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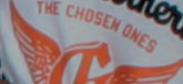
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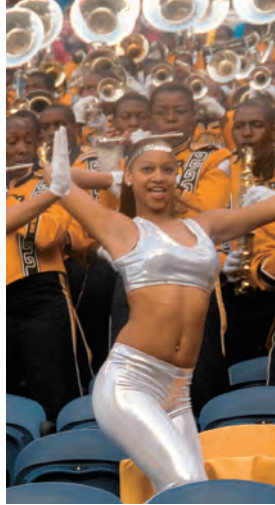
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ON THE COVER

Seven movies in 2005 alone, it's no wonder that we've chosen Terrence Dashon Howard for this month's cover. With break out hits like *Hustle and Flow* and *Get Rich or Die Tryin* his impressive filmography profile make him more in demand than ever before. Ladies can't resist his sexy demeanor and men respect his roughly refined characters. He's grown leaps and bounds over the recent years. Enjoy the article about his new found wisdom on a sustaining career in Hollywood.

Photo Arnold Turner/Courtesy BET

Flossin'

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

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FROM STRUGGLE COMES PROGRESS



Folks, we are living in Flossin' times, a time of contribution. It doesn't matter if you are a big-timer or a small-timer. What matters is that when it hits the fan, we get busy. Those who help, give not just of themselves but they give their all. We commend these people.

After seeing the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on TV, I recall writing about the tragedy in Thailand. Both tragedies pulled at my mind and made me think about the randomness of death; but the tsunami was over there and about them, it had distance.

When my mother died, that pulled at my heart even though she fought the good fight and it was just her time. When Katrina hit, that pulled at my very soul and I asked myself why?

We attempt to blame it on levies, governments, poor people, wealthy people, the devil, and ever so carefully, our gods too. We, in our infinite wisdom, always find blame. For me, Katrina is all too real because it hit my people, my folks and my roots. But as I processed the naturalness of the catastrophe, it left me with a void. It is blameless.

There is irony in this story. One does not know life until they experience the reality of death. All these things are over now, but in each instance, there must be a rebuilding. This is what concerns me: if officials in Louisiana are communicating to people to return home in the same manner that they asked them to evacuate, then they are S.O.L.; black people seem to weather a lot of storms but don't ever seem to prosper as a result of them; and there are big-time developers out there right now circling like sharks in blood filled waters, to take advantage of the disadvantaged.

Somebody ought to pay attention and we here at Flossin' will be monitoring the progress of this situation.

I also want to give a shout out to Ebony Magazine. If it was not for John Johnson, the founder of Ebony, I do not think I would have the role I have in media today. He will truly be missed as a mentor. I thank him for opening the door. May I do his legacy honor!

With that said, I am very excited about this last issue of the year. Flossin' has come a long way. Similar to the bright stars and information in this edition, we are living in a time of our greatest achievements and our greatest wealth, but there are others whose needs are as great as our achievements. As I have said many times before, Flossin' is all about going from the dark to the light and about giving not receiving. We are trying to educate, inspire and increase the wisdom of the people. Please share a little Flossin' today.

Peace,
John Washington, a.k.a. Big Bubba
Editor-in-Chief



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to CEO

Toshio Suzuki

On one side of the office there are windows overlooking a barbershop, on the other it's a retail store with an indoor basketball court. Looming next to the desk there is a TV that displays the few hidden spots via several security cameras.

Most noticeable, however, is the two-time NBA All-Star turned businessman behind the desk. It is from this inner-city locale in his hometown of Portland, Ore. that Terrell Brandon is keeping an eye on the community that he was raised in.

Never known as a selfish player, Brandon was widely regarded for much of his career as one of the best pure point guards in the game. Flip Saunders, now the new coach of the Detroit Pistons, once said that Brandon had the best mid-range jumper in the league. Local sportswriters in Cleveland and Minnesota, two of the cities in which Brandon played, often referred to him as the best player NBA fans have never heard of.

The final stages of Brandon's NBA career were littered with injuries and sometimes-public ridicule for being soft. What many skeptics didn't know was that Brandon kept dishing dimes when he was only the eighth player less than 6 feet tall to get drafted in the NBA. He kept reliably sinking free throws even though he had a steel rod in his leg from a broken tibia. And he kept winning ball games even after numerous knee surgeries.

"After the second one [knee surgery], I thought, something's going on here," says Brandon. Well before any of these potential career ending injuries began to surface, however, Brandon was already positioning himself for life after hoops.

"Early in my career, before I got close to retirement, I said I was gonna do some business things," says Brandon. He credits his ambitious, early involvement in money matters with helping him make a relatively smooth transition from professional athletics.

Brandon has owned the complex that bears his name for about 10 years, which at the time was a \$600,000 investment into a troubled neighborhood. But it was his neighborhood.

"I'm proud of this spot," says Brandon. "I got letters from thousands of Oregonians telling me this is the wrong spot."

Brandon's perched office also serves as headquarters for Tee Bee Enterprises, the corporation that bears his nick name. Tee Bee says that he has many ongoing undertakings, such as establishing a record label, but Brandon is predominantly known for helping those in need.

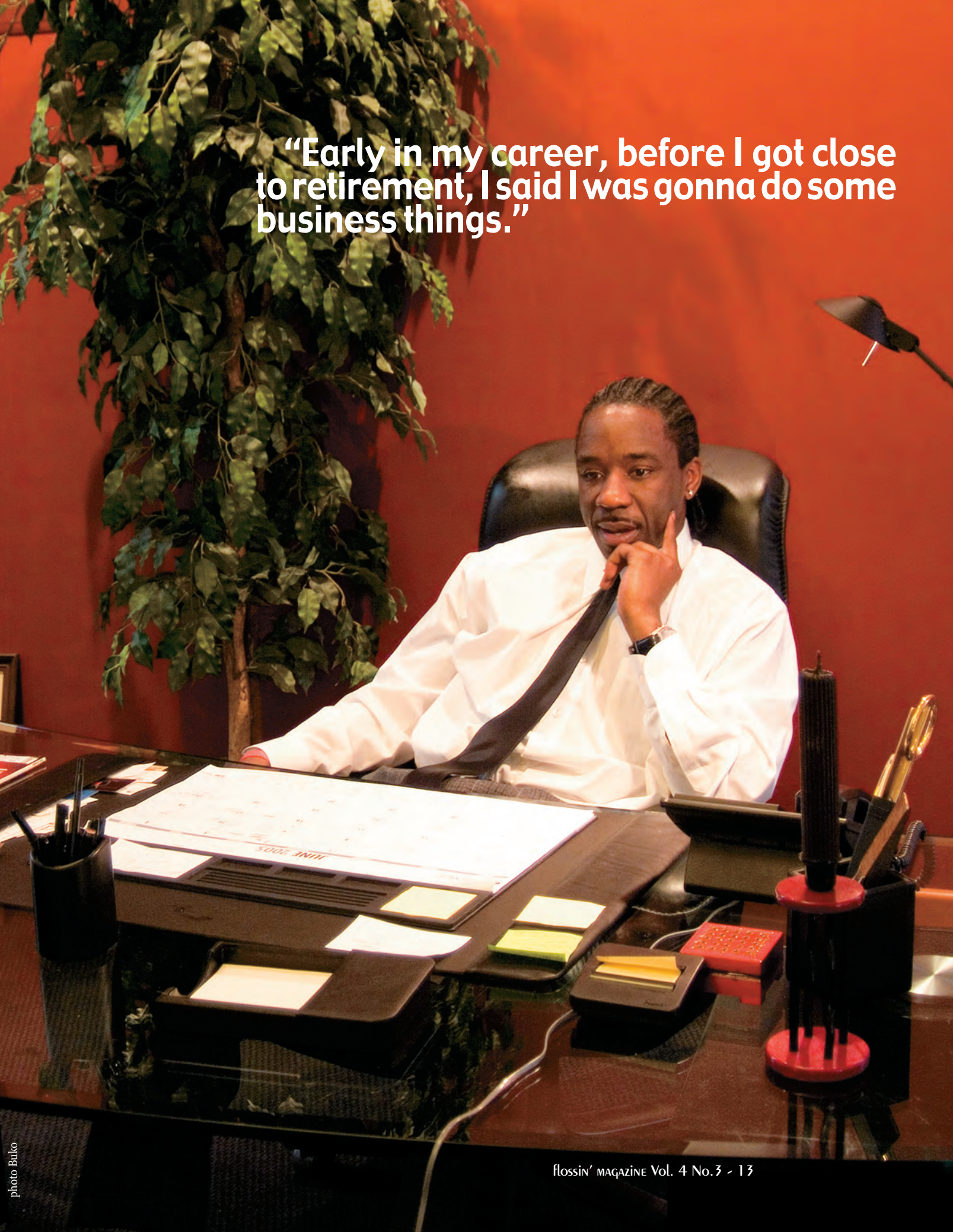
"I'm a nosey guy in the community," he says. "I find out who needs help." Brandon went on to explain that people need help with every day types of things, different from the annual free basketball clinics he holds in Portland and Cleveland. Whether it's keeping his community members warm by paying their heating bills or providing school supplies to a family of four, Brandon is practicing human based business.

"He's constantly thinking of others, because of his unselfishness," says Tracy Brandon Crittenden, Brandon's sister. Both siblings say they learned their values from their parents, Charles and Charlotte, who have been married for 40 years. During the '96-'97 season, Brandon's personality traits and upbringing were honored when he was awarded the NBA Sportsmanship Award.

On the court, one could argue that Brandon's game directly reflected the person he is and the life he now leads. The point guard position demands leadership and effectiveness as much as it does sharing and distribution. As a player, Brandon was a perennial NBA leader in assists-to-turnovers ratio—a statistical way to measure a point guard's efficiency. These days Brandon has all the same responsibilities of a point guard, only the size of the team he is looking after is countless times bigger.

"I'm more tired now than when I was a player," said Brandon. He also seems to have put his playing days behind him, saying he hasn't touched a basketball since the last clinic he organized, almost a year from the time of this interview. A few missed shots shy of 10,000 career points and 14 years removed from when he was the eleventh pick in the NBA Draft, Brandon seems content to

“Early in my career, before I got close to retirement, I said I was gonna do some business things.”





Terrell Brandon works with the kids at his last basketball camp in Portland Oregon.

be the businessman who used to play basketball, not vice versa.

“Playoff time is when I miss it sometimes,” reflects Brandon upon his playing days, quickly admitting the downsides of life during the NBA regular season included jet lag, nagging injuries and occasionally forgetting his hotel room number. “I don’t miss any of that.”

When asked which of his careers he would prefer to be known for, Brandon hesitated briefly, then replied, “I hope people can say I’m still a better businessman when I die.”

This may prove to be an impossible task for Brandon, who will always be admired as one of the most successful athletes to come from northeast Portland—regardless of how much money he makes or good he does.

There are not many business professionals that sport tightly woven cornrows, or have competed head-to-head against Michael Jordan for that matter, but this is not what makes Brandon unique.

Once a local hero with financial investment plans, Brandon has clearly transformed into a community leader. Just like the atmosphere downstairs in the barbershop, where people are either family or act as if they are, Brandon is putting people first and enjoying success because of it.





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photo Simone Van den berg

Mind over matter

makes Pilates picture perfect

By Jessica Clary

If workout plans were actresses, the it-girl of the moment would be Pilates. Designed to give you the long, lean muscles of a ballet dancer and the strength of a power-lifter, Pilates (pronounced puh-LAH-teez) is a hit among celebrities and regular Joes and Janes across the country and the world.

In 1894, Joseph Hubertus Pilates, born with multiple diseases, began to study anatomy and exercise to develop something new. During World War I, J.H. Pilates, worked with bedridden patients to keep their muscles strong with limited range of motion. In 1926, he brought the exercises to New York City and opened the first Pilates studio. A captive audience in the United States was found, first among ballet dancers and athletes.

So why is Pilates becoming a hit now? Celebrities. When Daisy Fuentes, Vanessa Williams, Halle Berry and even a character on *Sex and the City* name-drop Pilates when asked how they get their bodies, a new generation of Pilates fans were born. Who wouldn't want Fuentes' butt or a *Sex and the City* stomach?

Unlike aerobics, the sweat-fueled cardio-craze of the 80's, Pilates is about fewer, more-precise movements instead of many repetitions of strenuous motions. Most of Pilates exercises can be done with only a mat and simple equipment in a studio. One piece of the modern equipment is based on a hospital bed and utilizes simple springs for resistance.

"Pilates builds muscles and strength without you knowing it," said Matt Terrell, a college student in Georgia. "You really don't think you're doing strenuous exercise, but you can tell that your body is changing for the better."

Jessica Talisman, owner of ReForm Pilates in Portland, Ore. said, "Pilates has a structural foundation. The first foundation is to achieve

symmetry and balance in the body." Talisman explained that everyone's body compensates for things differently, which restricts their movement. Through Pilates, you can build a more balanced body that will ultimately lead to greater overall strength.

First, Talisman said, you build your core strengths. Once you build the right muscles to align your body properly, Pilates becomes a part of how you move in everyday life.

"Your body mechanics change," Talisman said. "Basically you can work your core in everything you do."

The first place people see change in their

"The first place people see change in their bodies is in the abdominal area. Over time, people can resolve many pain symptoms through the strength gained from Pilates exercises."

bodies is in the abdominal area. Over time, people can resolve many pain symptoms through the strength gained from Pilates exercises.

Pilates also focuses your mind, according to Talisman. By seeing the results of making small, simple movements for big results in your body, you can retrain your mind similarly, so you aren't wasting valuable mental energy on things that can be effectively resolved simply.

So, if you're looking for a get-thin-quick scheme, Pilates probably isn't for you. But if you're looking for a way to change your entire body and life for the better, maybe you should try checking out a local Pilates studio. Call first and ask some questions about the instructors and their training. The growing popularity of Pilates has diluted the market, and a lot of studios may not have properly-trained instructors.



