

GREED!

How Is IT Destroying OUR World?



John Lee Cary: From Klansman to God's Man for Equality - pg. 6

Johnny Lee Cary is the former National Head of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. In the past, he appeared on television shows such as the Oprah Winfrey Show, where he advocated, supported and defended racism. He is now a Reverend and an ordained elder in the Church of God in Christ, America's largest African American denomination, and now travels the world promoting racial reconciliation.



Eric Benét, The "Trinity Goodheart" Interview - pg. 7

Born in Milwaukee on October 15, 1970, two-time Grammy-nominee Eric Benét is an actor, singer and songwriter whose music has been influenced by such R&B greats as Al Green, Sly Stone, Chaka Kahn and Marvin Gaye. His first professional break came back in the late Eighties while he was in a local group called Gerard.

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SEPTEMBER 2011

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Michael Pittman

On September 8th, President Obama addressed the joint session of Congress to propose a jobs bill that he said would stimulate the economy and get people back to work. This bill will hopefully make a dent in the unemployment numbers that are at epidemic proportions in the black community. Roughly 17 percent of blacks are out of work in this country with a whopping 46 percent of black teenagers unemployed. President Obama has been under fire from several members of the black caucus to address the economic plight of black Americans. Congresswoman Maxine Waters from California has been traveling the country holding job fairs that have been attracting thousand of unemployed black Americans, and the message is the same everywhere: WE WANT TO WORK!! I happened to catch a piece on the news at one of Congresswoman Maxine Waters' job fairs when a middle-aged black man stood up and said that one year ago, he was making \$100,000 plus dollars per year as an architect, had his own home and was driving a Porsche. He then held up a duffel bag and said that in this bag was the only thing that he had left and he was homeless. In another piece that I saw posted on an online news site, there was another middle-aged black man in New York who had two masters degrees and a Ph.D. He said that he had been out of work for the last 18 months and was homeless living on the streets. I could go on and on with similar stories about people that are highly educated and were middle-class to upper-class and are now struggling just to make ends meet. I have stated in my columns before a quote from Malcolm X who said that when white America sneezes black America catches a cold. We can see

outstanding evidence of that right now. Contrary to some long-held beliefs, there are tons of black people out there that want to work and would work if given the opportunity.

In looking at these situations that middle-class Americans are facing and looking at low-income individuals that have always faced these challenges, one could say that at one time they were all on different ships, but they are all in the same boat now, trying to stay afloat. There are those that say that President Obama has gotten a pass from blacks on being criticized, saying that he hasn't done enough to help black people during this tough time, especially in light of the fact that President Obama had an unprecedented amount of black people that went to the polls to help him get elected. President Obama received 98 percent of the black vote, as did President Clinton who also received over 90 percent of the black vote in his two terms as President. I, for one, don't have unreal expectations of President Obama, as I know he inherited a mess when he took office, and I realize that he is the President of the UNITED STATES, not the President of Black America. I also realize that this President, even if he wanted to, could not come out with a "black agenda" and expect to receive the support that he got to get elected. I might not necessarily agree with how they are going about criticizing the President, but I do respect their right to do so.

Many of the jobs that the President is proposing in his jobs bill are in the construction industry, an industry where the "good old boy" system has systematically excluded blacks from receiving their fair share of jobs and contracts. I often cringe when I drive through the black community here in Springfield and see how our people are underutilized in building new homes in the community here, and no one seems to care or they are either too afraid to say anything about it. I remember making a call to a contractor who has

done a massive amount of building in the black community and questioning him on his lack of minorities on the job site. He promptly cut me off during my conversation and said, "I'm sick of this minority crap talk!" and hung up the phone. Needless to say, I was upset with him hanging up the phone on me. In my opinion it wasn't a question of black vs. white, but wrong vs. right. Additionally, after this conversation, my mind went back to a document I had received that was titled, "How to Evade Affirmative Action Programs for Minority Contractors." I was appalled to read this document, which spelled out in detail ways to discriminate against minorities. I then wondered if the contractor that hung up the phone on me had taken a page out of this playbook. If the energy that was used to create this document was channeled into doing the right thing, how much more parity would there be?

Black America is at a crossroads now, and we need to make sure that we do all we can to put ourselves in a position to be ready to benefit from the President's jobs bill, should it pass. This means filling out the necessary paperwork, keeping proper records, showing up for work on time, passing drug tests, doing quality work and not being afraid to speak up when wrong is being done.

This month's cover story,


written by Kim Gordon, is titled, "Greed! How Is It Destroying Our World?" Also in this month's edition is an interview with former KKK Imperial Wizard-turned-minister, Johnny Lee Clary, written by yours truly, an interview with Eric Benet, written by Kam Williams, and an article titled, "Cell Phone Videos and Cameras Foster Accountability among Law Enforcement Officials by Exposing Wrongdoing," written by Kim Connor.

Also, I would be remiss if I didn't wish Gary Plummer good luck on his new position as the President of the Wichita, Kansas Chamber of Commerce. Plummer, in his role as President of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, was responsible for creating various partnerships with the black community. I, for one, appreciated his willingness to reach across the table. Gary, you will be sorely missed. Springfield's loss is Wichita's gain.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

Michael Pittman

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IN THE NEWS

September is Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month

by Kimberly D. Conner



Sickle Cell disease affects 1 out of every 500 African-Americans. Many of us know someone that is living with the disease. I lost a cousin and a longtime friend to Sickle Cell disease. There are approximately 100,000 people living with the disease in the United States, according to the Center for Disease Control. More than 2 million people carry the gene. The disease affects others as well, such as South and Central Americans, Asians, Indians, and Arabians, but at much lower proportions. One out of 36,000 Hispanics have Sickle Cell Disease. According to the World Health Organization, Sickle Cell disease accounts for 5% of deaths involving children under the age of 5 in Africa.

Defined, Sickle Cell disease is an inherited disorder that affects red blood cells. Hemoglobin, found in red blood cells, carries oxygen from the lungs to tissues and organs in the body. Normal red blood cells are soft, smooth, and round in shape, and travel through the body with ease. But in individuals with Sickle Cell disease, the red blood cells take on the shape similar to the letter "C", making it more difficult for the red blood cells to reach tissues and

vital organs. The red blood cells, in these cases, are hard and sticky. The cells die off prematurely, resulting in a depletion of healthy red blood cells, necessary for good health. The ill-shaped red blood cells tend to get clogged in the smaller vessels, preventing adequate blood supply throughout the body, and results in severe pain and swelling of the hands and feet, fever, which is often referred to as a Sickle Cell Crisis. Other devastating effects can include anemia, when the bone marrow in the body stops producing red blood cells, organ damage, infection, bone damage, ulcers, strokes, and lung difficulties. Sickle Cell disease is one of the most prevalent genetic diseases in the United States. There is no cure.

Persons with the Sickle Cell trait are known as carriers. One in 10 African-Americans carries the Sickle Cell trait. Carriers do not develop the disease. If both parents are carriers of the trait, there is a 25% chance that they will have a child with Sickle Cell disease, which is why experts suggest that couples undergo genetic-testing.

September is designated as Sickle Cell Awareness Month. June 19th is World Sickle Cell Awareness Day. An event is held each year to commemorate the date that the General

Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution recognizing Sickle Cell disease as a public health concern. Attendees include healthcare providers, policymakers, and community advocates.

The Center for Disease Control provides information to the general public, healthcare providers, community organizations, patients, and families, in an effort to raise awareness about Sickle Cell disease

through research and development. Participation in clinical trials is encouraged in the development of better treatment options, as well as aiding researchers in finding a cure. The CDC has partnered with the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America in an initiative geared toward education and outreach in an effort to improve the quality of life and life expectancy for those living with the disease, titled, "Closing the Survival Gap". An event will be held on September 30, 2011 in Memphis, TN at the Marriott Memphis Downtown Hotel and Conference Center.

To maintain good health, individuals with Sickle Cell should get regular checkups (we all should!).

It is recommended that they also develop healthy habits like diet and exercise. It has been said that socio-economics, culture, and geography play a role. People living with the disease are said to do better in warmer climates, as do patients with access to adequate healthcare and resources.

The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Illinois offers support and educational services to the families of children and adults with the disease and may be reached at (773)526-5016 or toll free at (866)798-1097.



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LIFESTYLES

Johnny Lee Clary: From Klansman to God's Man For Equality!

by Michael Pittman

Johnny Lee Clary is the former National Head of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. In the past, he appeared on television shows such as the Oprah Winfrey Show, where he advocated, supported and defended racism. He is now a Reverend and an ordained elder in the Church of God in Christ, America's largest African American denomination, and now travels the world promoting racial reconciliation.

CCC: Could you tell us about your upbringing?

JC: *I was brought up in Oklahoma in a racist atmosphere with racist relatives and racist friends. So I kind of grew up at a time of the racial segregation. Things were very segregated back in Oklahoma when I was a kid. Blacks were on one side of town and whites were on the other. There was no such thing as integration. But during this time, this was during the time of the Civil Rights Movement, and we had Civil Rights pioneers in Oklahoma, such as Reverend Wade Blotz and Clara Loper working in conjunction with Dr. King to bring integration throughout the South. It was met with much resistance, and I grew up around all of that and was taught racism. Racism is a learned response; you're not born with it. Unfortunately, it was taught to me as a child.*

CCC: How did you come to get involved with the Klan?

JC: *My father's brother in Georgia was a member of the KKK, and he used to come and brag about it when he came to visit during the summers. As a kid, I used to play this 45 record that was made by a Klansman that used to praise the Klan and put down black people. I was hearing these things as a kid, so I was already being introduced to it as a child. Now, my father wasn't a Klan member, but he committed suicide when I was 11*

years old in front of me. He and my mother didn't get along, and she left him for another man and drove him into bankruptcy. After he killed himself, I was sent away to live with my sister in East Los Angeles, California. My sister used the money that I was receiving until I was 18 years old on a monthly basis due to my father's death to buy drugs with. So, I was living in the roughest section of town in East L.A., and it was a drug-ridden neighborhood, and I was being bullied and beaten up all of the time. I came from a middle-class home in Oklahoma, and now, here I was living in a poor side of town and I was lower-class and had to put up with gang activity. I was scared and I didn't have any friends. I was thinking about committing suicide when I was a teenager. I turned on the television one day and David Duke was on. He was the leader of the Klan. He was doing a circuit on talk shows about the Klan. So, I wrote him a letter and he responded by sending an older Klansman around. First, he gave me all of this literature that was blaming the Jews and blaming black people for all of the world's problems. I started having bad dreams. This was during the time that there were a lot of race riots going on. So, I was reading about the race riots and reading the literature and having bad dreams. One day, I got a knock on the door and David Duke had sent an older Klansman around to visit me. He gave me more newspapers and paraphernalia. He told me, "Son, what you need is a family." He said that no kid should see his father commit suicide and be told by his mother that she doesn't want him. "You've been through a lot in your life, and what you need is a family." He said for me to join the Klan and that they would be my family. And so, I made the wrong choice at 14 years old to join the Klan.

