

EDITOR: Joyce Swarn; REVIEW BOARD: Bertha Baugh, Earl W. Ford, and Joyce Batten

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



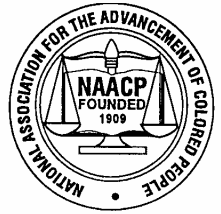
Justice Is Not Free. I have heard and believed this saying for some time now. However, things keep popping up to you remind me that this is true. Most recently you may have read the newspaper article on Wrongful conviction of Reshenda Strickland for a crime that she did not commit. This was a case of mistaken identity. Or so says the newspaper article.

Let me tell the story from my perspective as a participant in the re-trial. In early March Mrs. Juanita Strickland called me with the story about the wrongful conviction of her daughter. She told me that her daughter Reshenda had been convicted of shoplifting at TJ Maxx. She further stated that her relatives who were at the trial had seen an in store video which clearly showed her Reshenda's sister Starlisha in an altercation with store employees. Yet,

an all white jury, two store employees, the prosecutor and the Judge believed that it was Reshinda who was on the tape. This is hard to believe in that one sister is dark complexion and the other is light at least 2-3 shades lighter. Yet, Reshinda was convicted and sentence to six months in jail. What is even more telling is that she served 3 months in jail before we could get the case back into court.

After writing letters to the City Attorney, Attorney General and others we were able through the help of Commander Chris Sutter, City Manager Pat McDonnell and Columbian Newspaper Reporter Jeff Mize to get this case the attention that it deserved. On May 19, 2004 this case was re-opened and Reshenda Strickland was set free and justice was served.

However this was not without cost. The family and NAACP had to pay for and attorney because we were afraid to trust this case to the Public Defenders System which had allowed Reshinda to be convicted in the first place. **Do we really all look alike?**



UPCOMING EVENTS

School's Out Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, June 12, 2004

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Theme: Military Recruitment On High School Campuses

Admission \$5:00/person

Fort Vancouver Way

Public Utility Building

This promises to be one of our best Pancake Breakfast. We have a great topic. Should the military recruit on High School Campuses? If you have graduating seniors who are considering military service, then you will not want them to miss this event.

We have two groups who will present information on the pros and cons of military recruiting on High School campuses. Members of Vancouver for Peace, led by David Benedictus will present information on the downside of military recruitment. I know you have heard the stories of how young people are sold a bill of goods by overzealous recruiters. And later become disillusioned because they never receive what they were promised.

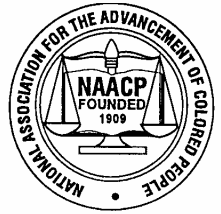
We will also have Deana Horton from Congressmen Baird's Staff and several military veterans who have had successful military careers share information on their successes.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

Our first Branch voter registration drive held Tuesday, May 18 at Clark College was a tremendous success. The drive coordinated by Mable Hicks and Illoba Odum resulted in over 80 new voters registered Vancouver and Portland. We were also surprised at the number of older African American men and women who do not vote.

One young man told President Ford that he did not vote because he had not confidence in the system. He did not believe that man could be relied upon to change anything here on earth. This is indeed a fatalistic approach to the here and now.

Scripturally we are told that mankind has been given dominion over the earth and we should take care of it. It is our responsibility as good steward and as good citizens. **Let's Vote!**



HOUSING COMMITTEE CHAIR NAMED
Carol Page Collier a Coldwell Banker Broker has agreed to take on the leadership of the Branch Housing Committee.

Her first project is to recruit market testers to participate in a Fair Housing Council of Oregon program. The Fair Housing Council is expanding into Southwest Washington. They are interested in testing the housing market for inequities and civil rights violations. They are in need of testers who will go out in the field test for discrimination. Training is provided and testers are paid for their field work.

If you are interested contact Carol at carolpcollier@msn.com

PENS AND T-SHIRTS ARE IN

1). **The New Gold Plated lapel pens** are available for purchase. The pens are \$5.00 each, and can be purchased from any board member, or directly by calling the hotline or mailing your check or money order to the Branch PO Box. We are encouraging every member to purchase at least two.

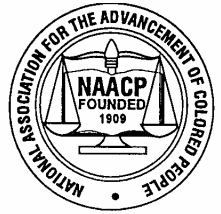
2). A **Branch T-Shirts** are available and will be on sale for \$15.00 beginning at our next general membership meeting.
Email earlwford@aol.com or call our hotline to place your order.

AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH RITES OF PASSAGE PROGRAM

Charles Simmons and Mable Hicks have been chosen as the program leads for this program. Simmons (360) 696-1949 the Chief Executive Officer is a graduate of Washington State University. He holds teachers certifications from University of Portland and Washington State University. He will be primarily responsible for curriculum development and staffing.

Mable Hicks (360) 910-6983 is a student at Clark College pursuing her second career as a Billing and Coding Specialist. She will serve as Chief Operating Officer for the academy. Her primary responsibility is managing the finances of the group.

VANCOUVER BRANCH NAACP # 1139
POST OFFICE BOX 1903, VANCOUVER, WA 98668-1903
360 256-6232
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www.naacpvanc.org



The primary purpose of the program is to assist African American youth in improving their academic achievements. The program will target middle and high school students.

Applications for program are available. You can pick up an application by contacting Charles or Mable. Applications can also be picked up by email if you email earlwford@aol.com or hmableone@aol.com. Application must be in by June 11, 2004.

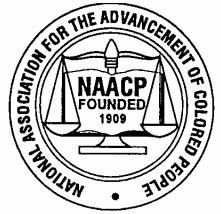
MOVING ON

DARYL HODGES AND YOLONDA SMITH ARE LEAVING. Daryl and his family are being reassigned to Florida. There Daryl will work as a biologist near Tallahassee. Daryl has been the spark plug on the Education Committee. Among his accomplishments are the development of the Rites of Passage Program, and he also led a group of about 30 Vancouver high school students to the Commission on African American Affairs Legislative Day in February.

Yolonda Smith is a Vancouver native who is returning to school this fall.

She will be attending Xavier University in New Orleans, LA completing here degree in Business. Yolanda has served as the Co-Chair of the Youth Works committee along with Brenda Simmons. She has led the development of the 2004 Youth Employment project. Yolanda and Daryl's leadership will be sorely missed. However, we wish you both Gods Speed and Blessings.

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