



# 2004



## 'Boogie Woogie Preacher' opens Saturday at Saenger Theatre

Gospel music, dancing and comedy are all rolled into the "Boogie Woogie Preacher," a new work by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association.

The company's director, Leroy Williams Jr., serves as director and producer of the show, and also portrays the magnetic preacher.

"This show is guaranteed to make you laugh until you cry," he said. "The Boogie Woogie Preacher" has charisma and knows how to push all the right buttons to make people realize that the time is now for salvation."

To add to the gospel entertainment, the association's Praise

### Want to go?

■ **WHAT:** "The Boogie Woogie Preacher."

■ **WHEN:** 2:30 p.m. Saturday. (6 p.m. Saturday show sold out.)

■ **WHERE:** Saenger Theatre, 118 S. Palafox St.

Dancers and other acts also will perform.

Featured performers in the 30-member cast are Anita Johnson as Josephine, Darin Franklin as Clyde, Charles Gibson as Elmore, Vin D. Durant as Russell and Charisse Charles as Della-Lee.



Bruce Graner@PensacolaNewsJournal.com  
Vin Durant, from left, Cynthia Westmoreland and Anita Johnson perform in "Boogie Woogie Preacher."

What's  
happening  
the week of  
February 6-12  
2004

www.PensacolaNewsJournal.com/week

# WEEK IDIAR

Tate students  
dazzle in  
'South Pacific'