CCC: How long were you in the Klan, and how did you ascend to the title of Imperial Wizard?

JC: *I was in the Klan from the time I was 14 years old to the time I was*

30. I went back to Oklahoma and finished high school and started going to college. I started organizing the Klan and I started doing interviews for the KKK. I also became David Duke's bodyguard. I later became the state Klan leader. I was doing all of these interviews, and I worked my way up through the ranks over the years. I got involved with Tom Metzger and the White Power Resistance. Then, the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan branched out and became national. I was also a professional wrestler. I used to wrestle on television under the name of Johnny Angel. I started wrestling in the '80's, and I captured the Arkansas heavyweight title. So, after being on television and gaining notoriety, the Klan thought it would be a good idea if I became the Imperial Wizard. They thought that with me being a wrestler, I could draw a lot of people into the Klan because there were a lot of wrestling fans that loved the Klan from around the country, so they thought that they could capitalize on that, so they put my name in for Imperial Wizard, and I won the election. So, I became the Imperial Wizard because of my wrestling career.

CCC: What was the turning point for you in getting out of the Klan?

JC: *There were several things that I disagreed with when I was in the Klan, and several things that I didn't like that they were teaching. For*



instance, I debated Wayne Watts, who was the head of the N.A.A.C.P. in Oklahoma, and he was a friend of Dr. King's. I debated him on a national radio show. I suspected he would come in and call me names. But he came in and shook my hand and said, "Hello, Mr. Clary, my name is Wayne Watts, and I just want you to know that I love you and Jesus loves you." I started talking really bad to him and saying hateful things to him, and he just looked at me and said, "God bless you." I told him I hated him. Then he told me that I couldn't do enough to him to make me hate him. He said, "I'm going to love you and pray for you whether you like it or not." Well, I didn't see him for several years. We harassed him, and the Klan set fire to his church. We pushed him around and did all sorts of bad stuff to him, and he refused to hate me. He just kept praying for me. That had an effect on me. Later on, after I got up in the ranks with the Klan, I feel in

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INTERVIEW WITH KAM WILLIAMS

Eric Benét “Trinity Goodheart”



Born in Milwaukee on October 15, 1970, two-time Grammy-nominee Eric Benét is an actor, singer and songwriter whose music has been influenced by such R&B greats as Al Green, Sly Stone, Chaka Kahn and Marvin Gaye. His first professional break came back in the late Eighties while he was in a local group called Gerard.

Since then, Eric has struck gold on the R&B charts and released albums like *True to Myself*, *A Day in the Life* and *Love and Life*. He has collaborated with a range of highly respected artists, including *Something for the People*; *Earth, Wind, and Fire*; and *Wynonna Judd*. As an actor, he's enjoyed recurring roles on the TV series “*For Your Love*,” “*Half & Half*” and “*Kaya*.”

Here, he talks about starring opposite Erica Gluck in his new film, *Trinity Goodheart*, a heartwarming family drama about a strained father-daughter relationship.

Kam Williams: Hi Eric, thanks for the time. How're you doing?

Eric Benét: I'm doing very well, thank you.

KW: I'll be mixing in my questions with a lot I got from fans. The first is from Teresa Emerson who says: I love your music, Eric. Great to see you back in films. What interested you about this particular project?

EB: Well, my manager had read the script, and liked it a lot. And I finally got around to it after I was ambushed at a gig in Atlanta by the producers and the scriptwriter. They told me they felt I was perfect for the part. So, I took the initiative to read it that night and fell in love with it, because there were so many parallels between the main character's life and my own. And I also liked how the story was so warm and about faith and how it reminded

people that love and family are both worth fighting for.

KW: Felicia Haney says: This film has some similarities to your having been a single-dad with a young daughter in real life. Is that one of the reasons why you chose to do the film?

EB: I felt that if this was going to be my first male lead in a film, then it would be a great opportunity to latch onto since there were so many anchors in this character that I could sink my teeth into because of all the parallels with my life.

KW: Was that you really playing the sax in the movie?

EB: I did not actually play. I kind of just pantomimed, hoping that whoever really played the sax would sound good and coincide with what I was doing.

KW: Irene Smalls says:

You play a black, single father raising his child alone. This is definitely not the norm in the Black community where there are so many single-female headed households. She asks: What message do you want to communicate through your role?

EB: Irene's right, it's not the norm. But it was my reality. I was pretty much a single-father for most of my daughter India's life. She's 19 now, just finished her freshman year at USC, and she's blossomed into an incredibly talented, beautiful, strong young woman. Looking back, were there things I could've done better? Yes, but I'm still pretty proud of myself for having raised such an amazing individual. Being a parent is not easy, but speaking for myself, it's a wonderful blessing and the most rewarding job I've ever had.

KW: Teresa also asks: Will your



daughter India be following you into the music business, and if so, how do you feel about it?

EB: India is an extremely talented singer/songwriter, and she is absolutely forging her own way musically. She's majoring in music business and communications, and she's been spending a lot of time in the studio while at school, so I think we're going to see a whole lot from India in the future.

KW: Marcia Evans asks: What parenting skills have you employed raising your beautiful daughter, India, to produce such a healthy offspring. Do you have any parenting tips to share with single fathers?

EB: I have always tried to keep an honest, age-appropriate line of communication open with India, even during the teen years, a painful time of development when they usually shut

down, and the last person they want to speak to is a parent. But India would always tell me what was going on, so I really encourage people to be as open with your children as you possibly can.

KW: Marcia goes on to say: The duets that you've done, like the one with Tamia, have been outstanding. So, she wants to know whether you've considered doing an entire album of duets, especially since love songs are what people are craving during these trying times.

EB: Hmm... That's a good idea, but I don't think I will ever do an entire duet album, because the logistics and scheduling get tough. I will continue to do two or three duets per album. And I agree with Marcia that those kinds of very nurturing melodies and lyrics are needed more so than

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Eric Benét “Trinity Goodheart” interview

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ever right now and I'm definitely going to do my part to make sure more of those songs are out there.

KW: Finally, Marcia asks: How do you explain to India about real love, and how do you explain your songs with risqué lyrics to her?

EB: Hmm... as accurately as I possibly can. I explain that love's an elusive, fragile and resilient thing. And as far as the lyrics, I say that part of being an adult is being sexual, and when you're in a relationship, to express yourself that way is a beautiful thing.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: Is there a recording artist you haven't worked with that you'd like to? And which of your recordings is your favorite?

EB: Every time I think about the first question, the answer generally turns out to be a living legend like Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder or Chaka Khan. I would love to record with any one of them, because they helped shape and mold who I am creatively. As to Harriet's second question, the answer changes with my mood. But right now, I'd have to say it's a song I wrote called "Sometimes I Cry," which audiences always really get into when I perform it at live shows.

KW: Larry Greenberg asks: When you played music producer T. Davis on the MTV series *Kaya*, was that character based on anyone you know from the music industry?

EB: [LOL] Yeah, I did base my character on a mosaic of a lot of the cocky, self-assured producers I'd worked with over the years. [Laughs some more]

KW: Legist/Editor Patricia Turnier asks: If you could back in time and speak to the Eric Benét of 1992, when your first album was released with the band called Benét, what advice would you give to yourself?

EB: Oh, that's a great question! The #1 tip I would probably give myself is: "Enjoy every moment of this journey," because back then I would really get caught up in the details of "Why aren't we signed yet?" and "Why isn't this happening faster?" I would have to tell myself that there's always a reason why things happen. I've learned in my older age how to let it go when things don't work out, because something

incredible that I don't know about yet is probably right around the corner.

KW: Patricia also asks: What is more challenging for you, singing or acting?

EB: Singing, for me, is like breathing air. Acting is a challenge. I find it difficult to switch gears emotionally.

KW: Lisa Loving says: There are probably a lot of struggling young artists who are working at UPS and trying to break through into the music industry at the same time, like you did. What advice do you have for them besides, "Lift with your back?"

EB: [LOL] I think the best advice I would give them is to always be working on your craft, because there are so many people out there with a dream similar to yours, a whole lot more than when I started.

KW: Lisa also says: You have lived through some real tragedy in your life. How did you deal with the grief?

EB: The way I've tried to grieve is by not holding it in. If you're mourning, cry, scream and purge whatever is going on inside you emotionally. That's part of the process. And keep those that love you very close as you go through it.

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

EB: No, because one of the least enjoyable things for me to do is to talk about myself.

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

EB: Yes.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

EB: Very happy!

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

EB: I can't even remember what we were talking about, but I had a lot of family in town recently and we shared a deep, gut-wrenching laugh in the kitchen before I left for New York.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

*EB: Reality-TV shows like *Hoarders*.*

KW: The bookworm Troy

Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

*EB: An old classic from Mickey Spillane's *Mike Hammer Series* called "One Lonely Night."*

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

EB: The last song I listened to is one I just wrote called "Real Love" which is going to be on my next record.

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

EB: Contentment.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Eric, and best of luck with both Trinity Goodheart and the upcoming album.

EB: Thanks, Kam.

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Johnny Lee Clary: From Klansman to God's Man for Equality!

