



From The Publisher



More than 2,700 people packed The WORD Church in Warrensville Heights last month. They listened to, from left, Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams, Rev. Jawanza Colvin of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Dr. William H. Myers of New Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, and moderator and host, Pastor R. A. Vernon of The WORD Church.

I don't think I know a black man of any age with any degree of self-awareness who could say he hasn't been racially profiled by some law enforcement figure or other authority figure.

I add that self-awareness reference for ahistoric brothers like Jason Riley of the *Wall Street Journal* who seem to think, like too many white apologists for indefensible police action, that if young black men simply pulled

up their pants and their bootstraps, stopped smoking blunts, and managed somehow to learn enough at the neighborhood school — with its out-of-date textbooks, novice teachers, and culture of defeat — to graduate from high school, get a minimum wage job he could ride public transportation to and from, and above all, obeyed all lawful orders [redundant

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Best of Black Dance Coming to Cleveland

International Dance Festival to Soar at Playhouse Square, Museum of Art

JAN. 21-25 GALA HAS ALL-STAR FLAVOR

By **R.T. Andrews**
EDITOR



Insiders in Cleveland's black dance community, which is larger than might generally be imagined, have been buzzing for more than a year in anticipation of the spectacular performances that regularly take place at the annual showcase presentations of the International Association of Blacks in Dance.

The IABD's annual conference and festival, which will be held in

Cleveland later this month, usually rotates among the founding cities where the nation's premier black dance companies reside. For Cleveland to host this event is akin to playing host to the NBA All-Star Game Weekend.

The 2015 IABD Conference and Festival is a five-day celebration of Black Dance, January 21-25, that will bring together artists, dance companies, directors, choreographers, educators, scholars, students, supporters, and lovers of dance. The Cleveland Dance Movement, an emerging arts coalition of dancers and choreographers, is the local host.

At the heart of the conference and festival are four Performance Showcases taking place at The **Continued Page 11**

Euclid mayor, council president fight Council plans to go green in clean up of city wastewater plant

Millions at stake as Council overrides Cervenik veto

Scarniench switches vote, supports new study

By **Mary Jo Minarik**
PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Euclid City Council and the administration of Mayor Bill Cervenik are engaged in a pitched battle over how best

to comply with EPA requirements to clean up the city's wastewater treatment plant. At stake are potentially millions of dollars in costs for Euclid residents.

Euclid entered into a con-

sent decree with the federal EPA in 2011 that calls for an "all gray" approach, involving new storm lines, underground tanks and plant upgrades to control and store overflow storm water until it can be

treated at the plant. This so-called Gray Infrastructure approach relies on man-made construction to move water to the treatment plant.

Under a plan devised by the city's long time engineer-

ing firm, CT Consultants, the estimated cost to bring the City into compliance by 2025 is \$150 million. To pay for the project, Euclid residents have seen their sewer rates jump

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CITY GOVERNMENT NOTES

RICHMOND HEIGHTS

Miesha Headen won the mayor's seat in November 2013 in part because she convinced voters that the incumbent regime kept a tight rein on public information. Voters recalled her less than 10 months later in what was mostly a referendum on her style, which seemed to matter more to the electorate than her substance. Six months after her ouster, voters passed a law requiring City Council to record and post video of its meetings online. That vote would never have occurred without her leadership. Take a look at last month's council meetings here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_aIcl2iw0J-jorQvGrxmcg

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

Interested applicants have until Jan. 15 to file a declaration of interest in the vacant City Council seat caused by the November election of Janine Boyd to state representative. Boyd resigned from Council, where she had served about a year and a half, to run for her mother's legislative seat. Her mother, Barbara Boyd, was term limited.

City Council will interview candidates to pick Boyd's replacement. Declared candidates include familiar ballot names Carol Roe and Keba Sylla. Newcomers include Erick Stubbs and possibly Khalil Seren. But we are heard a report that makes us a dark horse may surge to the front at the end, like that old Kentucky thoroughbred, Silky Sullivan.

OAKWOOD VILLAGE

Don't blink or you will miss the early filing deadline to run for mayor or village council. Oakwood is the only eastside community with an early February deadline for candidate filing petitions. This year is Feb. 4. We suspect it helps incumbents stay in office. Before newcomers can figure out what's going on the incumbents have all registered and generally face no opposition.