Clicking on the news, there is Matt Hennessee. He was leading a congregation of concerned citizens who had gathered to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. A month earlier, another television channel showed a local panel reviewing some land development proposals and constantly referencing to “Matt Hennessee says...”

His name is in the mouths of his supporters and naysayers. Among the latter is The Nose, a

I may. I did say that I would be president by the time I was 40 though, and I was, president of Quicktrack.”

Simultaneously, he is the head pastor at First Vancouver American Baptist Church. Hennessee comments, “As a pastor, people expect me to be judgmental and see things black or white. However, the world is so gray. I recognize the challenges of the human condition. The ministry is about calling and I ran away from it for years

The True Calling of Matt Hennessee

By Fawn Aberson

newspaper columnist for the *Willamette Week* who chided Hennessee in one of his editorials saying, “Hennessee’s political judgment comes from the Dick Cheney school of polish.” He went on to say, if Hennessee was thinking of running for office then he needed to “sober up.” Ouch. The comments came as a result of a decision made by the Portland Development Commission to award development contracts to one of three bidders. Some neighboring business wanted to see a different result than the five-member board voted on. Hennessee was the president of that board.

Hennessee shrugs off comments like these, a demonstration that hints he is well suited for the bull’s-eye jacket. This may come in handy since there is a constant rumor he is gearing up to run for one political office or another. Although which office always seems to remain a mystery. So Flossin’ asked him, “Will Matt Hennessee be the first black President of the United States?” Hennessee chuckles and comments, “Oh I think that there are others who are in a better position than I am. Colin Powell, Condi [Condoleezza] Rice or Barack Obama may be more likely than

doing only the secular thing. Finally I turned and embraced it.” It has been said that he is one of the most charming orators you may ever encounter. It is this aptitude that has him requested by associations worldwide.

People flock to him on a daily basis for advice on financial, spiritual and overall mental wellness needs. Hennessee is in every sense of the word a leader. He sits on countless boards and commissions in the categories of education, development, instruction and research. He has advised police chiefs, mayors and governors while working in the state governments of Ohio, Michigan and Oregon.

“It was my job to be three steps ahead of them so that when they were out there they had nothing to worry about,” says Hennessee. Mrs. Coretta Scott King considers him “her other son.” Just after her last stroke, Hennessee made her a video tape of people wishing her well. Condi Rice calls him friend and he was her escort to the first White House dinner of the Bush administration.

This attitude of serving others may be his destiny and a lesson taught to him at birth. Lying



crippled in his crib at an Ohio orphanage, Hennessee seemed fated for welfare and early social security benefits. But a higher power stepped in with a different kind of contribution in the form of some good doctors and the loving care of his first foster mother, Minnie Vance. Hennessee was born with his arms and legs turned the wrong way, and his teenage birth mother did not have the wherewithal to take care of him. She gave up Hennessee to the state and he was immediately put through the surgeries necessary to address his problem. Hennessee was fashioned with arm and leg braces, and doctors did not have a lot of hope that he would walk and most assuredly it would be with a limp.

Minnie Vance held strong to a different outcome. At night when everyone else was asleep she would go to his crib, take his braces off and rub his arms and legs with warm olive oil while praying and singing “the doctors are determined that you won’t walk but I am determined that you will.” Because of her contribution, Hennessee took his first steps when he was three-years-old and has never walked with a limp. Tragically, Minnie Vance was killed in an auto accident when Hennessee was only seven. These days when Hennessee speaks, he will often say that the night belongs to her.

At nine-years-old, he memorized and recited Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech and felt a “true calling and connection to a spiritual being.” Despite his age, he ministered in front of several churches. By this time he had moved to a new foster home, and though it lacked the love and warmth of his first, he does credit them with teaching him good work habits and discipline.

“Mr. Walker, my second foster father, had a hard work ethic,” says Hennessee. “He would call me at 6 a.m. to help with the chores before school.” His eyebrow crinkles a bit with begrudging admiration, “He taught me about working in the community. He would buy eggs wholesale and resell them to the neighborhoods. He duti-



fully went to church and was a trustee. I would go with him every Sunday. I learned early that I was part of an unfair system, but I was not bitter about it, the church helped that.”

Today Hennessee’s goals are clear and the message is singular: do good community work and serve others. Speaking on leadership, he feels the formula for success has to do with vision, inspiration, consistency and decisiveness.

“I take quiet time at either my home office or in the church sanctuary to pray,” says Hennessee. “For me this results a clear sense of direction.”

Concerning his congregation and his staff at Quicktrack, Hennessee likes to take the role similar to that of a coach. He is very pragmatic in saying, “People already have the knowledge, they just need to be inspired to excel.”

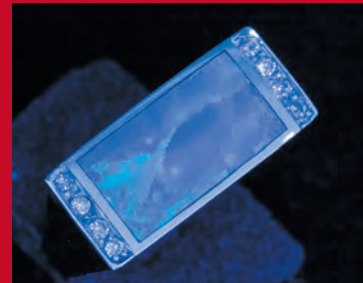
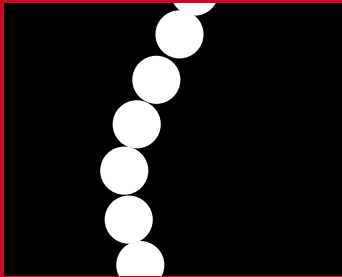
Hennessee knows that at some point a decision needs to be rendered so a leader who is indecisive can be very destructive. “It is not a popularity contest,” he states. “A leader can’t worry about making the popular decision, what is more important is that is fair. The buck may stop here with me but it better be wrinkled when it gets here. In the end we may not all agree on the decision but we will understand why and how it was made.”

John Isabelle, Director of Corporate Development and Logistics for Nike, worked with Hennessee for nearly eight years and sums up his leadership style. “When Matt came to work for Nike he was fresh out of politics, and I was wary of him, as were many other people in the organization. However, Matt does not ignore the elephant in the living room. He addresses it forthright. He made me realize that if you have an issue with something or someone, it is less painful to deal with it than to operate as if it does not exist. He does not make solo decisions and is very good at galvanizing people. By the time he left, he had earned the respect of his colleagues and employees. He taught me how to hug another human being, and I taught him how to pay attention to the bottom line. He is impressive.”

Hennessee seems focused on making others great. To hear him tell it he is just “the janitor.” His advice to those seeking their own formula of success is to “make choices about what it is you really want to be and work hard at making sure that you are not only speaking it but living it—then build a bridge for others to follow you.”

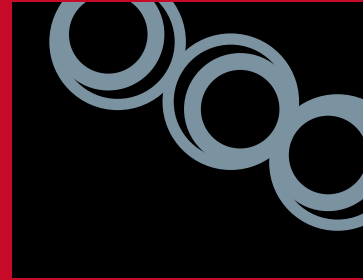
And all of God’s people said, Amen.





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Legacy House

by Randy Faber



The passion of true spiritual love and the awakening that occurred following her husband's death was the inspiration that led Cindy Olsen to take over her soulmate's business and continue his legacy. In doing so she built *The Legacy* to honor both his commitment to building quality in the Hamptons style, as well as his passion for building "homes, not houses."

This is evident as you approach *The Legacy*. Its 6,320 square feet are not presented in your face, rather, they are humbly hidden behind the true cedar shake and lowered roof line of the front veranda, which spans the length of the home. Far from austere or new, the scene is

serene and established.

Entering on the home's main floor you are drawn into the dining area that is anchored by deep, rich walnut floors and canopied by a 13 foot high barrel vault ceiling. The space is equally effective for a Saturday night dinner party as a Sunday afternoon nap. Throughout the home you are surrounded by a classic Nantucket ambiance.

White woodwork, antiques and reproductions are carefully integrated among more modern conveniences. Accessories and fabrics demonstrate a collected, hand-picked heritage, even though the home is less than a year old.





For Linda, this home is a culmination of four years of getting to know the business through the people in it.

“We are a very personable, close company,” said Olsen. “Today I live my life as though every moment were borrowed time. I appreciate how fragile life is.”

Today, Rick Myers, Brian Schmidt and Cindy Olsen build homes with a new found commitment and a deeper sense of dedication.

“This home is not about me, it’s about us.”







“People don’t die of a broken heart, love is our gift and we should take every opportunity to indulge in it.”

- Cindy Olsen







Aphrodisiac Cuisine

IN THE QUEST TO CREATE

a tantalizing feast for the senses, cultures from around the world have immersed themselves in foods of love since ancient times.

Legend says that Casanova ate more than fifty raw oysters every morning – in a bathtub with the woman he was romancing — to boost his libido. Bean soup was so renowned for its erotic qualities that it was banned from the Convent of St. Jerome in the 17th century. To ancient Teutons and Romans, the bean was a stimulant and its flower symbolized sexual pleasure.

Named after Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love and beauty who sprang forth from the sea on an oyster shell, aphrodisiacs are defined as foods, drinks or scents thought to cause or increase sexual desire or sexual response. Studies have shown that many foods possess chemical components that elevate mood and even create the sensation of falling in love.

Inspired by his passion for Feng Shui and an ancient Middle Eastern philosophy that emphasizes enlightenment through the five senses, Tim Hogle built a restaurant that has helped legitimize aphrodisiac cuisine.

Since it opened in 1988, Tantra Restaurant and Lounge has attracted A-list celebrities, international jetsetters and curious palates with its acclaimed aphrodisiac cuisine, sensual new age music, fragrant incense and jasmine-scented candles. The restaurant's exotic décor includes a live grass floor that is replaced weekly, softly illuminated marble water wall, a fiber optic starlit ceiling, and a copper and mahogany bar.

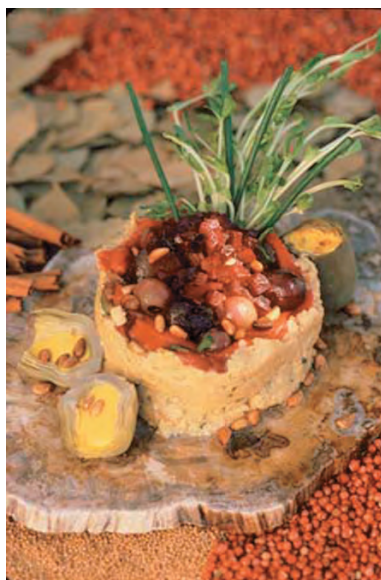
A former dentist for the set of *Miami Vice*, Hogle was one of the first restaurateurs in South Florida to center a concept on aphrodisiac cuisine. It was a natural fit, he believes, since the ancient Tibetan/Indian art of Tantra emphasizes the heightening of all five senses. Marketing experts and fellow restaurateurs, however, advised Hogle to scrap the idea of aphrodisiac cuisine when he developed his initial business plan.

"They [his advisors] thought it was too controversial and too gimmicky," Hogle said. "And since it was designed as a high-end restaurant, there was concern that the aphrodisiac approach would not attract enough volume of guests who would be willing to pay the prices on the menu."

Hogle ignored their warnings, believing that aphrodisiac cuisine was the perfect culinary element to accompany an ambience where each of the senses is heightened, even before the food arrives at the table.

Aphrodisiac cuisine, Hogle explains, results in a combination of sensual reactions: the visual satisfaction of the food, the fragrant stimulation of their pleasing smells and oral gratification from the savory dishes, which lead to a state of euphoria conducive to sexual expression.

"Originally, food was not spiced for taste, but for medicinal purposes and virility," he said. "Food is a medicine. It is life affirming. It is a lifestyle – a feeling. That is what



"Aphrodisiac cuisine results in a combination of sensual reactions which lead to a state of euphoria conducive to sexual expression."

the restaurant is all about – stimulating all of your senses through the ambience, the atmosphere and the cuisine."

Tantra has drawn international attention for its Feng Shui elements like the live grass floor, and for its reputation as a favorite destination for celebrities like Jennifer Lopez, Janet Jackson and Usher. They flock here for the atmosphere, for the World's Most Expensive Martini, and the lavish and private VIP room, where the infamous hammock hangs above the tables.

Usher has eaten here several times, including a visit during the MTV Video Music Awards. Arriving in style, Usher climbed out of one black Hummer with his bodyguards while his entourage emerged from another black Hummer behind him. After the musician's security team scanned the restaurant, Usher walked in with his manager Shauna Miller.

"How cool is this grass floor?" Usher said about the landmark that is one of Tantra's signature design elements. Before sitting at his table, Usher was caught by the music



as he strolled past the DJ booth. With his diamond-studded gold cross twirling, Usher showcased some of the dance moves for which he is famous.

Accustomed to accommodating celebrities, Tantra management offered Usher a secluded table, which he declined, choosing instead a table in the center of the restaurant, amid the copper and mahogany bar and under the fiber optic starry sky ceiling. Usher's party of four, which included a bodyguard, his manager and another female, dined on the Tantra Plate and then Usher selected the Chilean Sea Bass for his entrée.

As for spirits, Usher first requested Kristal, but he then changed his mind when he noticed Tantra's line of signature martinis. He chose the Sexual Center, which was delivered to him just after ordering dinner and just before they all grasped hands and prayed, blessing their food. After whispering, "Amen," Usher promptly ordered a round of lemon drops.

Tantra's executive chef, Sandee Birdsong, worked as a personal chef for fifteen years before joining Tantra. She specialized

in dishes inspired by southern herbs and spices. She continues Hogle's commitment to enhancing the senses with aphrodisiac cuisine by incorporating her personal approach to using herbs, spices and ingredients known for erotic stimulation.

Chocolate, for example, comes from the theobroma cacao tree, which is defined in Latin as the "food of the gods." Aztec nobility consumed cacao (also known as cocoa) to ensure fertility. When the Spanish conquered the Aztecs, they brought it home to Spain where it became famous as an aphrodisiac.

