidelities) to the slaveholder's wife, who would single out that child for special abuse. Still other enslaved women, after suffering all the abuse they could, took their anger out on the slaveowner and his family, slipping poisonous herbs into their food before running away to freedom.

However, courage and love of country are not just relics of the past. Many women carry the fighting spirit of their ancestors to the present and into the future. Growing up in rural Kenya, Wangari Maathai remembered the stream of water that gushed out of a hole in the ground right next to a huge fig tree. Her mother would send her to the stream to fetch water, but she always told her not to collect firewood from the tree because it was a "tree of God" and was protected. When Maathai was older, she went away to school, becoming the first woman in East Africa to receive a Ph.D. And when she returned to Kenya, she discovered her homeland had changed. The people no longer believed the fig tree was a tree of God, and they had cut

If This is a Man's World, What Would it be Without a Woman or Girl?

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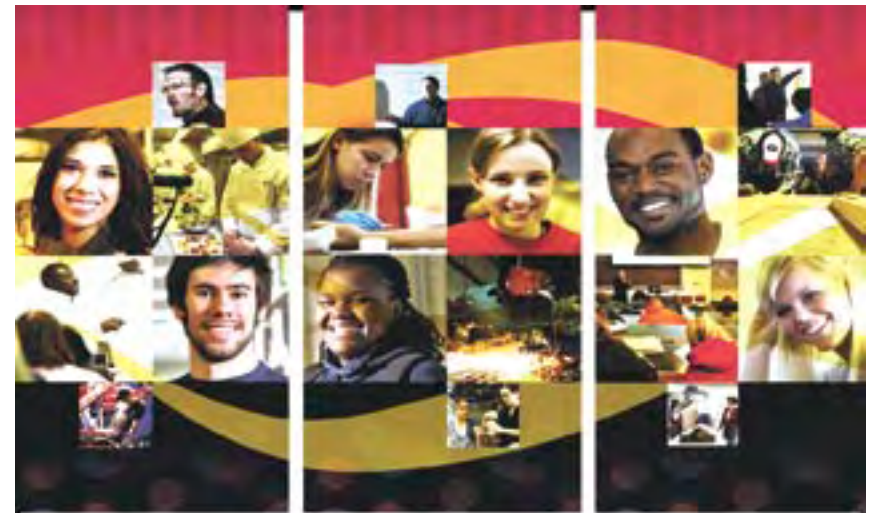
it down, along with many trees throughout the country. And next to the tree, the stream had dried up and disappeared. Now, crops were failing, and malnutrition was rampant. Water was extremely scarce. To make matters worse, public lands were being taken by foreign people and actually sold off by greedy government officials. As the public lands were being grabbed, more and more trees were being cut down to make room for parking lots, skyscrapers, and government buildings. The deforestation was enhancing the pockets of the wealthy and the politically powerful. However, cutting down trees...which protect and nurture vegetation and life around them... is also the quickest way to create a desert.

So Professor Maathai did something revolutionary. She planted a tree. And then she convinced other women who were scraping and barely surviving on neighboring farms to join her in planting trees. Pretty soon, she was making speeches urging her fellow Kenyans to take pride in their land, to stop the wholesale cutting down of trees, and to re-build the land one tree at a time. In fact, for over thirty years, she has fought for the environment, for human rights, and for democracy in Kenya. In 1977, she organized the rural Kenyan women and they founded the Green Belt Movement to do just that. She petitioned for the release of local people...children of the women in the movement who were being held as political prisoners. When that didn't work, she held a

sit-down protest/hunger strike until they were released. She also began to draw unwanted attention to herself from the government, who controlled the police force, who did not want the deforestation (or the reign of terror) to stop, and who did not want this arrogant African woman "stepping out of her place." She was arrested and beaten several times, but she felt the work was too important to allow herself to be defeated. In the face of personal danger and threats to her life, she continued to plant trees and to protest the human rights violations that were occurring in Kenya under the dictatorship of the time.

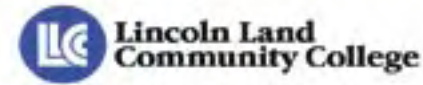
Her efforts helped bring about a democratic election in Kenya for the first time in 24 years, and the dictator in power was overthrown. Professor Maathai was elected to the Kenyan Parliament with 98% of the vote, and the police force that originally stood in her way now joined her in national unity. To date, the Green Belt Movement has planted over 35 million trees. And in 2004, Professor Wangari Maathai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work.

It is often women who begin such grassroots movements, primarily because it is women who are most affected by poverty, unjust laws, and exploitation. Women are the single mothers struggling to raise children by themselves, who must somehow find the strength not to be crushed in a society that devalues them and their contributions. Yet



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even in those patriarchal cultures, women still find ways to get around the repression, either through rebellions that begin in small ways or through more subtle means. In the movie, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," the narrator, Toula, describes growing up as a female in a male-dominated culture that believes the only roles for women are wife and mother. She talks about attending Greek School, where she was given such mathematical questions as: "If Nick has one goat and Maria has nine, how soon will they marry?" But Toula wants more...she wants to go to college; she wants to get out into the world. Her father puts his foot down and absolutely forbids her to go to school; she must find a good Greek boy and get married. Disappointed, she complains to her mother. "He told me I can't go to school," she cries. "And you know what he always says: 'I'm the head of this household!'" Her mother just smiles and tells her, "The man may be the head, but the woman is the neck. And she can turn the head any way she wants!" Her mother then goes into the bedroom and begins to talk to the father, making subtle suggestions of how some of the classes Toula might take at the university could come in handy in the family business. By the time she walks out, the father is completely in favor of Toula going to college, and convinced it was his idea all along. And Toula has a newfound respect for her mother.