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love with this girl, who I thought was everything I wanted. Well, it turned out she was an F.B.I. infiltrator, and she was sent by the F.B.I. to pretend to be my girlfriend and to get all the information she could, and then she turned me over to the F.B.I., and all these people were exposed as Klanspeople. I felt like I had a knife stuck in my back, and she disappeared into the witness protection program. So, the Klan started distrusting me. They said if I couldn't tell if my own girlfriend was an F.B.I. informant, then how could I be trusted, and that I could be an F.B.I. man myself. I got to where I couldn't trust anybody in the Klan, and I didn't like the Nazis and the Skinheads. The Klan always thought that black people had a right to be here in America as long as they did what the white man said. But the Nazis and the Skinheads had a different philosophy. They felt that anybody that wasn't white should be killed, and that any white person that disagreed with their philosophy should be killed. I didn't go along with that. So, I started arguing with people, and finally, I turned my back on it and resigned from being the leader. I wasn't going to quit the Klan because I had known the people most of my life. So, when I quit being the leader, they all turned on me and called me a traitor. So, they quit being my friends and I quit being their friend. I went on to try to get a job. I tried to get back into wrestling. Promoters quit using me because of my association with the Klan. So, I would get a job here and there, and after a few days on the job, someone would recognize me, and they would call me into the office and fire me. So, I was at a low time in my life, and I met this girl in a bar and married her after six weeks. I came to find out that she was into witchcraft. I told her I didn't want any part of witchcraft, so she divorced me and cleaned me out lock, stock and barrel and took everything I had. I was broke and didn't have a penny to my name. Once again, I wanted to commit suicide. I had made out a suicide note, and I had planned on taking my life. I laid down, and there was a Bible. I opened it up and started reading it. I got down on my knees and asked the Lord to help me. I told Him that I would straighten up and start doing what was right if He would just help me. So I prayed that prayer, and the very next day, a guy that I know that had a car dealership called me up and offered me a job. I

went to work that next day with one dollar in my pocket, and by the end of the day, I had sold three cars and I had seven hundred dollars. So, I knew that God had helped me, so I started going to church. So, I walked into this church and I saw different races of people in there. I saw blacks and white standing there together, and I almost left. You don't say just one prayer after being a Klansman all your life and say, "I guess I'll call up Stevie Wonder, Lionel Richie, Cyndi Lauper and Tina Turner and sing 'We Are the World;'" that's not what happened. You have to get your mind redeemed. So, I almost walked out of the church because I remembered what the Klan had taught me. So, I went down to the Pastor and he pointed right up at me and said, "You know what you have to do." So, I went down to the altar and gave my life to the Lord. I started going to church. I've been gone from the Klan for 22 years, and have been preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ all over the world. I called up Reverend Wayne Watts and told him what had happened, and he invited me to come and preach in the same church that the KKK had set on fire. I wound up leading four of his children to the Lord. He and I became best of friends, and we started having racial reconciliation meetings all over the South. I worked with him for seven years to help bring blacks and whites together. He later passed away. I wound up giving the eulogy at his funeral. His uncle was J.C. Watts, who was the first African American Congressman from Oklahoma. I got up and he got up and we both gave his eulogy. I promised Reverend Watts that I would do my best to keep the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. alive, and that's exactly what I have dedicated my life to for the past 20 plus years.

CCC: Have you feared for your life since you left the Klan?

JC: Oh yes. I still get threats. They have been threatening me for twenty years. They hate a traitor more than anything. They consider me the lowest of the low, somebody that turned his back on his own race. What they don't understand is that the Bible says that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but one of power, love and a sound mind, so I don't have to fear these people. I have God on my side, and my God is a lot more powerful than the Klan. I don't take anything off of them. They can call me

all the names that they want to. I'm used to that. When they start making death threats against my wife, then that is a whole different ballgame. I'm cautious of these people because I know what they're capable of doing. They threatened Dr. King all of the time. They even bombed his house. But Dr. King never backed down. If I back down, then they will think that they can intimidate people. I'm not going to run from these people. I stand up because I consider them a danger to society. I also know that if God can change me, He can change them too. My hope is that people would change in this world so that we can stop all of this hateful racism.

CCC: What do you think of the state of race relations in the United States?

JC: Dr. King said that he had a dream that one day his children would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. He was hoping that dream would come alive. Some places it has, but for the most part, I still see segregation as long as you have a white church and a black church. Dr. King said the most segregated place in America was the eleven o'clock hour on Sunday morning. I'm trying to work on where there is just one church where blacks and whites are in the body of Christ. People can say that race relations are better, but the truth of the matter is that I see people pack an auditorium and hold hands and say that we just tore down the walls of racism. But that's a lie. Because when the meeting is over, the whites go back to their neighborhoods and the blacks go back to theirs, and their children don't play together. What I'm working and striving for is for the children to be able to play together while they're still too young to hate, and they don't grow up being taught racism. They can learn that good friends come in all shapes, sizes and colors. I believe that it is up to us as adults to get the Whites, Blacks, Native Americans, Jews and other races together and set an example for the kids by hanging out as friends and inviting people from different races to our homes. Until the adults start acting that way, we are still going to have these problems with segregation and racism. Right now, 41 percent of African Americans adults are unemployed. That is sad. That is nearly half the African American population. That is wrong. There has to be some racism somewhere

behind the wall that is causing that to happen. You may not see hundreds and hundreds of Klansmen marching through your streets like you used to see back in the '60's and '70's, but they're still there. They are more powerful when they put on a suit and tie and they get a job as a loan officer at a bank and they deny people loans, or as an employer denying someone employment. A lot of people are doing it based upon the color of a person's skin, and that is wrong. They have got to get beyond that. Black people have been saying that for years, but how many white people have actually stood up and acknowledged it and spoken out against it? It's because white people don't want to get involved. If it takes a former racist and a former leader of the KKK to call attention to this problem, then, by golly, I'm the man. I will not shut up. I will keep drawing attention to this problem until people take steps to remedy it.

CCC: Did you ever think that in your lifetime you would see a black President?

JC: I always kind of felt that it would happen, even when I was in the Klan. Shirley Chisholm was the first one to run, but she really didn't get a lot of support. When Reverend Jesse Jackson ran, he got a lot of support. So, I knew with the right person, it was eventually going to happen.

CCC: What does your life works consist of now?

JC: I'm trying to accomplish a lot of things. My first and foremost calling is the calling of Jesus Christ on my life. Christ is about reconciliation not segregation. What I would like to see in the next five years is for people to wake up and take the necessary steps for racial reconciliation. That is first and foremost. I give lectures, not just in America, but I travel to New Zealand, Australia and other foreign nations and I deal with problems of racism over there. I spend a lot of time talking in public schools among the young people. I'm trying to get young people to stop bullying each other and seeing difference in color, and to also help them raise their self esteem so that they can say "No" to drugs, bullying and gangs. I let them know that the decisions that they make today can affect them for the rest of their lives. I use mine for example. I'm just one of the lucky ones that have

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Johnny Lee Clary: From Klansman to God's Man for Equality!

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turned it around. But there are so many out there who have not turned it around. I've dedicated my life to doing this. I received an award from the United States Armed Forces as an Agent of Change. I teach diversity classes and give speeches on Martin Luther King Jr. appreciation day for the United States military in hopes of bringing people of all races and cultures together. I also work with the F.B.I. on training new agents and law enforcement on the mindsets of people who join these groups so that I can be helpful with law enforcement in trying to help overturn these organizations. I'm trying to concentrate more on America, because I've spent a lot of time these last few years in Australia. They've got a lot of racial problems there. I can't ignore the racial problems here in America. My wife and I attended the C.O.G.I.C. convention in St. Louis last November; we were basically the only two white people there. There were 40,000 people there. We were trying to make a statement that we would prefer to see things integrated. We don't just want to talk integration, but practice it. One of my goals is to tear down the walls of segregation and help people of all races, especially African American, take a stride forward for the sake of their

children, because the children are the future of this nation and the world.

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

JC: Well, I know you are in Springfield. Abraham Lincoln worked on freeing the slaves. We may have gotten the slaves free, but we still have economic slavery today that we have to come out of. There are a lot of racial problems in Springfield, and I enjoyed this opportunity to be interviewed, but I would like to come into Springfield one of these days, especially since it is the Land of Lincoln, and try to work to help bring the races together, not just in Springfield, but all over America. A lot of people try to discourage me, and say it can't be done. Edmund Burke once said that evil prevails when good people do nothing. I want to be one of those people who have done something. When it comes time for me to leave this world, I'd like to leave it in a better condition than it was when I found it.

CCC: Johnny, thank you for the interview.

JC: Thank you. It was good talking to you, Mike.



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THE WINNING TEAM

Working on Your Imperfections!

by Aeneas & Tracy Williams



HE SAID:

If you are going to be a winning team you must remember that teams get better when they work on their imperfections. Even in marriage, each of us has areas where we need to grow. If we don't help each other grow, we will allow each other to miss out on reaching our full potential. My wife and I encourage and challenge each other to improve in those areas that we are weak. For example, early in my football career, I wasn't sure I could be an All Pro Player. One year my team hired a new coach that had the reputation of challenging players to reach their potential by forcing them to do things out of their comfort zones. I did not think I could do it, but it was my wife that began to ask me questions that made me realize that it was fear that I was dealing with. Through her words and the help of God, I took the challenge and from that year on I made 8 Pro Bowl appearances. I challenge my wife the same way. Remember, you are a team and that requires teammates to help each other grow up!

In marriage, there will always be areas where we need to grow. One of the best ways to grow in your marriage is to seek knowledge and wisdom from others whether they are friends or from books. One book that has been a blessing in our marriage is *The 5 Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman. Through this book, my wife and I have identified each of our love languages. Every spouse has a language in which they receive love from their partner. These love languages include quality time, physical touch, receiving gifts, acts of service, and encouraging words. My love language is acts of service. I feel loved and cared for by my wife when the house is in order and everything I need is within reach. Tracy could have bought me

a watch, hugged me at the door, and planned a romantic dinner, but if I come home and the things that I asked her to do are not done, I am going to be terribly disappointed. This is an area that I am working on in being patient with my wife as she seeks to get better. If we don't understand how our mate interprets love, we can completely miss it when we are trying to love one another. On the other hand, my wife's love language is encouraging words. She loves when I give her compliments or encourage her in things that she is good at. This is a whole lot easier said than done, because my natural bend is to comment on the negative things that I see rather than the positive. This is an area that I have to work hard at growing in so that my wife feels loved and appreciated.

The idea is to always be in the mode of getting better and growing in areas that are going to benefit your relationship. Many of us can find excuses to stay the same and just count it as "this is the way I am", but this attitude will leave you frustrated and unhappy in your marriage. Marriage is about growing up and growing old together. Just as we invest in books, programs, and courses to improve our effectiveness in our career endeavors, we should invest even more so in infor-

mation that is going to challenge us to grow up and become better partners and lovers to our spouse.

SHE SAID:

If we will work together as a team in our marriage, we can accomplish great things together. I believe there is no greater place to be sharpened and encouraged to grow up than in marriage. When you are married, your spouse sees all different sides of you even the vulnerable areas that you wouldn't want anyone to see. The blessing of marriage is that you have someone to walk with you through the tough stuff of life. When your spouse sees that area of weakness in your life and brings attention to it, you have a choice of whether you are going to ignore it or face it and overcome in that area. When you love someone, you want to see them grow and get better.

Given that marriage is the closest relationship you can have on the earth, where everything about you is totally exposed, we have to be careful that we don't get bitter when our spouse brings something to our attention that needs to change. We have to trust one another enough to be honest, but make sure that it is shared with an attitude of love.

There is no one that knows me like my husband, so if he sees something in me that needs to be addressed, he is the one I trust to do it.

My husband is teaching me all the time to push past my feelings and face challenges and overcome. I can remember I was having a problem with a friend of mine. Every time I was around her I felt awkward and uncomfortable. I would tell my husband about this and he refused to listen to my complaining about my friend, he would tell me you have the problem and you need to talk to her. Confrontation was totally out of my comfort zone. Well, I did take his advice and I went to her and we dealt with the issue. As a result we developed a very honest friendship. Aeneas could have taken my side and let me go on in my pity party, but he challenged me to grow up.

We all have areas that we are uncomfortable with changing, but if we would allow our spouse to love us enough to challenge us to face it and overcome, we will win individually, but we will be even stronger as a team willing to face life's challenges together.