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Real Money

Raceonomics becoming the newest form of Racism

By J. Burner Crew

Raceonomics is a new term we are hearing with more frequency and should all be aware of how RACEONOMICS will replace RACISM in the next 10 years. Raceonomics is the act of social bias based on the economic standing of an individual within the greater community.

We are all familiar with the social impact of racism and while our opinions may differ, all should agree that racism is less of a factor than just 50 years ago. Racism has not been eliminated, but has morphed into a more subtle form of injustice, being administered on the streets of our great nation from Ferguson, Missouri to New York City, and even here in Cleveland. People of color are angry and frustrated with law enforcement profiling, the senseless murders of our youth, especially our young black males, and the lack of progress in such important areas as employment,

education, and housing.

Compounding the anguish is the effort of conservative media outlets, like Rush and Friends, to misdirect the nation's focus away from substantive protests and onto the unlawful conduct of a few rioters and vandals. But if we look more closely, there are encouraging signs.

People of all races are standing up and speaking out against police misconduct and disparate treatment. Only a small percentage of protesters have been engaged in unlawful behavior. More and more people of color are beginning to understand and participate in our system of democratic capitalism. Affluent minority group members are beginning to understand that this system of capitalism is the best chance they have to level the playing field and achieve financial success.

Challenges remain of course. Will more of us join the mainstream and will that lead to our interests being addressed? Will black and brown citizens act

to reduce counterproductive behavior in their communities while simultaneously demanding substantial modification in law enforcement behavior and practice?

Answers to these questions become more difficult when race is not the only metric used to analyze the possibilities. Introducing economic status into the equation greatly raises the complexity of the analysis.

Raceonomics will play a major role because increasing numbers of affluent minority citizens will find that their natural interests becoming more aligned with the affluent majority than with those of their ethnic group on the bottom economic rungs. Affluent black Americans will likely partner with affluent white Americans to protect their status quo and power.

Most of us understand why the home crowd cheers when a minority group from their team dunks on a majority player from the visiting team. White and black alike cheer for a home team victory.

As minority members achieve economic success they become invested in perpetuating this system, while those who continue to be deprived of opportunity will seek change, even when it produces in civil unrest. In extreme cases, violence will be a part of that change and put at risk the interests people of all colors who have been enriched by our capitalist system.

Interracial marriage, diversity at the corporate level, and natural immigration will force a more ethnically homogeneous society. Bigotry based on skin color should continue to decline as Raceonomics becomes a rising and constant part of the new societal system of discrimination.

Know that understanding our global markets as well as our political interests will impact how and where we fit in the years ahead. Those who choose to invest and learn how to manage assets will benefit economically. Investing does not come without risk but a lack of knowledge in this arena



J. Burner Crew

will become more detrimental in the years ahead. As the lines of discrimination and bigotry become less unclear, the impact of Raceonomics will become clearer.

Participation in our Democracy and our Capitalist system will be a choice. Education and understanding our financial markets will determine the ability to accumulate wealth, secure access to capital and navigate the material quality of life most of us seek on a daily basis. The "haves" will continue their dominance over the "have nots." Your participation becomes a major choice for you, your family and your children.

PUBLISHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

phrase, since police in their worldview don't give any other kind] then police officers wouldn't have to kill our sons on a regular basis.

And yes, that's a short list of what we would have to do differently to avoid being victims of law enforcement.

Problem is, it still wouldn't be enough. Just ask the distinguished Rev. Dr. William

H. Myers, who told the more than 2,700 people who came out to a community meeting on a cold weekday night that he had never had a respectful encounter with a Cleveland police officer.

If you dismiss Dr. Myers because you think he's one of those "race-hustling" preachers, then consider the words of the black CEO of Kaiser

Permanente, a \$55 billion company, that even since attaining that lofty status, he has suffered through encounters that speak to "the commonality of the black male experience that remains consistent no matter what the economic status or job title."

America, we have a problem. The question of course, is what do we do about this

problem that has been a part of our national DNA since before we were a nation.

I would suggest that we begin at home here in Cleveland, where for too long too many of our armed guardians have too often been out of control.

For those who didn't know before, the latest investigative report from the US Justice Department confirms irrefutably





that we have problems in the Cleveland Police Department.

This is not a new problem. It predates the administrations of Campbell, White, Voinovich, Kucinich, Perk, and Stokes.

