

Peabody, GSU graduate to lead alternative school in Avoyelles Parish



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM – Principal Kevin Johnson listens to a student's explanation of why she's been assigned to the Avoyelles Parish Alternative School. Johnson, who had been at Arthur F. Smith Middle Magnet School, is a first year principal.

New building. New parish. New assignment.

Everything is new for Kevin Johnson, who is the new principal at Avoyelles Parish Alternative School in Mansura.

That's OK with Johnson. He's a military man who is always ready for a challenge and the next assignment.

Johnson is in charge of the Alternative School, which houses the Pre-GED program and ALERT, a program that allows students to attend school while being suspended or expelled.

He started the new gig on July 22, and he's done just about everything there is to do at the school. With the help of some former students, he's spruced up the building that had been a storage facility. He also cut the grass.

Johnson has a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education

from Grambling State University and a Master's degree in Education Leadership from Northwestern State University.

Johnson is no stranger to Avoyelles Parish. He once taught middle school in the Fifth Ward. In Rapides Parish, he taught at Alma Redwine Elementary, Horseshoe Elementary and most recently Arthur F. Smith Middle Magnet School.

"My goal for this school is to decrease the dropout rate, stop the revolving door of students and to change the school's image," Johnson said.

The Pre-GED program is designed for students who are at least 16 years old, who have failed the LEAP test at least three times and who are too old for their current grade.



NEW PRINCIPAL – Principal Kevin Johnson of Alexandria talks with a parent of a student who attends the Avoyelles Parish Alternative School in Mansura.

Photos by Sherri L. Jackson



DOWN TIME – Principal Kevin Johnson relaxes in his sparsely furnished office at the Avoyelles Parish Alternative School. He began his first at the school on July 22.

Spotlight on Religion



Photo by Mary Hollingsworth

WELL DONE – Mayor Jacques Roy congratulates the Rev. Clarence Dupar for a successful Youth Revival that the United Educational Missionary Baptist Association hosted in May. Roy presented Dupar, who is the Association's president, with a Proclamation.

New Hope celebrates church anniversary Aug. 17

Greater New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, 630 Jackson St., Alexandria, will celebrate its 31st Church Anniversary at 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 17.

The theme is "United We Stand," and Pastor William Dearborne of Union and St. John Baptist churches in Lecompte, will be the speaker.

The Rev. Robert M. Butler is pastor.

Monthly quartet musical to be held at New Bethel

The Concert Supremes will be

the guest group at New Bethel Community Baptist Church's musical at 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 23.

For information call Ann Fluker at (318) 794-1412.

Prayer Workshop to be held at Zion Hill on Aug. 23

Zion Hill Church's Prayer Ministry will present, "Praying Effectively for the Lost," from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 23.

Bro. Lee Thomas of West Lake will be the speaker. He has a Master of Divinity degree in Religious Education from Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

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Community organizations motivate, encourage students and parents with words and deeds



Photos by Sherri L. Jackson

CUPID SHUFFLE – Capt. Robert Floyd, a Rapides Parish Sheriff’s Office DARE officer, and Terry Horowitz, assistant principal at Phoneix Magnet Elementary School, dance with children attending the annual School Supply Giveaway, sponsored by the Pineville Concerned Citizens and VFW Post 1736 Ladies Auxiliaries. The eighth annual event held at Kees Park Community Center was designed to motivate children and encourage them to have a successful school year. The event was one of three held Saturday, Aug. 9. Alexandria attorney Ingrid Johnson provided school supplies to more than 500 students at a park in the Sonia Quarters. Johnson said she saves a portion of her personal money each month throughout the year to purchase the supplies. Also, there was a giveaway at the Bolton Community Center. (Bottom left) Children and parents sit on the floor and line the walls while waiting for their back-to-school goodies. (Bottom right) Rhonda Dickey and Maxine Pickens members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Pineville Chapter help man the registration table at the Kees Park Community Center.