Used as a sweetener long before sugar, honey was the nectar of Aphrodite. Its connection with romance includes its role in wedding ceremonies in many cultures. This is where the term "honeymoon" was derived from.

Like the oyster, caviar is high in zinc, which stimulates the production of testosterone and is thought to improve male sexual performance.

Asparagus was served to 19th century bridegrooms because of alleged aphrodisiac qualities and Middle Eastern sheiks had asparagus recipes for "reviving the enthusi-

“Many people think that the Tantra philosophy is just about enhancing your sexual experiences. It’s actually about attaining self-realization. Once your senses are heightened, you can reach that place.”

asm of the exhausted lover.”

Tantra’s menu features these types of flavors and textures that span the globe, each dish being created with aphrodisiac elements.

The Tantra Love Apple, boasting a sliced ripe Homestead tomato layered with Laura Chenel goat cheese, basil oil, and Cypress Grove Bermuda Triangle, garnished with fresh pomegranate seeds, is an ideal starter. So is the Tantra Plate, a unique blend of the most potent aphrodisiacs such as Pacific oysters, tender poached jumbo shrimp, thin sliced Japanese calamari salad, succulent sweet soy grilled eel, twin flash fried lobster wontons, large stone crab claw, spicy roll of sushi tuna and wakame seaweed with wasabi kiwi sorbet.

Among the main courses are the Chilled Maine Lobster Napoleon, which features steamed then chilled Maine lobster, layered with sliced mango and fresh avocado, a baby green salad with a black truffle and fresh herb vinaigrette. The Pan-seared Hawaiian Ahi Tuna and Foie Gras rests on stewed Beluga lentils, sautéed spinach, fine diced Asian pear and a truffled Foie Gras sauce. And the Grilled New England Free Range Filet Mignon with Cuban coffee sauce and toasted organic chicken breast, which is stuffed with winter truffles, Robert Pierre cheese and Morel mushrooms served with fresh sautéed spinach and tomato timbale finished with a creamy vanilla spinach sauce.

“We use only the finest ingredients,” Birdsong explained. “Many of our vegetables and meats are organic. So are the herbs and spices. That is an important component of giving each guest a sensory experience.”

Even the spirits at Tantra have an aphrodisiac twist. The signature cocktail is The World’s Most Expensive Martini. Three vodka, white cranberry juice, guarana syrup and Inniskillin Cabernet Franc are the ingredients that compose what may be the world’s finest cocktail – at least for martini connoisseurs. The cost? \$25. The reason? Inniskillin grapes are exceptional. They are naturally frozen on the vine and hand picked only during the pinnacle of winter in Canada.

Hogle has also created a series of innovative events, like the Monday Night Party, which has grown into one of Miami’s highest attended regular galas. Developed to generate traffic on what was once Tantra’s slowest night, the party was crafted into what it is today by his wife, former model and current Tantra entertainment director, Irina Korneva. Hogle met the Russia native – who has a degree in aeronautical engineering and is a former competitive chess player in Moscow – at the restaurant. They share the same birthday and the same passion for the true meaning of Tantra.

“The only time human beings use all of their senses at the same time is when they are consuming food or making love,” said Hogle, who still practices dentistry on a limited schedule for undisclosed celebrities. “Many people think that the Tantra philosophy is just about enhancing your sexual experiences. It’s actually about attaining self-realization. Once your senses are heightened, you can reach that place.”



enomatic™

Wine vending of the future now.

by Carla Arendes

“In a pre-Enomatic world, the unavoidable truth about wine is that its quality deteriorates after opening. With the Enomatic...the wine will be good for upwards of two months.”

Ah, Italy, that beautiful, romantic, boot-shaped country with rolling hills, leaning towers and baked ziti. From the land that gave us our favorite Marlon Brando characters, Versace, and



the correct pronunciation of ‘how you doin’?’ now comes the latest innovation to hit the states: the Enomatic wine serving system. Considering the abundance of imported wine staples here in America, it’s obvious Italians know their wine; apparently, they also know how to serve their wine.

The Enomatic offers wine aficionados a new twist on tasting and ordering their favorite drink. Think of it as a wine vending machine—put your

pre-purchased Enomatic debit card into the machine, push the button corresponding to the wine of your choice, and watch as your drink is poured directly into your glass. This wine “vending machine” just might be the spark that ignites a wine revolution worldwide.

There are four basic designs: the Enoround, the Enoline, the Enomove and the Enosystem. The Enoround is a 16 bottle kiosk that allows for self-service with a chip card reader, which can be purchased from the store with a pre-paid dollar amount. The Enoline allows for temperature controlled storage—those white wines need a little chill. The Enomove holds eight bottles and is completely mobile, allowing waiters effortless service. Finally, the Enosystem is perhaps the grandest of all the models. The custom made storage units can be built to fit behind a bar or in the back room of a restaurant. They can be tailor-made to match almost any décor or look. The Enosystem creates a continuous line of bottles that will immediately wet the tongue of any wine lover on sight.

In a pre-Enomatic world, the unavoidable truth about wine is that its quality deteriorates after opening. With the Enomatic, a nitrogen gas system is in place to protect the wines from oxidation. Instead of lasting for only two or three days, the wine will be good for upwards of two months. So what does that mean for the average wine drinker? Try this: restaurants and bars that formerly were deterred from ordering, stocking, and opening expensive or rare bottles of wine, due to the cost of throwing away unused portions, can

now offer patrons a wide selection. They can rest easy knowing the unused wine will stay fresh. Be on the lookout: never-before-seen wines might be popping up at a restaurant near you.

Roberto Rinaldini, president of Rinaldini Distribution, the company handling the import and distribution of the Enomatic, knows there are even more benefits to reap from the system. Wine novices, nervous about the pronunciation of “pinot grigio” or the correct glass swirling technique, can finally relax. “Instead of having to ask or feeling uncomfortable,” Rinaldini says with his fluid, Italian accent, “they can use their wine card and can go to our machine and insert the card, push a button, and test it themselves. This way they have their own experience and, with time, they can understand the difference between a Shiraz, a pinot noir, or Chianti.” The Enomatic offers a sample size, so newbies can read up on each wine, try it out, and then go for something else. “Each label has a history of the



wine, the grapes, the vineyard, and the region of production,” Rinaldini adds.

Where, exactly, might a budding wine connoisseur find an Enomatic? Restaurants and wine bars all over Europe, Australia, Canada and even Asia offer their customers self-service wine through Enomatic machines, and Americans will soon have as many options as their lucky counterparts around the world. Within the next two or three months, there are more than ten installations planned in states such as Washington, California, Texas and Nevada. “Usually (the Enomatic is installed in) wine bars—a lounge with couches and comfortable chairs,” Rinaldini says, elaborating on the perfect Enomatic locations. “People at

happy hour can go there with friends after work and can taste wine and can eat a selection of good cheese. It can be in a regular restaurant as well. Nice music, nice atmosphere.”

Once upon a time, cappuccinos were the tangible embodiment of snobiness. These drinks were reserved for only the trendiest of jet-setters, to be sipped with one pinky raised in the air while discussing items of importance for high society. It takes one drive down any street in the country to pass a Starbucks and know that things in the coffee world have changed. Coffee is now a drink for the proletariat, working class everyman, and it appears, with the help of the Enomatic, that wine will be, too. “In 10 years we can have a wine bar in each corner and people can enjoy wine, can test wine, can buy a bottle of wine,” Rinaldini claims. “People finally know the wine better. It is a revolution around the world!”





INTO EACH LIFE.

Alex Lupekha travels from the Ukraine to open a trendy and controversial nightclub.

BY FAWN ABERSON

a
little
H₂O
must

fall

ALEX LUPEKHA LEFT UKRAINE SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITY. . He traveled all over Mexico, Canada and the USA, but it was not until he came to Oregon that he felt something special. “When I come to this place I knew it was right, it spoke to me,” he said.

In a heavy Ukrainian accent, Alex echoes a voice that many people use when describing the Pacific Northwest. The rain keeps things fresh and clean and the temperature is never too hot nor cold. The mountains, the rivers and the green foliage all make for a convivial allure that can provide mental clarity.

Always business driven, Alex decided to open up a restaurant and nightclub called H2O. He was not new to the industry, having operated a thriving cowboy saloon in Spokane, Wash. for over five years. H2O was to be

something completely different-upscale and classy. It was his calling, his new project of passion in the land that had beckoned him. He hired designers, but when they could not complete the work, he stepped in himself, sawing, cutting, cleaning and scrubbing.

On opening night, patrons lined up around the block to see what was rumored to be a club like no other. Indeed, they were treated to multiple stylish amenities, such as the several 9-foot tall sheets of stainless steel, artfully etched, with cool cascading waterfalls. Even more spectacular was the huge 500 gallon fish tank that held small sharks.

The bar itself has an exquisite curb appeal with hardwood floors throughout that add a touch of wealth. The VIP area looks inviting with its velvet and vinyl couches, and long, romantic, gauzy drapes framing them. A glass coffee table that encases a small alligator continued the exotic theme.

A grand piano nestled into the corner had a pianist performing, and from time to time, a violinist would join in with a passionate sonata from one of the classical European composers. The place showed the love it had been given. Alex told it this way: “When I opened H2O, I put all my heart, efforts and soul into this place, so I feel that I am doing what I was called to do.”

It was all systems go towards happy ever after. Until... Well it wouldn't be life without a little salt now would it. The salt for H2O came one late night when just down the

“Some of Alex’s friends and family told him he should sell the place and walk away. But Alex chose to exercise one of the keys to his formula for success: ‘Never give up,’ he says.”

street an unfortunate fight led to bloodshed. A stray bullet ricocheted from a block away, hitting an unaffiliated homeless man. Police were called and somehow the media got wind of it and quickly branded it an incident stemming from H2O, even though several other bars were in the area. The talk around the area was that it was gang-related and that those involved were going to H2O because of the hip-hop music they played. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) smelled blood, as it so often does, around clubs that play hip-hop.

The OLCC preceded into their --change your format, change your crowd or we will make things very difficult for you-- mode. Alex’s dream was turning into a nightmare. “It was not even related to our club, the media turned everything around,” he said. “The police later came to me and said that it had nothing to do with me and that they were so sorry for the damage to our reputation, but by that time it was too late. Our customers had been scared away and the OLCC were giving me such a hard time.”

Some of Alex’s friends and family told him he should sell the place and walk away, telling him it was not worth it anymore. However, Alex chose to exercise one of the keys to his formula for success. “Never give up,” Alex stated. It was not the first time that he has faced disaster.

Alex lived only 30 miles from Chernobyl when the world’s worst nuclear power accident happened in 1996. “I was fishing with my friend...and he said to me, ‘look at this, the sun is coming so early,’” said Alex. He also said that he and his family had to hear from the BBC that the reactor had blown up. “Our country, they told us nothing.” His uncle died as a result of that accident, an example of how living through that time in

history gave Alex the courage to embrace life’s challenges

It has been several months since the shooting incident and his patrons are trickling back in. Between his trusted and loyal manager Mitchell Howard and himself, they have worked nonstop on marketing their dream back to the top, sharing this advice to those looking to get into the nightclub business: “Research what you want to do to make sure you know what you are doing. Always be ready for surprises. If you have the right manger it will be OK, otherwise you are in trouble. Also, you should be free from alcohol, and finally, you should be single.” He laughs at his hindsight because he is married and his wife and two daughters are supportive of his efforts, but it tugs at his heart that he must dedicate so much time to the restaurant leaving less for them. To drive home the message of love for them, Alex can’t help but grin and state that his proudest moment in the last year was that he is still married to his wife.

To follow Alex’s dream in progress, visit H₂O located at 204 SW Yamhill in Portland, Oregon. To learn more about H₂O, simply call 503-228-3068 or log on to www.H2Oportland.com.

from top: Alex Lupekha in the VIP lounge; H2O’s distinctive front window; the alligator who lives in a tank in the club’s VIP lounge



did you count the calories?

Holiday Drinking

Oh, the festive holiday advertising. It's always some big, jovial gathering of happy people and a resplendent spread of mouthwatering food, from simple salads to sumptuous desserts. And, of course, no good meal is complete without the tinkling of wine glasses, or a hearty beer, or later, a rich, smooth cocktail in front of the fire.

So they tell us, anyway. But what they don't tell us are all the downsides of adding that essential alcoholic beverage to our celebrations, and we're only talking about the nutritional considerations, here.

We all know that, generally speaking, even the most conscientious dieters, the most rigorous of careful eaters, will usually relax their usual standards to make room for some holiday indulgences.

You don't even need a big holiday. Researchers who track eating patterns have shown that we Americans tend to significantly increase our caloric intake even over weekends, as compared to weekdays.

We eat and drink more on the weekends, but you may be surprised by where most of our weekend calories are coming from.

A recent study found that among American adults aged 19 through 50, the biggest increase in caloric intake on weekends came not from indulging in extra desserts or having another afternoon snack, but from our alcohol consumption. And if we up the volume on the alcohol for any old weekend off, think how this might play out when we're feeling compelled by tradition at one holiday party after another.

People don't often think of alcohol as a calorie source. It's not hard to see why. We usually think of getting our calories from sources of nutrition. There's no nutritional value to alcohol at all, and while you may pick up a few carbs from beers and even a little fat from the goodies that go into some of those fancy holiday mixed drinks, you're

just not very likely to count them. That means your imbibing could represent a stealthy—but potentially significant—source of calories.

We know that even among people who tend to pay attention to caloric intake, liquid calories often slip in unnoticed. Research shows that even with non-alcoholic beverages, people forget to count the caloric content of their drinks. Sodas are the main offender of adding stealth calories to the American diet, but they are not alone. There's a pretty good chance those extra weekend beers, or that cup of holiday grog just won't get factored into the overall calorie count, or compensated for by cuts elsewhere.