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INSPIRATION

Be Sure and Get Your Message! (Human vs. Spiritual Technology)

by Sherry Pittman

A day or so ago a friend and I were talking about the use of technology. It is obvious to us who use email, texting, skype, facebook, twitter, etc. that a variety of avenues are available to communicate with others. Whether we want to get messages to a parent, sibling, boss, colleague, friend or any number of other individuals, we have numerous methods of contacting one another. When it comes to communication, however, human technology is surpassed by spiritual technology.

One form of human communication technology is email. Email is wonderful if you don't mind waiting until you go to your computer or i-pod to check for the latest update. And make sure your battery is charged. Just the same, unfortunately, there seems to be a lot of junk mail that arrives with the "real mail". Junk mail includes anything from someone who wants to share their 130 million dollar fortune with me to someone wanting me to buy endless products that would easily spend 130 million. Nevertheless, I find that getting messages from God is a lot less expensive and far more trustworthy.

Texting is great for short messages, but sometimes the exact intended connotation can be easily misinterpreted. Feelings are not always easily transmitted by words on a screen even if you frequently use symbols to help express yourself. Whether the message is long or short, communication by spiritual technology always get the job done. Whatever He purposes the message to be, it arrives completely.

Another human technology used to connect people to gather, is "Skype". Skyping allows individuals to see one another as they speak to each other. Though there is a slight

delay and communication is not

"real time", the individuals can see each other and observe one another. A message by spiritual technology supersedes skype because the message arrives immediately to the receiver.

Facebook is not exactly "real time" either, but it does allow a multiple number of people to remain in contact with one another though they may have differing time availabilities.

Twitter on the other hand, allows individuals to make almost their every move public. Some hold the view that this is too much information, while others seem to get an extra charge by following an individual's mundane tasks. Spiritual technology is even more complete in that nothing is lost and a record is being recreated. Even cameras on street corners, buildings, and inside stores can't document this well!

Staying in contact and or establishing contact with our maker is a lot less complicated than emails, texts, skype, facebook and twitter. For example, rather than God needing to take time to type up just the right message, He can simply uses direct delivery and the job is done. There are no misspelled words, usually no screaming, and there are only non-deliverable if the receiver remains too busy to hear from God.

Instead of lots of abbreviations used in texting and losing valuable meaning, God has no need to abbreviate because he knows how to get the message across with minimum words and nothing is lost in translation.

When it comes to Skype, He speaks to us in real time. In other words, what he says is always pertinent to our lives. Not only that, the hours of the day can easily coincide with our hours, unless we are too busy to hear Him during regular

hours. In this case, He is more than willing to 'see' us at another time.

Now His facebook allows others to read the same messages that He has posted for centuries and the readers can gain information just as valuable now as it was thousands and thousands of years ago.

Twittering is what we do with each other throughout the day. It happens before we get out of bed as well as when we lie down. We stay in contact while we get dress, but also when we undress. He's aware of everything about us and we consult him on a regular. We consult Him about our daily activi-

ties including everything from cooking, cleaning, shopping, working, entertaining, playing, laughing and loving. No part of our lives is kept secret or hidden from Him.


Those who love Him most are happy to get our messages from Him in any form. So whether you email, text, skype, facebook or tweet make sure your spiritual communication technology is up to speed.

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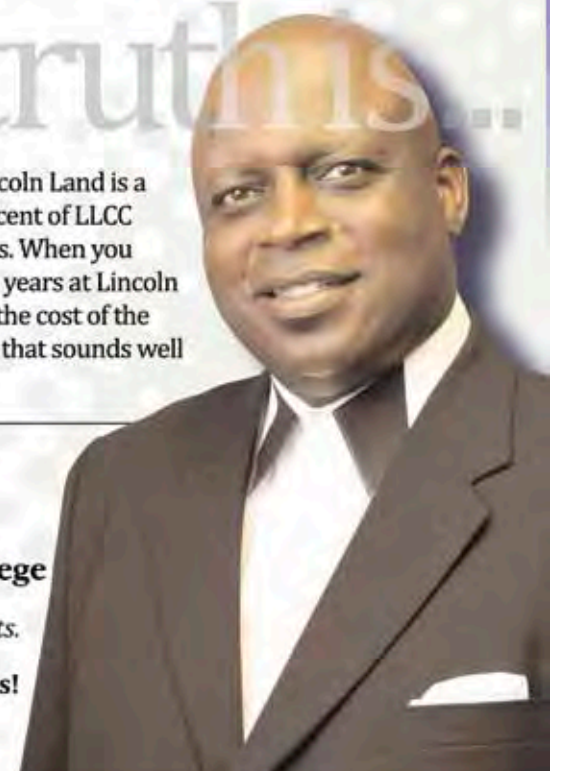
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COVER STORY



by Kim Gordon

GREED!

HOW IS IT

DESTROYING OUR WORLD?

Not long ago, my boyfriend hung a hummingbird feeder out on a tree limb in front of the house. Apparently the tiny birds have a keen sense of smell, and it wasn't long before they began to come around. However, instead of watching several hummingbirds gather at the circular feeder, where there was plenty of room, we've witnessed an example of nature's greed. One of them, a dominant male, it appears, has decided that the feeder and its nectar belong strictly to him. Day after day, he sits high up on a tree branch and watches. Turning his head from side to side, he is on the lookout...24/7...for any other hummingbirds, and when one appears, he swoops down to run the bird off. There is no spirit of cooperation; he tolerates no one else approaching "his" feeder. Now there is plenty to go around, and there's no danger of the nectar drying up. Still, this greedy bird, whose brain is the size of a pea, makes certain no other bird gets a piece of the action. Yet, how far removed from nature are we really, us humans...supposedly the most intelligent species on earth...when our politicians, corporations,

employers and exploiters follow their own "bird-brained" schemes to hog the trough and muscle everyone else away from the sweet nectar of life?

When I was growing up, Peoria bustled like other booming cities, and Caterpillar Tractor Company was at the hub of all that bustling. Practically everyone in the city and surrounding areas either worked for Caterpillar or had a relative who was a Cat employee. The sentiment was that once you got on at Cat, you had it made. Great wages, all benefits including health and life insurance, paid vacation time. Yes, Cat was a fully-loaded employer. Caterpillar is a Fortune 500 company as well as the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment. Over the years, Caterpillar has only moved up the ranking in Fortune 500 companies. It's stock has risen, performing well even in perilous times, and beginning in 2004, the company showed record profits for 5 straight years in a row. In 2009, however, the profits dipped somewhat, but in 2010 they again soared to new and record heights, and they continue their upward spiral. You would think Peoria's residents would be dancing in the streets. But no. Alas, Caterpillar

the Fortune 500 company is no longer the Mecca for the everyday, working-class individual. Now, most residents of Peoria, East Peoria, Morton, Mapleton, and neighboring cities are either laid-off former employees of Caterpillar or relatives of ex-Cat workers. You see, Caterpillar has been following an all-too-familiar pattern that many corporations and big-businesses have been using. That is, pleading poverty and the need to cut costs, all the while turning huge, record-breaking profits. So, in 2009, when the aforementioned profits took a slight dip, Caterpillar execs took advantage of that to lay off 20,000 employees, throwing 11% of the company's workforce out of work. So what happened the following year, when the profits climbed to the previous level and above? Did Caterpillar ask those laid-off employees to return? No, instead they used the money they saved when they stopped paying people's wages to buy up other manufacturing companies in order to diversify and increase profits. They also used the money to continue to pay higher dividends to their stockholders. But in all of this, it's the working man and woman who suffers.

Caterpillar is only one of many companies who have been increasing profits and keeping the books in the black by slicing and dicing their way through the personnel files. And while economic recessions and downturns can cause such untimely terminations, you would expect to at least see more red ink in corporations' reports before the pink slips are handed out. According to Forbes' Layoff Tracker, since November 2008, almost 700,000 jobs have been lost from the 500 largest public companies alone! And disturbingly, many of those companies have that same pattern of showing an increase in stock value or greater profits while they cry that they are losing money in this economy and need to let people go. And their CEOs' salaries jump up to obscene heights. I'm sorry, but I can't call that anything except pure, unadulterated greed.

Unfortunately, layoffs are becoming commonplace, and in some cases it's difficult to tell if they are greed-based or the legitimate signs of a business in deep financial trouble. Across the country, the appliance store, Maytag, has been letting

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Greed! How is IT Destroying OUR World?

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workers go since 2004, especially after the company's acquisition by Whirlpool. It seems to have begun shortly after Maytag moved a large segment of its work...1,600 jobs from Galesburg, Illinois, alone...to three new plants in Reynosa, Mexico. This trend is another part of the pattern many U.S. companies are following of packing up and moving to foreign countries where the labor is incredibly cheap and the profits...surprise, surprise!...are a lot higher for upper-level management, stockholders, CEO's, etc. Five years ago, Electrolux moved 2,700 jobs from Greenville, Michigan to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, where employees at its refrigerator production plant were paid an average of \$1.87 per hour. Levi Strauss is another company, one of many, who has discovered the secret of great wealth through paying people 68¢ an hour (the rate of pay in Honduras). Alcoa threatens its Mexican workers with moving its plants from Mexico to Honduras to cash in on the insultingly cheaper wages.

People in these countries suffer under horrendous conditions for considerably less than a living wage, mainly because they have no other choice. Any attempts to organize an independent union that will fight for fair wages and decent working conditions are met with termination, blacklisting, and even violence. It's similar to the events that took place in this country, in Canada, Great Britain, Europe, and throughout the world whenever workers tried to organize. It also calls to mind other situations in which the minority has subjugated, repressed, and exploited the majority for their own profit, such as slavery, sharecropping, and modern-day sweatshops. All for the sake of money.

Let's just take a quick and brief peek into the conditions at Alcoa, only one of many U.S. companies that have gone the cheap and easy route. In their Mexican plants, workers are paid an average of \$1.22 per hour, which is the equivalent of \$2.03 per hour in the U.S. Housing is primitive; mainly one- or two-room cinderblock huts with no windows or running water. The workers' meager salaries can barely cover rent, elec-

tricity, water, food, and propane gas for cooking. Alcoa provided transportation to the factory as well as a small stipend for children in grade school, which was the equivalent of three days' pay and was used for the purchase of notebooks and pencils. At the beginning of 2005, Alcoa announced to the workers that there would be cuts: among other things there would be no pay raises to keep up with inflation, no more stipends to help with school costs, and the workers would now be charged \$3.25 per week for transportation. In addition, there were changes to certain pay calculations that resulted in significant pay docking and penalties for any absences or lateness. No negotiations were allowed; no questions were taken. Oh, and Alcoa even took away the blankets they had always provided as a Christmas bonus, which are desperately needed in the freezing winter temperatures as the workers' homes have no heating. Alcoa's excuse for these drastic cuts was that the company was going bankrupt; but actually, in 2004... at the end of that previous quarter...Alcoa's profits had increased by 40%, up some \$372 million to reach \$1.31 billion for that year.