Community, Alexandria's public servants join forces in annual National Night Out activities



Photos by Eugene Sutherland

GET READY – Alexandria Police Lt. Kenneth McCall holds his nose as he prepares to hit the water in the “dunking” booth at the National Night Out event held Aug. 5 at the Public Safety Complex. More photos on Page 8.



FIRE SAFETY – Children stand outside of the Alexandria Fire Department's safety trailer posted at the Public Safety Complex. The fire department was one of the hosts for the annual National Night Out event.

Eugene Sutherland
The Light

As she stared down the 30 or so feet of mountain before her, 7-year-old Hillary Owens was resolute.

She would conquer this challenge and the initial fear she'd felt about climbing.

And she did. In its own way, the Phoenix Magnet School pupil's victory over the miniature mountain symbolized what National Night Out 2008, the event at which she'd attended with scores of other youths and their parents at the Alexandria Public Safety Complex, is all about.

“It was really hard at first, but I was able to get better the more I tried,” Hillary said. “It felt good to finally make it ... I'm having fun doing everything. I love the jumping and dunking the police officers. They are really nice.”

Music to the ears of Alexandria Police Chief Darren Coutee, who said his department's participation in National Night Out is a key to community relations. The Alexandria Police Department and Alexandria Fire Department hosted the event.

“Something like National Night Out helps to show the kids the negative things they see on TV and in movies about police are not true,” Coutee said. “It's a way to show them what these officers are really like and that they are here for them. They see the other side. If we can do this while they're young, it's great.”

Coutee said he was overwhelmed by the turnout, which he said exceeded 500. The anticipated crowd total was about 250 people, he said.

The chief said events such as National Night Out, one of a number of such events held since the Force began its community policing program, are critical in establishing trust between children and those who serve and protect them.

Coutee credited the Boys & Girls Club, area DARE officers, Louisiana State Police troopers and Alexandria firefighters for their parts in making the event possible.

Among the attractions were a mini-mountain, Jupiter Jump, helicopter, police motorcycles and a “safe house,” in which youngsters learned about safety tips. But the longest lines belonged to what might be called “Dunk-A-Cop.”

Children and their parents took

turns attempting to hit a target that caused several good-natured officers to be dropped into a small pool.

Among those participants in blue was Lt. Kenneth McCall, who said seeing the event's growth over the past several years was well worth a few dousings.

“It's a great thing,” McCall said. “And it's getting bigger each year. I'm seeing lots more officers taking part. It allows kids to see there's another side to us and they get to do things like dunk us in water. You see the kids smile, and you see what it's about.”

Kids like 10-year-old Keon Veal, who was all aglow upon checking out the interior of the actual helicopter that sat just outside the police motorcade.

The Alexandrian was effusive in his praise of National Night Out and the kindness of the officers.

“I love it!,” he said. “I've never been to anything like this and I've never done anything like this. The policemen are really cool and you can tell they like kids. I'm really glad we came.”

Some grownups, like Hillary's grandmother, Metra Barraka, said the National Night Out doubled as both a positive police-community function and good family event. Barraka also happens to be the local Boys & Girls Club's operations director.

“It's so important, because a lot of kids don't know about law enforcement,” Barraka said.

“A lot of these kids don't really know about law enforcement. They see lots of negative things. This lets them know these are real people and nice people.”

“Our officers have been very involved in the community, especially since they began community policing.”

Barraka also pointed to a Boys & Girls Club event which drew the participation from members of the Alexandria Police Department, Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office and Magnolia State Peace Officers Association.

National Night Out is an international initiative designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for anti-crime programs, strengthen

Night Out
Continued on Page 15

CAP board hires new executive director

Jim Clinton, recognized as one of the nation's leaders in economic development, quality-of-life advancement and regional prosperity, is the new chief executive officer of Cenla Advantage Partnership officials announced in a press conference held Aug. 4.

"This is a major triumph for Central Louisiana," said Mike Madison, CAP board chairman.