Column intermission: the over-the-top reactions of the militarized state response in Ferguson, where it seems the authorities wanted a riot to de

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*In My Opinion***Positioning For Success:****Creating A MBE Business Community Better Able to Capitalize on Opportunities**

By Neil A. Dick

How often have we heard over the last decade... "If I only had the necessary financial resources!" We often hear this from SBE/DBE/MBE businesses and assume that if that bringing dollars to the table will solve the problem. When dollars are even harder to obtain during a recession, we see an increased failure with cause attributed to the inability to get capital.

I have learned to challenge that thinking. Money alone cannot and will not solve the problems these businesses are facing. Throwing dollars at the "problem" only makes it worse. This problem is acute in the service industry, which includes engineering, architectural, and most con-

struction companies. When capitalizing a business, we have to measure assets which in the service industry are intangibles including people and good will, while in most commercial and manufacturing industries, it is primarily tangible assets like buildings, inventory and equipment.

When a business tries to obtain investment and apply it to the business operations, the service industry has a more difficult task since value is again built on people. Individuals are faced with making many decisions that require a depth of experience since investing in intangible assets can be very risky.

Many MBE/SBE start-ups did not grow up in a business environment and did not have the opportunity to be part of a business mentorship pro-

gram. Their owners are faced with the task of trying to determine what capital is needed, where to put it, and how it can be paid back. With few fixed assets and a much greater uncertainty of the ability to generate revenue (one example is the MBE contractor being forced to bid a job and not knowing outcome), it becomes harder to quantify and qualify the risk. When the money does come, it is often applied in a manner that makes repaying it difficult. Individuals who "grew up" in this environment have the advantage of better knowing how to identify potential problems and resolve them. Without that, the business often hastens its own demise.

Greater Cleveland has several different public and

Continued Page 12

[If] the funding organizations could have helped to provide funding for consultants over the last half dozen years, we might not have see the loss of so many major minority architectural, engineering and construction organizations.



COUNCIL OVERRIDES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

13.5% since 2011. By 2020, rates are scheduled to increase another 22.64%.

Concerned over ratepayer costs and the CT plan's effectiveness, a majority of Council, with the EPA's encouragement, now wants the City to look at a solution that implements "Green" Infrastructure instead of gray. A green approach diverts water out of the system and into the ground instead of transporting it.

Council brought in CH2M Hill at no cost for its initial take of Euclid's consent decree and review of the CT Plan. Council chose CH2M Hill in part because of its track record in securing an amended consent decree from the EPA in Onondaga County NY in 2009. A federal court there had explicitly required the use of green infrastructure technology to reduce sewer overflows to Onondaga Lake and its tributaries. Two years later and at significant cost savings, the EPA selected Onondaga County as one of 10 green infrastructure partner communities in the United States.

After reviewing the CT Plan, CH2M Hill found "the lack of a clear connection between [EPA requirements] and the water quality benefit," said Ward 5 Councilman Patrick McLaughlin, an engineer and chair of the Public Service Committee.

Encouraged by CH2's initial findings, McLaughlin introduced legislation to hire CH2M Hill at a cost of \$280,000 to:

- examine weaknesses in the current consent decree to determine if there is justification to appeal the EPA for a less strict implementation;
- determine if Euclid rate-

payers could afford the current dollars required to fund the Gray Plan;

- determine whether implementing a green remediation plan could save money and provide quality of life improvements.

The ordinance passed in a 5 to 3 vote, over Cervenik administration opposition. Kristian Jarosz (Ward 4), Patrick Delaney (6), Daryl Langman (7) and Laura Gorshe (Wd 8) joined McLaughlin in favor. Council President Kirsten Holzheimer-Gail, Madeline Scarniench (2) and Kandace Jones (3) stood with the mayor. Stephana Caviness (1) is on a leave of absence for health reasons, and did not vote.

Jarosz suggested a long-term view mandates support for the legislation.

"Will we review this government mandate as a hurdle simply to be overcome or as an opportunity to do something that might truly be transformative for our city and its residents? ... We may well be on the cusp of a paradigm shift of how communities incorporate green infrastructure to not only meet the practical needs but to realize a greater vision for their communities."

Holzheimer-Gail and Scarniench rested their opposition to hiring CH2 by saying the normal process of bids and proposals had not been followed.