Women in such repressive societies

have learned to adapt; to become masters at manipulation. And it could be a "holdover" from such survival strategies that leads to the notion of women "playing mind games" with men. But when direct confrontation is fruitless at best or dangerous at worst, alternative methods are necessary. In the exchange between Toula's mother and father, we see that her father only takes the hard-nosed approach because it's expected of him as a Greek man. He actually values her mother's opinion and appreciates her non-threatening manner of presenting it. She is, after all, his wife, and he doesn't want to make her mad. Toula's mother is a strong-willed woman who could make his life miserable, if she wanted to. Instead, she has given him the opportunity to change his mind and still save face. There's an interesting dynamic going on in that scene.

PAPA'S GOT A BRAND NEW BAG

Competition and aggression are the hallmarks of male behavior. And these are useful traits, to be sure. This is why native societies reserved the more forceful tasks, such as hunting and fighting, for men. It's not that women

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If This is a Man's World, What Would it be Without a Woman or Girl?

continued from page 14



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can't do those things and be just as skilled... they can; just like men can be tender with children and cook up a mean steak dinner! But the aggressiveness of men finds a suitable outlet as warriors and hunters, and older cultures knew that. As they also knew that the wisdom of elderly women would keep the community on an even keel and prevent needless bloodshed. Grandmothers around the world are quietly proving that concept every day, while they raise their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and foster children, setting them on the right path and guiding them expertly through the treacherous waters of Life. They're doing what needs to be done. Without killing somebody.

It's only when the society gets out of balance, and one side dominates the other, that the world suffers; such as the current state of affairs, where the competitive foreign (and domestic!) policy of our world leaders consists of "My guns are bigger than yours!" This is how we get dragged into senseless wars that nobody in the nation voted for and, certainly, we don't want our children dying for. Where even a small child can see past the smokescreens of "We must find those weapons of mass destruction!" or "We must find Bin Laden!" or "We must stay and help them rebuild their country, now that we've bombed the cream cheese out of them and shown them how big our guns are!" Person-

ally, I believe we could all use a council of elderly women...grandmothers who will plant trees to save the environment and protest to draw attention to the injustices of the world... at Capital Hill, Parliament, and the Kremlin, at least. Nobel Peace Prizewinner, Wangari Maathai would be a good first selection!

As the saying goes, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." And since women are, for the most part, responsible for raising the children of each culture, it's up to them to impart the values and moral teachings of that culture, for good or for bad. This is why the oppressive societies that psychologically grind women into the dirt also have the strictest laws regarding childrearing. Women are there to feed them and clean up behind them, but children are separated out at an early age to attend sex-segregated schools where the brainwashing can be accomplished without the mother's influence. Children belong to the father in those cultures, so even if the mother decides to leave, she cannot take her children with her, and child custody is up to the discretion of the judge, which in many cases favors the father. Boys are pampered and told they are superior creations by their fathers, the society, and other men that they are around. They are also taught to view women almost as animals from a different species who have next to nothing in common with them. Factor in an unhealthy

dose of "big-boys-don't-cry!" machismo and you have the perfect recipe for perpetuating the oppression from generation to generation.

Eventually, though, women begin to say, "Enough is enough!" There are women freedom fighters struggling against tyranny and domination throughout the world, whether it's the indigenous rebels in colonized countries, Tibetan women resistance fighters in occupied Nepal, or the silenced and mutilated sisters fighting to tell their stories of pain in the Arab and Islamic African countries. (See "Body of Lies: How Does Our Body Image Affect Our Health?" Capital City Courier, May 2011.) Their names don't come across the airwaves on our prefabricated nightly news. But they are there, and they are risking life and limb just to breathe; just to gain some measure of respect, equality, and the right to not have violence committed upon them.

Such women represent a moral compass to gauge a society's condition...if women are screaming in pain, something is amiss. Their cries are a wake-up call to the men of that society; it's time to make a change. It might be a man's world now, but without the women by their side, nothing will be accomplished. Without the mother's participation and guiding influence, children grow up spoiled and selfish with no sense of direction other than "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!" If the women are held back,

that culture becomes backward and lost, stuck in some long-ago era that fails in all areas to meet the needs of the people. The feeling is that of being forsaken. I hate to sound so dire, but this is truly a 50-50 arrangement. Men and women need each other, but it only works in balance. Nature loves and will always strive for equilibrium. The great civilizations of Greece and Rome, as well as Sparta, met their demise in part due to their extreme aggression and desire to conquer all...the male force dominating the female. But one-sidedness cannot be sustained forever. Like a lop-sided seesaw, one party is going to come crashing down...and hard! If we can accept that the true measure of a successful society is not the number of trinkets the people can afford to buy, but the level of contentment and productivity of its people, who embrace the tenets of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, then we will see that the wealthiest societies, in which half of their population (the feminine half!) chokes on poverty and despair, cannot possibly progress. In this man's world, all it takes is a little "share and share alike" to create paradise on earth. And isn't that a lot better than what we've got?