Clinton, who is executive director of North Carolina-based Southern Growth Policies Board, will begin his new position on Sept. 15.

"Susan and I have both spent the majority of our lives in Louisiana, so this is very much a homecoming for us. I believe that Central Louisiana has enormous potential. It is already a great place to live and, working together, we can make it even better," he said.

CAP leaders said they were thrilled to be able to recruit Clinton. He is regarded as the South's leader in quality-of-life and prosperity issues and has more than 30 years experience in public policy.

It's a perfect choice for CAP, whose mission is to generate better jobs and more economic opportunity in Central Louisiana. CAP does that by: helping existing companies grow and expand; starting new companies; and supporting strategic recruitment efforts.

CAP's creation was a joint effort by Central Louisiana's private sector leaders and The Rapides Foundation. CAP is governed by a board of business leaders throughout Central Louisiana.

"We are excited to bring Jim to Central Louisiana," said Joe Rosier, president and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "His expertise is beyond compare. His experience will help CAP continue its work to improve Central Louisiana's economic growth and prosperity."

Alexandria Realtor Rod Noles, who was on the steering committee that led to the formation of CAP, has known Clinton for nearly two decades. "Jim's a scholar, he's a gentleman, and he's well connected throughout the United States. The community is lucky to land somebody with this much talent and this many contacts. Jim living here is going to make Central Louisiana a better place," Noles said.

Clinton most recently led the Southern Growth Policies Board, a non-partisan public policy think tank based in North Carolina. The board develops and advances visionary

economic development policies by providing a forum for partnership and dialogue among a diverse cross-section of the Southern region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community-development sectors. This unique public-private partnership is devoted to strengthening the South's economy and creating the highest possible quality of life. It is supported by memberships from 13 Southern states, including Louisiana.

Former Louisiana Gov. Buddy Roemer applauded CAP for recruiting Clinton. "In Jim Clinton, you have the best. I'm ready to follow his leadership when he develops a business plan for the area. Well done, Cenla."

Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry, who described Clinton as "an economic development guru" and "government policy genius," said, "Cenla Advantage Partnership is very fortunate indeed to have won his services."

Clinton previously was president of the Louisiana Partnership for Technology and Innovation and president of the Gulf South Research Institute.

He also served in a variety of state government positions in Louisiana and was lead author of the plan that reorganized Louisiana's executive branch from more than 250 governmental units into 20 principal departments. He managed the Louisiana Superdome's transition from public to private management.

Clinton serves on the boards of directors for the Southern Arts Federation and the National Policy Consensus Initiative. He serves on advisory boards for the Trans-Atlantic Technology and Training Alliance and the Institute for Rural Journalism and Policy Issues. In 2007, Alabama Gov. Bob Riley appointed Clinton as a Special Advisor to the Executive Council of the Rural Alabama Action Commission. The commission works with state and local officials to recruit industries, engage local development groups and work with a broad range of citizens on economic development efforts and other activities to improve the quality of life in rural areas.

Federal Communications Chairman Kevin Martin appointed Clinton to serve a two-year term as a member of the FCC's Consumer



NEW CHIEF – Jim Clinton, the new chief executive officer of Cenla Advantage Partnerships, talk with Mike Madison, chairman of CAP's board, and Victor Kirk, former executive director of Rapides Primary Health Care Center. Clinton, a native of Alexandria, is leaving the Southern Growth Policies Board of North Carolina. He begins his new duties on Sept. 15.

