

Community Calendar

Compiled by Marisela Santana

Fresh from the National Black Theatre Festival in North Carolina, actors Dorian Wilson (pictured), Wendy Raquel Robinson, Denise Dowse and Gigi Bolden will be in town together for a special Aug. 28 performance of their stage-play, "Extremities," a play set exclusively for the NAACP Theatre Festival taking place Aug. 29-30 at the New Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., Los Angeles. The actual NAACP Theatre Awards take place Aug. 31 at the Directors Guild of America, in Hollywood. For more information, (323) 464-7616



The Village Theatre in Lucy Florence brings Albert Cowart Jr.'s "Influences of the Spirit" to the stage. In two acts, "Head Trip" and "Crowded Room," the play shows how shared tales and images know no boundaries. The two stories depict the influence of spirits: One of a family on conflict and struggling to find closure and move one, the other with their own spirits warring over human decisions and reaction to the discovery of secrets. Fatima Cortez-Todd and Al Cowart are co-producers and co-directors. Aug. 28 through Sept. 20. Address: 3351 W. 43rd St., Los Angeles. (323) 293-1536



The Black Resource Center will be home to a special screening of the Sundance Film Festival winner, "Trouble The Water" (pictured), the highly acclaimed documentary about Hurricane Katrina. The New York Times called the film "Superb... one of the best American documentaries in recent memory." The film will be screened on Aug. 29 at 1:30 p.m. The screening is free and open to the public, but reservations are required since space is limited. The screening is sponsored by the BRC and by the Friends of the AC Bilbrew Library. Address: 150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles. (310) 538-3350

The Black Affairs Advisory Council, a voluntary organization of Social Security Administration employees who have come together to improve employment opportunities and training programs for African-Americans and for the betterment of services to the African-American community, host a golf tournament this Saturday, where a portion of the proceeds will go towards UNCF. Aug. 29, from 9 a.m. Chester Washington Golf Course, 1930 W. 120th St., Los Angeles. (213) 598-5223



New York Times best-selling author Eric Jerome Dickey will read and sign copies of his latest novel, "Resisting Midnight." With this new thriller ride, the author takes readers into the sexy, thrilling world of an international hitman. Aug. 29, Barnes & Noble at The Grove, 189 The Grove Drive, Los Angeles. (323) 525-0366



Raach Christian Community Fellowship invites the community to its first "Community Pride Back-to-School Black Party" this Saturday, featuring free school supplies, health screenings, live music, food, a mini job fair, jumpers, art classes, face painting, entertainment and much more. Aug. 29, Raach Christian Church, 11603 S. Western Ave., Los Angeles. (323) 567-9583



Expecting to accommodate 1,500 children and families, the Special Needs Network's fourth annual back-to-school "Community Connections: Inclusion Event" is set to take place this weekend in a different venue this year. Offering free food, entertainment, pony rides, clowns, jumpers, magicians, games, vendors and a 50-booth resource fair, as well as free backpacks and school supplies for at least 700 children, SNN's "Inclusion" event will also feature KCEP-TV's Sid the Science Kid (pictured), KJLH Radio personality, Adai Ramon, will serve as mistress of ceremonies, with a special welcome from Sen. Curran Price, D-26th District. Aug. 30, from 2 to 6 p.m. Junior Blind of America, 5300 Angelenos Vista Drive, Los Angeles. (213) 389-7100



Emma Dell Foley, director of nursing at Martin Luther King Jr./Drew Medical Center for 13 years, will be inducted into the Watts "Promenade of Prominence" Walk of Fame at Ted Watkins Park this Sunday. Foley was the first and only director to serve at MLK medical center. A resident of the Crenshaw community for 44 years, Foley is a member of the Alpha Gamma Alpha Sorority. Aug. 30, at 1:30 p.m. Los Angeles County Ted Watkins Memorial Park, 1335 E. 160th St., Los Angeles. (323) 296-5423



"Rebel Hearts: The Grimké Sisters." These feminists and anti-slavery movement leaders, were key figures in the campaign for U.S. women winning the vote in 1920. "Rebel Women L.A." is hosting screening of this documentary this Sunday. The film highlights the sisters' role in pushing the abolitionist struggle forward to not only fight for Black liberation, but also equal rights for women. Aug. 30, at 2 p.m. Solidarity Hall, 2170 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles. (323) 732-6416

The Black Business Association of Los Angeles hosts its annual Economic Development Town Hall Luncheon later next week with luncheon speaker, Donna J. Gambrell (pictured), Director of the U.S. Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. The CDFI Fund expands the capacity of financial institutions to provide credit, capital and financial services to underserved populations and communities in the United States. Gambrell will address how the current administration's economic stimulus plan affects job creation, business development and community empowerment. She will also address some of the concerns of black business owners, as well as opportunities for financial intermediaries and institutions. Sept. 3, Los Angeles City Club on Bunker Hill, 333 Grand Ave., Los Angeles. (323) 291-9334



The annual Leimert Park Village African Art & Music Festival has been set for Labor Day Weekend. The event, "Family First," the yearly fest will feature a children's village, live entertainment, an international food court and more. This event is free and open to the public. Sponsorship, vendor and volunteer opportunities are still available. Sept. 5-7, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day. Leimert Park is located at the corner of 46th Street and Degan Boulevard in the Crenshaw District. (323) 319-5800

SAVE THE DATE: Award-winning comedian Bill Cosby brings his humor and light-hearted insights about the media, ordinary people, and everyday life to the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts next month. Cosby's comedy transcends age, gender and cultural barriers without adopting profanity, prompting the Los Angeles Times to hail him as "one of the great clean comics of his time... an icon—America's Dad." Sept. 27, two shows. Address: 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. (562) 467-8818



Those wishing to place announcements in the weekly calendars should mail information to The Wave, 1730 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015, fax to (213) 835-8584 or e-mail to announcements@wavepublications.com. Items will be published on a space-available basis. The deadline for all submissions is Friday at 5 p.m. Please include the name and telephone number of a contact person.



