

ADVOCATE

Fresno's African American Community Newspaper



Local Obama Inaugural & Martin Luther King Jr. March & Events



(See Page 7)

Fresno Child Protective Services 'Drops Ball' Leads to Child's Death



Lebaron Vaughn



Rena Ireland

Numerous complaints and calls made to Fresno County Child Protective Services in past months regarding 10 year old Seth Vaughn not "evidence enough" for agency

Seth Ireland, a ten-year-old 5th grader at Columbia Elementary School, died Tuesday, December 6 as the result of a horrific beating by his mother's boyfriend, LeBaron Vaughn, while his mother, Rena Ireland, watched.

Vaughn is accused of violently punching the child ten times in the face and

chest area, kicking him ten times on his legs and body, and then stomping on his head while he was lying on the floor. The mother reportedly did nothing to stop the assault on her son.

In spite of numerous reports of suspected abuse from school officials, the Fresno County Sheriff's

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Singer Eartha Kitt Dies at 81

BY POLLY ANDERSON

NEW YORK (AP) -

Eartha Kitt, the self-proclaimed "sex kitten" whose sultry voice and catlike purr attracted fans even as she neared 80, has died. The singer, dancer and actress was 81.

Family spokesman Andrew Freedman said Kitt, who was recently treated at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, died Thursday in Connecticut of colon cancer.

Dubbed the "most exciting woman in the world" by Or-

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Eartha Kitt

BET, TV One Plan Extensive Obama Inauguration Coverage

BY DAVID BAUDER

BET marked President George W. Bush's last inauguration with a news brief, to say "Oh, it happened. What a shame," he said.

This time, BET will cover the swearing-in and parade from four locations, including ground and rooftop sites

on Pennsylvania Avenue. Anchoring the coverage will be Hill Harper of CBS' "CSI: NY," former CBS "The Early Show" host Rene Syler and Jeff Johnson, who hosts a weekly BET news program.

The networks will take a particular interest in speak-

Continued on Page 5 ▶

McCain Volunteer Begins Probation for Made-up Story

BY DANIEL MALLOY
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

The McCain campaign volunteer who falsely claimed a Barack Obama supporter carved the letter "B" into her face with a knife entered a probation

program this morning. Ashley Todd, 21, of College Station, Texas, had her initial interview with a probation program for first-time offenders today after she was formally arraigned on the charge of filing a false police report.

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Obama Featured in Spider-Man Comic-Book

BY DADVID COLTON

USA TODAY -

In a growing world of Barack Obama collectibles, one item soon may be swinging above the rest.

On Jan. 14, Marvel Comics is releasing a special issue of Amazing Spider-Man #583 with Obama de-

picted on the cover. Inside are five pages of the two teaming up and even a fist-bump between Spidey and the new president.

"It was a natural after we learned the new president is a Spider-Man fan," says Marvel editor in chief Joe Quesada about reports that

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OAKLAND EXPLODES

Hundreds Riot in Protest of Police Shooting of Unarmed Black Man

OAKLAND TRIBUNE

OAKLAND -

Mayor Ron Dellums stood before a fuming crowd on the steps of City Hall on Wednesday night

trying to restore calm after angry protesters rampaged through the streets of downtown Oakland, creating a surreal near-riot that lasted several hours.

"Number one, let's deal

with each other with respect," Dellums told the crowd over a bullhorn, referring to the Jan. 1 shooting of Oscar Grant III by former BART police Officer Johannes Mehserle - cap-

tured on cell phone and digital camera videos and replayed on national television stations. "I sense your anger, I sense your pain and your frustration."

Continued on Page 6 ▶



George Bush, Sr., Barack Obama, George Bush, Jr., Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter

Obama Has Luncheon with 4 Past Presidents

BY BEN FELLER

WASHINGTON (AP) -

President-elect Barack Obama hailed a rare Oval Office gathering of all U.S. presidents as an extraordinary event on Wednesday as the current occupant,

George W. Bush, reminded his predecessors and successor that the office "transcends the individual." "I just want to thank the president for hosting us," the president-elect said, flanked by former President George H.W. Bush on one side and his

son on the other. Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, both smiling broadly, stood with them.

"All the gentlemen here understand both the pressures and possibilities of this office," Obama

Continued on Page 4 ▶

Black Youth Murders Rise

BY LARA JAKES

Washington -

The number of young black men and teenagers who either killed or were killed in shootings has risen at an alarming rate since 2000, a new study shows.

The study, to be released Monday by criminologists at Northeastern University in Boston, comes as FBI data is showing that murders have leveled off nationwide.

Not so for black teens, the youngest of whom saw

dramatic increases in shooting deaths, the Northeastern report concluded. Last year, for example, 426 black males between the ages of 14 and 17 were killed in gun crimes, the study shows. That marked a

Continued on Page 5 ▶

Social Security has New Online Benefits Sign Up

BY JIM ABRAMS

WASHINGTON (AP) -

The Social Security Administration, envisaging the near-future prospect of 10,000 baby boomers applying for benefits every day, has put together a new online service that will allow people to get their benefits without ever traveling to a Social Security field office.

The agency, in introducing the program Tuesday, said most people will be able to apply for their retirement or disability benefits in 15 minutes or less.

Academy Award-winning actress Patty Duke, spokeswoman for the Retire Online campaign, acknowledged that her own computer skills "are wanting." But her husband gave her a demonstration "and I was able to do it with my limited skills. It was very user-friendly," she said in an interview Monday.

The administration is betting that a great majority of baby boomers, the first to grow old in the computer age, will share that opinion.