This scenario, unfortunately, is all too familiar. It's appalling to see the number of companies that are willing to put profit ahead of the well-being of their employees. We want to believe that our loyalty, dedication, and hard work will be noticed and taken into consideration; yet everywhere we turn, we are faced with the sad truth that we are the most expendable part of an employer's business... fodder for the corporate machine that churns and burns through us as it reaches for more and more zeros to add to that figure on the bottom line. For, as Charles Dickens' character Ebenezer Scrooge, poster boy for the greedy, once said, "There is no such thing as rich enough; only poor enough." And so many believe it.

As this "recession" deepens (all the while that we are assured it's just about over), it's becoming more and more apparent that greed knows no boundaries. Republican tax breaks for the wealthy have continually caused an imbalance and

kept the middle class and the lower class paying a higher proportionate share of taxes. This shift in the tax burden helps to keep the average working man and woman perpetually in debt and always trying to climb out of that hole. And hardly a month goes by that we don't hear of some greedy politician or business tycoon who has been caught accepting bribes, kickbacks, or skimming off the top. But lately, the businessman's (or woman's) favorite way to put extra money into his or her pockets it just to not pay people.

I used to wonder why these wealthy business owners and heads of corporations fail to realize that when they cut people's jobs they are also hurting themselves and their own businesses. Let's use Caterpillar as an example. Suppose I worked for Cat for years and then, one day, I receive that dreaded notice. "Thanks for all of your hard work for the past twenty-aught years, Kim. Here's a hearty handshake and the address for the Unemployment Office." And overnight, I no longer have the money to pay all of my bills; some things have to go by the wayside, especially major purchases I had planned to make. Now, the odds of my ever buying a tractor, whether it's Caterpillar's or not, are nil, I can assure you. But I might have bought all of my groceries at Claire and Heathcliffe's trendy but pricey little local organic foods store. Now, I can no longer afford to shop there, and neither can the other 20,000 folks that Cat just laid off. So, the little mom-and-pop store suffers and eventually closes its doors. And Heathcliffe, who was also a farmer in his spare time and had been saving his money to buy that top-of-the-line Caterpillar combination combine and espresso machine that would have made his life so much easier has to put aside his dream. Of course, I know that one lost sale won't make a dent in the Fortune 500 company's multi-billion dollar figures, but it's still a lost sale, and those add up over time. If nobody's there to buy your product, who can you sell it to? Eventually, even the big boys have to feel the pinch.

As I say, I used to wonder. Lately, I've been thinking about this: maybe

these huge corporations and fat-cats are all planning to sell to each other and to completely cut out the rest of us. It's a theory that falls in line perfectly with the philosophy of greed. After all, one of the mindsets of the greedy is that "everyone else" is just a tool to be used. That's how wealthy business owners can look down from their mansions up on the hill at the ramshackle shanties and cold stone huts with corrugated tin roofs that house the impoverished people who work for them and justify tossing them a few pesos while charging them for the privilege of working. That's how descendants of slaveowners could parcel out a corner of the land they owned to descendants of slaves, charging them outrageous sums of money as rent while "allowing" them to sharecrop themselves deeper into debt. That's also why sweatshops are still thriving, despite the many times that businesses have been exposed as participating in the near-slavery treatment of their workers.

So, perhaps the very rich plan to sell and trade only among themselves; as items become inflated out of our price range and wages plummet. We're seeing the first wave, with right-to-work states and other out-and-out wars against unions. Sometimes unions can go overboard in their zeal to get as many benefits for employees as possible, and there have been times when a union's failure to compromise has proven detrimental to the company. However, it is still much better to have a strong union than to not have one at all. Collective bargaining is often the only protection the worker has to avoid low wages (think: Mexico and Honduras), exploitation (think: sweatshops), and being blindsided by layoffs or sudden and unexpected changes at the whim of whoever is in charge. Lately, there have been numerous attempts across the country to undermine various unions. If unions are dissolved, the American worker is left helpless. The next wave would be "wage reform," which is simply a fancy phrase for cutting our paychecks, followed by "right-sizing," which means laying off and

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Greed! How is IT Destroying OUR World?

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firing the next round of employees to get to “just the right size.” And without the protection of unions, the people being let go would be: anyone, anywhere, and for any reason.

All-in-all, it appears the middle class is steadily slipping down an economic slope, and the country...the world!...is becoming more of a two-tiered socio-economic system, with the very, very wealthy at the top and all of the rest of us struggling to pay the rent. But greed isn't necessarily a dominant trait of the rich. Billionaire investor Warren Buffet, ranked in 2011 as the third wealthiest man in the world, recently wrote an article in the New York Times urging U.S. lawmakers to raise taxes on Americans who make at least \$1 million a year, with an additional increase on those who make \$10 million a year or more. As Buffet pointed out, the middle class is taxed up to 25% in its income bracket while his own federal tax rate was 17.4% and some investment managers were taxed as low as 15% for earnings in the billions. The move would cut Washington's huge budget deficit. “My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress,” he said. “It's time for our government to get serious about shared sacrifice.” A philanthropist who donates large amounts of money to charity, Buffet has also made it clear that his children will not inherit a significant proportion of his wealth, as he is opposed to the transfer of fortunes from one generation to another. “I want to give my kids just enough so that they would feel that they could do anything, but not so much that they would feel like doing nothing.”

But not all billionaires are as free with their money as Warren Buffet. In fact, for every openhearted example, there many more tight-fisted and stingy ones, because greed seems to be the weed that a lot of people find easy to cultivate and hard to destroy. Historically, the desire to sail around the world or march across the land in order to conquer foreign people is a form of greed. And the slave trade was one of the worst offences: “My life isn't enough; I have to go take someone else's!” After slavery ended, the subsequent theft of

Africa's resources...gold, diamonds, ivory, etc...was a clear-cut case of blatant avarice. In South Africa, the De Beers Corporation's stranglehold on the diamond industry, from the 1880's on, forced hundreds of thousands of Africans to leave their homes to live in shanty-towns at the diamond mines, working long hours for slave wages and under inhumane conditions. Sound familiar? Also, the extent of De Beers' greed can be shown in the public governmental policy that said all diamonds belong to De Beers. This means that if you were to find a diamond just lying in the road, you risk imprisonment if you keep it and don't turn it over to the De Beers Corporation. And, in a further demonstration of their greed, De Beers has been fighting to remove the Bushmen of Botswana from their land since at least 1980, when it was discovered that there were diamonds on the Bushmen's land. (Good grief! How many more diamonds do these S.O.B.'s need??) On the grounds that their hunting and gathering has become “obsolete” and their presence is no longer “compatible with wildlife preserves,” De Beers (through the government) has persecuted the Bushmen...who have lived on the land for tens of thousands of years...cutting off their water supply, taxing them (a favorite tool of oppressors), fining them, beating and torturing them. It just gets more disgusting, because greed is never satisfied.

And what can we do, especially when the cards seem to be stacked against us? We can start by speaking out. One person can get the ball rolling. When 25-year-old film editor, Daphni Leef, received a notice to vacate her apartment in Israel, she began to hunt for another one within reach of her job. She was unsuccessful, though, because she discovered she was unable to afford any of the apartments in metropolitan Tel Aviv; they were all out of her price range. And, to make matters worse, she learned the apartments had all doubled in price over the past five years. So, she announced on her Facebook page that on July 14, 2011, as a form of protest against the lack of affordable housing in the city, she was going to set up a tent in the middle

of Habima Square on Tel Aviv's posh Rothschild Boulevard, and she invited anyone who wanted to join her. The first night, 150 students showed up with tents. Word of the protest spread like wildfire, and the following week, more than 20,000 protestors lined the streets. What has become known as the Israeli Housing Protest has sparked calls for social justice and changes to the economic structure. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, appointed a team of ministers and senior staff members from his office to negotiate with the protestors, and has vowed to make changes to solve the housing shortage.

So, how much will we take? Exactly how far do the greedy have to push us, to squeeze us, to stand over us with their feet on our necks before we say, “Enough!”? How many of our jobs do they have to erase to increase the corporate dividend? How many times do we need to be down-sized, right-sized, and under-sized before we let them know that size DOES matter, because without the employees, there is no company? How long before we tell them that taking away our union job with its guarantees and giving it to Starving Sue, who has been out of work since her employer downsized years ago and will accept any position, for minimum wage and no benefits is NOT outsourcing; it's called making a fast buck? It's like the late poet/activist, Gil Scott-Heron said, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.” When people get fed up, we will start to demand some changes.

When greedy people worship, it's at the altar of riches, whether that's gold, diamonds, or paper currency. I'm not so sure it's appropriate to bring God into it by having “In God We Trust” on our dollar bills; although Judas Iscariot did sell Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Personally, I think every dollar should have the words, “YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!” printed on it, right next to the denomination. And then, there's the old joke about the dying millionaire who gave \$1 million each to his minister, his doctor, and his lawyer, and told them to throw the money into the grave at his funeral so that he could take it with him. After the funeral, the

three men were talking, and the minister said, “I must confess, we needed a new steeple for the church, so I kept \$250,000 of it and threw the rest in.” The doctor said, “Well, since we're confessing, we needed a new wing at the hospital, so I kept \$500,000 of it and threw the rest in.” The lawyer shook his head and said, “Gentlemen, I'm ashamed of you. I threw in a check for the whole amount!”

But the truth is, you only need so much of anything to be happy. And most people with a conscience find it difficult to be happy if those around them are miserable. But maybe that's the “sharing gene.” I'd like to think I inherited it. Meanwhile, I'll continue to speak out when I see those hummingbirds perched on the lookout, selfishly guarding what should belong to everyone. They really need to be stopped before we all die of thirst. Won't you join me, and together we can make a change?

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CELL PHONE VIDEOS & CAMERAS

Foster Accountability Among Law Enforcement Officials by Exposing Wrongdoing

by Kimberly D. Conner

With advancements in technology, along with the benefits come challenges and opposition, not so much with regards to the public, but for law enforcement officials aimed at concealing wrongdoing. Law abiding citizens have the upper hand, except in Illinois, Massachusetts and Maryland where it is illegal to videotape an officer without their consent. In other states, citizens may record on-duty police officers as long as they do not interfere with officers in the performance of their duties. Gaining national attention from media outlets, crossing several states, there have been numerous cases in which law enforcement officers have been caught on tape, violating citizens' rights, by innocent bystanders and witnesses armed with camera phones and video, subjecting police officers to public scrutiny and shining a light on misconduct. People simply do not trust the police, especially in the African-American community for this reason. Furthermore, Law enforcement officers should not be permitted to falsely arrest, harass, intimidate, or threaten citizens for attempting to report abuse. Police are to protect and serve, but in recent years, an alarming amount of officers have been found guilty of planting dope on innocent people, physical abuse, intimidation, theft, robbery, rape, even murder. And, it can no longer be ignored, law or no law. Police officers must be held accountable when they choose to engage in wrongdoing.

