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CARE Recent and Upcoming Events in the Community

Striving to live Dr. King's dream

By Kevin Mertz

Standard-Journal

Mon Jan 21, 2008, 01:08 PM EST

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MILTON — The spirit of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was alive Saturday evening, January 20 in Milton. St. Paul's AME Church hosted a program to remember the famed civil rights activist and his dream of equality and freedom from oppression for all people. The event featured poetry, an interpretive dance number, special readings and gospel praise music.

Gerald Smith, president of the Lycoming Tri-County NAACP, spoke on King's legacy throughout the evening. "Dr. King was a great man of faith," said Smith. "The best way we can honor him is through our faith." He added a group of clergy once told King the time was not right for the civil rights movement. Smith repeated King's response. "When is the right time? If we're wrong, then God almighty is wrong."

Smith added that in 1968 he could not have walked into a church with a racially mixed congregation. "Times are changing. We have to change with those times," he continued. "We have to be open-minded and thoughtful of what we say to one another."

Smith pointed to Sen. Barack Obama's bid for the presidency as an example of how far the nation has moved toward reaching King's dream. "We're on the eve of another momentous election. People are looking for change," he said. "For the first time in history, an African American has a chance to be president. People are getting over the color barrier. "Dr. King said he wanted to see the day his children would be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin," Smith continued. "I think he would be very proud today."

Smith added he believes the nation is close to realizing King's dream, however a lot of work still needs to be done. "We have to tear down the barriers that divide us," he said. Smith said one of the keys to realizing the dream is to educate young people about the dangers of hatred, crime and violence. "It's our duty and responsibility to nurture the children," he said. "To save the next generation we have to put our efforts into prevention."

"Everything starts at home," Smith said. "Children learn bigotry at home. They learn all the profanity when they hear mommy and daddy going at each other. When a child has self-esteem, they believe in themselves," he continued. "If we don't instill that in them, we'll have another repeating cycle."

"What's it going to be?" Smith asked. "Prevention, or the old standard, lock them up and throw away the key?" According to Smith, there were 184,000 African Americans incarcerated in 1964. Today, over 888,000 African Americans are in prison, he said.

Rev. Donald Spiller of St. Paul's AME church echoed Smith's sentiments. "We must instill the dream Dr. King had in our young people. They will carry on," he said. "The dream has not been fully realized," Spiller continued. "Great changes have been made, but a lot still have to be made. The way we can continue that dream is to work toward the goals of a deeper commitment to working together in peace and harmony," he said. Spiller added he believes society needs to completely eliminate bias and segregation. "If we can accomplish that, we can accomplish racial harmony," he said. Spiller said events like the one St. Paul's hosted Saturday allow people to remember the dream King had of freedom, justice and fairness for all people who are oppressed. "He made a great sacrifice to bring about a peaceful change," Spiller said.



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Yul Holloway performed several inspirational songs during the program and offered his thoughts on King.

“The dream is real,” he said. “If we live the dream then there is so much we can do to eliminate hate and crime.”

Center celebrates King’s vision

By Andrew Zechman
Standard-Journal

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LEWISBURG — The unity on display at the Donald Heiter Community Center Monday evening was the same kind of unity the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was preaching for more than 40 years ago.

Members of the community came together to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day with activities for the children, a community meal and an inspiring speech from the first black female officer and executive at a major airline.

It wasn’t always easy for Joyce Coleman, who grew up in a poor household in pre-civil rights Mississippi, but with the love of her family and the help of King’s message, she now too is helping to make a difference just as he did.

“As we celebrate the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we can’t help but reflect on his teachings and the impact that his contributions have had on our lives and our nation,” said Coleman. “The very notion of diversity would not be embedded in our language were it not for Dr. King’s vision and struggle. I would not be standing before you tonight were it not for that vision.”

It would be dismissive to believe that Dr. King’s movement did not help to pave the way for her move up the rung of power in corporate America, said Coleman. “Major U.S. Corporations were giving diversity a try in 1968,” said Coleman. “Diversity, at that time, meant adding a bit of color.” Coleman first joined Trans World Airlines (TWA) as a flight attendant on April 11, 1968, a week after King’s assassination.

Once Coleman began to take on management roles, she started to understand the value of having a diverse team. “It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs and other ideologies,” said Coleman. “Diversity is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance and embracing and celebrating rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual, she continued”

Andrea Tufo, executive director of the community center, said Monday’s events were a celebration of the diversity that the center practices all year long. “It is a motivation of this is where we have come, where do we go from here?,” said Tufo. “It is realizing what is in our own community, and also what we could be bringing to our own community.”