The other issue for diet is really the main problem with alcohol in general. It lowers inhibitions. The same affect that makes one drink lead to another, can also make one drink to lead to, say, a second serving of thick, cheesy au gratin potatoes, or another slice of double chocolate sin cake.

One glass of wine or a beer, depending on the type, is likely to add between 80 and 180 calories. That's not so much, in itself. But the relaxed attitude and lowered inhibitions most people get from that first glass of wine or beer usually make the second drink—complete with all its calories—seem more appealing.

And it has that same affect for all the lovely, tempting food that we were only going to have in moderation this year (really, this year we MEAN it!). This is especially likely to come into play during the holidays, because it's already a special occasion, and we're already making exceptions to our rules. A bit of the vino is most likely to further lower your prudent resistance to other high-calorie, low-nutrient foods.

The solution, as always, is moderation and



balance. And if you think through the drink, and plan ahead for the impulse that is likely to come, you can be prepared to say 'no thanks' to that thick creamy, rummy egg nog, or the extra piece of cheesecake that's offered along side it.

Finally, even though the alluring holiday ads show us the most festive, joyous, convivial gatherings we could imagine, the truth is that people are often thrown into social situations during the holidays that they might normally prefer to avoid.

Parties at the inlaws aren't always a blast. Politely listening to Great Uncle Willard drone on about his fuel injector might be a real strain. Company parties can sometimes be an awkward, uncomfortable drag.

In such situations, people are at risk of needless nibbling or drinking more than they'd planned, just out of nervousness or, let's face it, boredom.

Plan ahead for that possibility. Wear something with pockets so you can comfortably stand with your hands idle instead of wrapped around a beer you didn't really want. Ask for iced tea or diet soda or just plain water to go with your meal. And when it's time for after-dinner drinks, make yours coffee or tea.

There are other concerns associated with overindulging in alcohol, but you likely know those already. If you overdo it, your hangover will probably fade after a day, and eventually you'll live down doing the hokey pokey on the coffee table.

But the extra pounds from extra drinking and eating could be harder to shake.

Through Thick & Thin

Holiday spirit might come in a glass, but too much of it could lead to needless, unanticipated eating, or even more drinking! Keep count of the calories in your beer and wine and cocktails and remember that more you have, the harder it is to keep count!

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Caroline J. Cederquist, M.D. is a board certified Family Physician and a board certified Bariatric Physicians (the medical specialty of weight management). She specializes in lifetime weight management at the Cederquist Medical Wellness Center, her Naples, FL private practice, you can also get more information about Dr Cederquist and her weight management plan by visiting www.DietToYourDoor.com

She is the author of *Helping Your Overweight Child - A Family Guide*, which is available at DrCederquist.com, Amazon.com, or by calling toll-free 1-800-431-1579.



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Flossin's 2005

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

stacking stuffers for everyone

*L*et Flossin' give you pointers on unique but fail-proof gifts that both men and women of all ages will love. We'll show you festive and fun gifts great for everyone from your coworkers to your closest family members.

1



The beauty of Affusion skin care products is in the ingredients: essential oils of lavender, geranium, tea tree and rosemary. On top of cleaning pores and soothing blemishes, these gentle cleansers can also increase circulation and reduce stress.

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www.affusionskincare.com

CANDLES make an excellent gift for almost anyone, from a stocking stuffer to an offering for your party host. Candles affect mood, create holiday ambiance, and are consumable, which makes them perfect even for the person who already has everything

2



Colonial Candle creates uniquely fragrant candles with seasonal scents and colors.

We love the scents from their Holiday Fragrances line, which combine steamed milk, vanilla, fresh pear, cinnamon, ginger, clove, and rich figs. Makes you want to stay home and hang tinsel on the tree.

\$20.99, 22oz.; \$14.99, 8oz.; \$8.99, 3.5oz.



Match your candle to your mood: Colonial links each candle to a particular energy: white poinsettia reduces anxiety, mulberry activates your energy and desire to learn, vanilla promotes feelings of youthfulness, while cinnamon stimulates a man's sense of romance.



Personalize your scent with a mix-and-match set. Pour fragrant wax beads onto your candle to blend aromas as desired. Holiday scent sets include vanilla cream with cranberry, and apple orchard with autumn spice.

Colonial. \$19.99 2-4.3oz. candles and 1-.75oz. jar of beads



Stylish frosted glass votive, ivory wax. Scents include tangelo & white peppercorn, persimmon, fresh fig, champagne & confetti, winter jonquil, red maple.

Colonial. \$28 10oz.; \$18 4oz.; set of 3-1oz. \$20



photos this page courtesy of Colonial Candle visit www.colonialcandle.com



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Starbucks® Barista Home Espresso Machine



Starbucks® 16-oz. Pylones Thermal bottle



3

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Tazo® Trio Gift Box



Starbucks® Coffee & Chocolates Pairings



Black Faux Crocodile Tote



Madison Bag, gray



Espresso Faux Crocodile Briefcase

4 purses & totes

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Suede Tote, natural



Komen Microfiber Tote

5 other carriers



Select briefcase, Dr. Pepper



Premium Backpack, yellow



Premium Messenger Bag, gray



Laptop Portfolio, blue



Select Leather V-load





iRiver, an innovator in the portable digital media world, has rejected the “one size fits all” philosophy for MP3 players. Consumers can choose from several different options within the **H10 series**, and all of the devices offer a range of different capacities, features and storage sizes. With all those choices you’re sure to find the player that’s just right.

iRiver H10 series (\$229.99-\$299.99)
www.iriveramerica.com

6 *I want my* **MP3 PLAYER!**

MP3 players are not going away, and with so many options, there is a good choice for everyone on your list. Here are a few of our favorites.



The **ce2100** and **Carbon** versions of **Rio's** digital music players are not only ultra-thin, they also manage to pack an industry leading battery life of 20 hours into their supermodel-skinny frames. They are compatible with a host of on-line audio stores (think Napster, Yahoo!, eMusic, etc.), so your playlist will consist of virtually any song out there. The Rio Carbon 5GB is capable of holding up to 80 hours of MP3 music and 160 hours of WMA music, meaning you could literally go days without hearing the same song twice.

Rio ce2100 (\$199), Rio Carbon (\$249)
www.rioaudio.com





When you want to listen to music and look good doing it, the **Oakley THUMP** is just what you need. These sunglasses are the first digital audio eyewear product on the market and are completely free of any cumbersome dangling wires. The fully integrated 512 MB audio system is optimized for the playback of digitally compressed MP3, WMA and WAV files.

Red Camo/Black Iridium Polarized (\$545)
www.oakley.com



Cowon's entry into the increasingly cluttered world of MP3 players earns points for its simple, sleek design. Music isn't the only thing this device is capable of, the **iAudio X5** also supports MPEG4 files for video playback and TXT or JPEG files for image and text viewing. Now it's easy to have pics of Richard Simmons right there with you on the treadmill for a little encouragement. On the other hand, maybe that's a little too much spandex.

iAudio X5 20GB (\$299)
www.cowonamerica.com



The **Philips ShoqBox** portable stereo is small enough to be your personal MP3 player when hooked up to headphones but loud enough to be the only sound system you need for your living room. Easy to set up and use, the ShoqBox enables fast downloads from your computer through a USB connection. As if that isn't enough, you can also wake up to either music or an alarm buzzer when using the alarm clock function. No word yet on whether this what-can't-it-do gizmo was invented by Q for James Bond's personal use.





If you're old enough, you can remember the **Commodore**, the revolutionary computer that was about the same size as a grand piano and ruled the home computing world of the early '80s. The Commodore brand now brings you the **MPet**, a slightly smaller version than the original—OK, it's now about the same size as a pack of gum. This portable MP3 player comes with a digital music player, built-in FM tuner, voice recorder and external data storage. So get retro with it and bring back that old-school flava with the MPet.

512 MB MPet II (\$139)
www.commodoreshop.com



Teeny tiny MP3 players with headphones are fine some of the time, but other times you really want to turn the volume up sans headphones. The **JBL On Tour** is a portable music box that's reminiscent of traditional boom boxes. The stereo mini jack connection allows you to enjoy high quality audio from a variety of devices such as MP3 and CD players, desktop computers, and laptops. The deceptively small speakers provide a large, full sound you can take with you anywhere—the pool, the beach, your cubicle, or anywhere else you want high quality sound in the palm of your hand.

JBL On Tour (\$99.95)
www.jbl.com





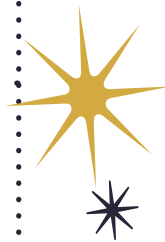
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Mobile Edge MiniMouse

5

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“I’M GRATEFUL FOR THE BLESSINGS
AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT I’VE
HAD, BUT I’M NOWHERE NEAR
THE GOALS...THAT I’VE ACTUALLY
WRITTEN DOWN
ON PAPER.”

by Carla Arendes
photo Kwaku Alston

Look past the Sin City setting, the elaborately flashy sets, the beautiful women, and the decadent grandeur that is NBC's hit television drama *Las Vegas*. Look closer and you'll see him, James Lesure, the smooth-talking, laid back actor who plays surveillance team member Mike Cannon. Lesure, with multiple TV and film credits to his name, is now climbing the fame ladder faster than J. Lo can move from one husband to the next. Sure, working with James Caan—yes, that James Caan—might be all in a day's work, and being voted one of the hottest guys on TV might be just another gold star on his performance chart, but don't expect fame to go to his head. This guy won't make any exorbitant paycheck demands, publicly jump around on couches declaring his love for a Venezuelan supermodel, or trash a ritzy hotel room any time soon. James knows what he wants—Hollywood staying power and a larger minority influence and authority behind the camera. It seems as though he just might have what it takes to get it done.

Lesure grew up in Gardena, Calif., an ethnically diverse city about 20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles. His family was active in the neighborhood, and it wasn't long before the neighborhood became his extended family.

"I had a great childhood," Lesure recalled. "I remember the block I grew up on. It was filled with African Americans, white Americans and Asian Americans, all on one block. People would come to our house for block parties and what not."

After a brief stint at the Air Force Academy ("It wasn't the lifestyle that I wanted," he said), Lesure enrolled in the theater program at the University of Southern California. He soon found the road to success to be an arduous path, but was willing to sacrifice a certain level of security to follow what he really wanted to do—act.

"My parents couldn't afford to send me to college, but they wanted the best for me," Lesure said. "They wanted me to stay in [the Air Force] because I would be taken care of. But I was like, that's not my dream, that's not my love. I had to do it on my own. I put myself through college. I have to listen to myself and trust in my inner voice, my muse."

Since co-starring with Holly Robinson Peete on the popular series *For Your Love*, Lesure now has two hit TV shows on his résumé. Does that mean he's edging closer to becoming a member of that top echelon of actors? "To me, I don't feel like I'm elite yet," said Lesure. "I look at the Tom

Cruise's or the Brad Pitt's, and these kids are on the elite level. Me, I'm still a hustler, and I'm still going to hustle."

Goals are very important and private for Lesure. "I'm grateful for the blessings and opportunities that I've had, but I'm nowhere near the goals in my mind that I've actually written down on paper," he said. When asked what those goals are, Lesure simply answers, slyly, "Those are personal goals—sort of like world domination."


If Lesure were to achieve world domination, there is one thing he would change: the lack of behind-the-scenes minority power in Hollywood. While strides have been made for the recognition of worthy black actors and actresses (look at Oscar wins for Halle Berry, Denzel Washington and Morgan Freeman as examples), people of color still lag behind in off-camera power.

"In terms of television, I would like to see more people of color, be they African-American, Mexican-American or Asian-American, being the heads of networks and making decisions about what different types of programs will show," Lesure ruminated. "I don't think enough of the diverse stories are being told and are being given the chance on television."

Would Lesure himself be interested in producing? "Yeah, I would, I would like to get some more power and control in this industry. I'd like to see a drama with a primarily African-American cast," he said. "The majority of African-Americans are on sitcoms, which is fine, but I'd like to see good dramas with African-American cast members. I'd like to see that from an Asian-American and Mexican-American point of view as well, on network, and not just cable."

It's fitting that the character Lesure plays on *Las Vegas* started out as a valet driver before moving up to join the surveillance team at the Montecito Resort and Casino. Lesure himself made a similar leap in his own life. When he struggled with the critics and the reality that acting might not pay the bills, he found his own inner strength. "There were times where I would get emotional, breaking down after getting so much rejection," Lesure said. For him, however, acting was the only choice. "At the end of the day, I love performing, I love acting, I love the way it feels, I love the way I feel when I do it. There's not much of a choice for me."



A man with a shaved head, wearing a black suit jacket over a white shirt, is sitting and looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a necklace and a watch. The background is a dark wall with many small, warm-toned lights, creating a bokeh effect.

Life: Life can be long, life can be short. I've been enjoying my life.

Love: I enjoy love. It's like a gift of life, that loving vibrations feeling. I am grateful to have received that in this lifetime, and I hope to continue to experience love with family, with friends and with intimate relations.

Death: Death is a hard thing. Death is something that when you're young you might not have to experience it, but if you live long enough you probably will experience losing somebody close, and it's a hard thing. I don't understand it.

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54 - flossin' MAGAZINE Vol. 4 No. 3

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photos Buko

KARA cassinelli

AGE : 22 • HEIGHT : 5'3" •
NATIONALITY : Fiji Indian •
OCCUPATION : Bartender •
EDUCATION : Marketing student •
HOBBIES : surfing, snowboarding,
wakeboarding, skateboarding,
anything boarding • THE
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GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY

KEEPING THE BEAT

by Toshio Suzuki

Grambling State University isn't in New Orleans but it's close enough. With deaths in five states mounting and displaced residents popping up all over the U.S., the north-central Louisiana school took a large step towards normalcy recently in Seattle.