"We have nearly 80 million

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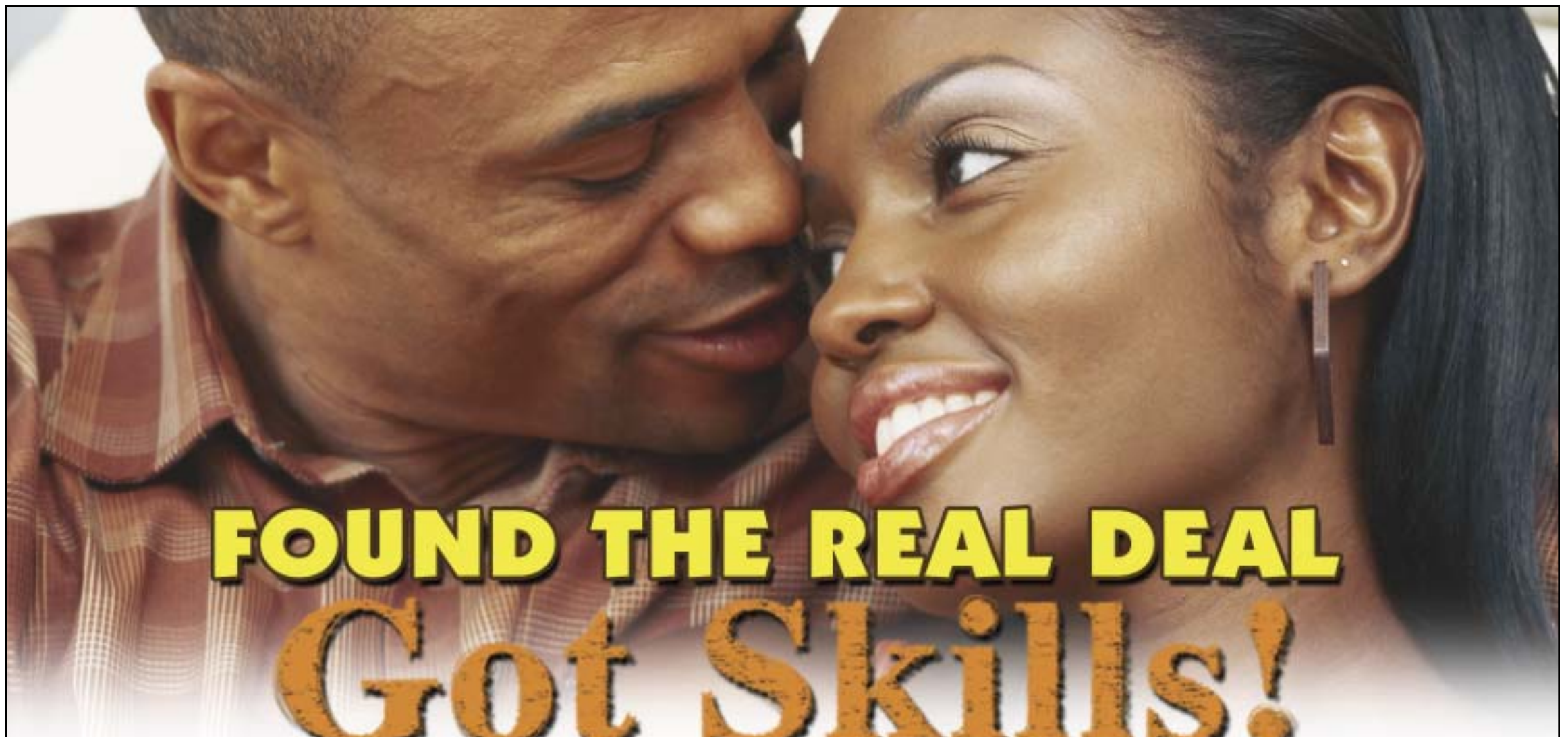
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LOCAL NEWS

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

What's Going On in Our Community

Letters to the Editor

"Casualties of War – Homeless Veterans"

Dear Editor,

Hoping for 18 feet of snow in the mountains is a wonderful thought and a beautiful sight. On the valley floor the cold, bleak and frosty wreaks havoc in the citrus industry and the homeless.

As in all wars, the casualty rate is high, more so during the two world wars, The Korean Forgotten War and The Vietnam Famous War. In the Iraq and Afghanistan war that are still continuing today, there are fewer casualties but, the rate of injuries are higher because of the use of IED's and more powerful weapons that cause more invisible injuries to the brain.

Personally as a volunteer, over the years going to various Stand Downs for

homeless veterans and talking to them is really sad, since I'm a veteran myself. To be rejected by their own families because they have changed so much with their invisible injuries.

Will the City of Fresno ever step up to the plate and help these homeless veterans? If they have a physical address or permanent residence they could call home, they can be productive employees and can be seen by professionals at the Veteran Affairs Medical Center. They aren't asking for a handout but, a helping hand.

Sincerely,
Floyd Takeuchi

Drinking Water for Homeless

Drinking water donations needed for the Fresno homeless population. Call 559-251-0540 or 559-270-1023 for water pick-up arrangements. Project contact persons: Dr. Jean Kennedy and Ms Rene Zeno. Need volunteers.

Creating Dynamic Films"

Emmy Award-winning documentary maker Ric Burns will speak on "Creating Dynamic Films" on Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 10:30 a.m. at the Saroyan Theatre, 700 M Street, Fresno, presented by the San Joaquin Valley Town Hall lecture series. Burns collaborated with his brother Ken on PBS' "The Civil War" and created the eight-part "New York" series. For tickets, contact (559) 444-2189 or www.valleytownhall.com or the box office on the day of the event.