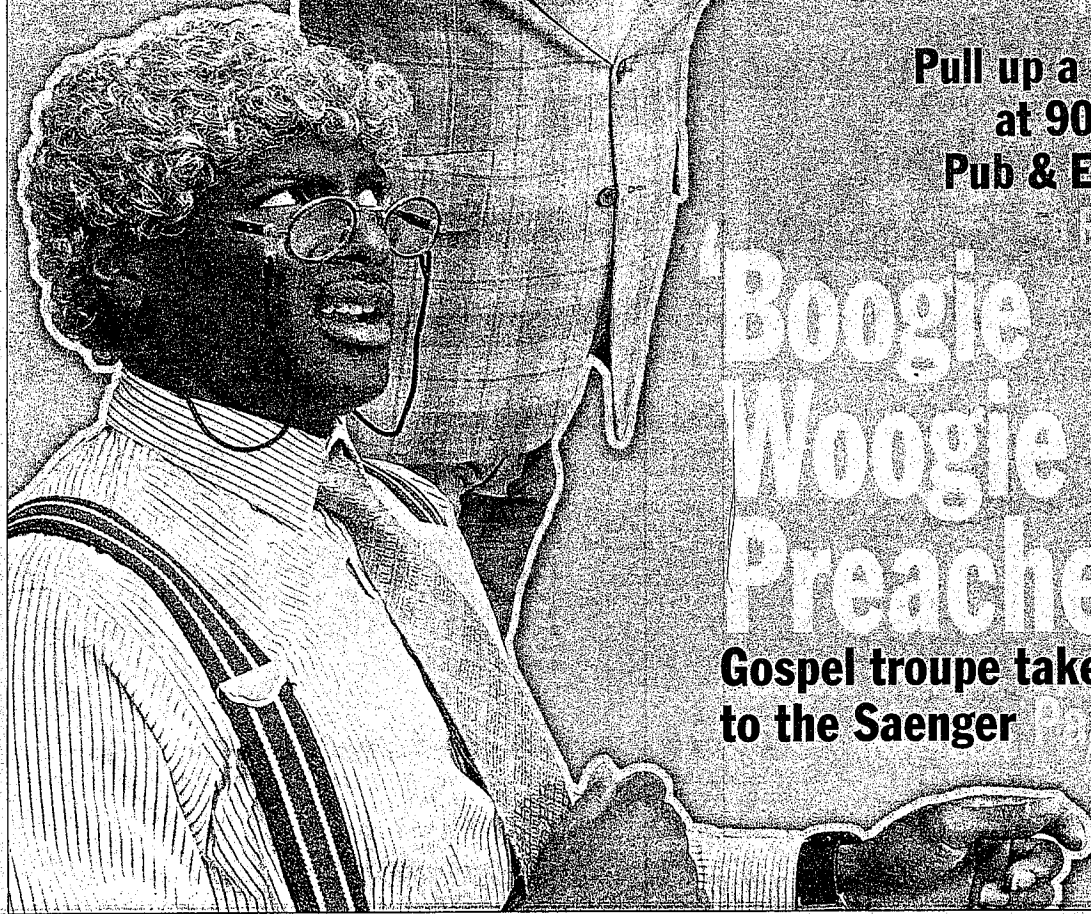
Page 4

Pull up a chair  
at 90 East  
Pub & Eatery

Page 8

## 'Boogie Woogie Preacher'

Gospel troupe takes  
to the Saenger Page 2



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**Boogie down to  
see 'Preacher'**

"The Boogie Woogie Preacher" tells the story of a preacher who has a unique way of winning souls for Christ. For humor with a message, head downtown Saturday to the Saenger

# PENSACOLA News Journal

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2004

February 6-12, 2004

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Evelyn Rankin-Hill, playing Lulamae, reluctantly unveils her badly damaged hair to the horror of friends Monique Wiggins, from left, playing Ramona, Victoria Brown, as Patsy, Wendolyn Wilson, as Vera, and Johnetta Moultrie, as Bonnie.

Bruce Graner @PensacolaNewsJournal.com

## 'Boogie Woogie Preacher' to hit stage

The Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association will present a new work by the company's director, Leroy Williams Jr.

"The Boogie Woogie Preacher" is the story of a preacher who has a unique way of winning souls for Christ. It is his mission to save all those who are not saved.

Williams, who also serves as director and producer for the show, portrays the magnetic Boogie Woogie Preacher. Other featured performers in the 30-member cast are Anita Johnson, Darin Franklin, Charles Gibson, Vin D. Durant and Charisse Charles.

In addition to the play, audiences will be enter-

tained by the PCARA Praise Dancers and other acts.

■ **WHEN:** 2:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Saturday (6 p.m. show sold out)

■ **WHERE:** Pensacola Saenger Theatre, 118 S. Palafox Place

■ **COST:** Tickets are \$18 in advance, \$20 day of show, and can be purchased in advance at the Stage Right Christian Music store in University Mall and all Ticketmaster locations.

■ **DETAILS:** 444-0646

**On the cover:** Vin D. Durant, standing, and Charles Gibson rehearse for "The Boogie Woogie Preacher."

# THE BOOGIE WOOGIE PREACHER!

WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED  
BY LEROY E. WILLIAMS, JR.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28: 19, 20

Raise your palms to the Lord, and get ready for a laughing, foot stomping, shouting, dancing, gospel good-time! "The Boogie Woogie Preacher!" is about a preacher who has a very unique way of winning souls for Christ. This theatrical production will prove to be the world's most hilarious, soul-saving, sold-out and most talked about gospel comedy stage-play of all times.

"The Boogie Woogie Preacher!" will be performed at the Pensacola Saenger Theatre on February 7, 2004, at 2:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Get your tickets while they last! Admission is \$18.00 in advance and \$20.00 the day of the show. Tickets can be purchased at the Stage Right Christian Music store in University Mall and all Ticket master locations. For more information, call 444-0646.



# THE Independent Voice

SERVING THE PEOPLE ALONG THE GULF COAST

Ph: (850) 473-6633 • Fax: (850) 473-6634 • Email: [Indpvoice@aol.com](mailto:Indpvoice@aol.com) • P.O. Box 19076, Pensacola, FL 32523

## 'Boogie Woogie Preacher' headed to Pensacola



"Never Cancelled", "Always Sold Out", and "Sure to Make You Laugh" are just a few descriptions Northwest Florida theatre goers have grown accustomed to from a PCARA production. This year's production brings the "Boogie Woogie Preacher" to town - definitely a must see. The gospel stage play will be February 7, 2004, at the Pensacola Saenger Theatre. To accommodate mass ticket sales, the group added a 2:30 p.m. matinee show in addition to the 6:00 p.m. show. Tickets available at all ticketmaster outlets.