In 1986 the Illinois Supreme Court dismissed eavesdropping charges against a man that apparently recorded two officers while he was seated in the back of a squad car. According to the statute at that time, a person could only be convicted for violating the wiretapping law

if the officer believed that the conversation was private. In this case, officers had no reason to believe that the conversation was private. So in 1994, legislators "modified" the laws, removing the privacy aspect, stating that recording of any kind is a violation of the law if officers failed to consent, unless it is obvious that the officers are being recorded. The last time you were pulled over by an officer, did that officer ask for your consent to videotape you during the stop? Citizens are routinely recorded without their permission, an apparent double standard.

A surveillance video in a Chicago bar captured an off duty police officer's brutal assault on a female bartender after she refused to continue to serve him. He was obviously intoxicated. The officer received probation for his conduct.

A Chicago woman reported that she was improperly touched by an officer responding to a domestic violence call to her home. When she went to internal affairs to report the incident, officials discouraged her, refusing to take the report, intimidating her instead. She recorded the conversation on her cell phone in support of her claims, and was arrested that very day and faced 4 to 15 years in prison because she did not obtain permission to videotape the officer.

Another incident in Chicago involved a street artist arrested for selling his artwork without a proper license. He recorded the exchange on his cell phone. Charged with a misdemeanor for not possessing a peddler's license, those charges were later dropped. But he was then charged with a Class 1 Felony, for violating the state's eavesdropping law by recording the event, a sentence that carries up to 15 years in prison.

Yet another case in the city of Chicago, involving two brothers,

one, a college student at Northern Illinois University and the other, an events planner, simply waiting in the drive thru at McDonald's, when officers approached their car because they "suspected" that the driver was under the influence. Having witnessed police corruption and improprieties involving officers in the Windy city first-hand, one whipped out a cell phone and began recording the incident as his brother was arrested. When officers realized that they were being recorded, he, too, was arrested and charged with violating the eavesdropping act. Surprisingly so, the duo pleaded guilty to attempted eavesdropping, a misdemeanor, in order to avoid felony convictions, and forced to apologize to the officers involved.

A police officer in Ohio was convicted of shooting a motorist in the back after a traffic stop, paralyzing the 24 year-old man. A year ago, a National Guard Staff Sergeant was riding his motorcycle when he was pulled over by Maryland State Troopers for speeding, a simple traffic stop. According to the motorist, the plain clothes officer jumped out of the squad car with his gun drawn, shouting at him. The motorcyclist routinely wore a helmet, but what the officer didn't know was that attached to the helmet was a video camera devise, that captured the entire exchange. Though astonished by the officer's actions, the motorist did not seek action against the officer for the violation, but instead posted the video on the internet. Days later, the Maryland State Police kicked in his door, raiding the victim's home, confiscating his computer, and subsequently arresting him for violating the state's wiretapping laws by recording the officer without his consent. He was charged with possession of an intercept devise.

In a separate case, an officer

attempted to serve a warrant on an individual. When he approached the homeowner, he was repeatedly told that the person did not reside in that home. The officer then threatened the resident, basically stating that he would not go away and that he would continue to come back until he found the person that he was looking for. The resident did not even know the person on to which the warrant was to be served, as he had clearly stated. However, the resident was arrested for obstruction of justice because he had secretly recorded the event. The charges were later dropped.

Just this year, an 18 year-old California boy was arrested for videotaping an officer as he beat down a fellow student at a bus stop. Although he did not interfere or get physically involved in the altercation, he was arrested and held on a \$150,000 bond.

This practice by members of law enforcement is not limited to African-Americans, however. A Robinson Illinois auto-mechanic is currently facing 75 years in prison for recording the police without their consent. Officers reportedly came to his home in regards to vehicle registrations. He was fined for not registering the vehicles. Earlier, he had filed a suit against the city in regards to zoning ordinances, as municipal officials seized cars from his property, forcing him to pay to have the cars returned. Resulting from the suit he filed, the victim alleges that he was harassed and retaliated against by officers. In turn, he requested an ordinance hearing to settle the matter. He also requested that a court reporter be present at the ordinance hearing, but was denied the right. He recorded the incidents, including the hearing. The man informed the judge of his actions prior to the court proceedings. But,

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MY HAIR JOURNEY:

How I Came to Love My Hair

by Donna A. Treadwell



A few years ago I purchased the children's book, *I Love My Hair* by Natasha Anastasia. I fell in love with the illustrations, especially the one of the little girl resting her head on her mother's lap. The tenderness between mother and daughter brought back memories from my girlhood. In my mind's eye, I am sitting at my momma's feet. Every night she took my braids down and combed and re-combed my hair before putting on my nylon stocking cap. Then off to bed I went. And while my friends and I never discussed it, I'm pretty sure the same ritual occurred at their houses each night as well.

We all have our hair memories. Once I was older, momma started pressing my hair. Every other Saturday I sat in the blue kitchen chair and waited for the straightening comb to get hot.

Momma would put the comb on the flame. When she figured it was hot enough, she would yank it off the stove before pressing it between a towel to cool off. Then she would begin the torturous process. Momma always started with the sides or the back, and I remember jerking every time the straightening comb came near my temples, ears or the nape of my neck. It was impossible not to jerk. Momma never seemed upset by all the wriggling I did, but she never stopped

pressing my hair either. In the 1960s, we didn't have the multitude of styles we have today. Unless you had naturally straight hair, you got your hair pressed and that was that.

I hated the hair pressing ritual and have experienced a wide range of emotions and hairstyles over the years. In the 80s, I had a jheri curl. In the 90s, I had a perm. For many years I wore a short natural. My natural was followed by braids, wigs and braids again. At different times I've considered shaving my head and going bald like Telly Savalas and Michael Jordan.

It seems to me that black women have an unusually difficult relationship with our hair. We're always trying to change it. It is no coincidence that Madam C.J. Walker, the first African-American millionaire, built her empire on hair care products. Undoubtedly, our grandmothers and great-grandmothers worked hard at their hair too.

Today I am pleased to announce, "I love my hair!" About a month ago I decided for the fourth time to begin the locking process. So far. So good. Every other time I've started, I've quit, gone back to my wig, found someone to put extensions in or worn a hat. This time, I'm in it for the long haul and all I can wonder is, "What took me so long?"

When I feel my hair, I love its texture. Twisting my hair is the most natural thing in the world because

my hair has a natural wave pattern. It's crinkly. If you put a strand under a microscope, it would look like a crinkly fry. When momma pressed my hair, she took the natural wave pattern out. When my beautician permed it, she also took it out. Now that I'm leaving the natural wave pattern undisturbed, I've set my hair free. And, it is growing. Before long, I'll look like Rapunzel with my tiny, coiled locks cascading down my back.

This hairstyle makes sense to me for so many other reasons. I have more time because I'm no longer spending hours in the beauty shop. And, I'm saving money on gas because I'm not driving to hair appointments.

I never knew doing my own hair would make me feel so powerful. I know my hair better than anyone. It's been on my head all these years, which makes me the most qualified person to care for it.

Now that I've made peace with my hair, I'm looking forward to taking up a hobby, travelling and spending more time writing. After all, I need something to do with all this extra time I suddenly have on my hands.

Donna Treadwell is a freelance writer with a B.A. in English from DePaul University and a M.A. in Public Affairs Reporting from University of Illinois-Springfield. She grew up on Chicago's South Side and worked briefly for the Chicago Defender after graduating from college. Donna and her family live in Springfield, Illinois where she is employed by the Springfield Public Schools.



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Cell Phone Videos & Cameras Foster Accountability Among Law Enforcement Officials

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officers were laying and waiting for him as soon as he exited the courtroom, throwing the cuffs on him. He's now up against 5 felony charges. He states that he is willing to go to jail if that means overturning the current law. He turned down a plea deal.

In what would turn out to be an extensive, ground-breaking case involving two Champaign-Urbana community activists several years ago, the citizens took their cameras to the streets, shedding a light on wrong-doing within the local police departments. The duo produced a documentary titled "Citizen's Watch", a film that exposed racial disparities with regards to law enforcement officials and the Black community, particularly on the city's north side, a predominately Black area of town. The two notified the police and local government in writing of their intent, exercising their First Amendment Right to freely videotape law enforcement officials on duty. The activists set up camp, filming at and around campus bars at the University of Illinois as well as bars frequented primarily by African Americans on the city's north side, as club-goers exited the club. The video shows obvious differences. While the campus party-goers, primarily white, were allowed to stumble to their cars and essentially drive home without being arrested on even questioned, patrons at the black bars were stopped and cited for being under the influence, and hauled off to jail. There was a series of questionable traffic stops involving the two after information about the video surfaced in the community. Word about the documentary's release filtered into police departments, generating massive attention from within the community. For their community activism, the filmmakers were indicted on a Class 1 Felony for violating the eavesdropping law. Their cameras were confiscated without a warrant, which is illegal. They were forced into court. And it didn't end there. The next day, one of the two was falsely arrested and charged with home invasion and attempted sexual abuse and held on a \$250,000 bond. Officers failed, in this case, to even conduct an inves-

tigation into the allegations, simply arresting the community activist on the alleged charges. There was no physical evidence. The two filed a federal lawsuit in U.S. District Court on the grounds of racial profiling, violation of their Fourth Amendment Rights, and malicious prosecution. The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) came to the activists' defense. The charges were later dismissed and the case was settled for an undisclosed amount of money.

Perhaps the worst case of police brutality caught on tape by a bystander involved Oscar Grant two years ago in Oakland, CA. As the father lay unarmed face down on the ground, as he was ordered to do, he was shot and killed by officers. The officer responsible for the crime received a two-year sentence, convicted of involuntary manslaughter while the young man that videotaped the offense was charged with a crime, and faced 7 years in prison, because authorities believed that he violated the eavesdropping law.

The eavesdropping law was originally designed to "restrict" government wiretapping. The ACLU has reacted to the wave of police brutality cases caught on camera across America, supporting the rights of individuals to videotape government activity in public settings. Representing American citizens that have reportedly been treated unfairly or improperly by law enforcement officials, the ACLU is placing pressure on the powers that be to ensure that citizens' First Amendment Rights, the rights of free speech, are upheld. The First Amendment gives citizens the right to obtain information regarding governmental activity, ensuring their protection with regards to freedom of press to report on such improprieties through measures of accountability. The Fourth Amendment Right protects citizens against unreasonable seizure, a right, too, that has been routinely violated by police officers. The ACLU challenged the Illinois Eavesdropping Act, which by law deems it a crime to record private as well as public conversations without permission from all parties, an antiquated law that prohibits the videotaping of law

enforcement officials in performance of their duties, a law that dates back years before video cameras and cell phones, when the law was first introduced. The ACLU seeks to lift the ban, filing a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Chicago. Initially, a U.S. District Court judge shot down the argument, ruling against the organization, but the ACLU filed an appeal.