'RUN FOR THE DREAM' INDOOR TRACK MEET

The "Run for the Dream" Track Meet is scheduled indoor Track Meet is scheduled for January 19, 2009, in the beautiful Save Mart Center on campus at Fresno State College.

The "Run for the Dream" Track Meet is about building up the sport of Track and Field in California, and developing the potential the San Joaquin Valley has for youth involvement in the sport.

Activities will include Collegiate Competition, California vs. Texas High schools, Evening with the Stars, Banquet of Champions, Mini Reunions, World Class Competitions, and The Fastest Kids contest.

Opportunities for parents, athletes and teachers to experience the potential Track & Field offers to fight te epidemic of obesity, diabetes and more.

The "Run for the Dream" Committee has members that represent city schools, county schools, medical organizations, valley cities, agribusiness, college professors, ministers, the media, and former National Champions and Olympians.

Extreme Makeover to Build New Home for Local Hero

FRESNO – This morning the life of Fresno resident Mary Ann Riojas and her four children changed forever when they were surprised by Ty Pennington and Extreme Makeover: Home Edition's design team who announced today they would be the recipients of a new home in just seven days! De Young Properties, a third-generation local homebuilder was chosen by Extreme Makeover: Home Edition to help give this deserving family a new quality constructed, energy efficient and certified green home, better suited to their special needs.

Born without legs and only one fully developed arm, Mary Ann isn't a stranger to adversity. Mary Ann was placed in foster care at an early age and grew up in poverty and an unstable household. After getting married and having four children, she struggled financially and found herself on welfare.

Despite her living conditions and disability, she was determined to lead an independent and active life while providing love and support to her four children. It was this same unwavering determination that prompted her to obtain a driver's license, be

the first in her family to graduate college, and become both an employee and state/national Ambassador for the Easter Seals program. Her work with the Easter Seals has taken her all over the country, inspiring thousands of people to overcome adversity and reach for success. In 2006, Mary Ann became a first-time homeowner and has since been employed with the local Housing Authority, where she counsels other struggling families in her community to find housing.

Unfortunately, her own home is ill-equipped to serve her physical challenges and has led to many serious physical injuries. Mary Ann's children are deeply concerned about their mother's care and safety, especially when she's home alone. Despite its challenges, Mary Ann's home is nonetheless, a source of great pride to her.

De Young Properties is joining forces with the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition's design team and the Fresno community at large to give back to Ms. Riojas, who is considered a hero in our community for her selfless contributions to helping others in need.

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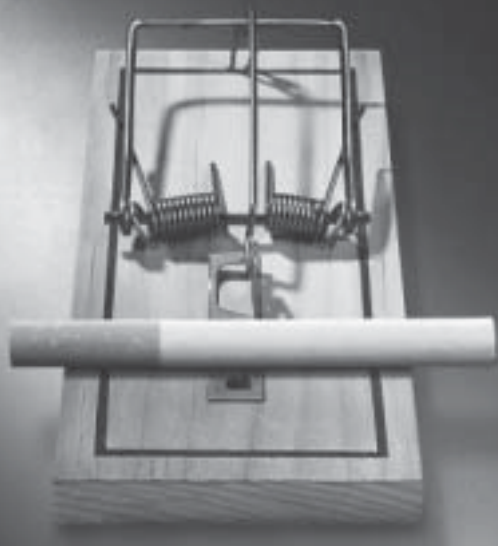
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Obama Has Luncheon with 4 Past Presidents...

► **Continued from Page 1**
 ma said. "For me to have the opportunity to get advice, good counsel and fellowship with these individuals is extraordinary."

In a swift photo opportunity, the current president wished Obama well before all five men headed to a private lunch.

"I want to thank the president-elect for joining the ex-presidents for lunch," Bush said, even though he's not quite a member of that club yet.

"One message that I have and I think we all share is that we want you to succeed. Whether we're Democrat or Republican we care deeply about this country," Bush said. "All of us who have served in this office understand that the office itself transcends the individual."

He added: "We wish you all the very best, and so does the country."

Bush and Obama also met privately for roughly 30 minutes. That one-on-one meeting, coming just 13 days before Obama's inauguration, likely focused on grim current events, with war in the Gaza Strip and the economy in a recession.

It had been an entire generation since the nation last saw the tableau of every U.S. president together at the White House. The presidents have gathered at other locations over the years, most recently for the funeral of President Gerald Ford in Washington.

Obama suggested holding the gathering when he met Bush at the White House in November.

Obama has sought to strike a balance as the power curve bends his way. Be-

fore taking office, he is publicly rallying Congress behind a massive economic stimulus plan. But he remains deferential to Bush on foreign affairs and will not comment on Israel's deadly conflict with Hamas on grounds that doing so would be dangerous for the United States.

"You can't have two administrations running foreign policy at the same time," Obama said at a news conference earlier in the day.

Vice President-elect Joe Biden also held a private meeting with former President Bush at the White House on Wednesday.

Considering the bond they hold in history, U.S. presidents gets together infrequently, particularly at the White House. And when they are in the same room, it is usually for a milestone or somber moment - a funeral of a world leader, an opening of a presidential library, a commemoration of history.

Not this time.

"It's going to be an interesting lunch," Bush told an interviewer recently. When asked what the five men would talk about, Bush said: "I don't know. I'm sure (Obama's) going to ask us all questions, I would guess. If not, we'll just share war stories."