Coleman said she could not help but notice the quote on the community center’s Web site by Dr. King, “Life’s most urgent question is what are you doing for others?” Since retiring, Coleman, who now lives in St. Louis, Mo., helps children at a juvenile detention center develop personal Web pages, many of whom have a great grasp on technology.

Coleman also recently attended at talent show in which low-income children showcased their skills. “This one young lady who sang was unbelievable. It made you think that Jennifer Hudson of ‘Dreamgirls’ had gotten loose in St. Louis,” said Coleman. “These children and people have enormous talents, and all they need is a vehicle to showcase it.”

As for those who harbor hate for someone different than themselves, you allow yourself to become controlled by that hate, said Coleman. “Hate I think hurts the practitioner more than anybody else. Everyone has had something that makes them really mad and to hold onto it freezes out every other emotion and does not allow you to objectively look at anything else,” said Coleman. “What singular thing comes from that which is good?”

Seven-year-old Amirah Williams summed up the importance of having a day to celebrate a man’s dream. “We celebrate it because it joins black and white people



Do you have any news or suggestions for us? Please contact us at 570-524-2273 or email care@dejazzd.com

together and shows us that we need to respect both sides of black and white and treat each other the same," said Williams. "To celebrate that we are all different in our own way, and that is OK."

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Update from African American Task Force Mentoring Program for Youth

For Black History month the task force is focusing on implementing a youth mentoring program which will be led by Dr. James Peterson, an English professor at Bucknell University. A self-professed hip hop scholar with an Ivy League Ph.D. in English, James Peterson lectures, consults, and teaches at various universities. We are delighted that Professor Peterson is willing to head up this project. We have planned a series of five workshops led by him in which he will use hip hop and break down the lyrics to talk about issues that affect our youth.

Health Fair

The task force is also collaborating with Bucknell University on a health fair to be held during national health minority month in April. Bucknell will host the event with support from the task force and from Evangelical Hospital. The task force plans to focus on health issues that affect minorities such as high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, diabetes, etc. The events will be held at two low-income housing complexes, Meadowview and Memorial Acres. Jessica Hess, the director of Multicultural services at Bucknell, is leading this effort.

Grand Opening

On February 8th Diversity Styles, 223 North Front Street, Milton, will open its doors. The owner is Rosalind Hamilton. This will be the first salon of this kind in our area. Her focus is multicultural hair care. Rosalind has also joined CARE's African American Task Force. Welcome, Rosalind and good luck in your new endeavor!

Special Events for Children at the Public Library

Val Foster is spearheading special events for children at the Union County Public Library. Val is a graduate of CUNY York College. She is organizing the upcoming library reading events which will feature African American musicians and African American Athletes. Ms. Foster is excited and happy to be a part of CARE's African American Task Force. See the flyer at the end of the newsletter!

Weis Center Event

The 51st (dream) state, nationally acclaimed poet Sekou Sundiata's contemplation of America's national identity, of its power in the world, and of its guiding mythologies, will be presented at Bucknell's Weis Center for the Performing Arts on February 29 at 8:00 p.m. This multi-media performance features a cycle of songs, poems and monologues supported by still and moving projected images. Performed by an all-star ensemble of singers and musicians, including keyboards, trumpet, drums, bass and guitar, *the 51st (dream) state* is a quest to find a vision of what it means to be both a citizen and an individual in a deeply complex, hyper-kinetic society. Some of the project's implied questions are:

- What does "pursuit of happiness" mean in a society that places so much emphasis on tangible outcomes for most endeavors?
- Given the multilingual reality of daily life in much of the U.S, what is the American language?
- Can the old, central myths about such things as beauty, power, and destiny sustain the nation?
- What does a public imagination steeped in violence say about who we are?
- What are the prospects for love, compassion and human solidarity?

The 51st (dream) state was created with the specific purpose of joining art and civic dialogue and is designed to initiate and illuminate public discussions related to the questions outlined above, among others. This performance piece was created through Sundiata's *America Project*, a series of community dialogues held throughout the country. The dialogue activities included community sings, which are public events featuring cast members and community members singing and discussing their relationships to a variety of American folk, popular, traditional and patriotic songs. Community sings and similarly structured poetry circles, along with citizenship dinners, workshops and discussion forums will continue to be offered as *the 51st t*

(*dream*) state tours. Bucknell will kick off its own *America Project* engagements during the week of February 4 when vocal arranger Richard Harper and other *51st dream state* company members will be on campus for a residency program. For more information, call Cindy Peltier at 570-577-3981.