The weekend of events was scheduled before the names Katrina and Rita combined to traumatize a nation. Probably the most famous historically black university in America was coming to the Pacific Northwest for a celebration of music, football and diversity. Then as quickly as those lethal 160 mph gusts made landfall, the

significance of the weekend changed—perhaps especially for those in the Northwest who are about as far removed from the Gulf Coast region as possible in the continental U.S.

When GSU flew cross-country—just three weeks after Katrina hit—they instantly represented more than a storied football team, legendary marching band and unique ambassador of higher education. They became a group of people whose lives were directly impacted by disaster.

Timing is everything to a good band. Unfortunately for the GSU band, their flight was uncooperative in helping them arrive on time to their



photos Buko



'sneak peak' performance at Memorial Stadium, which sits directly beneath the Space Needle. Is it normal for the visiting band to have a free performance the Friday before the game—let alone one that draws several thousand spectators in the middle of the afternoon?

Any preconceived notions of what a college marching band is supposed to be dissipated upon

the band's grand entrance that included a police motorcade and the musicians donning stylish black traveling suits with sun-reflecting white sneakers. With all the build-up and without really knowing what to expect, first time viewers could hardly contain their excitement.

"Grambling is a band that is constantly on the move, playing music and dancing simultaneously,"





explained Wayne Greer, a GSU band alum.

When Greer was with the band in the late '70s and early '80s they were already known as a traveling band, twice being requested to play in Japan for the Coca-Cola Bowl. Besides international performances, the GSU band has played in almost every major American stadium, at every major sporting event, and for presidents and dignitaries alike.

On this particular afternoon the GSU band played for, among others, the students from T.T. Minor Elementary School, with which Greer is an administrator and band director of the only grade school marching band in the state of Washington. Greer said he models T.T. Minor's band after Grambling's, usually just showing the third, fourth and fifth graders a video of the band at the beginning of the school year.

T.T. Minor and GSU have something else in common: they are comprised of almost entirely black students. In a city like Seattle where about 10 percent of the population is African-American, a few hundred black musicians performing together will turn some heads. There is no denying that the institution of GSU and their band have come to

symbolize one of America's strengths—diversity. What keeps people turned in their direction isn't their complexion, however, it's the impressive display of unison and the absolute commitment to entertaining the crowd.

"We try to emphasize discipline, organization and then we will put the pride in there," said Dr. Larry Pannell, GSU Band Director. "I got doctors and lawyers and everything else in that band—my goal is to get the first black president out of the Grambling Band."

Despite the glaring prestige that has only been pushed further into mainstream recognition thanks to the 2002 Hollywood film *Drumline*, it's hard to imagine a 67,000 capacity stadium selling out for anything other than a football game in America.

Thus was the setting for one of the first Saturdays in the college football season. The pseudo home team, Washington State University of the Pac-10, was set to meet the GSU Tigers of the SWAC.

Nearly every section of Qwest Field, home to the Seattle Seahawks, was adorned with WSU fans that typically would have to drive several hours east to see their Cougars play. The home team fed off the exuberant crowd, and on this day the difference between a Division IA and IAA team was clear in the final outcome.

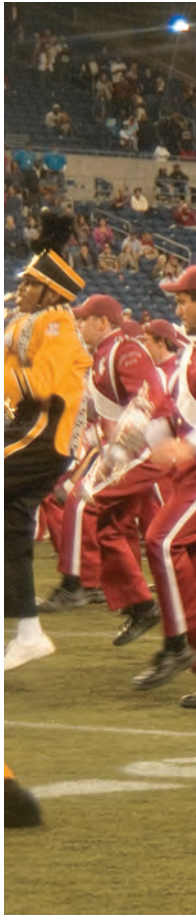
Football coaches, especially at the NCAA level, are results oriented. In spite of his team's lopsided loss, GSU Head Coach Melvin Spears felt as if his team had accomplished something more in Seattle than being beaten.

"The main thing about it is that these guys have bonded," said Spears. As far as direct impact, Spears said about a dozen of his players, including his starting QB, are from New Orleans. Unfortunately, this is obviously the case for many students, not just those involved with extra-curricular activities.

"It's hard to picture Louisiana without New Orleans," said Dr. Pannell. He further notes that GSU is trying to provide counseling for students who may need it, but the reality is that much of the day-to-day coping is spent with friends, teammates and especially mentors.

"When you're talking about being a head coach at Grambling, you're talking about being a leader," said Spears. This responsibility of being a leader has undoubtedly taken on a more sig-







nificant meaning this season for Spears. Usually a SWAC haven for NFL prospects, the football team this season is a testament to sheer determination every time they put their pads on. The typical pre-season preparations for both the band and the football team did not operate under ideal conditions this year. But as the classic euphemism of life puts it, the show must go on.

And it did, even after the game when the GSU band had an encore performance for the tens of thousands that decided to stay. Those who were impressed enough from the halftime show and those who probably knew better than to leave early were treated to a medley of songs, including a tuba sectional solo of *Just my Imagination*, which featured the all male ensemble harmonizing during the chorus to the synchronized clapping of the crowd.

As if that wasn't riveting enough, the bandleaders then appeared with instruments, breaking into a traditional, New Orleans jazz procession while playing *Just a Closer Walk With Thee*.


The outpouring of support from the crowd rivaled anything heard from the stadium all day. Things only got crazier as the opposing bands, and even a few WSU football players, united on the

field for a finale that seemed to never end.

"They say music can soothe the savage beast," said Dr. Pannell. "They were doing what they like, and the crowd was appreciating it, and that's good therapy." When asked how often these types of euphoric spectacles happen with his band, Assistant Band Director Charles Lacy simply responded, "Everywhere we go."

While the blending of crimson and gold band uniforms marked the culmination of the weekend, there was a much quieter interaction that capsulated the reality of life and everything under its umbrella.

It happened all weekend long when people from the affected region of Katrina said, "How are you" to each other. The words were spoken so delicately that they easily embodied a distinct sincerity that differed from the everyday greeting. The voice of a Coast Guard Capt. or a Super Bowl MVP became hardly audible.

Within the whispers was the underlying message of GSU's official slogan, "Where Everybody is Somebody." Sometimes it can take great loss to remind a person or a nation what matters. And sometimes it can take a group of people doing what they love to help them move forward with their life, cause it's all about keeping the beat. 

Miri Ben-Ari

by Toshio Suzuki



“Ben-Ari combines an improvisational style of violin playing that has classical roots...and is morphing it with one of the most influential music markets in the world.”

Who is the greatest hip-hop violinist? Many regard Jascha Heifetz as the greatest strings player of all time and Stephane Grapelli as one of the best jazz violinists, but they're both dead. Classical music living legend Itzhak Perlman is more accustomed to performances at Carnegie Hall than he is with those at The Apollo.

Perhaps it took a woman, Israeli born with dual U.S. citizenship, who has performed at both of these venues and with the likes of not only Isaac Stern and Wynton Marsalis, but also Jay Z and Kanye West. Perhaps most already know, but the woman's name is Miri Ben-Ari, and she is the world's first hip-hop violinist.

As far as music goes, hip-hop can be likened to a teething child still in its infancy, where as its new counterpart, the violin, is a 16th century relic of an instrument looking for its dentures. However, there is a reason the violin is still around: it sings to the audience with its expressive pitch and range, arguably unlike any other instrument.

Ben-Ari combines an improvisational style of violin playing that has classical roots, was jazz trained and battle tested on the NYC bar scene, and is morphing with one of the most influential music markets in the world. The main difference is that she is making the violin sing and hip-hop sound in ways never heard before.

When classically trained, professional musicians see Ben-Ari play, they are instantly enamored with her virtuosic abilities. As Ben-Ari puts it, this may simply be an appreciation that all musicians are incredible, but it is likely closer linked to the unique freshness she is providing with the songs she performs. There is a new air of musical legitimacy flowing to hip-hop and much of it is billowing from Ben-Ari's bow strokes.

“I'm like a music messenger, getting it to the streets,” says Ben-Ari. The streets, sold-out concerts and countless music videos on MTV and BET are a few of the places she is sending her tune. It took only a few moments of her solo performance for the historically judgmental Apollo crowd before she had them flabbergasted.

Instances like these are becoming common place, so much that when asked to describe what is different about her as an artist, Ben-Ari feels most comfortable using statements other people have made about her. “When I play, people say that it's like I'm talking,” she

Photo Courtesy Miri Ben-Ari



photo: Clinton H. Wallace/Photomundo

“I discovered black music on my own and I play it as my own,” she says. “It’s like a reincarnation or past-life experience...”

says. They also tell her that she is revolutionizing things, that she grooves, and that the violin is an extension of her hand—but what do they know.

Flattery is nice for the successful hip-hop artist but it could probably get mundane for someone who is also an extremely photogenic 20-something with endorsement deals from the likes of Reebok and Lady Foot Locker.

“It’s funny, but I learned it’s [being attractive] very important, especially in hip-hop—music and sex is the same thing,” says Ben-Ari. “If people see me on stage and think I’m very attractive, cool! I feel very lucky about that, if people like me.”

Ben-Ari speaks openly and with a frankness about her that coincides with her free-styling abilities on the violin. There is a green hologram of a butterfly that resides near the chin rest on her violin. About the size of a quarter, the emblem is out of place and uncharacteristic of an instrument that does not take well to cosmetic flare. These preconceived notions are disregarded when Ben-Ari shares that the butterfly flies every time she plays. Where she is today came about not from holding back on societal norms but from pushing

the envelope and testing herself.

“My upbringing in Israel made me the person I am,” says Ben-Ari. “It prepared me to take and fight, be independent and get what you want. Whatever I accomplish, I feel like I bring great respect to Israel.”

Ben-Ari became the first Israeli to win a Grammy Award in a non-classical category when she contributed on West’s debut album, *The College Dropout*. Without forgetting this young woman’s Israeli roots, where her family still resides, she aptly considers herself an American artist “from another flavor.”

“When I came to the U.S. I didn’t speak the language but I spoke the music language,” she says. This apparently was enough to begin her self-transfusion, a personal journey that in part feels as if she is conforming to hip-hop music but also taking it places it has never been.

“Do you believe in past life?” asks Ben-Ari, attempting to describe the intricacies of her musical development. Beginning her life around traditional religious music, Ben-Ari eventually found R&B, which she says was a shameful act of self-indulgence.

“I discovered black music on my own and I play it as my own,” she says. “It’s like a reincarnation or past-life experience...soul.”

Ben-Ari’s career path needs neither apologies nor excuses for where it is today. She is a determined woman who is gifted enough on an instrument to play it professionally in three distinct categories. Despite her blatant abilities on the violin, hip-hop is clearly a forum that primarily demands vocal artists. While it is becoming popular theory that Ben-Ari is on her way to being a hip-hop staple, there is a remaining question that asks what kind of lasting impression she will have.

One thing will be emphatically clear this Fall when Ben-Ari’s self-titled CD of sorts is dropped (it’s titled *The Hip-Hop Violinist*), it is becoming hip to play the violin.

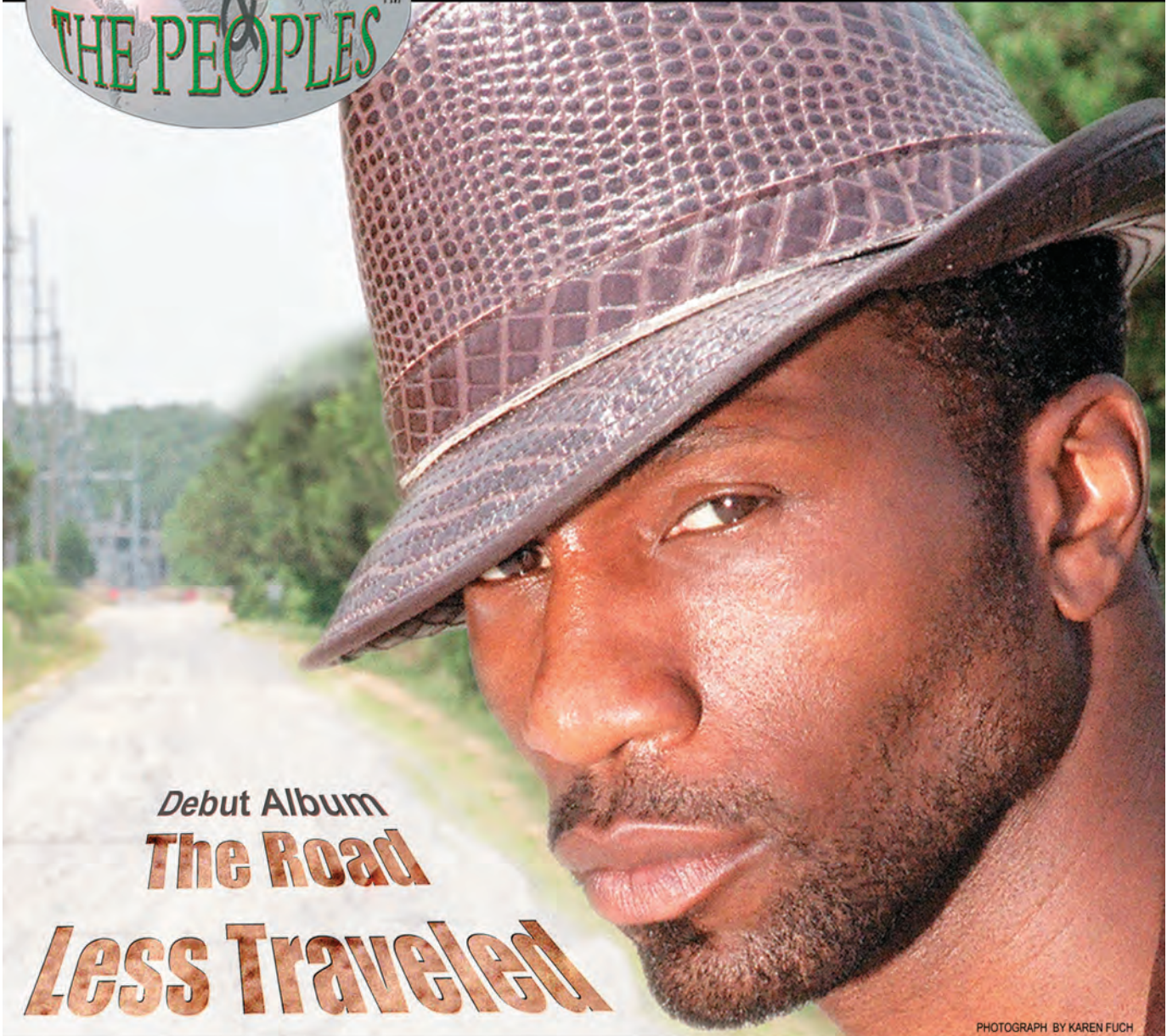


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IN STORES FALL 2005

The G Funkster Warren G Rides Again.