They have plenty of those, political and otherwise. Their paths to power have long been entwined.

Carter lost the presidency to Ronald Reagan, whose running mate was George H.W. Bush. Bush later won election but lost after one term to Clinton. Then Bush's son, the current president, defeated Clinton's vice president, Al Gore. And

this year Obama won after long linking his opponent, John McCain, to Bush.

Those campaign rivalries tend to soften over time as presidents leave the White House and try to adopt the role of statesmen - although Carter, even as an ex-president, has had some critical public words for the current president's foreign policy.

All five men were to pose for a group photo in the Rose Garden, but a January rainstorm scrapped that plan. So the noontime photo opportunity - the media's only glimpse of them - was moved indoors to the Oval Office.

The presidents and Obama were having lunch in a private dining room off the Oval Office, where no one else was expected to join them.

"All of us would love to be flies on the wall and listening to that conversation," White House press secretary Dana Perino said.

The rare presidential joint appearance also offered Bush, who ends his two terms deeply unpopular, to again show he is rising above the fray.

The last White House event to draw the former presidents was a November 2000 celebration in honor of the White House's 200th anniversary. But one of the former presidents, Ronald Reagan, who was afflicted with Alzheimer's, was unable to attend.

All the presidents were last at the White House in 1981: Richard Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan, who was president then. The three former presidents were there before leaving as part of the U.S. delegation to the funeral of Egypt's Anwar Sadat, who had been assassinated.

Notes on a Scorecard



By CRAIG REID
SPORTS WRITER

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Let's start the year off with a community heavy weight who is also renown for power lifting heavyweights all over the United States and the world.

Pete Wilson is a 72-year old phenom who was inducted into the legendary United States Power lifting Federation Hall of Fame last March in Los Alamitos, California.

Since arriving in Fresno from New York in July, 1979, Wilson has split his time being a family man and hands on advocate for political and community enrichment, while modestly plying his craft at becoming one of the world's best power lifters.

How good?

How about the time in 1992 when he won the International Power lifting World Championship for the fifty and over age group, 181 lb weight class with a total lift of

1331 lbs.

Then there was the time in 1995, when Wilson won first place in the United States Power lifting Federation National Power lifting tournament in Evert, Washington for the 55-59 age group, 198 lb weight class, with a total lift of 1368 lbs.

How about March 31, 2007 when Wilson set United States Power lifting

Federation American and State of California records in the 70-74 age group, with a 512 lb squat, and bench press of 330.51 lbs.

However, even though Wilson has represented himself, his family, and Fresno commendably in faraway outposts such as Helsinki, Finland, Calgary Alberta, Canada, Sydney, Australia, and 21 states in America, the big story truly is what he has done to power lift those in need right here in the Valley.

On the local front, Wilson's meritorious efforts earned him the United Way Community Appreciation Award, for his involvement with the Boys and Girls Club of Fresno.

Furthermore, he received the 1995 California Legislative Sports Award, On December 19, 1987, Mayor Jim Patterson proclaimed Pete Wilson Day in the City of Fresno. In 2003, Wilson won the United Blackmen Inc. Man of the Year Award.

When you think of the countless good deeds that

the United Blackmen of Fresno, Inc have carried out for Blacks and subsequently all people in the Valley such as scholarships for students, political participation through diplomacy as well as activism, you naturally and justifiably think of names like Rutherford "Bud" Gaston, Les Kimber, and Cedric Hardamon.

Yet Wilson has served the organization in every capacity except chaplain during the 27 years he has been a member. As in the case with many community leaders

Wilson has chosen to do many good deeds while working for then Assemblyman Jim Costa and Assembly member Cruz Bustamante.

Ditto his work on the Family Self Sufficiency Corps Inc., the Board of Directors of the Fresno City and County Housing Authorities, and as a commissioner on the Board of the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission.

Usually with international sports stars like Pete Wilson, you hope that your community youth will be inspired to achieve and literally lift themselves up in what ever they do.

However, in addition, in Wilson's case, people like me who are in their fifties but feel like they are in their sixties, can take heed that:

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Partners:

Singer Eartha Kitt Dies at 81...

► Continued from Page 1

son Welles, Kitt's career spanned six decades, from her start as a dancer with the famed Katherine Dunham troupe to cabarets and acting and singing on stage, in movies and on television. She won two Emmys, and was also nominated for several Tonys and 2Grammys.

Kitt was featured on the cover of her 2001 book, "Rejuvenate," a guide to staying physically fit, in a long, curve-hugging black dress with a figure that some 20-year-old women would envy. She also wrote three autobiographies.

She persevered through an unhappy childhood as a mixed-race daughter of the South, and made headlines in the 1960s for denouncing the Vietnam War during a visit to the White House.

Her first album, "RCA Victor Presents Eartha Kitt," was released in 1954. It featured songs such as "I Want to Be Evil," "C'est Si Bon" and the saucy gold digger's theme song, "Santa Baby," which is revived on radio each Christmas.

The following year, the record company released "That Bad Eartha," which featured "Let's Do It," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and "My Heart Belongs to Daddy."

After becoming a hit singing "Monotonous" in the Broadway revue "New Faces of 1952," Kitt appeared in "Mrs. Patterson" in 1954-55. (Some references say she earned a Tony nomination for "Mrs. Patterson," but only winners were publicly announced at that time.) She also made appearances in "Shinbone Alley" and "The Owl and the Pussycat."

She was the sexy Catwoman on the popular "Batman" TV series in 1967-68, replacing Julie Newmar, who originated the role. A guest appearance on an episode of "I Spy" brought Kitt an Emmy nomination in 1966.

