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Included Articles:

5/11- Racial discrimination at law school- Nat Hentoff

5/19- Project Change awards- no author

5/20- Council to hear concerns over retention pond plans- Jodi M. Scott

5/20- Former governor's racial attitude being debated- Associated Press

5/22- State law may allow teachers to bear arms- no author

5/24- Rep. John Lewis recalls struggle civil rights- Associated Press

5/26- City's project targets crime: Director hopes Weed and Seed improves safety- Jodi M. Scott

TUESDAY

May 26, 1998

City's project targets crime

■ Director hopes Weed and Seed improves safety

By JODI M. SCOTT

The Valdosta Daily Times

VALDOSTA — By fall, the Weed and Seed crime prevention and community improvement programs will be fully operational.

"I hope we will see Weed and Seed create a safer part of town with much less violent crime, much less drug activity," Weed and Seed director Pam Lightsey said. "I hope to see it restored to what it once was."

Lightsey envisions restoration or demolition of dilapidated houses, a lower unemployment rate, less crime and increased community involvement.

The city was named a Weed and Seed site earlier this year and should receive \$250,000 in federal grant money by July 1. Officials had hoped to receive up to \$750,000 a year as part of the three-year grant. Due to the Weed and Seed program's decision to recognize more sites but with less funding, Valdosta instead will receive \$250,000 a year for three years.

That funding includes \$125,000 of Weed and Seed grant funds, \$50,000 for special emphasis initiatives and \$75,000 for law enforcement and/or community policing.

The application submitted by Valdosta totals \$200,399 in Weed and Seed and law enforcement funds and \$50,000 for special emphasis initiatives. The funds will be supplemented with money and in-kind services from other organizations.

As part of Weed and Seed, Valdosta already has begun the demolition of substandard houses and drug interdiction efforts. Lightsey said "one of the most exciting" programs will kick-off on May 30, with the opening of the first safe haven at Southside Recreation Center. The center will offer a summer program for children.

Summer programs also will be offered through the Quality of Life Association at the Hudson House on South Lee Street.

The city also is accepting applications for Granny's Place, which will be implemented in 10 houses to provide after-school care for children. Tutors will be on hand to help students with homework.

According to the city, a needs assessment shows that "there are no safe, nurturing and enriching environments in the neighborhoods for children of elementary school age whose parents or guardians work past school hours. The result is children without any supervision in the afternoons."

Women who agree to allow centers in their homes will be screened for criminal and drug activity and provided with training.

Lightsey said work also has started on the jobs and asset-building for at-risk youth and

Project

From Page 1-A

adults. Child care, transportation and other resources will be made available to people can get jobs or learn employment skills.

A committee continues to work on neighborhood restoration, in which low-interest loans will be made available to home owners

for repairs. Habitat for Humanity also is expected to help.

Lightsey said neighborhood clean-up days will be held, focusing on lots where houses were demolished. Community policing efforts will be put in place, using the Neighborhood Watch program as a model.

Racial discrimination at law school

Katuria Smith's mother was a 17-year-old high-school dropout when Katuria was born. Divorced 11 years later, her mother raised four children by herself. The family was poor, and when Katuria was graduated from high school, she worked at whatever jobs she could find—janitorial work, a job in construction, another mixing auto paint.

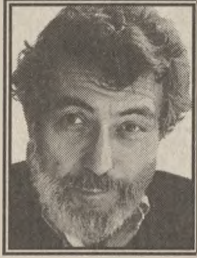
As Michelle Malkin, a columnist for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer notes, Smith took night classes in the paralegal program at a community college, working full time during the day. In 1992, she was admitted into the University of Washington in Seattle, continuing to work to pay her tuition, and was graduated cum laude.

When Katuria Smith then applied for admission to the University of Washington Law School, her record included a 95th percentile score on the Law School Admissions Test. Moreover, her quarterly grade-point averages at the college level ran from 3.56 to 3.79 on a 4.0 scale.

"I felt I was exactly the kind of person they would want," she told the Seattle Times. "Most kids in my hometown expected me to end up in jail. Instead, I really did do something with my life."

In March 1994, Katuria Smith was rejected by the University of Washington Law School. She failed, I believe, because on her application form, she checked the box identifying her race as "white."

OPINION



**NAT
HENTOFF**

She went on to a less prestigious and more expensive law school at Seattle University. Because she is convinced she was treated wrongly by the University of Washington Law School, she has brought a lawsuit charging reverse discrimination—or put more plainly—racial discrimination that violates equal protection of the laws. Among her attorneys are members of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Individual Rights. They won the Hopwood case at the University of Texas and may well prevail in a reverse discrimination suit against the University of Michigan Law School.

The law school that turned Katuria Smith down prides itself on its commitment to a diverse student body. Between 1989 and 1994, the percentage of minorities there increased from 17.5 percent to 43.3 percent. The current dean, Roland Hjorth—a likable, well-intentioned man, says, "I think it's important that there be lawyers from all segments of society."

Recently, I was asked to lecture at the University of Washington Law School on other matters. But at lunch with the dean and other members of the faculty, I couldn't resist bringing up the rejection of Katuria Smith.