Holzheimer-Gail and Scarniench have both approved sizable contracts in the past. In 2013, the City extended garbage pickup indefinitely at a cost of roughly \$2 million a year in a no-bid contract to Kimball. And CT Consultants, the city's engineering firm, re-

ceives hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in no bid contracts and is overseeing the Gray Plan in a no bid process.

Cervenik vetoed the legislation hiring CH2 on Nov. 24, a week after it passed, saying the ordinance was not subject to competitive review and usurped the authority of the city's service director to select engineering professionals.

At the December 1 Council meeting to reconsider the legislation, McLaughlin said if the city could renegotiate the burden level, "we will be able to lengthen the time of compliance schedule and this would allow us to charge lower rates over a longer period of time to pay for that compliance."

Over Administrative warnings of dire consequences and EPA intransigence, Scarniench switched her "no" vote to "yes", thus overriding the Cervenik veto. Scarniench said that while she was still concerned the process had not been followed, her first responsibility was to the residents, and if the study could result in cost savings and improving quality of life, it should be conducted.

At press time, the Mayor, his key directors, and Holzheimer-Gail remain adamantly opposed to hiring CH2M Hill, and the contract process with the firm has stalled. Cervenik continues his unwavering support of CT's totally Gray Plan, even though EPA supports integrated Gray/Green solutions. Millions of dollars in potential cost savings may be at stake for a community hit hard with declines in population, housing values and per capita income.

**"I had no idea
I was eligible
for a lower rate."**

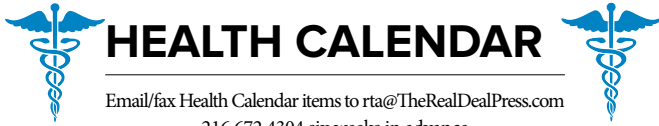


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Gathering Place Warehouse Sale set for Jan. 10

The next Warehouse Sale sponsored by The Gathering Place is set for Saturday, January 10 from 9am - 2pm. Lovely furnishings, home collectibles and fun costume jewelry are all at 50% off!

The Gathering Place Warehouse is located at 4911 Commerce Pkwy in Warrensville Heights. All proceeds support our free programs & services for those touched by cancer.

Free Vegan Cooking Demonstration at Heights Library, Jan. 14

Do vegans actually cook? Is it tasty? How can they make it tasty without some good old animal fat? If you don't know, you better ask somebody, and you can best do that at Cleveland Heights-University Heights Main Library, 2345 Lee Rd., on Jan 14, 2015 from 6-8PM. The program is free.

Rashid Mitcham, owner of Mo Bite Products, will be there to answer your questions and show you some answers. He's on a mission to provide a healthy alternative to foods that cause disease by presenting the foods that give life in a fun and delicious way. Rashid has been vegetarian for over 19 years and vegan for the past 4 years. Since his commitment to eating vegan, he's lost nearly 150 pounds!

Rashid received his training at Soul Food Vegetarian Restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio and has worked for multiple food service companies. Mo Bite Products supplies restaurants, caterers and individuals seeking healthy organic vegan alternatives for their nutritional needs and teach classes to those who want a permanent lifestyle change.

The Cleveland Animal Rights Alliance is sponsoring this event.

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Sustainable Agriculture Movement Grows Deep Roots in Cleveland

By **Derek K. Dixon**
CORRESPONDENT

It's no longer safe to assume the vegetables served at last month's holiday dinner came from Dave's, Giant Eagle, Heinen's or the West Side Market.

A local beekeeper, a "green" dry cleaner, a healing garden owner and hundreds of other urban residents have taken control of their nutritional and economic conditions through sustainable agriculture. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is helping area residents gain more access to and better control of the quality of foods they consume by providing funding for high tunnel structures to grow their own produce.

Residents who meet zoning requirements are permitted to build and maintain these tunnel structures, also known as "hoop houses", on their private property. The houses provide an atmosphere for growing plants of all kinds beyond the normal harvest season. Crops can be gathered even in winter, if that's when their freshness is at its peak.

Before the NRCS launched the Cleveland High Tunnel Initiative in 2011, residents who wanted hoop houses had to foot their own bill, typically a few thousand dollars from inception to completion of the high tunnel. The initiative has attracted hundreds of applications from residents — many from people living in so-called "food deserts", neighborhoods with limited options to buy affordable, healthy foods. More than \$100,000 was granted for the construction of 23 hoop houses by the end of 2012.