Michael P. McMillan, Licensed Collector, City of St. Louis

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Michael McMillan presents Co-Sponsor, Margarita Flores, Vice President of Community Affairs, Anheuser Busch, with a welcome back to St. Louis basket and flowers.

annually through his Board Chairmanship of the St. Louis Community Empowerment Foundation, also known as Vashon/JeffVander-Lou Initiative. Resources are distributed into the community where they are most needed. Over 3,000 Senior Citizens in 55 different locations; and 1,500 public school children benefit all year. Educationally enhancing events are hosted for school children to reward them for good grades, attendance and behavior. For McMillan, building strong collaborations is essential to stabilizing a community.

Each summer, he builds a collaboration of health, educational, financial and job service providers to provide needed resources to the 5,000 people who attend an Annual Community Empowerment Festival. Whether hosting a Salute to Women in Achievement or serving as Chairman of other's events, he takes pride in acknowledging those who leverage their professional accomplishments to give back to others. Currently, three endowed scholarships are in his name. He personally mentors the recipients and hires them as interns for professional development. Tens of thousands of people have benefited from his work.

His character was best captured by a colleague who recently introduced him for one of his numerous awards, when he stated, "To know Michael is to know a committed public servant. To work with Michael challenges you to raise the bar in giving without reservation to help others. To support his vision, is to support a future filled with diversity and opportunities for the entire region. And, to be a friend of Michael McMillan is priceless."

Michael McMillan is a native St. Louis; a graduate of Bishop DuBourg High School; and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Black History from Saint Louis University. McMillan has prepared himself well to serve. His impact is consistent and his commitment is steadfast.

MICHAEL McMILLAN'S CHARACTER WAS BEST CAPTURED BY A COLLEAGUE WHEN PRESENTING HIM WITH ONE OF NUMEROUS AWARDS, "TO KNOW MICHAEL IS TO KNOW A COMMITTED PUBLIC SERVANT. TO WORK WITH MICHAEL CHALLENGES YOU TO RAISE THE BAR IN GIVING WITHOUT RESERVATION TO HELP OTHERS. TO SUPPORT HIS VISION, IS TO SUPPORT A FUTURE FILLED WITH DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ENTIRE REGION. AND, TO BE A FRIEND OF MICHAEL McMILLAN IS PRICELESS."

remember it like yesterday. She pushed every button I had in my body. We had some arguments before, but this time she really got under my skin. Like most arguments it was over something petty that could have been resolved rationally, but for whatever reason, she wanted to take me there in her words, "So she could get some type of emotion out of me." I literally felt like one of those cartoon characters whose head turned red and had steam coming out the top of it. I was losing control and no matter how much I tried to be reasonable and rational she taunted and tried to push me further over the edge. All of my efforts to act civil were failing. She wanted me to get as emotionally out of control as her and was determined to do whatever it took to make that happen. She cussed me out, threatened, talked down to, talked about and kept daring me to do something. She saw the smoke coming from my head and braced herself because she knew she pushed me to the point where words were over. In my mind I was going to shut her up one way or the other. I charged across the room, got right in her face nose to nose, looked her directly in the eyes and stopped. As she cringed and somewhat readied herself for a blow while still trying to act not intimidated, I backed away because I saw the reflection of myself in her eyes. What the hell was I doing? This wasn't me and I couldn't believe I let this woman almost take me there. With no words, I grabbed my coat and keys jumped in the car and left. I could hear her still taunting me as I pulled off, but I really don't think she knew how close she was to me putting my hands on her.

Sticky subject I know, but it happens more often than most of us like to or would be willing to admit. We've all had moments where we almost lost control and did something we'd regret for the rest of our lives. As men, anger is one of our most volatile and explosive emotions and needs to be addressed appropriately whenever it surfaces. Some people would argue that anger doesn't affect them, but I'd professionally tell you they're lying and aren't being honest with themselves. The nicest guys can become the nastiest, the sweetest become sour, the respectful can be ruined by rage and those always in control can lose control when anger is factored into a circumstance or situation. Moreover, when you're pushed into that situation unwillingly, the natural instinct is to express yourself in whatever way you feel your message will be heard. Let me pause here to say that when it comes to relationships, expressing yourself by any means necessary is the wrong approach. Stop yourself, drop the issue and roll out of the vicinity as fast as you can to avoid doing something you will later regret. I know, easier said than done, especially in the heat of an argument, but it's possible.

