

Minority Enterprise Development

African-Americans Unleash the secrets of health and prosperity

There is power aplenty in the pages of "Bridging the Gaps: An African-American Guide to Health and Self-Empowerment." This book conceived by Memphis internist A. Maria Newsome, M.D., features a collection of articles on spiritual, physical, and economic self-empowerment. With contributions from 16 African-American professionals from the fields of medicine, law, business, education, and clergy, this book addresses a holistic approach to healing the ills in the black community.

Spiritual empowerment and self-love are the consequences of learning what the Bible really says about those of African heritage. Dispelling

the popular myth of 'God's curse on Ham' (and thus black nations) by examining the often misquoted scripture (Genesis 9) leaves the reader with a higher self-image. Numerous other biblical scriptures attesting to God's love for Africans are also reviewed. To love others, you must love yourself, and realizing that the omniscient, omnipotent God of the universe loves you is the first step.

Health care in the black community lags behind the nation as a whole. Thirteen physicians from the specialties of internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, family practice, ophthalmology, endocrinology, and cardiology explain, in

laymen's terms, over 20 medical illnesses that cause a disproportionate amount of suffering and death among

well. Economic self-empowerment can be achieved by obtaining

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blacks. These articles include everything from basic physiology and pictures to crucial, but practical information everyone should know to not only increase his life expectancy, but to live a more comfortable life as

marketable skills by way of technical schools and universities. Helpful hints are given that can not only teach the average person how to prepare his children for training in the future (includ-

ing scoring high on the ACT/SAT and obtaining needed funds for the education) but also show adults who wish to return to school what steps to take as well. With welfare being phased out, this chapter is invaluable in helping make the transition from welfare to faring well. Communication skills are addressed in a separate chapter in order to stress the importance of using standard grammar and burying longstanding, substandard usage.

Political empowerment through voting, and rebuilding the African-American community are topics addressed by an attorney/city council-

man and a businessman, respectively. By taking a more active role in the community, one can contribute greatly to its prosperity.

Excerpt: "The African-American race has faced unthinkable hardships throughout centuries of racism and economic deprivation. Although many have prospered in spite of the obstacles, their numbers pale in comparison to the number of those barely making it, those 'just getting by.' 'Instead of focusing on what other people have done and are doing to us, we need to focus on what we could be doing for ourselves.'"

BGE Awards minority vendor \$75 million Coal Contract

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (NYSE: BGE) has awarded Southeast Fuels, Inc. a seven year, \$75 million coal delivery contract. The contract is BGE's largest ever with a minority vendor, and it significantly contributes to BGE's ongoing efforts to provide minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) equal access to its purchasing opportunities.

Southeast Fuels, Inc., based in Greensboro, N.C., with a regional office in Washington, D.C., will supply BGE with 400,000 tons of coal each year for the next seven years.

"Southeast Fuels has been a reliable and competitive short-term supplier for several years," states Jim Beauvais, BGE's principal buyer who played a crucial role in securing the multi-million dollar deal. "We are pleased that this supplier

relationship continues to grow to the benefit of BGE customers."

"This contract and this relationship positively illustrate what can happen when majority- and minority-owned firms make a real and long-term commitment to doing business together," says Harold D. Williams, director of BGE's Minority Procurement Opportunity Program.

Southeast Fuels' President Ralph K. Shelton attributes his success to a positive and committed attitude on the part of BGE's Fuels Procurement Group and the Procurement Opportunity Program. "In addition to providing access to key corporate contact, the procurement program helped me gain insight into the company's culture, processes and procedures. It is an invaluable tool for minority-owned firms seeking to do business with BGE."

BGE's Procurement Opportunity Program works to attract MWBEs as potential vendors. Since the program's inception in 1989, BGE has awarded more than \$300 million in contracts to MWBEs; in 1995 alone, more than \$56 million was awarded to such vendors.

BGE is an investor-owned company that combines its core utility business with diversified non-utility operations. Founded in 1816, BGE is the nation's first gas utility and one of its earliest electric utilities, with a tradition of superior, low-cost service reliability. With assets greater than \$8 billion, BGE serves more than 1.1 million business and residential electric customers and 540,000 gas customers in an economically diverse 2,300-square-mile area encompassing Baltimore City and all or part of 10 Central Maryland counties.