In 1996, Kitt was nominated for a Grammy in the category of traditional pop vocal performance for her album

"Back in Business." She also had been nominated in the children's recording category for the 1969 record, "Folk Tales of the Tribes of Africa."

Kitt also acted in movies, playing the lead female role opposite Nat King Cole in "St. Louis Blues" in 1958. She more recently appeared in "Boomerang" and "Harriet the Spy" in the 1990s.

"Generally the whole entertainment business now is bland," she said in a 1996 Associated Press interview. "It depends so much on gadgetry and flash now. You don't have to have talent to be in the business today."

"I think we had to have something to offer, if you wanted to be recognized as worth paying for."

Kitt was plainspoken about causes she believed in. Her anti-war comments at the White House came as she attended a White House luncheon hosted by Lady Bird Johnson.

"You send the best of this country off to be shot and maimed," she told the group of about 50 women. "They rebel in the street. They don't want to go to school because they're going to be snatched off from their mothers to be shot in Vietnam."

For four years afterward, Kitt performed almost exclusively overseas. She was investigated by the FBI and CIA, which allegedly found her to be foul-mouthed and promiscuous.

"The thing that hurts, that became anger, was when I realized that if you tell the truth - in a country that says you're entitled to tell the truth - you get your face slapped and you get put out of work," Kitt told Essence magazine two decades later.

In 1978, Kitt returned to Broadway in the musical "Timbuktu!" - which brought her a Tony nomination - and was invited back to the White House by President Jimmy Carter.

In 2000, Kitt earned another Tony nomination for "The Wild Party." She

played the fairy godmother in Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" in 2002.

As recently as October 2003, she was on Broadway after replacing Chita Rivera in a revival of "Nine." She also gained new fans as the voice of Yzma in the 2000 Disney animated feature "The Emperor's New Groove," and won two Emmys for her voice work in "The Emperor's New School."

Kitt was born in North, S.C., and her road to fame was the stuff of storybooks. In her autobiography, she wrote that her mother was black and Cherokee while her father was white, and she was left to live with relatives after her mother's new husband objected to taking in a mixed-race girl.

An aunt eventually brought her to live in New York, where she attended the High School of Performing Arts, later dropping out to take various odd jobs.

By chance, she dropped by an audition for the dance group run by Dunham, a pioneering African-American dancer. In 1946, Kitt was one of the Sans-Souci Singers in Dunham's Broadway production "Bal Negre."

Kitt's travels with the Dunham troupe landed her a gig in a Paris nightclub in the early 1950s. Kitt was spotted by Welles, who cast her in his Paris stage production of "Faust." That led to a role in "New Faces of 1952," which featured such other stars-to-be as Carol Lawrence, Paul Lynde and, as a writer, Mel Brooks.

In 1960, she married Bill McDonald but divorced him after the birth of their daughter, Kitt.

While on stage, she was daringly sexy and always flirtatious. Offstage, however, Kitt described herself as shy and almost reclusive, remnants of feeling unwanted and unloved as a child. She referred to herself as "that little urchin cotton-picker from the South, Eartha Mae."

Black Youth Murders on the Rise...

► Continued from Page 1

40 percent increase from 2000. Similarly, an estimated 964 in the same age group committed fatal shootings in 2007 - a 38 percent increase from seven years earlier. The number of offenders is estimated because not all crimes are reported, said Northeastern criminologist James Alan Fox, who co-authored the study.

"Although the overall rate of homicide in the United States remains relatively low, the landscape is quite different for countless Americans living, and some dying, in violence-infested neighborhoods," Fox said.

Seizing on President-elect Barack Obama's incoming administration as an opportunity for more funding, Fox added: "There is an urgency for reinvestment in children and families. In essence, we need a bailout for kids at risk."

Obama will be the nation's first black president.

The study partly blamed Bush administration grant cuts to local police and juvenile crime prevention programs for the surge in crimes by young black men and teens. Incoming Vice President Joe Biden has promised funding to put 50,000 new police of-

ficers on the street to help bring violent crime rates back to a decade-long annual decline that began in the mid-1990s, after then-President Bill Clinton provided local officials with money to hire 100,000 new cops.

Nationwide, the number of murders and violent crimes overall dropped last year after increasing in 2005 and 2006, according to annual data compiled by the FBI. Overall, however, murders have risen by about 8 percent between 2000 and 2007.

The FBI reported 10,067 arrests in murder and non-negligent manslaughter cases in 2007. Half of the people arrested - 5,078 - were black. Almost 10 percent of black people arrested for murder were under age 18, the FBI data show.

The number of young white men who committed gun-related homicides also rose over the same period, the Northeastern study showed, but not as dramatically. In 2007, an estimated 384 white males age 14 to 17 shot someone to death, up from 368 in 2000.

The numbers of homicides committed by women and teenage girls - whether black or white - were relatively few, the Northeastern study found.

BET, TV One Extensive Inauguration Coverage...

► Continued from Page 1

ing to people who have traveled to Washington to witness the event. On election night, their ratings peaked shortly after the general news networks declared Obama the winner - when black viewers turned to the stations to soak it in with the people on the air.

"They talked about the emotion of it," said Johnathan Rodgers, TV One's president. "Everyone talked about their own relatives and how they grew up. Almost everyone could not believe that it happened in our lifetime."

TV One plans to follow the inauguration for 21 straight hours, from 6 a.m. EST on Jan. 20 to 3 a.m. EST the next day. Radio talk-show host Joe Madison and Art Fennell of CN8, the Comcast Network, will be the hosts. It's already a big week for TV One: Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday the weekend before marks the fifth anniversary of the network's launch.