Try to imagine a time when you found yourself as angry as you've ever been. Where were you? Who and what provoked that anger and what did you do about it? What's important to realize about anger is that anger is a surface emotional reaction that results from

FOR THE FELLAS

Stop, Drop and Roll, When Anger Surfaces

by Jack A. Daniels



a primary emotion seeping to the top. Simply put, there is something else you're really dealing with deep down that comes out as anger because you have yet to honestly address it. Things such as depression, disappointment, divorce, hurts, heartbreaks, choices, challenges or children can all be motivating factors of deep seeded unanswered, unstable emotionally repressed sentiments dwelling inside of you. That's why in relationships, arguments about you not putting the seat down always seem to turn into how you don't really care about how she feels. Or how you forgot to bring home some milk turns into you not being a good father AND you not really caring about how she feels! It was never about the toilet seat or the milk. There is something more at the root of what's truly bothering her. It's the same for us as men. We have some fears, failures and frustrations that we carry with us daily. If someone pushes the wrong buttons and we have yet to address whatever is buried inside, we're liable to snap. Unfortunately, that's no excuse for succumbing to your anger. Real men control and keep their emotions in check. There is no excuse, reason or rationale for hitting a woman. Practice being reasonable and rational when it comes to expressing yourself. If your point of view isn't being seen or heard, be man enough to walk away. God gave us the power of choice. When your temperature starts boiling and you feel yourself about to lose control, remember God's gift. Stop talking, drop the issue and roll out however you can. You have the power to make the choice to not lose control regardless of what's going on inside of you. I knew very well what was going on inside of me and it had little to do with her talking crazy. I may have shut her up by getting physical, but that wasn't the right way to deal with my emotions or hers. I was man enough to stop myself, drop the issue, get in my car and roll out to avoid doing something I'd regret. I encourage you all to do the same whenever anger surfaces in your lives' again. Stop, drop and roll fellas, there's no excuse for succumbing to anger.

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

Jack A. Daniels is a renowned psychotherapist for high profile individuals. Politicians, business execs & entertainers frequent his services. Bestselling author of "From Wounds to Wisdom" "Stay Out of Your Own Way," & "The Man's Handbook for Choosing the Right Woman." He's also an international Speaker & Syndicated Columnist based in Atlanta, GA. Jack can be contacted for interviews, speaking engagements, questions or comments concerning this column @ 866-496-9983 or www.presspause.org

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THE CREATIVE WOMAN

by Kris Calmese



We all know the story of the beginning. We teach our young, guide our lives, and know of a history that began ages before we were considered. What we have forgotten is what has manifested as a result. Women worldwide have found burden within the realm of the creative process, though collectively, she births new light so rapidly across the world that mankind cannot accurately approximate its rate. She is our creator.

An embryo's development is a gift of a woman's own. Her belief in the significance of life is the only thing that moves her to begin her creation. The women that have been driven to adopt know this belief and are willing to move within this path regardless of explained medical limitations. In each movement, woman has become the creator of mankind, and the potential for the revelation of new brilliant minds. Inside of a woman, there is a natural system that has the power to build, develop, nurture, and present to the

world the most incomprehensible and intricate thing known to man: the human mind.

She is expected to walk with care, live in peace, and live as though every step of life itself depended upon her every choice. She must endure hormonal imbalances, physical discomfort, and physical alterations that could potentially change her appearance for the duration of her life. She must do this all on her own, and is expected to achieve this feat as she leads a normal lifestyle.

In our society, there is a growing theme that has virtually destroyed the family. We, men, have found ways to discredit our women, our creators. Women have expressed a fear that every walk may lead to pain in search of man.

One woman is the mother of two very strong, brilliant young men. She endured the pregnancy post-pregnancy transition, only to find that her journey was the reason behind her husband's choice to move on to another woman. Now that she is faced with the responsibilities of developing two creative young men, she is still expected to carry on as a woman. Left with broad insecurities, emotional mayhem, financial responsibilities,

deceit, destruction, and seemingly hopeless new beginning, she is inundated with the responsibility to teach two young boys to believe that they will always be loved.

Once the homemaker for a man that once found pain to be more significant than his family, a woman was left with four resilient young children and no place of employment. She quietly prayed and cried nightly as she cleaned after her children. Her nightly routine, though shrouded with tears, involved planning and sorting out her five-person family's next day of lunches and clothing, as she pulled together notes for her evening classes that she'd enrolled into, in order to provide a future for her children. She worked diligently and slept for no excessive reason, because of her belief in the significance of her four young lives. When cancer finally guided her to the infinite transition, she left four successful, brilliant minds. Her belief in the significance of life has manifested a musical genius, a wellness professional and entrepreneur, a young doctorate in electrical engineering, and one of the most powerfully creative artistically gifted individuals of today.

Woman is gifted with the creative pro-

cess of mankind itself. From the development of the embryo, until her days' end, she has the responsibility to safely create mankind, to carefully balance a young person's reception and vision of affection, to embed an appropriate socio-emotional connection with family, to mold this young mind into becoming an asset to society, to teach sexual identity, and to guide this young mind into independence to one day move toward the creative process effectively and successfully. As her responsibilities may seem daunting, but her emotional and physical life adds to these responsibilities. She is somehow expected to remain inundated with these responsibilities merely to satisfy the man with whom she has begun this creative process. Man has consistently desecrated woman, for the most narcissistic, immoral, and superficial reasons. He, seemingly intentionally, impresses upon her a psychological and physical dimorphic disorder as a gift for beginning the creative process. If we take for granted her work, then we have taken life itself for granted.

For those of us that were blessed enough to have a powerful creator as a mother, we walk each day knowing that a woman is the reason. She is capable of so much more than any of us men, because she was created to be that way.

It is with this, man must begin to truly grasp the image, the responsibility, and the creative being, that is the woman. We must begin to strongly consider her plight, her intent, and her foundation in her worth when she is identified as woman; our essential gift from God.