Hispanic National Bar Association Annual Convention to be held

Approximately 1,500 Hispanic attorneys from across the nation are expected to attend the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) Annual Convention, which will take place Oct. 3-6, 1996 at the Fontainebleau Hilton Resort & Towers in Miami Beach, Fla., announced Alfonso J. Perez, Esq., Convention Chairperson for the HNBA and a shareholder with the Miami-based law firm of Haley, Sinagra and Perez, P.A.

The Convention is hosted for the first time by the Cuban American Bar Association of Miami.

Keynote speakers on Oct. 4 include Ambassador Madeleine Albright; Judge Ruben Castillo, Federal District Court in Illinois; and 11th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Rosemary Barkett who will receive a special honor. On Oct. 5 keynote speakers include Senator Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee who is tentatively scheduled; Anita Perez-Ferguson, President of the National Women's Political Caucus who will speak at the Latina Lawyers lun-

cheon; California Congressman Javier Becerra; and Florida Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart.

Lizbet Martinez, a 14 year old violinist born in Cuba, will play the Star Spangled Banner at the convention on Saturday, Oct. 5. When Lizbet and her family fled Cuba on a raft in 1994, Lizbet brought only her violin, bible and asthma medicine. Lizbet won the admiration and love of many when she and her family were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard and she played the Star Spangled Banner on her violin in gratitude.

Major issues particular to the Hispanic community to be examined at the Convention include immigration, Helms-Burton legislation, Proposition 187, tort reform, language rights, affirmative action and the Cuban embargo. President Bill Clinton has been officially invited to attend the Convention.

The theme for the 1996 Convention, "Together - The Future" reflects the importance of Hispanics as a major political group in the upcoming Presidential elec-

tion and a significant part of the work force in the United States. According to Dario Moreno, Ph.D., with the Department of Political Science at Florida International University in Miami, the Latino electorate consists of two voters—Core partisan voters and swing voters i.e., non-voters who vary from occasional voters to non-U.S. citizens who cannot vote. "Now more than ever, the Hispanic vote will be critical to this year's Presidential election. The Latino vote will be heavily recruited by Democrats and Republicans," said Dr. Moreno.

Several major local corporations have stepped forward as sponsors including Bacardi-Martini U.S.A. Inc. the host sponsor for the Convention, as well as NationsBank, AT & T, Lucent Technologies and Akerman, Senterfitt and Eidson, P.A. The HNBA to date has raised more than \$150,000 in scholarships for the Hispanic National Bar Fund, an organization which annually awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to deserving Hispanic law students.

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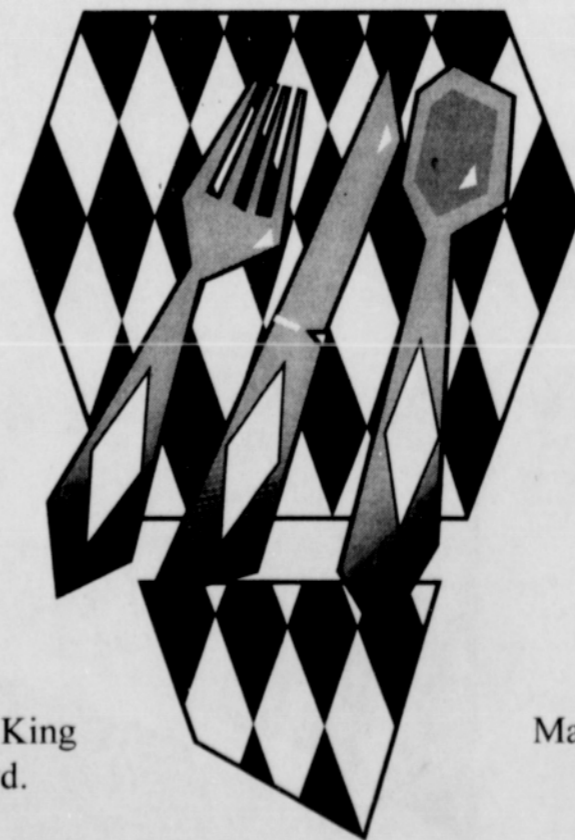
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