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Scenes from PCARA's "Boogie Woogie Preacher" during Saturday's performance. PCARA performed two sold out shows on Saturday.

photos by Al Henderson

## Reviewed by Al Henderson:

If you missed last weekend's show "The Boogie Woogie Preacher," don't kick yourself just yet. PCARA's hilarious, laced with an underlying message, performance will be available on DVD and VHS soon. Check out their website ([www.pcaraonline.com](http://www.pcaraonline.com)) for availability.

The first scene is set at church. Members are having a stomp-down praising good time when their new pastor is introduced. Through a cloud of smoke, the Boogie Woogie Preacher steps onto the scene decked in a shiny suit with shiny shoes and accessories to match. At that point, church members had to unbutton their too little suits,

kick off their high heel pumps and disregard their weaves and wigs because 'Chuch', not church, was 'bout to get started.

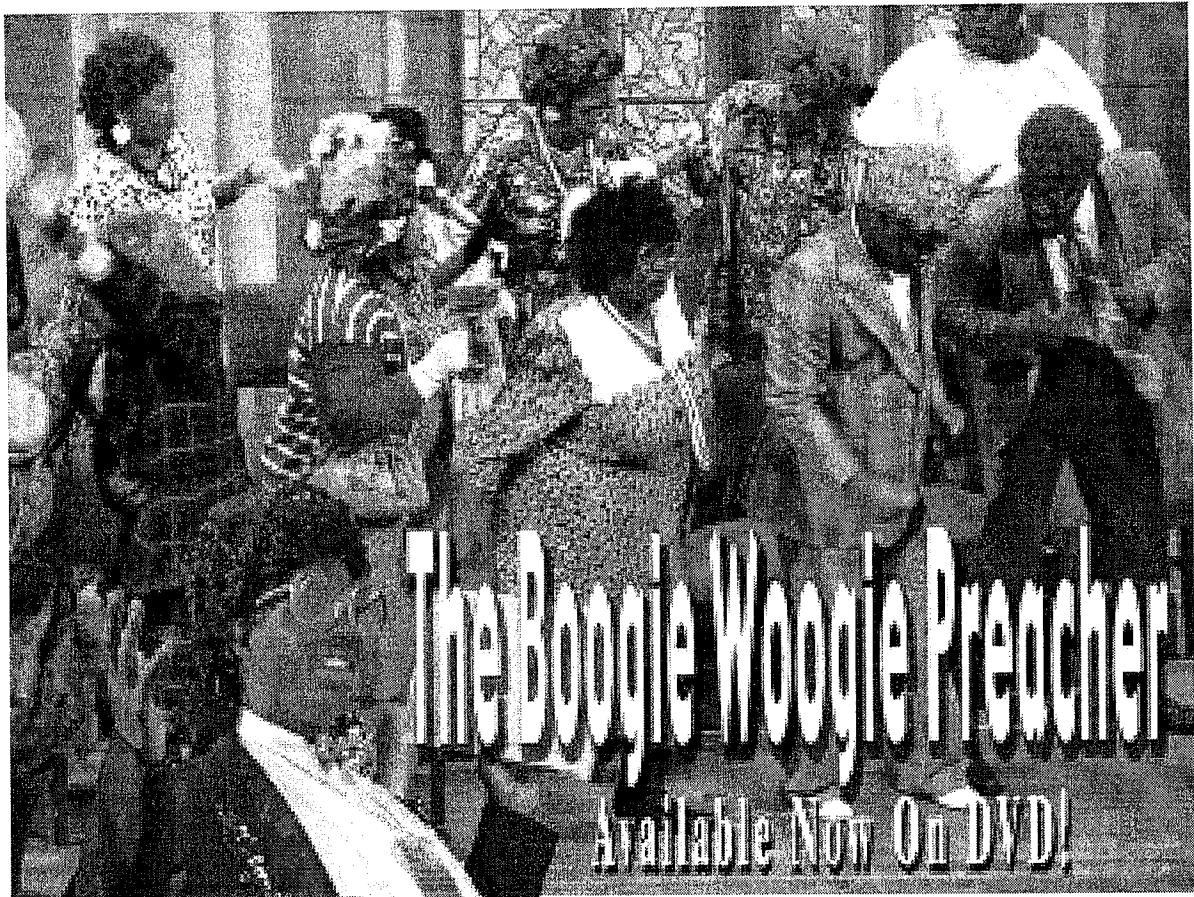
Another scene depicts "Business Meeting" and pokes fun at some of the bickering that goes on before the pastor arrives. Where have I heard that before?