Kris Calmese is the owner of Calmese Fitness in Bourbonnais, Illinois

Q. I married my wife not long after meeting her on the internet. I became an instant father to my wife's two sons, ages nine and thirteen. This has become a really big problem affecting my marriage. The boys think they need to challenge everything I say or do. They also lie about me to their mother. My wife is caught in the middle and is stressed out because of it. I now find myself really disliking the boys and our relationship has gone from bad to worst. I think of myself as a family man because I have children too (but they live with their mother). Is it too late to save this family unit or is this a lost cause because of too much male testosterone in one house?

A. More information is needed to adequately address your situation, as the union of step-parent and step-children has many variations and requires significant insight. I suggest that you review your pre-marital situation and identify if your step-sons were included in discussions and decision-making when your dating relationship turned towards marriage. It is possible that they are resentful for finding out about this major life change more by accident than by inclusion, and subsequently are feeling out of control and overwhelmed. Acting-out is an indicator of their confusion about their role in the household (e.g., were they previously treated as the man of the house?)

ASK SARNIA

by Sarnia Cotton

and finding their place within it (e.g., are you their mother's husband or someone acting as a father to and for them?). I recommend having family meetings and allowing them to voice their opinions and concerns. Then, as a family work together to work out issues which are creating tension in the house and stress on your wife. Long term and consistent stress may not break up a marriage but they will certainly break it down.

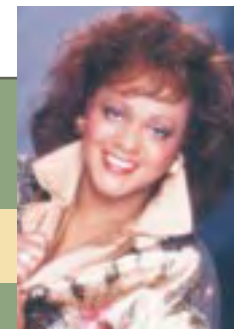
Q. My EX-boyfriend and I dated for three years, and have been broken-up for three years. I wasn't getting any younger, our relationship was not moving forward, i.e., up the matrimonial aisle, so I ended the relationship. I recently attended a wedding and reception without an escort. My 'EX' was also there, and also without an escort. We hung-out together the whole night and had a wonderful time.

The reception was at a hotel that turned into quite a party. When it was time to leave, my 'EX' asked me if I would like for him to get us a room or come back to my place for an "all-nighter". He totally surprised me, and although I felt flattered, I said, "No". However, it has been awhile since I've been sexually active and he told me that he wasn't dating anyone either. So, now I am having serious second, third and fourth thoughts about calling him to get together on a casual basis, for no strings attached sex. What would be the harm of a little something-something in the mean time and in between time with an old friend? Sign me Needing-some Nellie.

A. Once having considered the morality of this issue, other questions you should ask yourself and honestly answer before engaging in 'ex-sex' are: 1) will you

feel used and unhappy if he only wants "ex-sex", and has no intentions of getting back into a committed relationship with you ... or taking a trip down the "matrimonial aisle"; 2) have you been unsuccessful in connecting with a new romantic interest and "it has been awhile", therefore you're ready to settle for "what was", even though "what was" apparently did not please you; 3) will you become jealous and possessive, especially if your "ex" begins dating others afterwards; and 4) will you feel as though you've been dumped and seriously depressed if he stops seeing you because of his commitment to someone else he may be currently or start pursuing and wooing? If you answered yes to any of these questions, my opinion is that your answer should be a definite, "No".

Questions may be submitted to asksarnia@yahoo.com



DOCTORS LOVE IPADS, BUT STILL HAVEN'T AUTOMATED HEALTH RECORDS

Expert Reveals Massive Cost Savings Hidden In Electronic Medical Records Adoption

by Ginny Grimsley

The handwriting on your prescription isn't the only thing about the typical doctor that's hard to understand. Several recent studies have shown that the vast majority of doctors in the U.S. have not adopted the standardized use of Electronic Health Records (EHR), and one expert believes it's one of the driving forces behind rising healthcare costs.

Preliminary estimates from the 2010 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS), which is conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), showed that the percentage of physicians with EHRs that met the criteria of a basic EHR

system by state ranged from 12.5 percent to 51.5 percent. However, after excluding 27 states with unreliable estimates, the percentage of physicians having fully functional systems that met the criteria ranged from only 9.7 percent to 27.2 percent.

"Tracking medical problems can prevent complications of chronic illnesses such as heart attacks, strokes and can increase the overall quality of care," said Dr. Angel Garcia, CEO of EHR solutions provider Global Medical Consultants. "Moreover, the cost savings of having widespread adoption of EHR in the U.S. healthcare industry would reduce healthcare costs by more than 30 percent per year – a savings of more than \$720 billion per year. That's actually more than enough savings to insure all 47 million Americans currently without health insurance."

What perplexes Garcia is the new data just released that suggests almost one-third of physicians now own an iPad. According to a report by the American Medical News in April 2011, nearly 33 percent of all doctors indicate they own the new technology. Another report from the market research firm Knowledge Networks stated that 27 percent of primary care and specialty physicians own an iPad or similar device, five times the rate of the general population.

What's unclear, according to Dr. Garcia, is the role the technology has in their practice.

"When you compare the power of tablet and cloud computing with a strong EHR adoption rate, the potential for savings and markedly increased quality of patient care could skyrocket," said Dr. Garcia, also author of *Do No Harm: Saving Our Health Care*

System (www.DoNoHarmTheBook.com). "The problem is that doctors aren't incorporating both these elements. Let's face it – some doctors are surfing the web and downloading movies and music on a device that could help save the industry that is in crisis. It's time for the healthcare industry to catch up to every other industry in the civilized world and adopt an electronic solution for not just record-keeping but more importantly clinical tracking of medical problems that will make their patients safer and healthcare affordable."