American citizens began to recognize the importance of transparency and accountability with regards to law enforcement officers and the legal system after repeatedly watching the 1991 videotape of Rodney King being beat down in the streets by police officers in California. Citizens began to realize that videotaping is an effective tool in eradicating police brutality and uncovering wrongdoing. Technology advancements have made it just that much easier to keep a watchful eye on our public servants.

In Illinois, several years ago, HB 1139 was introduced to ensure the public's right to record or listen with aid of any device to a conversation of a public officer or public employee if the officer or public employee in the performance of their duties conducts the conversation in a public place and the physical act of recording or listening does not interfere with the performance of those duties, to curtail inappropriate, unethical behavior among law enforcement officials with regards to treatment of citizens. Like this bill, the civilian review board designed to "police" the police within the city of Springfield by allowing citizens to file official complaints, has yet to receive the attention that it warrants and deserves, on a local level. Officers in Springfield no longer inform citizens of their right to appeal, reports indicate.

If you suspect that you will encounter "trouble" with an officer, whipping out your Smartphone and taping the incident could be a major risk, but it may be a risk worth taking if it ensures safety in the community. According to supporters, if you do decide to, remain at a reasonable distance. Do not interfere with the officer's duties, or present a safety concern for officers. The ACLU of

Illinois supports the rights of citizens to videotape governmental activity in a public place. If you have encountered police brutality, racial profiling, disparate treatment and discrimination, harassment, and intimidation by officers, you may want to consider contacting the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois at (312) 201-9740 or by visiting www.aclu-il.org, to report your claims. Too, the NAACP encourages citizens to videotape police misconduct with their cell phones and to submit those videos to the organization by contacting them at www.naacp.org.

Citizens must continue to get involved if we are to see change, even if that means monitoring the behavior of law enforcement officials. Americans' rights to freedom of speech and freedom of press must be upheld at any cost. Talks of police brutality spill over, giving all police officers a bad name, when perhaps, only a select few actually engage in reckless, brutal behavior, misusing and abusing their power and authority against law abiding citizens. As long as citizens are following guidelines, by that I mean, not interfering in the actual event or arrest, the police should not have a problem with being videotaped, unless, of course, they have something to hide.



ASK SARNIA



Q. Is it me or what? Like many of us 'girls' are doing, I had been praying for a good man. It seemed that my prayers had been finally answered when I met D.K, but with one big exception. D.K is a sister's baby-brother, and seems to be proud of it. I like his sister, and we get along good—on the surface. BUT! When he is at my apartment she just has to call him for something, no less than two times and it's only to "see how and what he is doing". That wouldn't be so bad if he did not currently 'live' with her. That's right -- he sees her when he goes home —ugh!! I feel like she calls to purposely and possibly interrupt 'something' ... if you catch my drift. He is always concerned about 'not' doing anything that would upset her, like staying over to my place all night. If he were a high school teenager I could understand, but D.K. is forty-three years old. He has a steady job and could afford to have his own place, but he doesn't because to quote him, "he has a good thing going". By living with his sister he gets good cooking, cleaning, laundry done and the rent is cheap. He married young and when it didn't work out he moved in with big sister. He has been living with her every since. Also, they both say that by living together he provides a good role model for his young nephew. To me, this situation seems incestuous, or am I over reacting? How much rope should I give this relationship before cutting him and his ready-made family loose?

A. My opinion is that your prayers were answered according to what you specifically asked for, but now you need to pray for a

patient spirit, discernment and an inclusive love for the man's family. I believe that the relationship between the brother and sister is a really close bond that has evolved over their life-time of shared trials and tribulations—some of which you will never know or understand. They learned that through it all they can always depend on each other. Trustworthy relationships, whether a blood relationship or not, are a treasure and should be recognized for their value. For whatever reason(s), the sister provides stability and consistency in this man's life and, unlike you, doesn't "cut him loose" when she is unhappy about something he is doing. He 'knows' that he can trust her and that she will be there for him no matter what. It doesn't seem that he 'knows without a doubt' that to be true about you? Also, it is my opinion that you should examine what it is that you are looking for that you feel/think that you are not getting from him 'because of the sister', other than a sleep-over. Then ask yourself if there is not a little insecurity that you feel because there is another woman (even blood related) in his life that comes before you. The brother may have experienced a difficult recovery from his marriage and other relationships and as a result he and his sister choose to avoid anything close to a repeat. Your relationship with the man and also the sister can, with patience, discernment and an inclusive love for the man's family, improve with time as they get to know you and know that you are actually an asset to him/them. And, Uncle can be a role model with or without the same address. Best wishes and continue to pray.

Q. My best friend has become the personal ATM for a guy she has only known for about three months. For example, he keeps her car while she is at work and burns up the gas. Then, when he picks her up from work he goes straight to the gas station for a refill for her to pay for. She has indicated that her money is low because he makes no financial contributions to the relationship. He has all but taken over her mind and her life, and it seems that she really can't help herself. The guy is extremely smooth and seems very experienced at breaking women's mind down. My question is what could wake her up to be able to see him for who and what he is?

A. Her wake-up call is totally dependent on her 'way of thinking', i.e., it will depend on how she has connected to him. For example, if she thinks his money problems are temporary and he's just down on his luck and/or that his circumstances of life are especially hard (no employment experience or skills) things could continue this way for a while. But, when things continue the same way with seemingly no end in sight, her patience and understanding will grow cold ... as will the relationship.

Questions may be submitted to asksarnia@yahoo.com

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FITNESS

5 Ways to Recover After Your Workout!

by Lyle Johnson CPT

No matter if you are taking a simple stroll in the park or killing your body with Kettlebell training, rest and recovery is an important part of any workout routine. Recovery has a major impact on your fitness goals and allows you to train for better results.

Recovery is important because it allows your muscles and tissues to repair and build strength. This is very important after a grueling workout session. Your muscle needs anywhere from 24 to 48 hours to repair and rebuild, and working it again too soon simply leads to tissue breakdown instead of building.

Here are five tips to get your post-workout plans on point.

Cool Down. Cooling down simply means slowing down (not stopping completely) after exercise. Continuing to move around at a very low intensity for 5 to 10 minutes after a workout helps reduce muscles stiffness. Jumping on a cardio machine such as the treadmill or bike is a great way to slow your heart rate down.

Replace Fluids. You lose a lot of fluid during exercise. You should be replacing fluids during exercise, but filling up after exercise is an easy way to boost your recovery. Water does the body good when it comes to replacing fluids. Water also helps keep your skin looking smooth and young.

Eat Properly. After depleting your energy with exercise, you need to refuel if you expect your body to recover, repair tissues, get stronger

and be ready for the next workout by eating the proper foods. You should try to eat within 60 minutes of the end of your workout and make sure you include some high-quality foods made by God.

Rest. Time is one of the best ways to recover after a hard workout. Your body has an amazing ability to take care of itself if you allow it some time. Resting after a hard workout allows the repair and recovery process to happen at a natural pace.

Water Therapy: While taking your post-exercise shower, alternate two minutes of hot water with 30 seconds of cold water. Repeat four times with a minute of lukewarm temperatures between each hot-cold spray.

The most important thing you can do to recovery quickly is to listen

to your body. If you are feeling tired or sore you may need more time to recover or a break from training altogether. If you pay close attention, your body will let you know what it needs, when it needs it. Just make sure you don't push yourself too much to the point where it could cause you injury or you feel overly fatigued, sluggish, and useless.

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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MAKING STRIDES

Against Breast Cancer 5K Walk

by Kimberly D. Conner



Have you or someone that you know been touched by breast cancer? The disease has impacted many of us. One in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. Diagnosed early, women have close to a 90% survival rate. Breast cancer is the 2nd leading cause for cancer-related deaths for Illinois women. One in 35 women will die from the disease. The American Cancer Society has been a part of every major breast cancer breakthrough of the last century. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. And, we are gearing up for the “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer 5k Walk” at the Illinois State Fairgrounds on Saturday, October 15th, 2011. Registration begins at 7:30 am. The 5k Walk begins at 9AM. There is no fee to register for the walk, but every dollar raised can make a life-saving difference.

Your dollars fund several projects through the American Cancer Society including studies of protein pathways to identify ways to eliminate cancer-causing cells, reducing breast cancer recurrence and initial tumor growth; Further study of how a woman’s genetic make-up determines her response to treatment, building on work that has already led to leading drug therapies like tamoxifen and herceptin; New therapies to reduce treatment side effects by targeting tumor cells without damaging normal cells. Currently, there are 222 breast cancer research grants. Of these grants, 32 address cancer disparities to help give women of color, who succumb more frequently to the disease, a fighting chance when it comes to breast cancer.

We are reaching out to ask for your support in the fight against breast cancer. Together we can make a difference in the lives of women and

men affected by the disease. “Making Strides” is a noncompetitive walk that celebrates breast cancer survivors while raising funds to support the American Cancer Society’s lifesaving research and programs. “Making Strides” honors survivors and family members of women diagnosed with the devastating disease. Anyone that has travelled this road knows that the disease not only impacts the victims, but reaches far beyond, affecting loved ones and caregivers.

Please consider joining our team, “The Pink Mile”, symbolizing miracles and hope. We are encouraging you to walk in honor of someone that you love that has battled this disease. Perhaps you have a co-worker, or a neighbor, that has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Perhaps you have a loved one that has been impacted by this illness. It’s possible that you may have lost someone near and dear to you to breast cancer. Perhaps, you know, firsthand, how this disease impacts lives. Please join us in the fight! In 2009, nearly 700,000 walkers across the United States collected \$60 million through “Making Strides”. Since 1993, nearly 5 million walkers nation-wide have raised more than \$340 million at “Making Strides”. In Illinois alone last year, 25,000 supporters worked to raise \$1.9 million to battle the disease. With your help, we can help save many more lives. Please consider making a donation in any amount toward the cause. Every dollar raised will make a lifesaving difference.

To assist in helping us to reach our goal, please visit the website and join our team, “The Pink Mile”, and consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our efforts at <http://www.MakingStridesIllinois.com> or text “Strides” to 70000 for more information. With your contributions we can avail breast cancer

patients much needed services. With your help we can fund groundbreaking research in the fight to end breast cancer. Your donations could fund the next great breakthrough.