DON'T MISS THIS AMAZING PERFORMANCE

From the newsdesk of Doug Sturm...

"No noose is good noose"

That one-phrase ditty was once a childhood joke, but was perhaps more serious in its fundamental meaning than we thought at the time.

The January issue of *In These Times* included a piece called "Hanging Hate," that opens with a discouraging declaration that "The noose, that symbol of American racism associated with the Jim Crow South, is making a comeback."

The author, David A. Love, reports case after case of recent incidents in several states (including Pennsylvania) where nooses have been used to intimidate blacks and Latinos. Over roughly a two-year period (2006-7), over 60 such incidents have been reported, seemingly stimulated by the Jena six case.

Some of us are old enough to remember when lynching of minorities, primarily African Americans, was a particularly gruesome expression of racial hatred in the United States. A columnist noted that not until 1952 did the U.S. go "a whole year without a single lynching."

Malik Shabazz (Black Lawyers for Justice) remarked, "The hanging of nooses is a sign that there (could) be real bodies under those nooses soon."

Questions: Have there been any displays of nooses in the Central Susquehanna Valley? What might be done to deter that possibility?

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR): Hate Group?

The Winter 2007 issue of the *SPLC Report* announces that the Southern Poverty Law Center has added FAIR to its list of "hate groups."

FAIR was created in 1979 years ago by John Tanton and has acted as a "nativist group" engaged in trying to prevent Latino immigration in the U.S.

Among other actions FAIR has, according to this article, promoted a program of eugenics to improve the stock of Americans. Despite this troubling orientation, the mainstream media (including Lou Dobbs' CNN show) have turned to FAIR repeatedly throughout 2007 as a resource in its reporting on immigration debates.

Questions: Should FAIR be ignored by the media given its commitment to racial hatred? Is it fair for the media not to reveal that commitment when FAIR is quoted?

The United Nations "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples": A Step Forward

The (Fall/Winter 2007) *Indian Report*, published by the Friends Committee on National Legislation, reports the dramatic adoption by the United Nations of the "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

Most affirmations of human rights over the past three centuries have focused on rights of the individual. The new UN declaration is among few major official statements proposing the idea of "community rights."

According to law professor G. William Rice, "The heart of the whole Declaration is the right to self-determination."

"The Declaration reflects a growing international consensus concerning indigenous rights...[including] such areas as self-determination, spirituality, and rights to intellectual property. It creates a minimum standard for the promotion of the rights of some 400 million indigenous people worldwide."

The impact of the Declaration, it is hoped, will address a range of vital issues.

“As clamor for land and its life-supporting resources grows, indigenous people face increasing threats to homelands, bodily safety and cultural integrity resulting from oil extraction, tourism, dam construction, population expansion, and forced displacement in the name of ‘conservation’.”

Only four nations refused to vote for the Declaration: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States.

Susquehanna University's Gender-Sexuality Alliance Presents...
“Alphabet Soup”
GSA 5th Annual Colloquium

Susquehanna University is holding its 5th Annual Colloquium from Friday, March 28 to Sunday, March 30. The theme is Alphabet Soup (LGBTQAP, etc. etc. style!)

We are looking at presentations on the following topics thus far:

- Homophobia on conservative college campuses
- LGBT Representation in the media/pop culture
- Coming out late in life
- LGBT Sex Education
- LGBT culture and writing culture
- Is AIDS still a ‘gay’ disease?

We will also be having:

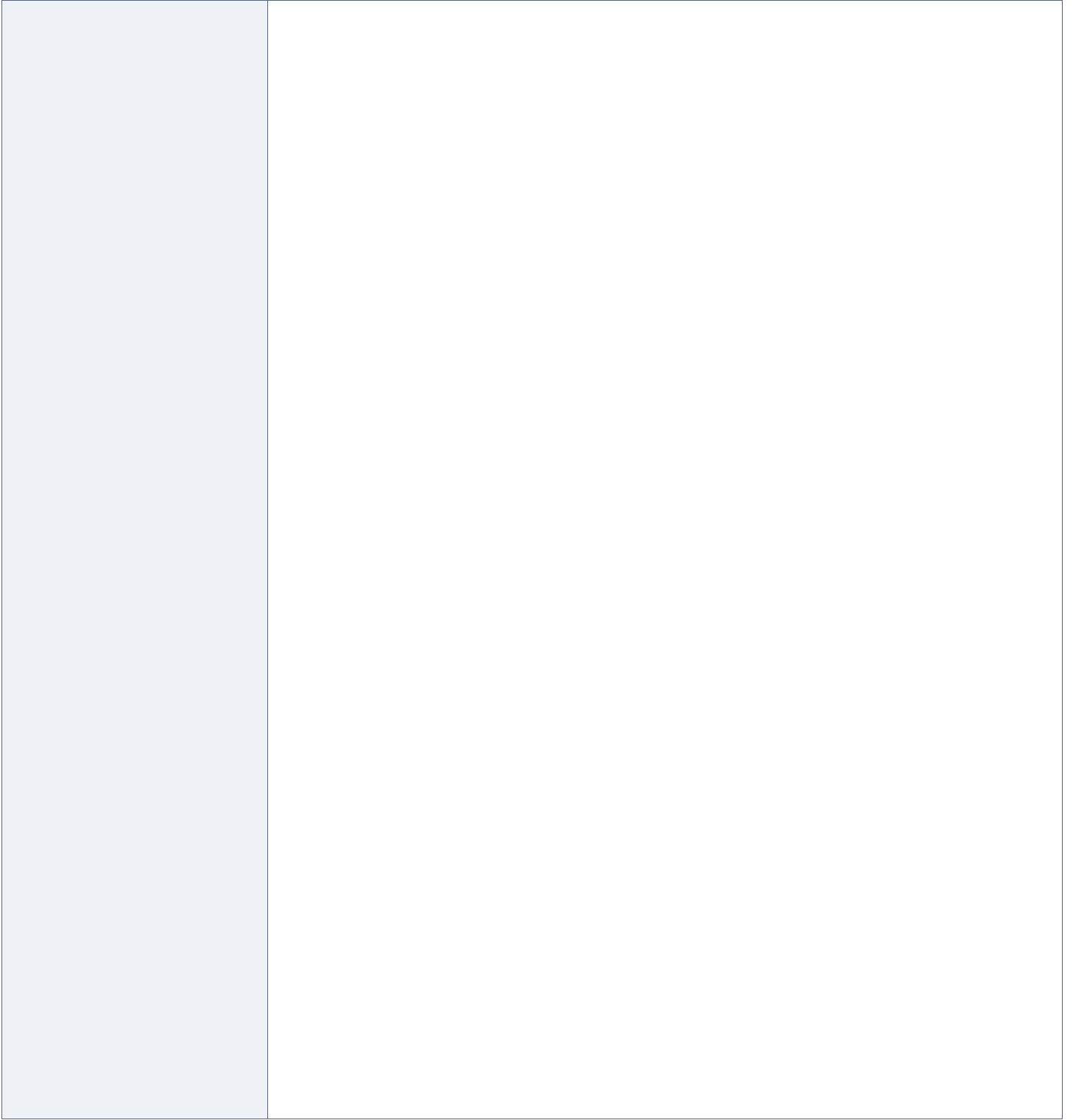
- General Q&A Panel on being a sexual minority
- “Out of Your Element” panel - on being a sexual minority in typically heterosexual fields (i.e. sports, business, Greek organizations)
- Out lesbian singer, songwriter and guitarist Jenna DiQuarto (check her out on MySpace under Jenna and the Jennettes!)
- Drag Show in Susquehanna University's on-campus nightclub, *Trax*

Please pass word on to anyone who would be interested in attending or presenting! If you or your organization is interested, please contact Kristin Bentzen for a full schedule of the times, dates and locations of the different events as they become available.

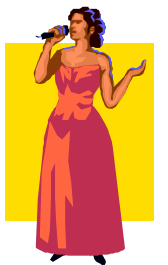
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DIZZY, HARDAWAY OR FITZGERALD

Join us at the Union County Library

Thursday, March 27

6:30 pm – 7:15 pm

AS WE READ SHORT STORIES
ABOUT MUSICAL INSPIRATIONS &
DO MUSIC RELATED ACTIVITES



Please **RSVP** by visiting or calling the library: **255 Reitz Blvd. Lsbg. / 523-7059**
Sponsored by the African American Task Force of CARE