ABOUT DR. ANGEL GARCIA

Angel M. Garcia, M.D. is a practicing physician with more than twenty-five years of clinical experience. Dr. Garcia designed electronic medical records to improve medical care by tracking medical problems for thirty-two medical and surgical specialties. Dr. Garcia was a five-time guest speaker at the National Medical Records Institute annual scientific meetings. In 2001, Dr. Garcia was selected as a finalist for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award and was a guest of President George Bush at the White House for the High-Tech Leaders Forum and the Economic Leaders Forum.

Litsa Bolontzakis thinks we're all living disposable lives, and that our children deserve better.

According to the Family Online Safety Institute, young people spent an average of 6.5 hours with media on a daily basis – including TV, radio and the Internet – back in 2004. Today, that figure is up to 10.75 hours per day. Moreover, according to Fast Food Stats, more than 50,000,000 people in the U.S. rely on fast food each year. These are stats that worry Bolontzakis, author of the children's book *Summer: The Magic Blanket* (www.hummingbirdpublications.com).

"We are a media-saturated, drive-through society, and it worries me that some kids never know what it is to go to a park, experience nature or just spend time with their parents that doesn't involve being shuttled between school and soccer practice," she said. "Time and money are the two resources most busy parents don't have in abundance, but they operate on the mistaken belief that those elements are necessary to spend quality time with their children. It's just not so."

Bolontzakis believes that the best things in life we can offer our kids take little time, and cost nothing.

"I am blessed, because I had a near perfect childhood, despite the lack of perfect circumstances," she said. "My parent's were

very simple people with limited means and life was hard like it is today for many families. My parents did their very best to make my life happy with simple things. They focused on the seasons of the year, and they used their imagination to make every season count by showing me how nature's cycles relate to the lives we live. They didn't need to take me to Disney World or fly me around the world to do it, and if they could do it, any parent can. It's free."

Her world as a child wasn't cluttered with technology or the fast pace of life today. Instead, it was filled with lessons about how our lives are intertwined with nature.

"Nature has its cycles, just as people's lives have theirs," she added. "In nature, there is a time for the bringing of new life, as in the spring, and there is an autumn that sees it fade. There is a time for rest and renewal as taught to us by the animals that hibernate in the winter, as there is a time for abundance

and growth in the summer. Our lives are tied directly to our planet, and each of the seasons we experience help teach us those lessons of love, generosity, patience and even forgiveness. We just need to be open to those lessons, and open our children's minds to them, as well."

Her message to parents is to take whatever time they can to turn off the TV, shut down the computer, leave the cell phones turned off and open their children's eyes to a world that spun quite well on its axis long before any of those mediums existed – and will continue to spin well after they are all obsolete.

"You don't have to travel the world to get away from it all," she said. "Even in the most urban of areas, there are parks and zoos and bike trails that are all off the beaten path," she said. "Sometimes it's enough just to get outside, away from the video games and the computer, and feel the warmth of the sun on your skin as you read a book under a shady tree.

When I think about my childhood, I get a warm amazing feeling that includes, joy, contentment and freedom, and I want all children to have the same. Children don't need more things, bigger things or better things. They need love and attention. They need to slow down and see the more important things that are all around."

ABOUT LITSA BOLONTZAKIS

Children's book and cookbook author Litsa Bolontzakis is an expert on Greek cooking and that culture's easy, simple way of life. Her desire is to help other families learn from her culture how to appreciate the simple things in life and grow to enjoy the seasons and the gifts they bring.

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by Ginny Grimsley

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Local Events, Comments and Announcements



8TH ANNUAL SALUTE TO WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

The 8th Annual Salute to Women in Leadership was an unprecedented demonstration of appreciation and recognition to celebrate outstanding St. Louis area women who, not only achieve professionally, but personally give back to others in significant ways. The event is sponsored by the St. Louis Community Empowerment Foundation (STLCEF), a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. The purpose of the event was to acknowledge and reinforce the deeds of professional women whose philanthropic contributions extend far beyond the call of duty to help others.

Thirteen (13) Honorees received over 32 combined recognitions from officials within the Bi-State area, nation, and internationally; celebrity tributes; and 80 gifts from a host of businesses.

Listed below are the Honorees, their affiliations and the category in which their leadership awards were received: Nicole Adewale, ABNA Engineering, Business; Mrs. Anita Banks, Community Service; Jan Albus, Variety Club, Civic; DeBorah Ahmed, Better Family Life, Cultural; The Honorable Mattie Moore, Congresswoman Claire McCaskill's Office, Community Service; Becky James-Hatter, Big Brothers Big Sisters Eastern Missouri, Civic; Vanessa Foster, Anheuser Busch, Corporate; Mavis Thompson, Esq., Legal Advocacy; Rabbi Susan Talve, Central Reform Congregation, Religious; Councilwoman Hazel Erby, St. Louis County, Government; Vickie Newton, KMOV Channel 4, Media; Missouri Secretary of State Robin Carnahan, Government; and Dr. Lillian Parks, retired educator, Lifetime Achievement Award.