With all that time on the air, TV One

will do its best to give its audience a real flavor of being there, Rodgers said.

"We will show the parade," he said. "We will not overwhelm the parade with a lot of pundits and other stuff."

The connection between King's work and Obama's election will be a major theme for the networks; BET will speak to King's children for their thoughts on Obama and is making a special, "King to Obama: Repurposing the Dream."

BET is preparing several reports to air during the coverage, including a look at Michelle Obama; on the people who helped elect the new president; on his international appeal; and on his security, asking, "Who is willing to take a bullet for a black man?" BET, as the older of the two networks and the one with the wider reach, believes it has an advantage over TV One because BET is the only one with a news division.

BET will include simple historical explainers about presidential inaugurations throughout the day; the network

reasons that many who will be watching have never seen one before.

"This is the first time in a long time a lot of people in our audience feel they are really part of the process of selecting a leader for the United States of America," Hill said.

BET is planning a prime-time entertainment special taped earlier, "Yes We Will: The BET Inaugural Celebration," and will also sponsor its own inaugural ball, which will be featured in live cuts. TV One is reporting from the scenes of Obama's inaugural balls from 10 p.m. EST to midnight.

General news networks are still formulating their coverage plans. It's unclear whether reporters will be assigned specifically to cover the black perspective on that day, but it obviously will be a big part of the story, said Paul Friedman, CBS News senior vice president.

"I don't know how you don't cover that story virtually all the way through," he said.

Obama Featured in Spider-Man Comic-Book...

► Continued from Page 1

Obama once collected Spider-Man comics. "We thought, 'Fantastic! We have a comic-book geek in the White House.'"

The White House transition team did not respond to a question about the extent of Obama's comic-book geekiness, but Obama did mention Spider-Man during the campaign, primarily at children-oriented events. And during an Entertainment Weekly pop culture survey, Obama said Batman and Spider-Man were his top superheroes because of their "inner turmoil." (John McCain picked Batman.)

In the story by Zeb Wells, Todd Nauck and Frank D'Armata, Spider-Man stops the Chameleon from spoiling Obama's swearing-in. At one point, Spider-Man says he mistook Vice President-elect Joe Biden for the Vulture (a vintage Spider-Man villain).

The issue, selling for \$3.99 at comic-book specialty shops (find one at comicshoplocator.com), is expected to be an instant sellout, especially because the Obama cover, by Phil Jimenez, is limited to half the run.

"This issue will have a lot of heat and go for premium prices. I already

have people calling about it," says Alan Giroux, owner of All About Books and Comics in Phoenix. "I expect this will be on the collectors' market for \$20 by the first day."

Presidents have been supporting characters in comics before: During World War II, superheroes fought Hitler as Franklin D. Roosevelt cheered them on. John F. Kennedy appeared in Action Comics #309 in 1963, when he helped protect Clark Kent's secret identity.

"If I can't trust the president of the United States, who can I trust?" Superman tells Kennedy.

McCain Volunteer Begins Probation...

► Continued from Page 1

She told police Oct. 24 that she was mugged in Bloomfield by a man who then became enraged at the John McCain bumper sticker on her car and came back to leave an Obama-themed mark. Ms. Todd's story began to unravel when investigators noticed the "B" was backwards, as if she had cut herself using a mirror.

But by then, the tale had attracted national attention after a photo of Ms. Todd's scarred face was sent to The Drudge Report Web site. In the midst of a heated campaign season, the assault became an Internet and

cable news sensation. The McCain and Obama campaigns expressed concern for her safety.

After police determined the report was fabricated, Ms. Todd was jailed for a week and, upon her release, ordered to undergo counseling as a condition for her entry into the Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition - or ARD - program.

Her probation could last anywhere from six to 24 months, according to Allegheny County District Attorney spokesman Mike Manko. The terms of the probation will be determined at her first hearing May 22.

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Hundreds Riot in Protest of Shooting of Unarmed Black Man in Oakland...

► Continued from Page 1

Although Oakland has no direct jurisdiction over the incident, Dellums pledged that the city would investigate Grant's shooting "like any other homicide." Unappeased, the crowd of about 50 protesters erupted in jeers and boos at the mayor's words as he retreated into City Hall, demanding that Mehserle be brought to justice for the unarmed 22-year-old father's death.

About a dozen of the protesters then began smashing windows of nearby businesses and cars, including several city of Oakland vehicles parked near 17th Street and on San Pablo Avenue, just north of Frank H. Ogawa Plaza.

In response, police fired what appeared to be tear gas for the second time after a relatively peaceful demonstration began at the Fruitvale BART Station.

By the time a marching crowd left the Fruitvale station and reached the Lake Merritt BART station, the protest had turned violent. Cars were burned, windows of cars and downtown businesses were smashed. Dumpsters were overturned, tear gas was fired, and at least 13 people were arrested. Protesters broke out windows and dented an Oakland Police Department car.

The protesters also threw bottles in the direction of officers, and as many as 200 police, including Oakland's Tactical Operations Team, were called to the scene. BART police and officers from the Housing Authority were sent in for backup.

Ken Epstein, assistant editor of the Oakland Post, who was finishing an article about Grant's death, watched from the 12th story of his office at 14th and Franklin streets as his 2002

Honda CR-V disintegrated in a roar of flames as the police continued to push protesters down 14th Street from the intersection with Broadway, smashing store windows and setting trash cans on fire.