By Fawn Aberson

The man who helps put the “G” in gangsta rap, and who is arguably one of the smoothest rap/producers from the West Coast, is back with his first album in nearly four years, *The Mid-Nite Hour*. Warren G is not only representing Long Beach, California (LBC), now he holds the key to the city. Recently, LBC Mayor Beverly O’Neill named the first week in August “Warren G Week” because of his magnanimous contribution to the community. In addition, California State University in Long Beach bestowed him an honorary degree. Warren helped to implement programs for the youth like, The Midnight Basketball League and the Willie McGinest Freedom School. He has also collaborated with City Councilwoman Laura Richardson with foundations to keep music in schools and to provide eyeglasses for children. These days the “G” may better represent Giver than Gangsta.



photo Clinton.H.Wallace/Photomundo

“I want to see my kids have kids. I want to be a grandfather. I don’t want to be another statistic out here. That’s what motivates me to talk and say what I say.”

We caught up with Warren G on the set of his video *Get U Down Part 2*. With him were some of the originators of the West Coast hip-hop movement. Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg and B Real all came together for a special dedication to Hurricane Katrina victims.

Could this compilation be the spark that the West Coast rap revival has been looking for? “We ain’t went nowhere,” says Warren. “The one thing that is hurting the West Coast is that these record labels, ain’t nobody from the West Coast the head of one except Dr.Dre [Aftermath Records]. We don’t have no outlet—that’s why you ain’t really hearing the ‘West Coast Crack’ like it usually crack. All the guys in the offices are from New York and don’t really understand the West Coast.”

On his latest album, Warren chose to work with a new independent label out of Bellevue, Wash. called Hawino Records. “Hawino was cool and straight to the point. That’s what I like,” states Warren.

The song not only speaks about the devastations of the hurricane but also addresses other social problems. It touches upon the military entanglements in the Middle East, outrageous police behavior that includes handcuffing little girls, and black on brown violence between the black and Latino gangs in Los Angeles. To address the latter of those issues, Warren brought in the notorious Latino motorcycle gang, the Mongols, to make an appearance in the video. There were no clashes between Latinos and blacks on set, only grilled burgers and cold beer. Between the tirades of mixed smoke signals from Snoop’s camp to the Mongols, an easy flowing afternoon turned into an evening focused on teamwork. Other collaborators for *The Mid-Nite Hour* album include Raphael Sadiq, Nate Dogg, Mike Jones and newcomers Frank Lee White, Chuck Taylor and Bishop Lamont.

Looking back over the last fifteen years of the controversial and highly celebrated careers

of Warren G, Snoop Dogg, Ice Cube and B Real, what is striking is that these sons of hip-hop have become the fathers. The question is do they have what it takes to raise the next generation of bad ass hip-hop kids? Do they have the ability to foster and mentor the young and the restless? It seems apparent when you speak with these gentleman that something is changing. A transition of sorts, perhaps brought on by their own young families. Warren has three children with one on the way, Snoop is a father of three and Ice Cube has four.

Speaking on what motivates him today, Warren G comments, “I don’t want my kids to be without a father. I want to see my kids grow up, be in high school and college, and see them be successful. I want to see my kids have kids. I want to be a grandfather. I don’t want to be another statistic out here. That’s what motivates me to talk and say what I say.”

Both he and Snoop are involved with Pop-Warner football—Snoop is the offensive coordinator for his son Corde’s team. Ice Cube is putting out movies that portray road trips with kids *Are We There Yet?* 2005, instead of drive-bys with thugs *Boyz N the Hood* 1991. As kids, Warren and Snoop cycled influences from football, to gangs, to church and finally to music.

“As you can see, the music won,” says Warren. “I wanted to play football but I was F@#@ing up in school. When asked what the hardest thing about being a father himself is, he states, “Being a father, my weakness is having to give them a whoopin’. It hurts me, but I gotta do it.”

Almost everyone has a day where they feel like throwing in the towel and moving on—we asked Warren if he ever feels like quitting. “All the time,” he laughs. “Seriously, sometimes I get frustrated when you got people that you help start in the game and then they turn around and charge you \$150,000 to be on your album? That’s frustrating. I’m not going to spit any names but you can’t let stuff like that get you down, you got to use it as motivation to keep going and put out

something hot.”

Will Warren be able to generate enough steam to turn his latest project to platinum? That remains to be seen. What is evident is that the years of experience in the game have taught him to be determined and confident. He rhymes in the track *Make It Do What It Do*.

I helped start this thang, these suckas
act like they forgot my name
But without the G, you can't spell the game
So it's impossible not to have me in it
It's not gangsta unless it has the G in it.
His manager and Uncle Wron G comments,

“Things get hard for everyone at some point. The mark of a superstar, the mark of a champion, the mark of a hero is that if they loose ground they will go back for it and get it. And they will sign their own checks.”

Today Warren still likes his cars, his homes, his jewelry and his toys, but his flossin' priorities have big business on top. Warren smiles big as he states: “Flossin', as a black man, is being able to own your own corporation, a humongous corporation.”

Warren G is still riding, still regulating and still evolving.



Right: Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg and Warren G kickin' it on the set.



B Real of Cypress Hill.



Snoop on the Green set.



L to R: John "Big Bubba" Washington, Ice Cube and Aaron Scott- Liquid Assets.

photos Clinton.H.Wallace/Photomundo

B Real

Formula for Success:

"Be yourself and say what is in your heart and hopefully people accept whatever that is. If you fall, you have to get up. I could have let myself crumble but I got up, got back on the horse, and tried again. That's what it is all about."

Warren G

Formula for Success:

"Keep your head on right and have good people in your corner. I consult with my father, my uncle, Dre and people who I consider family. Read, look, watch and listen. Keep pushing and don't let nothing stop you from succeeding in what you want to do in life. Then once you get that deal, make sure that you take your money and invest just incase you have a rainy day."

Ice Cube

Formula for Success:

"Be determined. You got to have a plan, everything starts with a plan and projections. See where you want to be and figure out how to get there. You know when I first started all I wanted to do was rap. I wasn't thinking about none of this other stuff but I used to say at the end of the year I want to be here and then I'd try to figure out how do I get to the next step. That was when I started producing and then it just kind of lead to other things. To this day, at the beginning of the year, I come up with a plan on where I want to be at the end of the year and then throughout the year I figure out how I am going to get there. That is one of the keys to success being determined and not letting nothing stop you."

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Terrence Howard Has It. Sustaining Power



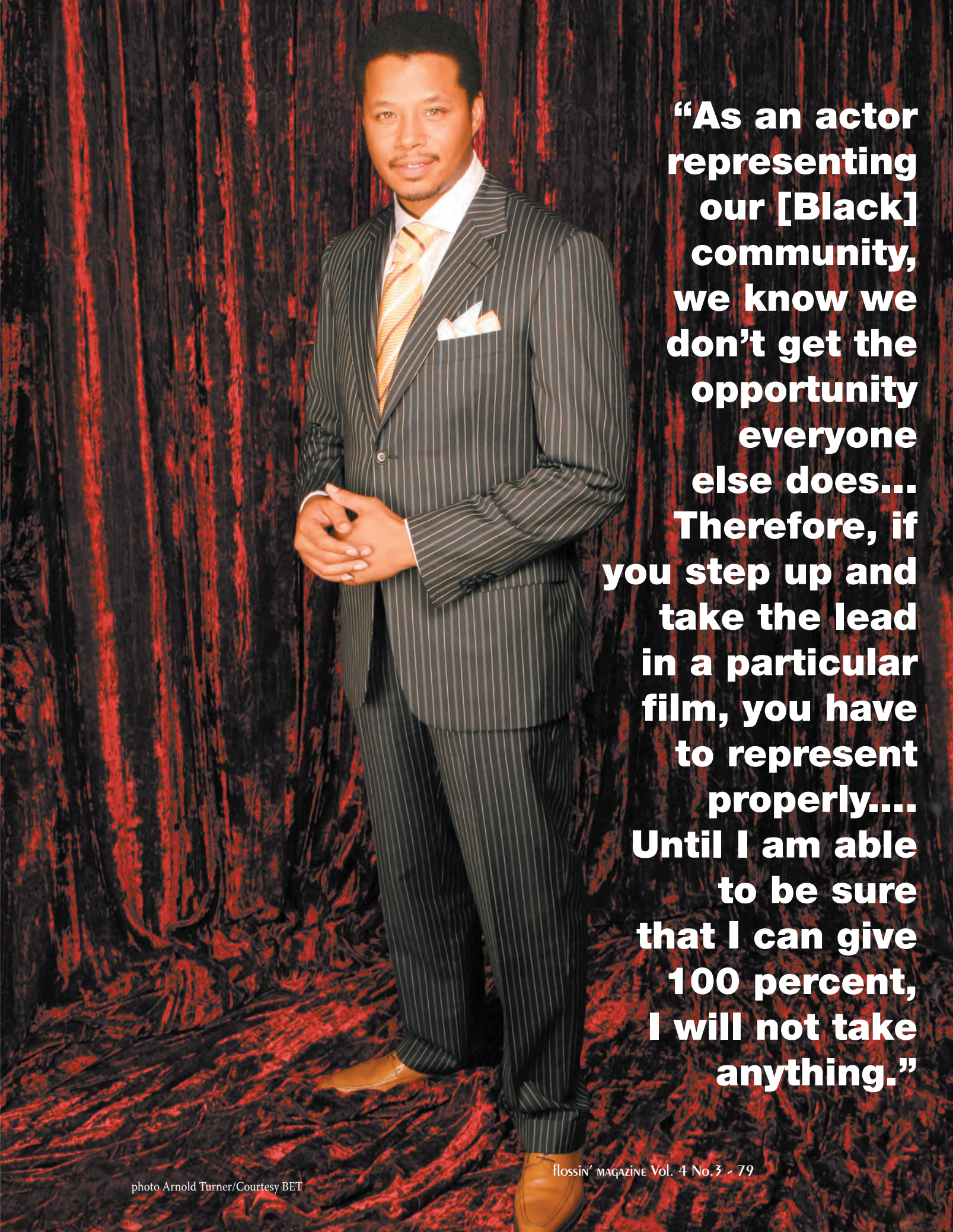
Get Rich or Die Tryin''s Terrence Howard's seventh movie role in 2005. Howard plays Bama, a loose cannon that causes some serious problems for the starring character, Marcus, played by Calvin "50 Cent" Jackson. The movie is described as, "a tale of an inner-city drug dealer who turns away from crime to pursue his passion, rap music," according to a Paramount Pictures representative. "It is based loosely upon the real life of 50 Cent." Howard's explosive popularity at the box office this year and Jackson's current domination of gangster rap make this movie a noteworthy event.

Always closely connected with the hip-hop scene, Howard created a huge buzz earlier this summer with his star performance in *Hustle and Flow*, in which he starred opposite another Grammy Award rapper, Ludacris. Howard, who actually sang some of the songs for the film's soundtrack, also appeared a few years back in an Ashanti video, playing the sexy scoundrel who cheated on her but that she could not seem to let walk out of her life.

Howard seems to have built his successful film career in Hollywood by playing hard to get. He refused the role of D-Jay twice

before finally buying into John Singleton's *Hustle and Flow*, the film many think will launch him to the elite level of fellow black American actors like Morgan, Samuel, Denzel, and of course, the newly christened Jamie.

In 2002 he refused to read for a role director Greg Hoblit insisted would be perfect for him. In fact, he agreed only to have "talks", in an effort to save face. During the conversation, however, he was persuaded to take the role of Lt. Lincoln A. Scott, in the heartfelt drama *Hart's War*. Although he gave a stellar performance, Howard admitted he



“As an actor representing our [Black] community, we know we don’t get the opportunity everyone else does... Therefore, if you step up and take the lead in a particular film, you have to represent properly.... Until I am able to be sure that I can give 100 percent, I will not take anything.”



tried to sabotage his involvement, while later acknowledging that he was glad he took the role. Then there was the self-inflicted pay cut Howard took in 1995 when he turned down a German miniseries and accepted a small role in *Mr. Holland's Opus*. He later said that the mentoring he received from the film's star, Richard Dreyfuss, ended up making that decision priceless.

Whatever the technique and discernment power Howard wields in choosing his roles, his bright green eyes keep lighting up the screens year after year. His face and sexy demeanor drive his adoring female fans to the theaters; and his edgy characters are a big draw for the men, such as the potential role of Joe Louis in Spike Lee's new biopic, which Howard is rumored to be a top candidate for.

