

THE SKANNER™

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



INSIDE

- The Interruptors *page 2*
- Saving Medicare *page 3*
- Issa and Akon *page 5*

STORYTELLER



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Gansango music and dance storyteller Won-Lyd Paye from Liberia accompanied by company leader Etienne Cakpo on drums tell stories about "Masks of the Rainforest" Friday, July 29, at the Lake City Library.

Politics of the Debt Crisis

Divisive debate in Congress falling on geographic lines

By Charles D. Ellison
Special to the NNPA from The Philadelphia Tribune

WASHINGTON — Overlooked in the bloody dysfunction that is the debt-ceiling fight is the geography.

That has little to do with the proximity of Capitol Hill to marshy Potomac tributaries. As a week of triple-digit heat in Washington ended with competing visions of how to end the impasse, a closer look at who was voting or not voting revealed a portrait of what was going on. The geographic composition of Congress, particularly in the House, appeared to dictate outcomes.

Not House Speaker John Boehner's (R-OH) \$800 billion soft-deal package of cuts which rehashes the hot ghetto mess again in December. Far from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's (D-NV) all-in-one, get-it-over-with \$2.2 trillion happy cut till 2012. Nor is it the \$4 trillion "grand bargain" once openly fantasized in bipartisan utopia by President Obama.

Sifting through the madness, observers found conflict defined as much by geography as by party or ideology. It's replaying like a badly scripted pre-Civil War era movie, but ugly enough to cause some pause and nostalgia on the part of historians and careful students of the most devastating war in U.S. history.

Where Members of Congress hailed from said a great bit about how they would vote or what stand they would take. Fast forward to 2011 and a quick examination of the 60 official Members of the "tea party Congress" clears that up: most on that list proudly buck from very rural and exurban states like Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and others. Southern, Southwestern and rural Midwestern states with heavily red Republican Congressional

See DEBT on page 3

Recession Batters Middle Class

Urban League report details unemployment's impact on families

By Russell Contreras
The Associated Press

BOSTON — The economic downturn has erased the gains made by the black middle class over the last 30 years as the unemployment rate of blacks with a four-year college degree has skyrocketed, according to a new study by the National Urban League Policy Institute released Wednesday.

The study said that the unemployment rate for blacks with a four-year college degree has

tripled from 1992 while overall black unemployment levels are nearing 1982 levels when it was close to 20 percent.

The unemployment rate for blacks with a four-year college degree was 6.5 percent in 2010 compared to 2.9 percent of whites with college degrees, the study said.

The report, released just as the National Urban League begins its annual conference in Boston, mirror similar studies by the Economic Policy Institute and the Pew Research Center that

says the economic meltdown in recent years has hit black households hard. Like the previous studies, the Urban League report said black home ownership fell sharply in recent years due to the mortgage crisis and affected overall black medium income.

The National Urban League Policy Institute used U.S. Census and U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics for the study.

National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial said the report showed that the

recession affected the middle class, not just poor and working class African Americans as some might assume.

"These are people who played by the rules. They built wealth, went to college and had good jobs," said Morial. "But in a short period of time, they've fallen back."

The large losses by the black middle class, Morial said, is one of the key reasons why the median wealth of black household declined dramatically since

See ECONOMY on page 3

Indian Tribe Legalizes Gay Marriage

Suquamish become only second in country to erase gender barrier

By Manuel Valdes
The Associated Press

SEATTLE — An American Indian Tribe in Washington state has adopted a law recognizing gay marriage, making it only the second tribe in the country known to do so.

The Suquamish Tribal Council voted Monday to extend marriage rights to same-sex couples on its reservation near Seattle,

after the measure gained support from more than 100 tribal members at a meeting this spring.

The new law allows the tribal court to issue a marriage license to two unmarried people, regardless of their sex, if they're at least 18 years old and at least one of them is enrolled in the tribe.

It will be up to the other courts to decide if unions granted under the Suquamish ordi-

nance will be recognized elsewhere in Washington, said the tribe's attorney, Michelle Hansen.

Gay marriage is still illegal in the state, but the Legislature this year approved a measure recognizing same-sex unions from other jurisdictions, which include other nations, like Canada. State lawmakers also

See MARRIAGE on page 3

INDEX

- News3,8
- Calendar2
- Opinion4,6
- A&E2,5
- Bids/Classifieds.....7