The protesters were outraged that the officer involved had not been interviewed, he said, adding that he shared their anger. It was clear from the videotape that Grant was lying facedown and he hadn't been accused of a crime, Epstein added.

"I'm sorry my car was burned but the issue is very upsetting," he said.

As the standoff escalated, protesters chanted "murder, murder, murder" and were forced by heavily armed police toward Madison and 15th streets. It was at that time protesters set ablaze another car and smashed shop windows, including Creative African Braids, Oakland

Yoon's Pharmacy and the McDonald's on 14th and Madison streets. Damage estimates were impossible to gather late Wednesday, as was the extent of the damage.

BART spokesman Linton Johnson said three stations got shut down by protesters Wednesday - 12th Street, Fruitvale and Lake Merritt.

Johnson said no one was seriously hurt at those stations and no BART property was damaged. "There will be beefed-up security and BART police on standby" at the BART board of directors meeting at 9 a.m. this morning, he said.

The protesters were "calling attention to something that is a systematic problem, which won't go away with an apology," said a 29-year-old who identified himself only as B. Rex. He was arrested and taken by police in a squad car soon after.

Fresno Child Protective Services 'Drops Ball' Leads to Child's Death...

► Continued from Page 1

Office and the child's biological father, Joe Hudson, the Fresno County Child Protective Services (CPS) reportedly took no action to protect the child from ongoing abuse by Vaughn and Ireland.

"They failed to protect my son and now he is dead," stated Hudson while discussing his son's death with the media.

From all indications, CPS dropped the ball by not actively taking steps to remove the child from his home environment after having received so many warnings about suspected child abuse of Seth by Vaughn and Ireland.

Hudson stated that he has been pressuring CPS to do something about his son's suspected abuse by Vaughn for several months. He said he contacted CPS in September but apparently nothing was done.

Hudson also released a copy of a letter written to CPS by Kirk Elementary School principal Carla Manning in November listing her concerns about Seth and his seven-year-old half-brother which she stated in part, "I am very

concerned about the well-being of the boys ... both boys are absent a lot and they come to school with bruises."

The Advocate contacted Catherine Huerta, director of Fresno County Children and Family Services, which includes CPS, and was asked to comment on criticisms by Hudson and others over the apparent failure of CPS to protect Seth from child abuse.

Huerta said, "I would love to answer questions about this case, but I am legally prohibited from doing so at this time."

Vaughn has been formally charged with murder and Ireland has been charged with two counts of child abuse.

Fresno County Superior Court Judge W. Kent Hamilton set bail at \$1 million for Vaughn and \$30,000 for Ireland.

Fresno Unified School District released a statement to the Advocate saying, "Seth did very well in school. He had many friends and teachers enjoyed having him in their classes. The entire staff at Columbia are deeply saddened by this tragedy. School Psychologists will be on campus on Monday to serve the needs of the students and staff."

Social Security has Online Benefits...

► Continued from Page 1

dion baby boomers coming in," Social Security Commissioner Michael J. Astrue told The Associated Press. "We just don't have the infrastructure to handle that workload in the traditional fashion."

The agency estimates that the baby boom generation will become eligible for retirement at a rate of 10,000 a day for the next 20 years.

The Social Security system already faces a long-term financial crisis as fewer workers finance the retirements of more senior citizens. In 2008, it was paying out some \$614 billion to 50 million retirees

and their dependents, disabled workers and survivors.

The agency has had versions of online applications since 2000, but in the past applicants have still had to mail or deliver paper documents with their signatures and copies of birth certificates or W-2 forms. In the future, the process should be paperless in the majority of cases.

"We redid it from scratch. It's easier to use, it's faster," Astrue said. He said it now takes about 45 minutes for a field officer to finish an application form for a person who visits a Social Security office.

David Certner, AARP's

legislative policy director, said the new program was "a nice tool, particularly as more people are more comfortable with using the computer and the Internet."

But he cautioned that there is still a fairly large portion of the population that is not computer literate, and "we don't want it to substitute for the ability to deal with a real person."

Astrue gave assurances that people with more complicated applications or questions can still call the agency or visit a field office.

Duke, who at 62 is part of the coming baby boomer wave of retirees, made several public service an-

nouncements promoting the online program. One is a takeoff of the 1960s sitcom The Patty Duke Show, on which Duke played both teenagers Patty and her identical cousin Cathy. In the ad, the harried Patty is trying to gather paperwork for her retirement benefits application while the calm Cathy advises her of the ease of applying online.

The agency also plans to run full-page ads in USA TODAY and several news magazines.

Those wanting to use the new program can go to www.socialsecurity.gov and click on "Applying Online for Retirement Benefits."

Donations for funeral expenses can be sent to:

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'We Are the Change' Celebration

'We Are the Change' Celebration mobilizes diversity and solidarity in Greater Fresno for the upcoming inauguration day

As the nation prepares for a historical presidency on Tues., January 20, 2009, the 44th US President Barack Obama will celebrate the overture with the previous campaign message matured, "We Are the Change," at the African-American Museum of the San Joaquin Valley that same day.

Valley Black Talk Radio, the African-American Museum and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, (founded by the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) have pulled key Fresno community organizations together as co-hosts of this grand affair Tues., Jan 20th from 5-7 PM to celebrate the inauguration of President Barack Obama.

With the help of sponsors and co-hosts such as; Fresno West Coalition, California Advocate Newspaper, Good Citizens Inc., City of Fresno Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Committee, National Network in Action and Fresno City College Black Faculty & Staff, the event will be free admission for all.