Jamel Rahkeerah, an urban farmer and beekeeper whose hoop house was completed 18 months ago, sees it as an extension of his existing agricultural ventures. "When we heard about the program, we thought it was excellent. It wasn't just a hobby. It eventually became a self-employment opportunity," Rahkeerah remembers.

NRCS Cuyahoga and Summit County District Conservationist Lynette Harmon and Urban Conservationist Alphonso Norwood spearhead the promotion and processing of applications. They are constantly seeking serious would-be grant recipients like Rahkeerah.

Although he's enjoyed nutritional and economic benefits, Rahkeerah's vision for

his hoop house is far from complete. One spin-off from the venture has been his "Bee All You Can Bee" enterprise where he sells fresh honey on-site. He also helps teach an urban farming class at the nearby Hough Library on Crawford Road. He plans to open a store before spring that will feature a variety of healthy foods, including homegrown produce. "As of now, our biggest sale item has been collard greens," he says. "In total, we've probably grown about twenty-five different kinds of crops." He sees no limit to the agricultural potential of owning a hoop house.

Neither does Tanya Holmes, an owner of several properties including the Ka-La Healing Garden Center in Cleveland's Ward 2. Her desire to have a hoop house grew stronger when her favorite farmers market made policy changes she didn't like. At that point, she felt the need to obtain her own method of producing quality foods. While waiting on the finished construction of her hoop house, Holmes has not only grown crops in a plot of land that was gifted to her, but has held a series of community events on her property at East 73 St. "So far, we've had birthday parties, a church revival, a Juneteenth celebration, and a senior citizens appreciation brunch. I've sort of become known as a place where people can go to hold their events." Like Rahkeerah, Holmes has also begun an agricultural entrepreneurs group, which will expand once the structure is finished.

None of the advantages realized by the growing number of hoop house grant recipients surprise Norwood. "For some people, the high tunnels are even therapeutic. Oftentimes, elderly or disabled residents like to simply sit among the plants, breathe the air and such. It gives them a sense of calmness and even inner healing. We've also heard of the upgrade in nutritional habits for the children of these high tunnel owners."

Residents interested in applying for a high tunnel for fiscal year 2015 may submit applications between January 16 and March 20, according to the NRCS website. To be eligible, an applicant must be a farmer who earns a minimum agricultural income and meet other Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) program requirements. For more detailed information, go to: EQIP Eligibility on the NRCS website. NRCS also maintains high tunnel project video on YouTube under the title "USDA Cleveland Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative."

Student Spotlight

Marcus Greenwood is currently a student at Lorain County Community College where he is studying Middle Childhood Education. The 29-year-old native Clevelander graduated from Bedford High School in 2003. A current resident of Garfield Heights, Marcus wants to inspire his community to grab hold of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunities when they come along. We caught up with Marcus to ask him about his 2014 summer experience studying in the Dominican Republic.

By **Chardé Hurst**
CORRESPONDENT



RDP: Where did you go and what brought you there?

MG: My experience this summer is one that I will never forget. I was able to study abroad in the Dominican Republic from June 2nd to August 3rd. I never thought I would have the opportunity to go abroad, but my school has a program called International Studies Abroad (ISA), where students can complete college courses and receive credits towards graduating while attending. I went to one of their top private schools named Universidad Iberoamericana to complete my classes and stayed in the home of a local family during my time there.

RDP: How was it living with a native family and adapting to the culture there?

MG: At first, I was in shock. Living in the Cleveland area my entire life I have seen people who are in need and are poor. However, after being in the DR, my thoughts of poverty are now very different. There are many people and children who don't have any lights in their homes, running water, or a toilet. Seeing this face-on made me more grateful for what I have and caused me to enjoy volunteering at the orphanage even more.

As for living with a local family, it was great. They were very hospitable and fed me home cooked meals

three times a day, every day. One of the main differences there is that they eat a heavy lunch like we do at dinner between 12 and 1 in the afternoon, and a very light dinner between 5 and 6 in the evening.

RDP: Was volunteering at the orphanage a part of the program as well?

MG: It was just something I decided to do with my own free time. As a Childhood Education major, I really enjoy children so when I met another American who was working at the orphanage, I asked her if I could come and volunteer. At first I was just going once a week, but it quickly became between 2-3 times.

Being at the orphanage was hands down my most memorable moment and best take-away from the trip. Not only was I able to practice my Spanish and become more fluent; I was also able to interact with the children and positively impact their lives, as they also did mine.