When recently fielding questions for reporters in Hollywood he spoke on the concerns of role choices and his nineteen plus years in the biz. "As an actor representing our [black] community, we know we don't get the opportunity everyone else does," states Howard. "Therefore, if you step up and take the lead in a particular film, you have to represent properly. You have to be able to do the research and make sure that it is a success, even if you have to put your own blood and sweat-equity into it. Until I am able to be sure that I can give 100 percent, I will not take anything. I take my responsibility very seriously."

Howard explained an example of his research technique during an Internet question and answer session. Asked how he did his research for playing a pimp in *Hustle and Flow*, Howard replied, "It took three years to get the financing for the film, so during that time I interviewed 123 pimps, 78 prostitutes and a number of strippers. I didn't ask them, 'What is it like being a pimp?' or 'What is your day like?' I asked them 'How did this happen to you?' and 'Why do you keep doing this?' When I am speaking to your spirit,

“I was struggling early on in my life and I was asking myself questions about what I wanted to do. It turned out to be acting, so I thought, I’m going to pursue it to the fullest and be courageous with it and take a chance. And now, I have to listen to myself and trust in my inner voice, my muse.”

it is your spirit and not your mouth that is going to answer back to me. Some part of your spirit is going to register. In every one of them, you could see it in their spirit that something painful had happen to them. That broke my heart.”

With about two decades of experience as an actor, it is ironic that people are calling Howard the next big up-and-coming star. More appropriate may be to say Howard is more grown-up than up-and-coming. He is now back with his wife and three children after separating for some admittedly “wild” years. At 36 years of age, as is typical of many adults his age, it would seem he has come through his own mid-life crisis truly enlightened. He admits that this happened when he learned that others could not get out

of your way until you get out of your own way first. Meaning, if you do not take the time to understand yourself, how can others get you? It is a lesson that those looking to stretch themselves mentally may want to explore.

Howard leaves reporters and fans with these parting thoughts of advice: “Strive for something that is bigger than you are and push yourself to accomplish it, always looking for something greater than anything that you have ever accomplished before.”

As he walked off stage, no entourage gathered around him and neither publicist nor manager clamored to protect him, he simply slicked smoothly and solely to the side exit. Gone, but most assuredly not for long.



They've hustled their music in the true sense of the word hustlers. Their resume' extends from, performing on the streets of downtown, to cities and states across the U.S. and Canada. This female duo made up of Toni Hill and Syndel, otherwise known as "Sirens Echo" are staking their claim in the world of hip-hop.

"Our music definitely has an under-laying spiritual theme on a lot of levels," says Hill. "It definitely has a message to the women, of empowerment-to help encourage and inspire them be and become greater than what they are. Our music shares a message of hope. We've been through things that other women have been through, or are probably going to go through, if they're younger. That's why we're able to talk about alcoholism, drug abuse, rape and other issues that women are probably going to go against in their life-time, and to be okay talking about that. We also want to send a message to the youth because they definitely are the future. We call to them to step up their game and realize who they are, because they are the next leaders. They're going to have to fill in some shoes."

Their name was derived from Greek mythology, where Sirens were part human, part bird. The Sirens lived on a rocky island in the middle of the sea singing melodies so beautiful that sailors passing by couldn't resist getting closer to them. Following the sound of the sirens music, the sailors would steer their boats towards them or even jump in the water to get closer. Either way, it always ended in disaster on the rocks.

Echo was a mountain nymph who, over affairs of the heart, pined away until only her voice remained. These ladies have assured me that it is not their intention to allure men into peril with their music.

As we all know, for the most part the hip-hop genre is a male dominated realm, but these ladies are holding their own. "I think it's because we're comfortable with what we do, what we have to say and how we want to say it," says Syndel. "We don't have to remind you of someone else or fit a stereotype. Our music comes from the heart, the spirit, the soul, and that works for us."

Toni Hill adds, "I think it's also because we have a diverse range of music that we both come from." "Coming up she played the violin, I played the clarinet. I participated in ballet, sang in the choir and different things like that. There's a hint of a little bit of everything, so we're able to make some gumbo. We draw from a little bit of this, a little bit of that, add some spice and serve it up. I think that aspect is what helps us stay unique."

While working their way through an industry where sex sells, not only do these ladies maintain a certain level of integrity in their music but in the way they portray themselves as well. You won't see them on stage half naked. The only thing they plan on dropping



photo Jeremiah Deasy

Syndel & Toni Hill of "Sirens Echo"

like it's hot, is their lyrics.

"That's not us, it's not our style," says Syndel. "We feel it's sexier when you have your clothes on and you leave something for the imagination."

"We like to feel sexy but the whole shaking your ass, hoochie momma thing, no!" says Syndel. "We don't do that. We don't know if people would take us serious if we went that route."

"I don't think we could do the music that we do without a message," says Syndel. "I just don't see what the point would be. Our music has always had a message, from day one. It's kind of been our goal."

"Music is one of the most powerful vehicles that there is, in terms of social change, etcetera," says Toni Hill. "Marvin Gaye and different artists like James Brown's 'I'm Black and I'm Proud,' from back in the day, they used music as a vehicle to propel whatever message that there was. Old negro spirituals were very powerful, songs that were used in terms of the movement; 'We Shall Overcome,' things of that nature. When you have strong music and it has a base, something behind it, more than just making a song, for the hell of making a song. People can feel that."

RED RAY FRAZIER movin' on up



photo Buko

I'm not sure if it's rock, soul, blues, pop, gospel or something brand new. To tell the truth I can't quite call it, but whatever name you tag on to it, it's definitely hot. It's the music of Ray Frazier.

When I first witnessed this phenomenon, I will admit I was flabbergasted. My first thought when he sat down on a stool and plugged in an acoustic guitar was "what is this cat about to do, play some country music?" Talk about a pleasant surprise, from the first strum of his guitar to the last note he sang he had my complete attention. The music of "Red Ray" Frazier, as he's called, is hard to put into words; it's something you just have to hear for yourself.

Ray is just coming off of working on a project called Tin Drums/ Soul Kids, produced by Kevin Salem. The record's purpose is to introduce and expose old soul music to children as an alternative to *Old McDonald* or Barney the dinosaur, tunes like, *If You're Happy and You Know it Clap Your Hands*, and all the those other childhood sing-along songs that have been around for ages. Other artists scheduled to participate in this project are The Bangles, Macy Gray, Donovan and Chocolate Genius to name a few. It features classics songs like *Lean On Me*, *Mustang Sally*, *Stand By Me*, *How Sweet it is*, *ABC* and *Express Yourself*. It will be released by V2 Records.

Ray has had record deals with two major labels: Epic and A&M. His music career carried him to the northwest after the September 11, 2001 tragedy, which he says made him realize that maybe it was time for a change from the New York scene. As Ray puts it "I packed up my bags, got my shiny black boots together, scraped up a few shackles and moved across the country."

With such an extensive background in the music industry

some may consider a move from the Mecca of music and fashion in New York to Portland Ore. a step backwards. After being in one particular band for several years and doing what started to seem like the same thing over and over, Ray found it to be a welcome change. "A fresh start so to speak" said Ray.

Ray found out quickly that though Portland is a beautiful city, it can have a pretty ugly reality for the new kid on the block when it comes to its music scene. This gave Ray a reminder that he wasn't at home. Like the new kid at school, no one wanted to play with him. So Ray did what any New Yorker would have done, he found a way to survive. He taught himself to play the guitar and write songs in a style and fashion different than that which he had usually done. Ray says he isn't bitter about the fact that no band in town was willing to back him up at first. He says he's actually thankful because if not for that experience he would have never learned to play the guitar. "Back home I know plenty of great musicians who can play all sorts of instruments, so why would I have to play guitar if I sucked at it?" said Ray. The beauty in his learning to play was that it came out of necessity and it would not have happened had he not moved to Portland.

Ray also credits coming out west with giving him the courage to do things he would have been scared to death to do back home. Things like being out on stage by himself, relaying the message and being an open wound. These things are now his reality and he can take them anywhere. "Sometimes it's better to be from New York than in New York," said Ray.

His music has a message; it speaks about him and his life experiences. Ray says Right now is a purely honest and innocent period for him musically. In the mid 90s he was in a group called the Funky Poets, made up of his brother and two cousins. They spoke on a lot of social political issues. Ray recalls it as a pretty cool concept and a beautiful thing that came very honestly. "It was at a time where the now called Neo-Soul genre wasn't really that hot, so you could say we were a little ahead of our time," said Ray. From there he went on to a black rock band: Mosaic. Mosaic's music was partially about social injustices but no matter what the subject matter the style was always hard and in your face.

Getting started on the current chapter of his musical life, Ray is able to pull it back and make his music as subtle as he sees fit and to talk about emotions as softly or as loudly as he chooses. "That's the message that I'm relaying—it's Yo man, whether we talk about it or not we're all going through the same stuff," he said. "Whether we're brave enough to talk about it in front of people is a different story. I'm not saying that I'm showing bravado, I'm just releasing so that I don't go crazy. This is my catharsis and I hope I don't embarrass myself in the process."

When it comes to his music, Ray knows that you can't please everyone and that when you speak your mind someone's feelings will be hurt. "We're in a funny game as singers and musicians because when we put it out there, we are subject to all kinds of criticism and I'm cool with that. Otherwise I'd just sing in the shower," Ray said.

Sean "Diddy" Combs' Bad Boy TV and Russell Simmons have teamed up with MTV to bring the first hip-hop reality sitcom to television. *Run's House* takes a lighthearted look at the life and family of Reverend Run of RUN DMC. The show focuses on Rev. Run, his wife and their five children.

Recently, Reverend Run had a spiritual visit from the late Jam Master Jay who reminded him of some money that was owed to him from their group. He soon found that Jay was indeed owed about \$16,000 and gave it to his estate. This is sure to soon be highlighted in an episode of "Run's House."

Oprah will celebrate two decades of being on television with a DVD that highlights her show's most memorable moments. The multi-disc compilation will feature candid behind-the-scene footage and interviews with the queen of talk TV as she reflects on her broadcasting career.

"The Oprah Winfrey Show: 20th Anniversary DVD collection," which will be available in November will benefit her Angel Network. The public charity formed in 1998, was established to encourage people around the world to make a difference in the lives of others. To date, Oprah's Angel Network has raised more than \$27 million.

[oprahangelnetwork.org]

Later this year Oprah will go from DVD to film as her production company, Harpo Films, teams up with Selma Hayek and Toni Morrison to adapt her novel "Paradise" into a four hour

mini-series for ABC. Hayek will star in the TV movie that revolves around the slayings of several women by a group of black men in the town of Ruby, Okla.

Dave Chappelle is back! After two successful seasons, and on the verge of starting a third with a new two-season \$50 million contract, and selling the #1

all-time TV show on DVD ever, Chappelle flew the coop. The comedian jetted off to Africa for a "spiritual retreat." Plenty of speculations were going around from mental breakdowns to drug problems. None were ever confirmed; he simply felt that the show just got to be too much. With that behind him, Chappelle is

now back in the spotlight and on tour. He says he is perfectly content doing so after walking away from his show on Comedy Central. As for what's next...his movie Dave Chappelle's Block Party premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in September, featuring Chappelle, Mos Def, Kanye West, Common and a reunion performance by The Fugees.

Chappelle stand-up dates, according to his spokesperson:

- 11/12 - San Antonio, TX @ Municipal Auditorium
- 11/13 - Austin, TX @ Frank Erwin Center
- 11/14 - Denver, CO @ Comedy Works
- 11/15 - Denver, CO @ Comedy Works
- 11/16 - Denver, CO @ Comedy Works
- 11/17 - Salt Lake City, UT @ Jon M Huntsman Center
- 11/18 - Reno, NV @ Silver Legacy Casino
- 11/19 - Las Vegas, NV @ Caesars
- 11/20 - Tucson, AZ @ Anselmo Amphitheater

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by JoSonja Watson



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It's a Rap

by: Troy Atterberry



“Murder, drugs and guns existed in the world way before the first verse of any rap song was ever even conceived...so why is it that rap music gets such a bad rap?”

I'm sure when DJ Kool Herc introduced an old Jamaican tradition to New York he had no idea what an impact it would have. This style, which was originally dubbed MC'ing, was adapted from an old Jamaican custom known as “toasting,” where artists would freestyle over the instrumental portion of records. Herc took it a step further, spinning records on two turntables and switching back and forth between them to create a continuous beat. With the incorporation of a microphone, and call and response chants to the crowd, he gave birth to what is now known as rapping. With its fascinating new sound, the art of rap spread like wildfire throughout the five boroughs of New York. Rap took the streets by storm and pioneers like Kool Herc, Grand Master Flash and Afrika Bambaata began a trend in the inner city that would change the world of music forever. Not only did this new art form open the doors of the music industry for young black street poets, it brought along an entire culture and it's called hip-hop.

Some 30 years after that first time “Throw your hands in the air and wave ‘em like you just don't care” was heard in a park in the Bronx, lyrics of rap songs have become comparatively different to say the least. A large portion of rap songs now are about cars, cash, good times and ho's. Since its inception, rap has gone through a course of transformations. The one most prevalent seems to be that style given the name gangsta rap.

Murder, drugs and guns existed in the world way before the first verse of any rap song was ever even conceived, let alone recorded. With that being the case, why is it that rap music gets such a bad rap these days? Granted that from as far back as NWA, all the way up to present day rappers like 50 Cent, The Game, Snoop Dogg and others--whose music is labeled as gangsta rap--have lyrics which are explicit. But is foul language really the root or cause of

society's troubles? Rappers make music about their lives and the things that surround them. They didn't create these situations.