Despite the comedy direc-

tion Leroy Williams (writer/producer/actor) took the play, the Boogie Woogie Preacher still managed to win souls for Christ scene after scene. From saving an alcoholic to converting sinners at a juke-joint, the Boogie Woogie Preacher insisted on spreading the gospel beyond the four walls of the church.

The show's message was

delivered with consistent laughter. I applaud the cast and crews effort on this performance. It is always refreshing to see local actors perform at such a high level of professionalism. I would be remiss if I did not mention the excellent performances by several opening acts. Pensacola has an abundance of talent.



# The Boogie Woogie Preacher

Available Now On DVD!

The World's  
Most Hilarious  
Gospel, Comedy  
Stage-Play

# ON SALE HERE!

PURCHASE YOUR DVD ONLINE-at:

[www.boogiewoogiepreacher.com](http://www.boogiewoogiepreacher.com) or call 1.800.844.1568

The Boogie Woogie Preacher is a PCARA Production Written and Directed by Leroy Williams



# LOCAL

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2004

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Pensacola News Journal

## what's going on

### LOCAL BRIEFS

#### Event sends message against violence, rugs

The Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association will have its 11th annual United Together for Non-Violence and a Drug Free Community (The Big Cookout) at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Terry Wayne East Youth Ball Park on West Jackson Street between J and K streets. This event is to unite businesses and residents throughout the Pensacola community to promote a message to replace violence and drug abuse with love, respect and unity.

Last year more than 3,700 Pensacolians attended this major event. This year's attendance is expected to reach 4,200 people.

The Big Cookout will consist of free food, exhibits, guest speakers, local heroes, community leaders, spiritual leaders, victims and perpetrators of violence. Entertainment will include gospel choirs, performing artists, storytellers, comedians and free giveaways.

For details, call 444-0646.

#### United Together for Non-Violence and a Drug Free Community, The Big Cookout

2 p.m. Saturday. Terry Wayne East Youth Ball Park, West Jackson Street between J and K streets. Leroy Williams, 444-0646.

The Big Cookout will consist of free food, exhibits and guest speakers. Entertainment will include gospel choirs, performing artists, storytellers, comedians and free giveaways.

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Pensacola News Journal

June 4-10, 2004



Bruce Graner  
@PensacolaNews  
Journal.com

Orielia Valley gives Jerry Hunter a foot massage at "The Big Cookout" and United Together for Non-Violence event at the Terry Wayne East Park on May 29.

## Communities join together in drug-free celebration

Gary Ghioto

@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Shy but determined, little Michael Lima walked the talk at the "United Together for Non-violence and a Drug-free Community Day" at Terry Wayne East Youth Ball Park Saturday.

Organizers of the 11th annual "Big Cookout" at the West Jackson Street ballpark had encouraged the estimated crowd of 4,000 to make the acquaintance of "somebody you don't know" and help build a stronger community.