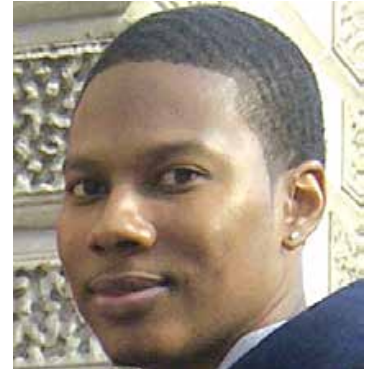
RDP: Wow. How were you able to finance this trip and where can other students go to receive financial assistance to do the same?

MG: Great question. I received the Gilman Scholarship, which is available to full-time students who are receiving the Pell Grant and are in good academic standing. With the help of the Gilman Scholarship and financial aid, I was able to pay for the majority of the program and transportation cost. The Gilman Scholarship is a great way for students to achieve their goal of studying abroad. The next deadline to apply is March 3. To learn

more about the scholarship students should research it online or speak to their school counselor or study abroad advisor.

RDP: What do you hope people will gain from you sharing your story?

MG: I know many people here who have never left the area, so I hope to motivate people to open their minds to other things outside of Cleveland. I hope that my story can inspire someone to step outside of their comfort zone and take advantage of great resources like the Gilman Scholarship, travel the world, return to Cleveland and be motivated to use what they learned and experienced abroad to



Marcus Greenwood

positively impact our communities right here. As a result, someone else will be inspired to do the same, and the cycle will continue.



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PUBLISHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

flect from the duplicitous prosecutor's success in obtaining a non-indictment, and the readiness of the 35,000 strong army of New York City policemen to consider themselves at war with those they are sworn to protect, makes me marvel yet again at the brilliance and courage of then-Mayor Carl B. Stokes to pull white policemen out of the community following the Glenville uprising in 1968. He knew that rank-and-file Cleveland patrolmen wanted to wreak holy hell on the natives in the village, an animus confirmed by the police radio chatter that day and thereafter.

That's why it was disheartening to see and hear Cleveland mayor Frank Jackson give tone-deaf navel-gazing responses to every question he was asked by Word Church host pastor and moderator R. A. Vernon at last month's community meeting. The mayor must have a different definition of systemic than the rest of us.

Bernard Tyson, the Kaiser CEO, recounted several instances of how he was profiled or stereotyped numerous times in just the past few months. He understands this not because he is overly sensitive on a personal level, but because he knows the troublesome image of the black male that our society has created, reinforced, marketed and sold in countless transactions over hundreds of years. That sounds systemic to me.

Tyson's first-person discussion, posted last month at diversityinc.com, talks about "the current environment of police officers going to white neighborhoods to 'protect and resolve' and going into black neighborhoods to 'combat and control.' That sounds like Cleveland to me. And it sounds systemic.

Systemic problems require systemic approaches. Otis Moss Jr., the distinguished former pastor of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, who fortunately has kept civically engaged in his retirement, outlined a systemic approach just a few weeks ago when he participated in a dialogue on race at the City Club.

As gentlemanly as a man can be,

he nonetheless told a story of his recent profiling at age 79 in the Village of Bratenahl where he now resides. It seems that while he was out and about the neighborhood for his regular constitutional walk, a call was made to the local police of a "suspicious" character. Stopped shortly thereafter by a uniformed officer, Moss had the grace, the skill and the temperament to defuse and resolve the situation, talents too few of us have, even if we assume the motivation of wanting a civil and peaceful resolution.

In the Q&A that followed his City Club remarks, Moss talked about how we might in this day and age, resolve the life-and-death questions about our justice system that can ensnare any of us at any time, no matter our guilt or innocence. [The narrative *Twelve Years A Slave* was not fiction.]

Moss said that civil rights activists had a tried and tested formula in addressing social injustice. The work begins with research, followed by education, then mobilization, then presentation of findings, negotiation, and if negotiations stalled, demonstration. The aim of demonstration, he said, was to get the negotiation resumed.

"Whenever we followed the formula, we won," Moss said. "When we did not, we often lost."

Courtesy of the Department of Justice, much of the initial research has been done. When we are ready to move to education, we might begin with asking some questions.

What kind of police department do we want? What kind of relationship with the police would be healthy for the community? What would that look like? What obstacles impede that vision? How might we begin to overcome those obstacles?