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CAP

Continued on Page 15

*Average savings based on information reported nationally by new Allstate auto customers for policies written in 2007. Actual savings will vary.
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Comings and goings in Rapides Parish schools for the 2008-09 school year

The Rapides Parish School Board in its Aug. 5 meeting considered the following personnel changes:

RESIGNATIONS

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

▸ Stephen Allgood, assistant principal, LEAD Center

TEACHERS

▸ Gwendolyn Andrews, Glenmora High
 ▸ Lisa Bellow, W.O. Hall
 ▸ Alexa Bollinger, Peabody Magnet High
 ▸ Kimberly Brinkerhoff, Martin Park
 ▸ Joe Brown, Rapides High
 ▸ Todd Burgess, Brame Middle
 ▸ Leslie Despino, Rapides High
 ▸ Candice Frost, J.I. Barron
 ▸ Kenosha Green, Peabody Montessori
 ▸ Jill Giordano, Horseshoe
 ▸ Barbara Hillman, Alma Redwine
 ▸ Howard Jackson III, Rapides High
 ▸ Kevin Johnson, Arthur F. Smith
 ▸ Yolen Lemelle, Arthur F. Smith
 ▸ Anthony Milner, Northwood
 ▸ Cheryl Reech, Pineville Junior High
 ▸ Vaydra Reeves, Pineville Elementary
 ▸ Camille Robinson, Horseshoe
 ▸ James Shahan, Brame Middle
 ▸ Sarah St. Romain, Northwood
 ▸ Kimberly Valair, Brame Middle
 ▸ Kimberly Wilson, Acadian

LIBRARIANS

▸ Cherry Donaldson, Rosenthal Elementary
 ▸ Deanna Jackson, Plainview High

PARAPROFESSIONALS

▸ Lissette James, J.I. Barron
 ▸ Joanie Lemelle, Arthur F. Smith
 ▸ Nicole Lifford, Lessie Moore
 ▸ Shelia Marcus, Louisiana Youth Challenge

FOOD TECHNICIANS

▸ Brenda Bennett, Phoenix Elementary

▸ Tonia Joseph, Rosenthal

RETIREMENTS

▸ Linda Duplan, teacher, Martin Park
 ▸ Troy Stokes, bus driver
 ▸ Nancy Wilson, bus attendant
 ▸ Caryn Chaney, teacher, Rosenthal
 ▸ Cynthia Bynog, school secretary
 ▸ Linda Long, paraprofessional, Martin Park

NEW HIRES

TEACHERS

▸ Jason Amedee, Bolton High, business
 ▸ Ladarien Amos, Oak Hill High, special education

▸ Mary Anderson, Northwood, special education
 ▸ Steven Arnold, Alexandria Middle, band
 ▸ Tamara Book, Forest Hill, third grade
 ▸ Anna Breaux, Northwood, fourth grade
 ▸ Michelle Brouillette, Northwood, first grade
 ▸ Nicole Campbell, J.I. Barron, first grade
 ▸ Jessica Carman, Northwood, fifth grade
 ▸ Katherine Cataldie, Mable Brasher, first grade
 ▸ Roy Chapman, Oak Hill High, math
 ▸ Amber Chevallier, Pineville Junior, English
 ▸ Ashley Cole, Bolton Freshman Academy
 ▸ Stephanie Coleman, Horseshoe Elementary, first grade
 ▸ Jennifer Daniel, J.I. Barron, special education
 ▸ Priya Daniel, Pineville Junior, English
 ▸ Calvin Dismuke, North Bayou, Health/PE
 ▸ Heather Dugas, Hadnot-Hayes, second grade
 ▸ Greta Eddlemon, Oak Hill Elementary, kindergarten
 ▸ Robyn Ellis, Pineville High, English
 ▸ Barbara Forest, Horseshoe, fifth grade
 ▸ Laurie Gaspard, Cherokee Elementary, special education
 ▸ Tara Gilcrease, Horseshoe, third grade
 ▸ Rachel Grimes, North Bayou, fourth grade
 ▸ Forest Grimmitt, Buckeye High, exploratory
 ▸ Melissa Grimmitt, Buckeye High, English
 ▸ Shanda Hammons, Tioga High, math
 ▸ Maggie Henderson, Alexandria Senior High, special education
 ▸ Elizabeth Holt, Rugg Elementary, kindergarten
 ▸ Terri Jensen, Pineville Elementary, fourth grade
 ▸ Carolyn Johnson, Brame Middle, English
 ▸ Deborah Johnson, Northwood, fifth grade
 ▸ Melissa Johnson, Bolton High, special education
 ▸ Willie Johnson, Martin Park, fifth grade
 ▸ Amy Beth Jones, Rugg Elementary, kindergarten