Key sponsors helping to bring the event to life include: Fresno City Council President Cynthia Sterling, Ann Marie Production, Urban Strategic Enterprises, and Grandmother's Love.

Coupled with sponsored food and entertainment, the festive celebration will include a replay of the inauguration ceremony from earlier that day, an informal program with community discussion lead by prominent activist and Fresno City College professor, Kehinde Solwazi, and Obama displays and paraphernalia available for the public.

Also the African-American Museum has collectively created an "Obama Ambience" amongst the arts community so that citizens can travel between the different festivities to continue celebrating at Arte Americas, Downtown Community Arts Collective and the Fresno Metropolitan Museum.

For more information, please go to: www.vbtradio.org or call the African-American Museum at 559-268-7102.

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Martin Luther King

Friday, January 16, 2009 – Opening Garlanding Ceremony (12:00-1:00pm). Location: Fresno County Courthouse Park (at MLK Bust), 1100 Van Ness Ave. Opening Ceremony. Please bring flowers. Contact: Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor (559) 435-2212 or Gall Gaston (559) 681-3140.

Friday, January 16, 2009 – Award Reception (6:00-7:30pm / Program begins at 6:30pm). Location: African American Museum, 1857 Fulton Ave. Reception to honor awardees for outstanding service to the community in five categories: 1) Business 2) Organization 3) Youth 4) Female, and 5) Male. Contact: Julia Dudley (559) 352-1444.

Saturday, January 17, 2009 – Community Breakfast (Breakfast served at 8:30am / Program starts at 9:30am). Location: Clovis Veterans Memorial Building, 453 Hughes Ave, Clovis (Hughes & Fifth Street). Come enjoy food, entertainment, and Keynote Speaker Pastor Steve Davidson from Clovis Hills Church. Tickets: \$5.00 each in advance (tables of 8 available) & canned food donations to benefit the Clovis Salvation Army. Contact: Caroline Carlson (559) 324-2416 at Clovis Police Department or Gail Gaston (559)681-3140.

Saturday, January 17, 2009 – All Faith Service (4:00-6:00pm). Location: 2nd Baptist Church, 1041 E. Jensen Ave. (Jensen & MLK Blvd) Various beloved community speakers, spiritual leaders, and musical talent. Contact: Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor (559) 435-2212 or Rev. Bruce McAlister (559) 227-9819.

Sunday, January 18, 2009 – Candlelight Vigil (5:00-6:00pm). Location: Saints Rest Missionary Baptist Church, 1550 E. Rev Chester Riggins Ave. Enjoy a variety of community speakers & musical performances. Contact: Dr. David Howard (559) 277-9552, Pastor Rufus Fruge (559) 347-8217, or Janet Capella (559) 974-1824.

Monday, January 19, 2009 – March and "Mountain of Food" Collection (9:15-10:45am). Location: St. John's Cathedral, 2814 Mariposa Ave. Marchers assemble at 9:15AM. March begins at 10:00AM, ending at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium for Commemoration Program. "Mountain of Food" will be collected at St. John's Cathedral. Contact: Enrique Reade (559) 940-2159, Bishop John Sims (559) 351-9524, or James Leftill (559) 284-6420.

Monday, January 19, 2009 – Commemoration Program (10:45am-12:00pm) Location: Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 2425 Fresno St. Commemoration program featuring inspirational speakers and musical talent. Contact: Julia Dudley (559) 352-1444 or Bishop John Sims (559) 351-9524.

Monday, January 19, 2009 – Fresno Falcons Hockey in collaboration with Fresno MLK Unity Committee and HandsOn Central California. Location: Selland Arena. Doors open at 12:00PM / Game starts at 1:05pm. Fresno Falcons vs. Utah Grizzlies Game honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and volunteers throughout the Valley. All Tickets 1/2 price. Contact: Fresno Falcons Ticket Office (559) 485-PUCK (7825).

Thursday, February 12, 2009 – Student Art Exhibition/Reception (Reception 4:00PM / Program 5:00PM). Location: Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1515 Van Ness Ave. Honoring student speech, essay, and art winners from Fresno and Clovis Unified, and other Fresno County School Districts. Art on display January 27-February 22, 2009. Contact: Shirley Hargis (559)265-3060.

FRESNO MLK UNITY COMMITTEE

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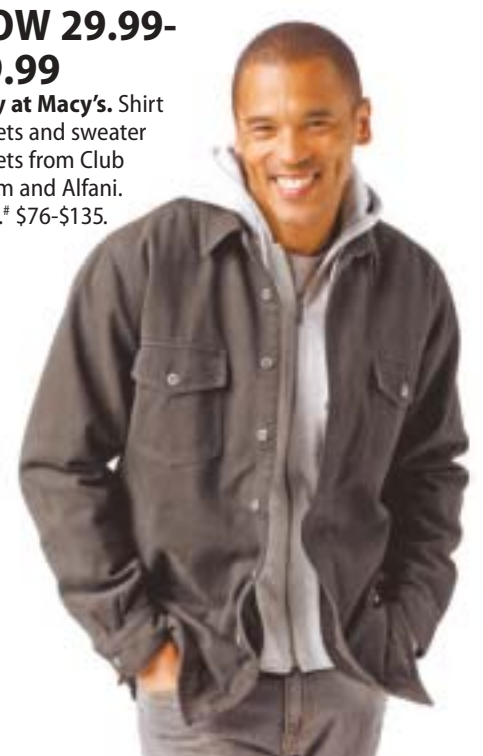
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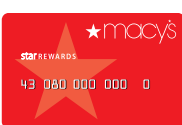
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