In 1988, Compton based rap group NWA, aka “The Worlds Most Dangerous Group,” consisting of founding member Ice Cube, along with Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, MC Ren and DJ Yella, released their critically acclaimed hit song *F@#k The Police*. It was a song about police brutality and racial profiling, both of which NWA boldly spoke out against. The single enraged the FBI. They accused the group of agitating violence and revulsion against the police. NWA stated that they were merely relaying the truth about what was really taking place on the streets of LA. The single, which went gold in six weeks brought the reality of life in the hood to the attention of the general public.

Rev. Calvin Butts set out on a crusade against rap music. He preached against it and even went as far as piling up CD's, music videos, and cassettes produced by rap artists, and running over them with a truck. Though he might have made a visual statement with his actions, how effective was his ploy? The good reverend still had purchased these products in order to destroy them.

In the 1990's, C. Delores Tucker led a national campaign against rap music with violent lyrics. In 1997, she filed a lawsuit against the estate of the late Tupac Shakur over lyrics in the song *How Do You Want It*. Her lawsuit was later denied, as well as several appeals.

While it is true that several rappers have been indicted for unlawful activity, is that necessarily proof that rap music and inexcusable behavior go hand in hand? I'd have to say no. In most cases, where rappers have found themselves facing the judicial system, it has had no direct connection to their music. Guilty sometimes of bad judgement, ignorance and in some cases just plain old acting irresponsibly? Yes, but the words and music of any song, being

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directly responsible for anyone's actions is invalid. We, as able-minded human beings have to take a realistic approach to these accusations. Where in history has a case been sighted where music has literally lifted an arm, leg or controlled any other body part or action? Though I have heard tales about the music of Barry White, Teddy Pendergrass and Luther Vandross being responsible for the birth of many babies, we as people are responsible for what we do.

Let's face it, music is a form of entertainment, and rap is a large part of that multi-billion dollar a year industry. Record Companies sign artists because they choose to use words in their songs like bitch, ho, and nigga, while speaking on topics like the streets, drugs, guns and life in the hood. It generates capitol, bottom line, and music is a business. Rap music is a sizeable portion of that business, and though some still refuse to believe it, rap is no doubt here to stay.

The problem in our society today is not the music being made or the lyrics stated in them. The problem is

“While it is true that several rappers have been indicted for unlawful activity, is that necessarily proof that rap music and inexcusable behavior go hand in hand?”

that somewhere along the line, between working two jobs or hustling and grinding to make ends meet, or just trying to survive in an ever changing world, we raised a generation of latch-key children who were left home to basically raise themselves. Children in their pre-teen years have left to become independent and self sufficient at a much earlier age then required decades ago. Today's youth have been left unsupervised, to be raised by the world around them with television celebrities as role models.

Neither hip-hop nor any other genre of music can be held responsible for the actions of a generation of seemingly troubled youth. As a society, we need to bridge the gap between ourselves and the youth of today. Many parents, in an attempt to understand this dilemma, have chosen to take on the roles of friends to their children, rather than figures of authority. To place the blame on recording artists because someone happened to be listening to a particular rapper's music prior to committing an act of wrong doing is irresponsible. Hip-hop is simply art imitating life. The problem is not rappers referring to females as bitches and ho's as much as it is females accepting it. And as far as the drugs, sex, guns and violence, it's all around us. And how do you tell a young brother from the hood, who's now making millions for telling stories about the world around him, to stop? Hip-hop has gone from the Hood to Hollywood. How far has the world around it come?

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MBM Entertainment presents Dionna Renee, Rache' Johnson, Myah Dillard, and Kiesha Henry. DYME is a compilation of four young ladies bred and gifted in music and performing arts. They are the epitome of youth with ages ranging from 18-21.

Dionna Renee, 20, a native from Indianapolis, Indiana, caught the eye of producer Billy Moss, CEO of MBM Entertainment Group, while he was on the road with his other act 4mula1. After hearing her voice he signed her on the spot, knowing she had the capability to lead this group. Myah Dillard, 18, a native from Los Angeles, CA, was introduced to Moss by his counterpart Benjalino, an A&R for MBM Entertainment. Impressed by Moss, with her vocals, fly look, and dancing capabilities, Myah was signed immediately. Rache' Johnson, 21, a native from Los Angeles, CA, auditioned for the group and shocked the whole MBM staff with her vocals, sexy seductive dance style, and look. Kiesha Henry, 19, a native from Los

Angeles, CA, was introduced to Moss when she submitted a tape of herself that showed her dynamic capabilities to audition for DYME. After hearing her vocals he knew that she was the missing component to DYME.

The concept for this demo is called "DYME Secrets". DYME represents the hot look that Victoria Secret portrays and captivates sex appeal through their music such as:

1. 1st night
2. Let it be me
3. Stay home
4. Serious

While listening to these sultry sounds you will grasp an understanding that women are passionate and their secrets are treasures.

DYME possesses the high energy, style, and poise that the music industry needs right now. This group is destined to join the ranks of multi-platinum artists. Dionna, Rache', Myah, and Kiesha are gracefully joined together with talents that they desire to share with the world.

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Oregon Native American Chamber of Commerce

featured left to right: Don Sampson, Executive Director of the Umatilla Tribe; Tom Hampson, Executive Director of Native American Business Network; Janie Millican, President of Oregon Native American Chamber of Commerce; John "Bubba" Washington, Editor in Chief of Flossin' Magazine; Herb Frickie, Board member for Oregon Native American Chamber of Commerce.

THE OREGON NATIVE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE held its first annual gathering at Montgomery Park this September. The event helped raise funds to support the Scholarship Program for Native American students. Since 2002, fourteen students have been awarded \$1,000 deposited directly into their school accounts for use on their tuition and books. The event also helped create awareness for the Chamber's involvement with the Native American Communities. Chamber President Janie Millican, also a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation of Okalahoma, commented: "The tribes are doing business with other Native American business owners. As little as five years ago they would always outsource to the 'big companies' and never consider smaller Native American owned business. But we are turning the corner on this and developing more trust and business between nations."

For more information, visit the Chamber's website at :

www.onacc.org.

Traditional drummers cry out a spiritual chant as the color guard presents the flags of the Indian Nation and the United States.





the DRUMMER'S TOY STORE

- **Rhythm Traders** brings the spirit of drumming from **Africa**

STORY BY MARC FAIRFAX STEVENS

*A Ghanaian
hard at work
crafting a
drum by hand.*

In the heart of the City of Roses, Portland, Ore., Rhythm Traders is a multidimensional percussion store that has roots and a mission beyond that of the average instrument peddlers. With instruments, instruction, outreach and a social conscious to boot, Brad Boynton and his crew of percussive masters have created an environment not just for musicians, but for everyone, regardless of race, color, creed, gender or age.

Whether you're a serious, internationally recognized musician, or a beginner who just wants to bang around and make noise, Rhythm Traders has something for you. Furthermore,

they have a comprehensive stock of drumming supplies and materials to make drums: and if your instrument should break, they have a full repair facility as well.

After studying anthropology, Boynton spent a year in Ghana with the Ashanti tribe. While there, Brad learned every facet of drumming and drum making from the tribesmen. Starting with a log and ending with the finished product, Brad in fact "graduated" and was given an amazing opportunity. The villagers decided that Brad would be the best conduit for the tribe to sell their drums in America. Thus, Rhythm Traders was born.

Now in its 15th year of operation and at its

second location, the Ashanti knew what Brad could not have known: when you have the spirit of the drum deep inside, anything is possible.

Throughout the world, drumming is used for more than just making music. In Africa, drumming has been used for centuries to communicate, declare war, celebrate life and death, and to motivate workers in the fields. In Cuba and throughout the Caribbean, drumming is an integral part of the mystic religion, Santeria.

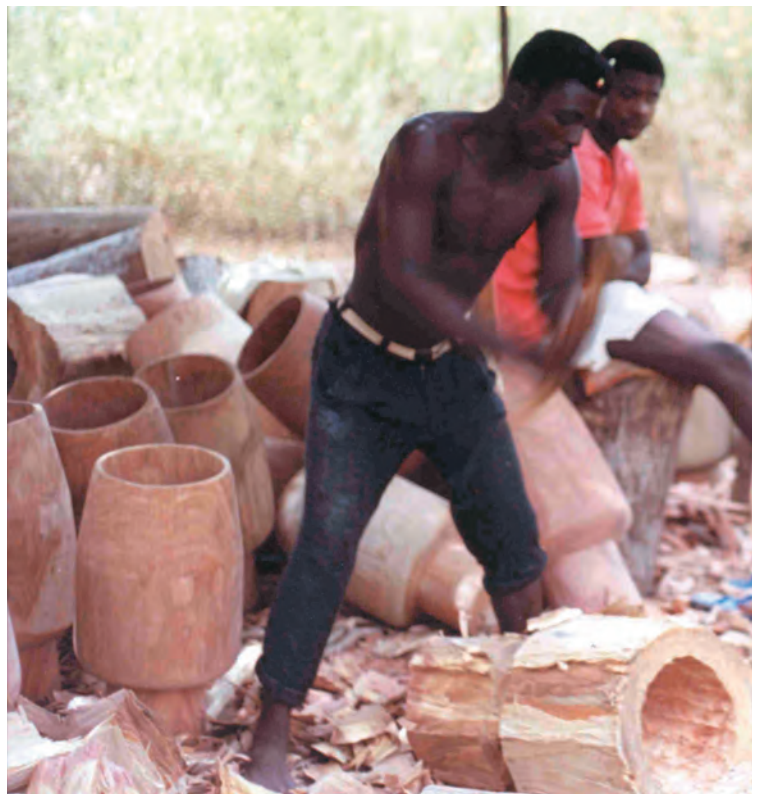
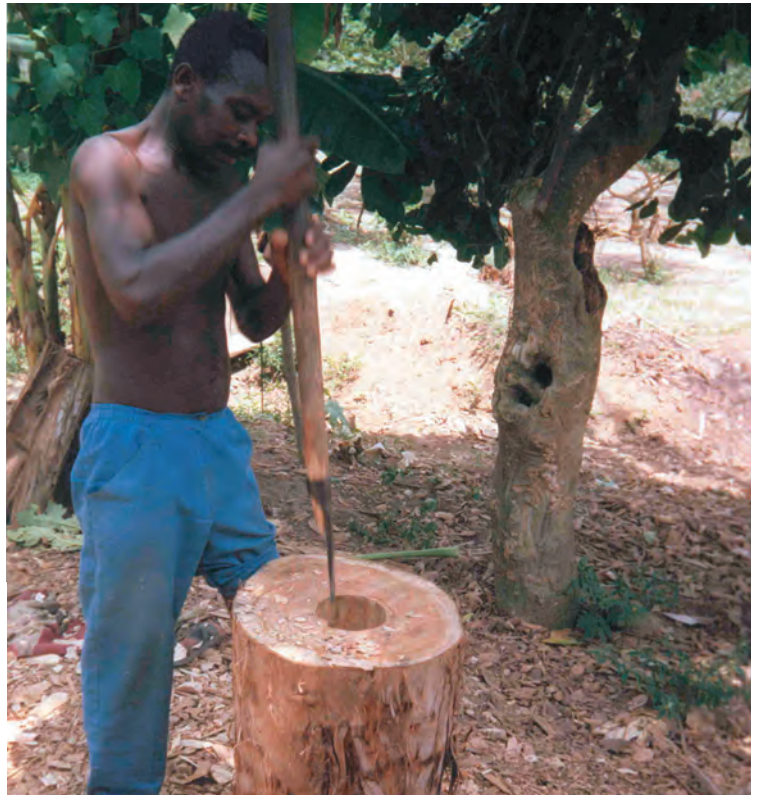
Here in America, studies have found drumming can be an aid in therapy for those with mental and physical maladies. Alzheimer's patients are receptive to drumming and more companies are using drumming as a replacement for retreats, cocktail parties or even a round of golf.

Through drumming, individuals can come

“Studies have found... that Alzheimer patients are receptive to drumming, and more and more, companies use drumming as a replacement for retreats, cocktail parties or a round of golf.”

together as a group and learn team building, sometimes exposing vulnerabilities. Drumming is indeed the great social equalizer. Anyone can sit down with the most primitive of percussion instruments and make a sound—put 20 people together and make a beautiful rhythmic symphony. In almost any major city in the world, you can find a park with a drum circle. Truly, percussion is an international equalizer.

The staff of Rhythm Traders travels the globe extensively to learn, teach, discover and spread the word of percussion. If they have it in their store, one of the staff can play it, teach you to play it, and fix it when it's broken. Education is the cornerstone of the Rhythm Traders mission, and weekly lessons, clinics, as well as special classes by master percussionists from around the world all can be had within these four walls. From age eight to 80, no one is too young to learn to play. All you need is desire and to feel the beat in your soul.



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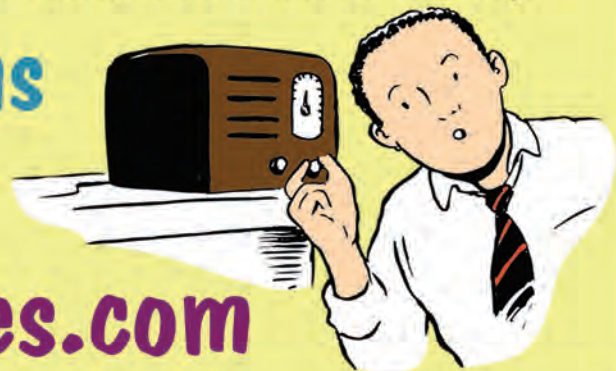
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Lance Armstrong with fans before the ride



Seven-time Lance Tour de France winner Armstrong and five-time Tour de France winner Eddie Merckx of Belgium with local riders

photo Buko

LIVESTRONG benefit ride



photo courtesy of Lance Armstrong Foundation

survivor after the ride

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for more information visit: www.livestrong.org and www.ohsucancer.com

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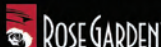
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