▸ Nikki LaCroix, Tioga High, science
 ▸ Kasey Leverich, Northwood, kindergarten
 ▸ Kaycee Lewis, Pineville Junior, special education
 ▸ Steven Linzay, Brame Middle, math
 ▸ Ashley Liotta, Northwood, FACS
 ▸ Jeanette Marcantel, Lessie Moore, second grade
 ▸ Julie Martin, Lessie Moore, fifth grade
 ▸ Clay Matchette, Alexandria Senior High, math
 ▸ Linda Morgan, Alma Redwine, second grade
 ▸ Doris Murphy, Alexandria Senior High, business
 ▸ Sara Newman, Glenmore Elementary, ESL
 ▸ Krystle Nichols, Northwood, special education
 ▸ Ashley Parker, Northwood, first grade
 ▸ Jeremy Parker, Buckeye High, social studies
 ▸ Jamie Poteete, Pineville Elementary, fourth grade
 ▸ Melissa Ricketts, Brame Middle, science
 ▸ Shannon Robbins, Mable Brasher, fourth grade
 ▸ Solomon Shorter, Alma Redwine, health/PE
 ▸ Stacey Sims, Tioga Junior High, English
 ▸ Teresa Taylor, Martin Park, fifth grade
 ▸ Meagan Tison, Tioga Elementary, special education
 ▸ Dana Tucker, Horseshoe Elementary, special education
 ▸ Dennis Ward, Bolton High, social studies
 ▸ Tonya Watson, North Bayou, fifth grade
 ▸ Lauren Wilson, Pineville Junior, English
 ▸ Michelle Brown, LaFargue, speech therapist
 ▸ Sally Tompkins, LaFargue, speech therapist

PARAPROFESSIONALS

▸ Tanya Blackwell, Julius Patrick Elementary
 ▸ Rhonda Deloach, J.I. Barron
 ▸ Brinda Edwards, Bolton High
 ▸ Sarah Edwards, Northwood
 ▸ Kristen Ferguson, Peabody Magnet High
 ▸ Doris Fox, Martin Park Elementary
 ▸ Jodie Howard, Julius Patrick
 ▸ Karen Ingram, J.I. Barron
 ▸ Tia Johnson, Brame Middle

▸ Paula Morely, Brame Middle
 ▸ Anglea Scallan, Glenmora
 ▸ Amy Thacker, Planview High
 ▸ Kara Williams, Nachman

Elementary

SCHOOL SECRETARY

▸ Jennifer Gorham, Julius Patrick

FOOD & NUTRITION

▸ Albertine Davis, Cherokee, technician
 ▸ Monica Johnson, Forest Hill, technician
 ▸ Alana Wiggins, Tioga High, technician

CUSTODIAN

▸ James Salande, Tioga High

BUS DRIVERS

▸ Wade Cooper, transportation
 ▸ Lacola Coutee, transportation

NEW HIRES IN LIEU OF SUBSTITUTE

▸ Lauren Covey, Mabel Brasher, second grade
 ▸ Cheryl Willis, Pineville Junior, math

PROMOTIONS

▸ Brenda Allen, to FNS assistant manager at Brame
 ▸ Nancy Green, to Gifted developer, at LaFargue
 ▸ Chad Johnson, to assistant principal at LEAD Center
 ▸ Helene Lashley, to FNS manager at Cherokee
 ▸ Richard Miller, to lead teacher at Lessie Moore
 ▸ Martha Raster, to JAG (Grant) at Bolton
 ▸ Bryan Runyan, to assistant principal at Glenmora High
 ▸ Melissa Savage, to 10-month business teacher at Alexandria Senior High