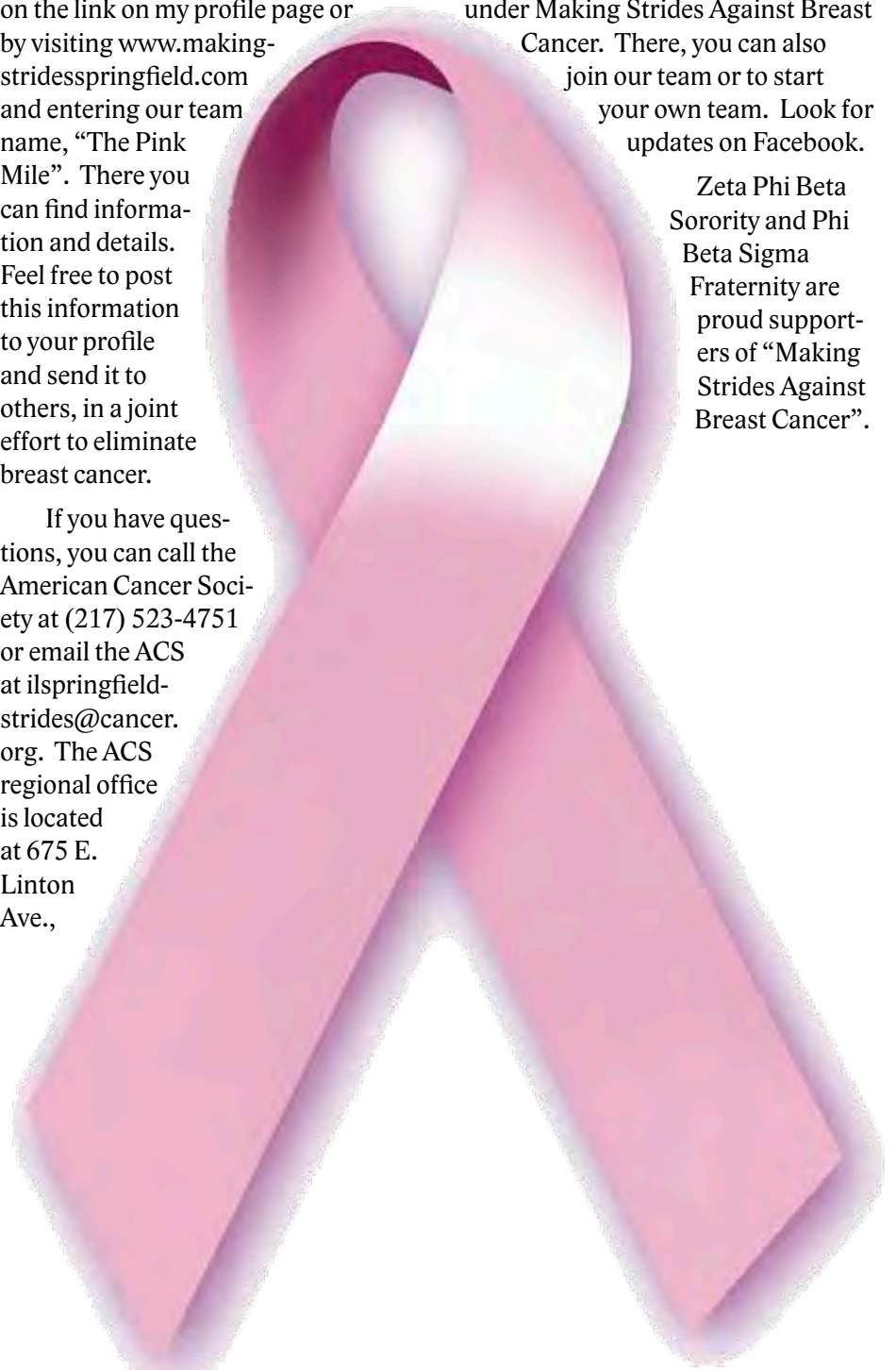
We have also set up a page on Facebook to inform friends and family about the 5k Walk and our efforts to end breast cancer once and for all. Information is available by clicking on the link on my profile page or by visiting www.making-stridesspringfield.com and entering our team name, “The Pink Mile”. There you can find information and details. Feel free to post this information to your profile and send it to others, in a joint effort to eliminate breast cancer.

If you have questions, you can call the American Cancer Society at (217) 523-4751 or email the ACS at ilspringfield-strides@cancer.org. The ACS regional office is located at 675 E. Linton Ave.,

Springfield, IL 62703.

If you’d like to contribute to the “Pink Mile Team”, please send those donations to P.O. Box 8345, Springfield, IL, 62791-8345. Make checks payable to the American Cancer Society. We will be accepting donations until December 1, 2011. You can find more information about the “Pink Mile Team” on Facebook under Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. There, you can also join our team or to start your own team. Look for updates on Facebook.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity are proud supporters of “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer”.





EDITORIAL

Pardon The Interruption

by James Clingman

Considering the fact that Black people are so entrenched in the distractions of this world, I think it's appropriate that I beg your pardon, Black America, in order to get a few important points across. Although for 16 years now I have sounded the economic alarm via this newspaper column, four books, and numerous speaking engagements, it is shameful that we have failed to act upon the messages of our ancestors and contemporaries. There is still a need to "capture" our attention when it comes to economic empowerment. Seems we have to be tricked, embarrassed, and beat-up before we start running for true freedom. So can you spare a few moments to read this missive, Black America? I beg your pardon for the interruption.

Pardon the interruption of your sports conversations, brothers and sisters, but you are in big trouble. The players, coaches, and team owners have their millions and are very secure; your team is not even in the game.

Pardon the interruption to your anger or euphoria, and your inconsequential rhetoric on Libya; Black folks in this country are unemployed in some areas as high as 50%. You are still being discriminated against when it comes to access to business, contracts, capital, and justice.

Pardon the interruption of your obsession with Will and Jada splitting up, Kanye and Jay Z's new album, and Tiger's golf game, multi-millionaires every one of them. You are trying to pay your rent, hold on to your homes, and feed your families.

Pardon the interruption to your wondering who will win the dancing and singing contests on television. You are doing the unemployment line-dance ("Now walk it out, y'all") and singing "Stormy Monday" Blues in response to your

current economic condition.

Pardon the interruption to your unceasing and loyal dedication to making everyone else in this country wealthy by buying their stuff and boycotting your own. Even with nearly \$1 trillion in annual aggregate income, the wealth of Black people is 20 times less than that of whites.

Pardon the interruption to your fascination with other folks' hair. Paying hundreds of dollars for someone else's hair, as if God didn't know what He was doing when He gave you yours, is only exceeded on the ridiculous scale by the dollars it takes for you to "get it done."

Pardon the interruption to your penchant to have the best of everything, even at the highest prices. You are so silly to brag about how much you pay for things, while others brag about how little they pay for the same items. You love to go to bars and order whatever Champagne or Vodka some rapper might be drinking — even at hundreds of dollars per bottle. Only top-shelf for Black folks, despite the fact that you don't make or distribute most of the products you purchase. Veblen's "Conspicuous Consumption" concept ain't got nothin' on you.

Pardon the interruption to your shooting and robbing one another. It's not enough for you to be under assault by outsiders, you feel compelled to take out your frustrations on yourselves rather than work together for your own benefit. Young people running rampant, wielding guns and having no trepidation at firing them at one another, at the police, or anyone they come across, speaks volumes about the overall condition of your families, your leadership, and your collective internal integrity.

Pardon the interruption of your meaningless conversations about Republicans and Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives, MSNBC and Fox News, and your preference of one talking-head

over the other. They have their six and seven-figure salaries and can "talk" about your problems all day long. What do you have, and where will all the talk get you?

Pardon this interruption to your complacency, your apathy, your fear, your doubt, your perceived helplessness, hopelessness, and powerlessness. Pardon this interruption to your stream of consciousness, your psyche, and your apparent overwhelming desire to shut out reality. Pardon this interruption to your indifference and unresponsiveness to the life and death issues you face. Pardon this interruption to your proclivity toward the temporal, trivial, and the trifling things of this world. Pardon this interruption of your inclination to allow the silly and symbolic to take precedence over the serious and substantive. Pardon this interruption of your desire to continue majoring in the minors and getting caught-up in practices that matter little in the larger scheme of things.

Yes, pardon the interruption, Black America, but I just had to shake you once again; I just had to try to awaken you once again. I love you too much to let you stay in your comatose state, a state of inactivity and numbness. I care too much about our children's future to sit back and not speak out about our condition and not get involved in initiatives to improve our situation. I respect our elders and ancestors too much to ignore their sacrifices for our economic freedom, some having died "on their way to freedom." Are you on your way?

So, once again, for the umpteenth time, pardon my interruption of whatever you are hiding from or running from or afraid of. I hope you will forgive my intrusion into your fantasy world. But most of all, I hope you will move beyond the mundane and heed this call for appropriate action to economically empower yourself and our people.

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JACK SEGAL

COMCAST ANNOUNCES PROGRAM TO HELP CLOSE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Comcast's Internet Essentials Program Provides Low-Cost Internet Service, Affordable Computers, Digital Literacy Training to Eligible Families

Comcast recently announced Internet Essentials in communities across Illinois. Internet Essentials is an ambitious and comprehensive broadband adoption program that addresses three of the primary barriers to Internet access in the home; a lack of understanding of how the Internet is relevant and useful; the cost of a home computer, and the cost of Internet service. Available in areas where Comcast providers Internet service, Internet Essentials' goal is to help close the digital divide and ensure that more Americans benefit from all the Internet has to offer.

"Internet access is the great equalizer. It's great for people economically to have access- kids especially to have access to the internet to do their homework, to learn, to dream and to really, really participate in the world" said Jack Segal, Regional Vice President of Public Relations for Comcast.

Service Details:

Internet Essentials participants will

receive:

- Residential Internet service for \$9.95 a month + tax;
- No price increases, and no activation or equipment rental fees;
- A low-cost computer for \$149.99 + tax (if they desire); and
- Access to free digital literacy training in print, online or in person.

Additional benefits include a 30-day money back guarantee and a complementary Norton™ Security Suite (\$160 value) for comprehensive online security protection.

Eligibility:

A household is eligible to participate in the Internet Essentials program if it meets all of the following criteria:

- Is located where Comcast offers Internet service;
- Has at least one child who receives a free lunch at school under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) (As an example, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a household of three would have to make less than \$25,000 a year in income);
- Has not subscribed to Comcast Internet service within the last 90 days; and
- Does not have an overdue Comcast bill or unreturned equipment.

Comcast will sign up eligible families in the program for at least three years and through the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Any household that qualifies during this three-year period will remain eligible for Internet Essentials provided the household still qualifies for the program until that child graduates from high school.

For general information about Internet Essentials, please visit www.internetessentials.com for English and visit www.internetbasico.com for Spanish. Educators or third-parties interested in helping to spread the word can find more information at www.internetessentials.com/partner. Parents looking to enroll in the program can call 1-855-846-8376 (1-855-765-6995 in Spanish).

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