So the 6-year-old walked to a grassy spot in the outfield and held out his hand to Barbara Davidson and daughter Jessica, 11, who sat listening to music.

"I'm Michael. What's your name?" he asked.

Davidson, a Florosa resident attending the event for the first time, smiled, introduced herself and shook the child's hand before he beat a hasty retreat.

That's exactly what Leroy Williams, founder of the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, wanted to see.

"Today is about bringing people together and impressing upon them the importance of replacing violence and drug abuse with love, unity and respect," Williams said. "A community that stays together, prays together and works together is a community that will prosper."

The cookout featured a variety of live rap, gospel and hip-hop music. Free hamburgers, hot dogs and cold drinks were served.

Between entertainment and goodies, folks heard inspirational messages and pep talks from a wide range of Pensacola leaders and celebrities asking them to reject violence and come together as a community.

The Rev. John Powell of the Pensacola Christian organization Truth for Youth said he was encouraged by the large number of teenagers who gathered at the ballpark Saturday.

"There aren't very many summer jobs for youth, and they are getting irritated because they can't find employment. We need to do positive things like this to empower them," Powell said.

"We need more activities like this throughout the summer months so we can encourage them to love one another and not get involved with violence and drugs."

Vendors selling cars, auto loans and cell phones were mixed in with tables offering information about registering to vote and getting tested for HIV and hepatitis.

For young children, two inflated bouncing tents provided by the state Human Resources Commission, Carpenter's Campers, WBQP-TV and WRNE-AM 980 were a big draw.

Other sponsors of the event included the University of West Florida, the Levin and Papanonio Foundation, Winn-Dixie, the Escambia County Sheriff's Department, auto dealer Sandy Sansing and Wal-Mart.



Bruce Graner@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

## 'Big Cookout' unites communities

The group Michael Dean and The Deliverers performs Saturday at "The Big Cookout" and "United Together for Non-violence and a Drug-free Community Day" at Terry Wayne East Park. **Story, 4C**

# THE PENSACOLA VOICE

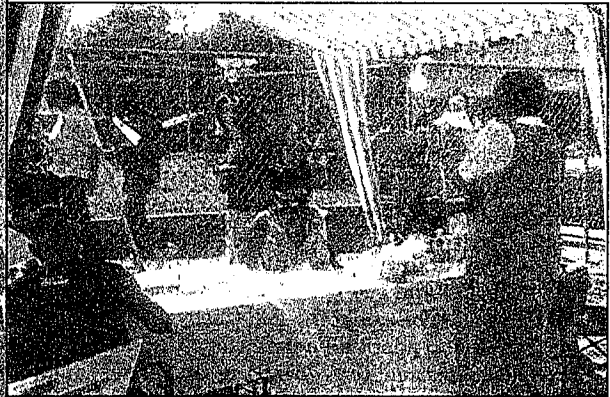
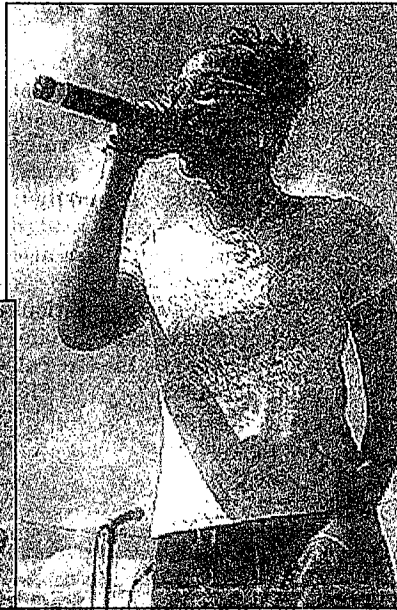
SERVING THE WEST GATE TO THE SUNSHINE STATE

Volume 40 Num. 23

June 03 - June 09, 2004

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## PCARA Celebrates 11th Annual 'Big Cookout'



The Pensacola Community Arts & Recreation Association (PCARA) celebrated its 11th annual Big Cookout at Terry Wayne East Youth Ball Park last Saturday. The event featured free food and entertainment from local vocalists, praise dancers and choirs. For more information about PCARA call 444-064. Pictured (l-r): PCARA founder Leroy Williams introduces acts, Alisha Huff sings a solo, Jackie Hunter volunteers to help with free HIV testing as a part of her church's outreach.