PERFORMANCE CONTRACT RENEWALS

▸ Ronald Akins, principal-on-assignment
 ▸ Teresa Arratia, principal-on-assignment
 ▸ Sidney Cox, principal, Mabel Brasher
 ▸ June Hudgens, assistant principal, Cherokee
 ▸ Fred Moore, principal, Lessie Moore
 ▸ Shirley Ryder, assistant principal, Ball Elementary
 ▸ Cindy Rushing, Title I coordinator, Media Center

Ford

Continued from Page 6

Attorney Daphne Robinson, and Publisher Sherri Jackson. Trust me. These are only a few.

Didn't we already know of this information about black women before watching "Black in America?" Yes, we certainly did.

Of course, "Black in America" couldn't leave out information regarding the high number of black men who are unemployed or incarcerated. Also, there was some mention of three black men having successful careers. Alexandria is not without its share of unemployed black men. Go for a drive on any given day during normal work hours through some of Alexandria's black neighborhoods, and you will likely see groups of black men sitting under trees drinking alcoholic beverages or playing cards or dominos.

Many of them can work, but they are unemployed by choice. I have seen this often. Alexandria is also not without its share of black men in prison. Go visit the Rapides Parish Jail one day, and you will find that most of the inmates there are black men.

Most are repeat offenders.

Alexandria is also not without its share of successful black men. All one has to do is go to several agencies or companies in the city to find some of these highly qualified and successful black men. Let me name a few. Alexandria Police Chief Darren Coutee is successful in his job. Rapides Parish School System's Assistant Superintendent Thomas Roque is successful in his job. Fire Chief Bernard Wesley is successful in his job.

Didn't we already know of this information about black men before watching "Black in America?" Yes, we certainly did.

With all that I've said, here's the point: We don't need to learn about our reality from the media whether it be through television, print, radio or online. We already know what our lives are like, what we face, what faces us, and what we need to do to solve our problems in this predominately white America.

Afterall, how can we not know what it is to be "Black in America" when we live and breathe blackness every day.

Night Out

Continued from Page 12

neighborhood spirit and "send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back."

Though 2008 totals were not available, the national event's Web site reports last year's campaign involved citizens, law enforcement

agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from more than 10,000 communities in the U.S., Canada and military bases worldwide participated.

In all, more than 35 million people are believed to have taken part in the event, sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch.

CAP

Continued from Page 13

Advisory Committee. Clinton has been a lead author for a number of Southern Growth Policies Board reports, including Brave New South, EnterpriseSouth.biz, The New Architecture of Rural Prosperity, The Mercedes and the Magnolia, The Globally Competitive South (Under Construction), Reinventing the Wheel, The Southern Innovation Index and Invented Here: Transforming the Southern Economy.

He has written for regional and national publications, including "Southern Cultures," "Spoon River Poetry Review," "CrossRoads,"

"Chattahoochie Review," "WORD" and "Coast and Sea." His book of poetry, "What is Fair," was published by the Louisiana State University Press.

Clinton is a frequent keynote speaker at the regional and national levels on a wide variety of topics involving economic opportunity. He is also an experienced facilitator on public and institutional issues. At Southern Growth Policies Board, he has led the effort to involve more Southerners in meaningful conversations on the future of the South. Southern Growth's listening and information gathering process now attracts the participation and feedback of more than 4,000 Southerners annually.

Personnel

Continued from Page 14

SABBATICALS

- Monica Delacerda, teacher,
- Peabody Magnet High, medical
- Lisa McKinney, special education teacher, Huddle Elementary, medical
- Donnie G. Megison, guidance counselor, Buckeye Elementary, medical
- Charman Mitchell, teacher, Rosenthal Elementary, medical
- Larry O'Neal, teacher, Northwood High, medical
- Teresa Trotti, Title I teacher, St. Rita's, medical

- Janet West, teacher, W.O. Hall, medical
- LEAVE OF ABSENCES WITHOUT PAY**
- Alexis Cleveland, special education paraprofessional, North Bayou, medical
 - Jodie Giordano, teacher, Glenmora High, child care purposes
 - Christina Nessmith, teacher, Northwood High, child care purposes
- WAIVER OF REPAYMENT OF SABBATICAL MONIES**
- Caryn D. Chaney, teacher, Rosenthal Montessori, requesting a waiver of repayment of sabbatical monies so that she may disability retire, effective May 22.