If we can channel our emotions into a resolute search for the right questions, and a disciplined effort to find the right answers, we may begin to achieve a healthier police-citizen relationship that will save lives and better manage the "combat and control" impulse.

RT Andrews, Publisher.



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Police and Minority Communities

By Richard Romero
SPECIAL TO THE
REAL DEAL PRESS

The public image of the police is complex. Polls of the adult population in the United States since the 1960s have shown that the majority of the public has an overall positive view of the police. Most citizens are satisfied with police service in their own neighborhood. However, Hispanics, and especially African Americans, evaluate police less favorably on the use of force, fairness, friendliness, and feel most threatened by the police.

Citizens living in urban neighborhoods with the most economic and social ills tend to have a more negative image of police officers. Disproportionately the residents of these neighborhoods have had past bad experience with the police. With a large number of minorities living in urban neighborhoods, this partially explains why African Americans and Latinos may have a more negative view of police than whites.

I believe that both the police and minority communities need to address the bad image they have of each other to avoid further conflict in the future. We must realize that there are good and bad police officers, just as there good and bad people in minority communities. Some police officers, especially new police officers, are afraid of African American and Latino boys and men and believe they are up to no good. It is as if they feel there is something dangerous in the DNA of African American and Latino males to justify the fear and negative image

— or as if some police officers fear the communities they don't know.

What we need to understand is that negative stereotype attitudes that many people have are formed by the lack of knowledge. We need to address the real problem in this country which is that the American dream is escaping a lot of us and even more so in the minority community. When I was growing up I was told that if you work hard and treated people with respect you can achieve the American dream. This is what makes this country the best in the world and is why so many want to come. It's all about the "the pursuit of happiness and justice for all."

My friend Dr. Samuel Betances has stated so many times: "Everyone needs to be good at something and if you can't be good at being good, then you will be good at being bad." What it comes down to is opportunity, the opportunity to provide for yourself and your family.

Eric Garner was known for selling cigarettes to help support himself and his family but was killed by an officer in New York. Now we all are asking ourselves why did this have to happen? Is there a better way to deal with this tragedy? Could the answer be more opportunities for those who are trying to provide for themselves and their families?

The economy is better, but many in the middle class and working poor have yet to experience it. In fact, we have taken a hit and our still struggling to have a better quality of life than our parents.

If something doesn't change soon, we will see more racial and

economic tension. The economics and educational disparities in the minority communities are at a boiling point.

We are seeing urban cities hurting bad, and people are in fear about their future and see no real solutions in sight. It's no wonder that we are now seeing some of the biggest protest rallies since the civil rights movement in the 1960s. I predict the next civil rights movement will be organized by people of all colors just like in the past and will continue to take place in urban cities.

Our urban areas need economic empowerment projects and educational success programs in our schools and in our communities. Real solutions will help not only minority communities but the entire U.S. economy.

African Americans and Latinos need to come together and work on an agenda that will help to put more Blacks and Latinos into good paying jobs that can change our communities' future.

Jobs like police officers, teachers, elected officials, bankers, business people, and medical professionals are all good paying jobs. For those who have these positions and for those who are getting these positions they must not forget the struggle. We must hold our schools and elected officials accountable to our communities.

Because every election impacts what does and does not happen in our communities, we must do a better job letting our voices be heard. That starts with showing up at the polls and voting and impacting change.

Richard Romero is a Lorain County businessman.

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DANCE FESTIVAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cleveland Museum of Art and the Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square.

Cleveland area dancers will take center stage at the opening night Ohio Showcase at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Featured companies include Dancing Wheels, Djapo Cultural Arts, The Green Works Project, and Verb Ballets.

The 27th annual conference will feature a host of renowned speakers, performances from local and national dance artists, professional development, networking, celebrations, and special events. Nearly 300 members from the national and international dance field are expected to attend the conference at the Wyndham Cleveland Hotel in Playhouse Square.

More than 20-30 classes will be held each day of the conference, from master classes for experienced dancers to stretch classes for interested amateurs. These will include three free classes on opening day, Wednesday, Jan. 21, in ballet, modern contemporary, and Capoeira.

The following day's Showcase event will spotlight youth

groups from all over the country, including Dallas, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Los Angeles and Dayton.