Four additional awards were presented to outstanding individuals who supported this 2011 event: Xernona Clayton, former Assistant to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ted Turner, CNN; and currently is the Founder & CEO of the Trumpet Awards Foundation, Atlanta, GA, received the national Lifetime Achievement Award. Margarita Flores, Vice President of Community Affairs at Anheuser Busch, and event Co-Sponsor, received a large welcome basket filled with St. Louis items which commemorates her return to St. Louis. David L. Steward, Founder & CEO, World Wide Technology, Inc. and event Co-Sponsor, received three solar revolving world globes on a marble pedestal; and Thelma Steward, a 2010 STLCEF Honoree, received a treasure chest of gifts and chocolates.

Baseball Hall of Famer Lou Brock and Rev. Jacqueline Brock were among the audience of nearly 300 outstanding women and special guests. Rev. Brock gave the invocation and benediction.

Each Honoree received STLCEF's standard gifts: a personalized shadow box award and a 12" tall brass eagle. In addition, each participate received recognitions from over 32 dignitaries from around the region, state, nation and the world who joined us in saluting the Honorees. They included the Minister of Women from the Nation of Malaysia, Moscow, Russia, the Senate from the Kingdom of Bahrain as well as dignitaries from Bermuda and Jamaica, Caribbean Islands, former Mayor of New York City, the Honorable David Dinkins, heads of both the Congressional Black Caucus Chairman, the Honorable Emmanuel Cleaver, II, and Dr. Elsie Scott, President & CEO of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

Eighty (80) luxurious gifts were given by both established and newly show-cased businesses. Among the many contributors were Neiman Marcus; LaRue Brenda Laseuer "Bead Chic" Jewelry; New York's clothing designer, Greta Wallace; Ann's Hat Boutique; Dior Design Salon frames by Sherri Robins; minks donated DeMay Ltd. Fur & Leather and Ron Light that were transformed into fur clutch purses and an oversized tote bag by Mary's

Unique Tailoring; L'Occitane toiletries; Ivy Hill Jewelry; Kansas City's Comfort Gourmet Confections and Helzberg Diamonds' Teddy Bears with a Godiva Chocolate Bar courtesy of Anita Maltbia; a Bissinger Stiletto Shoe filled with chocolates; St. Louis RAMS' 3-piece gift set; colorful exotic flowers from local florists; customized fragrances from Cassie's Fragrance Boutique & Scent Bar; fragrances and case from Bermuda; complimentary photo session with Isaac Perry; complimentary overnight hotel stays courtesy of the Renaissance Grand; wines beautifully presented in wine baskets prepared by Gerilyn's Gift Shop; wine glasses from the White House; Martini glasses from Tiffany's; entertainment packages to restaurants and spas; St. Louis Community College District donated a glass candy dish, book and blanket-size throw; and a MobiContact mCard from Baseball Hall of Famer, Lou Brock. A surprise framed collage was presented with autographed photographs from actor/director/producer, Malik Yoba; The Honorable David Dinkins, first African American Mayor of New York; and Ruby Dee, poet/actress. Each guest received a copy of Ruby Dee's poem: Calling All Women, an STLCEF tote bag and an assortment of gift items. Denise Thimes, 2009 Honoree, accompanied by Tony Saunders performed royally for the honorees.

The St. Louis Community Empowerment Foundation is committed to self-sufficiency and community empowerment through education, economic empowerment, neighborhood stabilization, senior citizen forums and tributes to community leaders who reflect the mission of STLCEF.

MR. PITTMAN, MIKE IF YOU WILL,

I have to disagree with your letter from the Editor statements about Spike Lee, and Tyler Perry. What Spike Lee has accomplished for the African-American in this country surpasses what Tyler Perry has done. Spike Lee attempted, and continues to attempt to uplift the African-American. What Tyler Perry has done, has sat us back 10 years.

Spike Lee brought out the talents of numerous Actors/Actresses from diverse backgrounds. Tyler Perry has brought out dressing in drag to a point where even Comedians such as Martin Lawrence feel the need to further it, and African-Americans are endorsing it. See an article from People magazine titled "My Princess Boy," a book written about an African-American boy who likes to dress up in clothes that little girls play in, and his Mom wrote a book about it, and condones this behavior! Mike all I'm saying is that we need to present positives to our community, not the negative behaviors that "others" have caused us to stoop to just to make a dollar. How are we to change pants being worn below the rear ends, if we do not attack the behavior? Tyler Perry has gotten rich, and yes, has help others gain employment in the movie industry, but Spike Lee has created big stars in the caliber of Denzel Washington, but unfortunately because of actions that come from Tyler Perry's characters, he would not win a Oscar from the serious roles he played in Spike Lee's movies, but from "Training Day," a movie that depicts a "dirty rouge" cop. Need I say more?

Deuteronomy 22:5 "THE WOMAN SHALL NOT WEAR THAT WHICH PERTAINETH UNTO A MAN, NEITHER SHALL A MAN PUT ON A WOMAN'S GARMENT: FOR ALL THAT DO SO ARE ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD THY GOD."