Obituaries Coming Soon to

The Light

Fall 2008

Community Development Works (CDW) provides free access to training, leadership programs, and informational resources to support citizen-led efforts that address local issues to improve the quality of life in Central Louisiana.



Community Development Works

Training Calendar

Basic Courses

To Be or Not To Be a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

Speaker: Armand Bertin

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 16

Time: 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Essentials of Grantwriting Success

Speaker: Lisa Kaichen

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 30

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

General Courses

Fund Development 101:

A Diverse Approach to Fundraising (2 days)

Speaker: Jan Eastman

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 24

& Thursday, Sept. 25

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Advanced Courses

Collaboration

Speaker: Nancy Burris Perret

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 10

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

- ➔ There is no cost for CDW Training.
- ➔ Class size is limited and pre-registration is required.
- ➔ To register for courses, please call **318.443.7880** or **800.803.8075** or online at communitydevelopmentworks.org



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The Awesome Power of Prayer

Today I salute my prayer partners: Dora Brady, Mimell Holmes, Millicent Rubin and Gloria Williams.

Every time I call each of you to pray you are **READY, WILLING and ABLE!**
Keep on **P.U.S.H.I.N.G.!**

God has blessed us to witness miracles in the lives of many people. We believe God is a healer - our main calling! **GOD is SUPREME and WE TRUST GOD for HE is FAITHFUL!**

I LOVE YOU!
Mary Boyd Smith

Moss' social networking sites bring family, friends, classmates together

Columbus, Ohio – Social networking is one of the most popular activities online, next to emailing and blogging. It has the unique ability of allowing users to interact with others as if they were in the same room. Just how big is it? On a daily basis, an estimated 300 million people worldwide log into a social network.

African-Americans are heavy social networkers and possibly the fastest growing group in this segment. Many spend a lot of time on Myspace.com, Facebook.com and LinkedIn.com — as well as the Black social networks such as BlackPlanet.com and HBCUconnect.com

William Moss, the 34-year old CEO and founder of HBCU Connect,

launched the first social network for African Americans in 1999 just a few months before BlackPlanet.com came along. To date, HBCUconnect.com is the largest online destination for Black college students and alumni.

Q: William, what is your professional background?

A: I'm a graduate of Hampton University, where I earned my Bachelors degree in software development. I've been programming since I was 13 years old.

Q: Where is your company based, and how big is it?

A: We are based in Columbus, Ohio with a staff of 12 people. We are located in the same building as our strategic partner Diversity City Media.

Q: Is it true that you created the first social network for African Americans?

A: Well, in the late 90s, the only mainstream social network that anyone knew of was Classmates.com. There also was AsianAvenue.com, the only ethnic-specific one, which was launched even earlier. There were no others until we officially launched HBCUconnect.com (formerly HBCU-Central.com) in June of 1999. According to Community Connect's Web site, they launched BlackPlanet.com in September of 1999.

Q: How big is HBCUconnect.com?

A: We have 1.2 million registered members with over 15-20 million page views a month. This makes us the largest online destination for Black

college students and alumni, hands down.

Q: What makes you the king of Black social networking?

A: Well, I'm modest. I don't actually go around calling myself that. However, I've done several speaking engagements, and during a Q&A someone labeled me "a king of social networking" after I answered a series of technical questions and related my experience.

I do feel that I'm a leader in the industry because I've been developing and programming social networks for nearly 10 years. I've done the technical work, the marketing, and I was able to reach profitability to survive the dot com burst.