Friday's events include a special luncheon honoring the dance innovators of Cleveland's seminal repository of black culture, the century-old Karamu House. Cleveland native Dianne McIntyre, a nationally known dancer choreographer, and current board member of Cleveland Dance Movement, emphasizes the importance of paying tribute to dance pioneers and raising the awareness of black dance history among younger dancers.

"I travel around the country and many of our young dancers don't even know about Katherine Dunham," said McIntyre, referring to the legendary African American dancer, choreographer, and activist.

Saturday night's awards banquet and Founders Showcase is hosted by George Faison, keynote speaker and honoree. Performers will include Philadanco, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance [Denver], Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and three New



York City ensembles: Dance Theatre of Harlem, Forces of Nature, and Camille A. Brown & Dancers.

Other highlights of the event-filled conference include auditions for coveted spots in national dance companies and summer programs, a Thursday midnight hip-hop class, an African Dance event with Dr. Baba Assane Konte,

a Vendor Marketplace, and a round table discussion on collective strategies for women of color in dance.

Ticket prices range from an affordable base of \$10 for the Thursday night Youth Showcase to a top price of \$50 for the Saturday night Founders Showcase. Tickets may be purchased by phone [216.241.6000 or

866.546.1353]. For more information, visit cleveland-dancemovement.org/ or playhousesquare.org.

Dora Rae Vactor is the current leader of Cleveland Dance Movement. Other members include Terence Green, Talise Campbell, Aseelah Shareef Allen, Edna Duffy, Errin Berry, Michael Medcalf and Dr. Margaret Carlson.



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License Plate of the Month

This month's license plate can take you on an interesting meditation. It stands in one writer's eyes as a metaphor for the bleaching of black culture as the price of the ticket for becoming mainstream. Check it out: <http://worshipinthecity.wordpress.com/2012/01/19/what-does-kumbaya-mean-and-why-should-we-care/>. Send your photographed entry for License Plate of the Month to rta@TheRealDealPress.com

POSITIONING FOR SUCCESS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

private entities that try to assist these start-ups or small businesses grow and stabilize. Organizations like Jumpstart and Magnet focus on small manufacturing and technology start-ups. In fact, these two organizations just announced a working agreement to expand their reach. However, they have not tried to understand the MBE sector since it has been below their radar. Organizations like the Greater Cleveland Partnership's Commission on Economic Inclusion, the Ohio Minority Business Assistance Centers, the Urban League, The President's Council, and Minority Business Service Enterprises all exist in part to help find or provide support and funding to MBE businesses but not necessarily

how to use the monies.

These programs are often paired with government outreach efforts. Organizations like NEORS, ODOT, Turnpike Authority, county governments, and other governmental and institutional entities have even tried to specifically promote the use of MBEs by setting percentage participation goals and/or partnering teams together. However, this effort has been only moderately successful and has often made the problems even worse. Without qualified MBEs, the funds and goals are not met, go unused or get misdirected. This has often resulted in the blame game – trying to blame someone or something without trying to deal with the real reasons to create more qualified MBEs.

Going back to the original premise, it is not an issue of money or capital but a lack of a solid business model to follow. Instead of doing a financial or even a technical assessment, I suggest that the first step is a true business assessment. This is not a difficult process but does require a moderate investment in time and money, and the MBE has to be willing to put some "skin" in the game. If there has not been a technical assessment, the two can be combined. The business assessment asks some key questions, gathers a lot of information, measures the people skills, looks at image and history, and then puts it together in a simple report that includes specific recommendations.

The recommendations involve bringing in the right team to assist the business side of the MBE. This team either writes or revises a business plan that includes an implementation and financial plan, and then provides direct help in implementing all the above. When the consultants do this, the business owner can focus on getting and running the business. Ideally, consultants shouldn't do a report and walk away, but remain to help find the resources and implement the plan.

Using experienced consultants costs money. These same SBE/MBE organizations often do not have the funds to pay for these services. This is where I believe the funding organizations could come in and help find or provide funds

that then can be used to help pay for these services. If this had been done over the last half dozen years, we might not have seen the loss of so many major minority architectural, engineering and construction organizations. While it does not eliminate the need to have "skin" in the game, it does give real value to having the human resources in place.

It would give more meaning to mentoring and partnering and create the foundation for a more successful MBE business community. The outcome will be more mainstreaming and less dependency on being everyone's sub!

Neil Dick is a business consultant based in Shaker Heights, Ohio.

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