# NEIGHBORS

www.PensacolaNewsJournal.com/neighbors



Ryan Clark/News Journal correspondent

Leroy Williams speaks to the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church MJJ Praise dancers. Many youth Gospel and other music groups will be performing in the Pensacola Youth Gospel Extravaganza at Saenger Theatre.

## Youth Gospel Extravaganza takes center stage Saturday

**Ryan Clark**  
News Journal correspondent

After playing host to SpringFest last weekend, Downtown Pensacola will have the opportunity to showcase another concert as the Pensacola Youth Gospel Extravaganza takes to the stage on Saturday.

"I think it is important that we spotlight all of the talented youth in the Pensacola community," said Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association founder and President Leroy Williams. "We felt the best way to do that was to let them perform at the best venue in Pensacola: The Saenger Theatre."

In 2000, after noticing the effect the performing arts had on his community, Williams wanted to have a concert that allowed area youth to perform. PCARA used the event, which has had consecutive sellouts, as a fund-raiser.

This year's concert includes 34 acts. The groups will perform in categories of singing, dancing, rapping, instrumental music and drill teams.

### Want to go?

- **WHAT:** Fourth annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza.
- **WHEN:** 6 p.m. Saturday.
- **WHERE:** Saenger Theatre.
- **COST:** \$8 in advance at Stage Right Christian Music Store in University Mall and the Saenger Theatre. Tickets will cost \$10 on the day of the show.
- **DETAILS:** 444-0646.

"Being that we have such a variety of acts, everyone is so excited about it," Williams said. "People look forward to seeing each other every week at rehearsal, and not only do the performances get better but the more we rehearse, the better the groups get."

Williams, a graduate of Escambia High, founded PCARA in 1987 as an attempt to give back to his community. Since then, not only has the organization been involved with putting on the concert, but it also al-

lowed Pensacola area youth a chance to be involved with activities such as boxing, aerobics and karate.

Even though PCARA offered many athletic opportunities, it was the performing arts that sparked interest among some youth in the community.

"Here in Pensacola, from what I have seen, there are not many organizations that promote positive things for the youth," said Tabitha Christopher, a performer in the group Unique. "When performances like this are done, and when there is a large amount of people and when they see young people on stage, it gives them inspiration."

More than 1,400 tickets already have been sold, Williams said.

"Every year has been a total success, and this year we expect the same result," Williams said. "When you go from place to place and see kids with so much talent, you do what you can do to get them exposure. It's just giving them an arena to expose their talents."



# Weekender

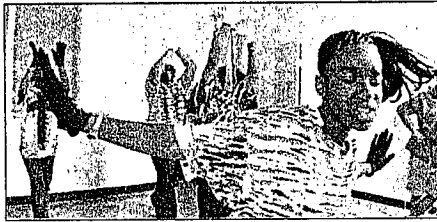
www.PensacolaNewsJournal.com ♦ June 25-July 1, 2004



Youth extravaganza, 3

SATURDAY

## PCARA fourth annual Youth Extravaganza

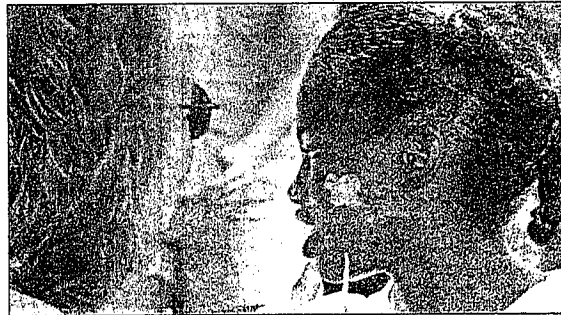


News Journal file photo  
Young performers rehearse for last year's show.