"What if," I asked, "Katuria Smith had chosen not to check the 'white' race box on her application? Would she have been allowed to do that?"

"Yes," said the dean.

"Katuria," I went on, "is not an easily categorizable name. It could be the first name of a black applicant. And Smith certainly could be a black name." (A longtime friend of mine was Willie "The Lion" Smith, an influential Harlem pianist.)

"With her high scores," I told the dean and faculty, "and also --as an index of character—the proof of her determination to overcome poverty, would she have been accepted if the admissions committee had believed her to be black?"

Several members of the faculty nodded affirmatively. "Then what kind of a system are you running?" I asked. "Is this the University of Washington Law School's definition of due process?"

Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell is a hero to many schools dedicated to "diversity," because in his swing vote in the 1978 Bakke decision, he said that race could be a factor in admissions criteria. But Powell clearly added that race could not be the determining factor, nor could a black applicant be judged on a separate track from the other applicants.

And as I reminded the University of Washington faculty, Powell also pointed out in Bakke: "The guarantee of equal protection cannot mean one thing when applied to one individual and something else when applied to a person of another color."

This law school has been sued before for reverse discrimination. In 1974, Marc DeFunis, white, was rejected, but through court action, including a stay by Justice William O. Douglas, he was allowed to graduate. A few weeks ago, I spoke to DeFunis' lawyer, Josef Diamond. At 90, he is still practicing law in Seattle. Affirmative Action as currently defined by many law schools, he told me, "is actually discrimination, and that's what the Constitution forbids."

(Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the rest of the Bill of Rights.)



Project Change awards

Valdosta Project Change held an awards ceremony Thursday to recognize its volunteers. The ceremony featured the Ron Brown Corporate Leadership award presented to Levi Strauss & Co. for its efforts to combat institutional racism through their initiative Project Change. Thursday's recipients included Frank Morman Jr., executive director, Valdosta Project Change; Jerry Hardee, former director of Equal Opportunity Programs/Multicultural Affairs, VSU. Other awards were presented to area volunteers for their work and leadership in the African-American community. — Times photo by Donna Delaney

Wednesday, May 20, 1998 5-A

Council to hear over retention

By JODI M. SCOTT
The Valdosta Daily Times

VALDOSTA — Residents upset about a proposed retention pond at Brown's Canal plan to voice their concerns to the Valdosta City Council.

About 40 citizens met Tuesday night to discuss the proposed 13-acre pond. Construction of the pond on West Street is not slated to take place for at least another four years, according to city officials. Part of the project would involve the purchase of 45 homes in the area and relocation of residents.

During the meeting, audience members were asked to raise their hands if they lived in the targeted area. Four people raised their hands.

The group later agreed to attend the June 4 city council meeting.

Concerns and questions centered on who would benefit from the pond, the side effects and the need for the project. Most residents indicated there is little flooding in the area, but two people said they have had problems.

In a meeting in March, city engineers Von Shipman and Jeff Lovell said the pond should decrease flooding, slow down runoff and prevent erosion. The canal is used to drain the downtown area, according to Shipman. On Tuesday, one woman said the pond would benefit the mall and Home Depot area.

"If they've got problems then let them worry about it," District 3 City Councilman Hol Hampton said.

Hampton said he was not aware of the proposed pond until contacted by citizens. The pond is one of 13 proposed improvements related to the canal under a master stormwater management plan developed for Valdosta by consultants Reynolds, Smith and Hill Inc.

"I told you once," Hampton said. "I told you twice, and now I'm telling you a third time there will not be a holding pond in the area. I've lived there 6 years and we've never had water problems. As long as I represent the district, there will not be a holding pond."

Hampton noted the city is

ar concerns pond plans

scheduled to build a pond at Dukes Bay. On Thursday, the council will vote on whether to proceed with a buyout of 16 homes in the area.

Hampton said a Valdosta realtor would benefit from a pond being built at Brown's canal. The man would receive money for at least eight homes "if the city is stupid enough to buy them," he said.

In March, three residents met with Project Change board members and Shipman and Lovell. Project Change Director Frank Morman set up the meeting after hearing concerns about the project.

Shipman had agreed to attend a second meeting after talking to consultants. But representatives of the city engineering department did not attend Tuesday's meeting. Shipman said Monday he had concerns about the meeting's format.

The Rev. Leon Dye said city officials did not attend because "they were fearful that we would be antagonistic, that we would ask questions that would put them on the spot."

Shipman could not be reached for comment after the meeting.

Wednesday, May 20, 1998 7-A

Former governor's racial attitude being debated

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The racial attitudes of a former governor were debated Tuesday before three federal appeals court judges who must decide whether a 1964 election law was passed to discriminate against blacks.

A lawsuit before the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals claims legislators tried to keep blacks out of office by requiring candidates to win elections with more than 50 percent of the vote.

Lawyers for the state argued that the election law was adopted to stamp out corruption at the county level. They argued that one of the law's chief supporters — then-Gov. Carl Sanders — was considered a racial moderate who distanced himself from staunch segregationists.