Photo by Gary McCarthy

Campus pride

Wearing the school insignia on his blazer, new Manual Arts High School Principal Todd Irving gives a campus tour Saturday as part of a celebration of the school's 100th anniversary. More than 2,000 alumni and supporters attended the event.

THEATER PREVIEW

On stage, attempting to personalize L.A.'s self-inflicted racial divisions

BY OLU ALEMORU
STAFF WRITER

"Next Door," a two act drama playing at South Los Angeles' Stage 52 Theater, takes a thought-provoking look at multi-racial and class co-existence through the eyes of three different family situations.

The play, scheduled for Aug. 28 and 29, is staged by non-profit theater ensemble Streetlamp Studio. In one story, single Black mother Anita (Malika Williams) works and attends night school, all the while trying her best to raise 16-year-old Kishon (Damian Horsley) who yearns to learn more about his absent father.

In another, Denise, a teenage Latina (Anna Klein), is a bright, geeky, student whose pregnancy could derail her dream of attending college.

Connecting them are Sarah and Michael (Jenny Vaughn Hall and Andrew Hemon), an ultra-liberal White couple who are both teachers and anxiously expectant parents.

Vaughn Hall also wrote the play, woven from real-life stories of people in her South L.A. neighborhood, and it was produced by Sarah Sandberg and directed by Naisa Wong.

Both Horsley and Klein portray students of Vaughn Hall's character, who, to Anita's chagrin, has her son composing rap



Photo by Sam Lee

Damon Horsley, left, and Andrew Hemon share a tender moment in the play "Next Door."

verses for his English tutorial assignment.

Meanwhile, Hemon has also run afoul of the "scary Black woman" by encouraging Horsley to talk about wanting to reconnect with his dad.

It's a set-up: White guilt, Black anger and Latino regret, that seems predictable at the outset but Vaughn Hall crafts the interlocking stories with wit, verve and ultimately pathos.

To quote Rodney King: "Why Can't We All Just Get Along?" For cynics it might just be

a utopian dream, but there is considerable evidence that a majority of us believe in a society where different races and classes can peacefully co-exist.

However, in L.A.'s volatile, car-obsessed environs that gives rise to the kind of thorny questions contemplated here. For instance, how can we create a truly multi-cultural city when neighborhoods are almost willfully divided by race, culture or economic design?

It maybe a joke, but the Mid-City dweller refrain, "I don't go

east of La Brea," can ring very true.

How can we also be good neighbors if we are so suspicious of outsiders? "They still think you're cops," Williams jokes to Vaughn Hall of her Black and Latino neighbors when a hint of a friendship starts to develop.

And ultimately, how can we ever be good neighbors if we instantly judge anyone by the color of their skin and the content of their wallets?

Mayor calls jobs program a success

From City News Service

More than 8,000 young people graduated from the city of Los Angeles' summer jobs program this year, Mayor Antonio Villarraigosa announced Friday.

The Hire LA program places young adults ages 16 through 24 in paid positions at companies like Vons, Best Buy, Kaiser Permanente and Universal Studios. It also helps them secure jobs at government agencies like the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Fire Department, and the Superior Court.

"The city of Los Angeles upholds its commitment to provide rewarding employment opportunities for youth ...

despite economic challenges we face as a city and as a nation," Villarraigosa said at the program's end-of-summer celebration in Griffith Park.

The Hire LA program provides young Angelenos with free job skills workshops so they can earn a "work readiness certificate," then helps them find jobs.

This fiscal year, the program is to secure employment for about 16,400 young Angelenos. More than \$20 million in federal stimulus money will fund nearly 7,400 of those jobs. The city will dip into its general fund to provide 2,000 more jobs.

The Los Angeles Unified School and community college districts will combine to provide another 5,000 jobs, while private employers have pledged a total

of 2,000 jobs.

Since its inception in 2005, Hire LA has helped nearly 37,000 young Angelenos find jobs. The program is run by the Community Development Department and overseen by the Workforce Investment Board.

Lisa Salazar, director of the Community Development Department's Youth Opportunity System, said "these stories demonstrate that a consistent flow of resources empower young people, reduce idle time, and contribute to the overall well-being of our city."

Companies interested in becoming part of Hire LA's Youth Employment program can register online at www.hirelayouth.com, or call (213) 744-7206.



Photo by Gary McCarthy

Mayor Antonio Villarraigosa, here at a school choice rally this week, said that more than 16,000 youth jobs are funded in the current fiscal year.