6 p.m. Saturday. The Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's annual showcase of talented youth from throughout the Pensacola Bay Area. Singing, dancing, praise dancing, instrumentals, gospel rapping and recitation will be among the talents presented by the 32 acts. Included will be the PCARA Faith Dancers, D.O.V.E. from Zion Hope Primitive Baptist Church and New Generation from Englewood Baptist Church, among others. Cost is \$8 in advance, \$10 the day of the show. Tickets on sale at Stage Right Christian Music Store, the Saenger box office and all Ticketmaster outlets. Saenger Theatre, 118 S. Palafox Place. 444-0646, 444-7699.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

## Fun Fest



News Journal file photo

## Youth gospel event a big hit

Michael Stewart

@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Daisa Wilson's praise dance Saturday night at the fourth annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza at the Saenger Theatre was punctuated with a thunderous applause from a packed house.

Daisa, 11, was among more than 150 performers — ages 6 to 19 — at the event to spotlight local youth. Sponsored by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, the event featured gospel singing, praise dancing, gospel rap, skits and more.

PCARA's Gospel Extravaganza helps fund the organization's programs.

"Our major objective is to keep kids away from drug abuse, teen pregnancy and violence," PCARA President Leroy Williams said.

Youth in the program are taught to develop skills that range from dance, acting and singing to boxing and karate.

"I wanted to join when I first saw PCARA about a year ago," Daisa said. "I thought it would be hard, but now I just love it."

Williams told the audience in the opening moments of the show that they were going to be treated to some amazing talent. Judging by the reaction of the crowd, he was right.

A skit of the confrontation between David and Goliath drew a roar of approval, punctuated by laughter as the young child playing David nailed the role with attitude, standing up to the hulking young man who portrayed his nemesis.

Kiondra Michaels, 5, and her four-member entourage earned a standing ovation for their praise dance to the gospel song, "Behold the Lamb."

"I like to dance and sing," Kiondra said. "I think we could be on television if we dance."

Shameka Abney, 15, was among the performers at the Saenger. Her mother, Monique Wiggins, 41, an actress with the organization, was enthusiastic about the program.

"I think it gives children a lot of self-esteem and builds character," she said. "It challenges them to go out and do other things."

# The shows go on

## Local theater groups struggle to restore lights, action for storm-weary audiences

Beth Ramirez de Arellano  
News Journal correspondent

Each week, when Carol Kahn Parker updates her theatrical Web site, Carol's Curtain Call, she issues this command to her Pensacola-area visitors: "Theatre — See it! Do it!"

In the weeks since Hurricane Ivan hit, local theater organizations are making her words their rallying cry.

The costumes may be a bit spattered, the theatres may need "mucking out," but they are up and running, auditioning for fall productions and generally fighting the post-storm depression we all feel with shows and events to bring a little laughter back to our lives.

Parker has been hearing from local theater organizers as they try to decide what to cancel and what to keep on their schedules. But no one wants to shut down production completely, she said.

"People were anxious about what was going to happen," Parker, a long-time performer in local venues, said. "They are frustrated with their own lives — they know they're going to have to wait three months to get their roof fixed, but they want to come back to normalcy, to do theater and to have the things we love in our lives again."

"People are saying the show must go on," she added.

Will Wirth, Pensacola Little

Theatre's marketing and public relations director, said nearly all October events have been canceled, including scheduled performances for which tickets already had been sold.

The Pensacola Cultural Center



Ben Twingley@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Darin Franklin, from left, Anita Johnson and Evelyn Rankin fine tune their acting skills during an early September rehearsal for Pensacola Arts and Recreation Association's production of "Faith is the Key." The play will still open on Oct. 23 in Bay Minette, Ala.

was badly damaged, with a flooded basement and a large hole in the roof. Costumes and equipment were destroyed.