Minister Gary T. Pierce
Key of David Ministries



EDITORIAL

Serving Mammon

by James Clingman



Thousands of contractors who got stimulus money to do such things as build roads and provide social services owe more than \$750 million in back taxes, a federal investigation has found.” This is the lead point in an article written by Jennifer Liberto for CNN Money. The article goes on to say, “More than \$24 billion in stimulus money went to some 3,700 contractors who still owe the federal government taxes, according to the report released Tuesday by the General Accountability Office, Congress’ watchdog agency.”

Do you remember the highway signs that bragged about stimulus money being used to put America to work through “recovery and reinvestment”? Yeah, right! So much for that charade. Billions of dollars paid out to contractors to rebuild roads, few if any Black contractors, at least in my neck of the woods, and now we see that many of them cheated the government out of payroll and corporate

income taxes. Stimulus? For whom? Did you get a stimulus yet? Elderly people on Social Security have gone two years without receiving a cost of living increase; unemployment is off the charts, especially for Black people, which is more than 16% now. Losses in housing values have robbed the so-called middle class of much of its wealth; the oil barons are robbing the people blind and lying to Congress while receiving record profits, testifying that they are not “out of touch” with us every day common folks and our economic plight. What a joke! What a scam! What a sham! What a shame!

While the politicians play their games, pontificating on the evils and virtues of oil subsidies, this nation is drowning in a sea of debt, which causes most of us to question if and how we will be saved. As for those subsidies; here’s a solution. The boys and girls in Washington could send each adult driver an equal portion of the subsidy and we could spend it on gasoline. That way, our pain at the pump would be eased and the oil companies would get their subsidy money anyway.

That makes too much sense doesn’t it? The government’s answer is to “investigate” high gasoline prices, and Exxon’s answer is to produce an “I feel your pain” TV commercial to educate us on oil sands in Canada.

Wall Street firms that are “too big to fail” have gotten paid; banks that intentionally made bad mortgage deals got their money; health care and insurance companies got their money; and selected contractors got their money, through highway work and two wars, one of which we did not need and the other of which should be stopped immediately, now that Bin Laden is dead. All of this prosperity for a selected few, gained by keeping the majority in abject poverty.

Here is the worst part of this country’s legacy of avarice: Juxtaposed against soldiers needlessly dying in Iraq and Afghanistan and coming home to poverty is the hypocrisy displayed by so-called patriotic politicians who are the first to say we should “honor” our service men and women. They pin medals on them, attend homecoming parades for

them, and make tear-jerking speeches at their gravesites, but they pay them meager wages for their service. Consider this idea: Pay soldiers at least as much as the politicians who sit in their cushy office suites “playing war” games. That way, the patriotic rhetoric and that condescending statement, “Thank you for your service to our country,” will really mean something. Of all the folks involved in war, it should be the troops who are compensated the most. Aren’t their lives worth it? Soldiers serve the country; greedy politicians and corporate execs serve mammon.

As some of us know, serving “mammon” is a dangerous thing. Just in case you don’t know that, read Matthew 6:24. In today’s world of “get all the mammon you can get” by any means necessary, it’s sad to see the examples being laid before our children. Corporate moguls sit before Congress with their condescending responses to questions; lying and cheating are on display by politicians and lobbyists who are only interested in grabbing as much cash as they can; and flaunting of material things by celebrities and athletes, all on a backdrop of poverty, natural disasters, and economic inequity, will surely prove to be the demise of our society.

Too many people in this country are unwilling to take a real stand against the corruption and greed we see every day. And too many people in this country are willing to serve mammon instead of God. Considering that reality, how long do you think this society of ours will last?

Just like your vehicle needs the gas tank filled up on a regular basis in order to go from place to place, your soul needs to be filled up with regular church attendance.

Church is a place of shelter, a place where you can find faith, hope, encouragement and love.

Not only is fellowship at church good for your emotional health, it is important to your quest of your commitment to live to please God.

Here are six blessings you will find by attending church:

1. **Longer life:** Insurance studies show regular church attendance adds five to seven years to your life.
2. **Wealth:** The Bible is full of methods for managing your money in a productive way.
3. **Harmony:** There is a special peace of mind knowing God will always be there, no matter what giant you are facing.
4. **Courage:** God will give you power



FITNESS

Increase Your Wellness by Attending Church

by Lyle Johnson CPT

and strength to make good and proper decisions.

5. **Friendship:** Learning to love others the way God loves you is a source of happiness and comfort.
6. **Forgiveness:** Learning to forgive yourself and others can truly heal your body and your soul.

Another benefit is positive reinforcement, because many ministers across the country are great motivational speakers. Their messages will move you, inform you and give you incentive to get closer to God. Plus, the church choir presents the finest singers and musicians to form a message of love and inspiration.

Here are more facts that support the benefits of attending church:

Avoid riding in automobiles, because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.

Do not stay home, because 17% of all accidents occur in the home.

Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks, because 14% of all accidents occur to pedestrians.

Avoid traveling by air, rail, or water, because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.

Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals. So... above all else, avoid hospitals.

BUT...You will be pleased to learn that only .001% of all deaths occur during worship services in church, and these are usually related

to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at church!

And ... Bible study is safe, too.

The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even less.

So ... for SAFETY’S sake, attend church. IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!

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 or www.mvpfitness.net. He can be reached at lyle@mvpfitness.net or call 866.487.4MVP (4687).



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