The appeals court judges defended that image of Sanders when Laughlin McDonald, a lawyer representing 27 black voters in the suit, admitted that some supporters of the law probably weren't motivated by race.

"Like Gov. Sanders, for example," said Judge Joel A. Dubina.

"He's a very complicated politician," replied McDonald.

"All politicians are complicated," Dubina said.

"Lyndon Johnson was complicated, and he got the Civil Rights Act passed. Didn't he?" interjected Judge Robert Propst.

McDonald, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union, attacked Sanders' moderate reputation by pointing out he pushed as a state senator in 1962 to allow counties to elect their senators at-large rather than from districts, which increase black voting strength in some areas.

"It was openly, overtly racist in that it was designed to ensure that no black got elected to the state Senate," McDonald said. "(Sanders) was no knight in shining armor."

The eight-year-old lawsuit con-

“

Lyndon Johnson was complicated, and he got the Civil Rights Act passed. Didn't he?

”

— Judge Robert Propst

tends the majority-vote law dilutes black candidates' chances of winning elections and discourages blacks from running for office.

The appeal was prompted by U.S. District Judge Richard C. Freeman's ruling in 1996 that the black plaintiffs failed to prove race was lawmakers' primary reason for passing the law.

A ruling isn't expected until after the July 21 primaries, but the three-judge panel could force the state to lower the threshold of votes needed to win future elections. Now, if no party primary candidate wins 50 percent plus one vote, the top two finishers meet in a runoff.

"For anybody to even insinuate that I supported the majority vote on some racial grounds is absolutely, utterly preposterous," Sanders said in an interview Tuesday.

Since 1994, Georgia lawmakers have lowered the election threshold to 45 percent in general elections for all statewide offices, such as governor and lieutenant governor. Elections for Congress and the state Legislature also fall under the 45-percent rule.



GEORGIA UPDATE

Atlanta.

State law may allow teachers to bear arms

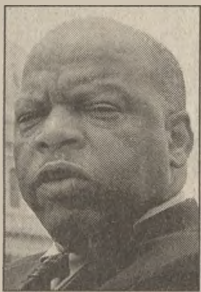
ATLANTA — As the latest in a series of schoolhouse shootings shocked the country Thursday, a Georgia legislator who favors arming some educators said state law already may allow teachers to bring guns to school.

Rep. Mitch Kaye, R-Marietta, known for backing controversial and often unsuccessful legislation, had announced Wednesday he planned to introduce a bill in next year's Legislature to explicitly authorize educators to be armed, drawing quick condemnation from teacher organizations.

Rep. John Lewis struggle

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Through 40 arrests, countless days in jail and beatings that twice brought him face to face with death, John Lewis says, he felt real fear only once during the civil rights movement.



LEWIS

As a 21-year-old college student arrested in Jackson, Miss., during the 1961 Freedom Rides, Lewis and 44 others were herded into a windowless truck trailer after midnight. They were driven to Parchman Farm, the Mississippi state penitentiary.

Now a six-term congressman from Georgia, Lewis describes that night of terror in a new book, "Walking With The Wind: A Memoir of the Movement."

"We were led into a cement building where deputies with cattle prods stood by while we were ordered to strip naked. For two and a half hours we stood wearing nothing, while we waited for... well, we didn't know what we were waiting for. I could see that this was an attempt to break us down, to humiliate and dehumanize us, to rob us of our identity and self-worth..."

"When we were finally led, two by two, to a shower room guarded by a sergeant with a rifle, I thought of the concentration camps in Germany. This was 1961 in America, yet here we were treated like animals for using the wrong bathroom."

Lewis spent 47 days in jail in Mississippi during the Freedom

in Lewis recalls for civil rights

Rides, the bus trips used by interracial groups to dramatize Southern resistance to Supreme Court-ordered desegregation of interstate transportation.

His book, written with author Michael D'Orso and set for publication next month, provides an insider's account of the movement that ended racial segregation in the South and brought hundreds of thousands of black Americans into the political mainstream.

"My hope is that young people in particular will see this book as a message of hope and faith, that if you believe that change is possible, by working together and being committed, you can accomplish the impossible," Lewis said in an interview.

The son of an Alabama sharecropper, Lewis enrolled in the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville at age 17 and soon became a leader in the student-led effort that desegregated that city.

After the Freedom Rides, he became chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), one of the six major civil rights organizations involved in the movement.

At the 1963 March on Washington, best remembered for Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech, Lewis created a stir among movement leaders when the initial draft of his speech condemned then-President John Kennedy's civil rights bill and called for a revolution that would "burn Jim Crow to the ground."

Although he toned it down at the last minute, Lewis still delivered a fiery speech that tagged him nationally with the reputation as the most radical of the movement's leaders. Lewis insists that reputation was unearned.

"I wanted change, but I always have believed in the philosophy and the discipline of nonviolence," he said. "I was very aggressive about that. I was very persistent."

It was that philosophy that led him to leave SNCC in 1966 when many of its members began talking retaliation and violence.

The discipline of nonviolence a year earlier had kept his fear at bay when he led voting rights marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., and into a brutal beating by Alabama state troopers.