But, "It could have been a lot worse for us, looking at other downtown historic buildings," Wirth said.

"The effects are going to be far-reaching, but we want to press on and get back to entertaining people in the community."

Their first post-Ivan production will be "A Chorus Line," performed Nov. 12-14 and 19-21, followed by a Treehouse Children's Theater production of "It's A Wonderful Life" in December.

At auditions Monday and Tuesday, about 130 people, adults and chil-

dren, showed up. The large turnout did not surprise Jean Odum, a drama teacher at N.B. Cook Elementary and member of the Treehouse board of directors.

"All I'm seeing is healing," she said. "They're sharing stories and consoling each other, and talking about their concern for the theatre."

Nicole Dickson, the director of the upcoming Treehouse show, said theatrical productions are not a needless frivolity, but a vital part of recovery from the hurricane's effects.

"The community needs a show like this because of its theme — that even when things look bad and it

See THEATER, 3E

# Groups ready for next production

FROM 1E

seems we're in our darkest times, there's really always hope."

"The central theme that ties into our Pensacola situation is the idea of community and family. George Bailey is so desperate, but the entire community comes pouring in to help. I feel Pensacola has pulled together amazingly in this situation, so that will really hit a chord.

"The workers who have come to help us have been like Clarence, our angels," Dickson said.

Michael Smith, at 13 already a veteran of several community theater productions, auditioned for the show along with nearly 50 others Monday night. He said it's a perfect time for a show "to take people's minds off things."

"You've gotta take a break, because bad things happen, but nothing ever really ends — things will be OK," he said.

In Milton, the Imogene Theatre escaped serious damage to its historic home, theater president Bonnie Andrews said.

A planned December production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" has been pushed back to February, and this year's "Ghost Walk" fundraiser is canceled, but the current effort, a children's play for the schools set for Nov. 1, will go on, she said.

"There's something special in being with other people at a time like this. It's not escapism. It's knowing that the arts are still there and life does go on."

— Yolanda Reed, Loblolly Theatre resident director

"The kids have been real trouper for that — since we had no electricity, they have been rehearsing during the day," Andrews said. "It's a welcome break from all the stress we've all been under, and the children still want to come." She recalled the effect on Broadway productions after the destruction of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and said this is a similar situation.

"At first they canceled a bunch of shows, but then the actors and directors got together and said, 'No, we need this,'" Andrews said.

Loblolly Theatre resident director Yolanda Reed said her company returned to performing a after the storm, as soon as power was restored, and has extended the current production, a one-woman show titled "Interim," until Oct. 17.

"We are donating a dollar of each Interim ticket sold to PLT, to help them with their costume losses, because we have to support each other," she said.

"A lot of people are still in shock and there is so much to do, it's hard to go to the theater, but we

hope people will join us and try to get back to normal in as many ways as we can," Reed said.

Loblolly's Halloween show, "Fortuna Saloon," a cabaret-style production, will open Oct. 29.

Pensacola Arts and Recreation Association had scheduled a production of "Faith Is the Key" for Oct. 23 in Bay Minette, Ala., and plans to mount that play anyway. They have rehearsed in cast members' homes while their rehearsal spots were closed for repairs.

"It's time to get your life back together and to move on, and that better way to do that than through an opportunity to perform," said Leroy Williams, PCARA president.

"The type of gospel productions we do, and all that we've been through, we must take faith that God is going to bring us through the storms of our lives," he said.

Michelle Kerrigan, the founder of the B.E.T.A. Children's Theatre, a Gulf Breeze group, said the musical "Give My Regards to Broadway" has been moved to Oct. 28-30 and Nov. 4-6.

One problem remains — finding

a location to put on a show.

"Most of our performing places, like the recreation center, have been turned into shelters and distribution centers," Kerrigan said.

B.E.T.A. showcases talented children between the ages of 5 and 15, and young hearts are not easily discouraged, she said.

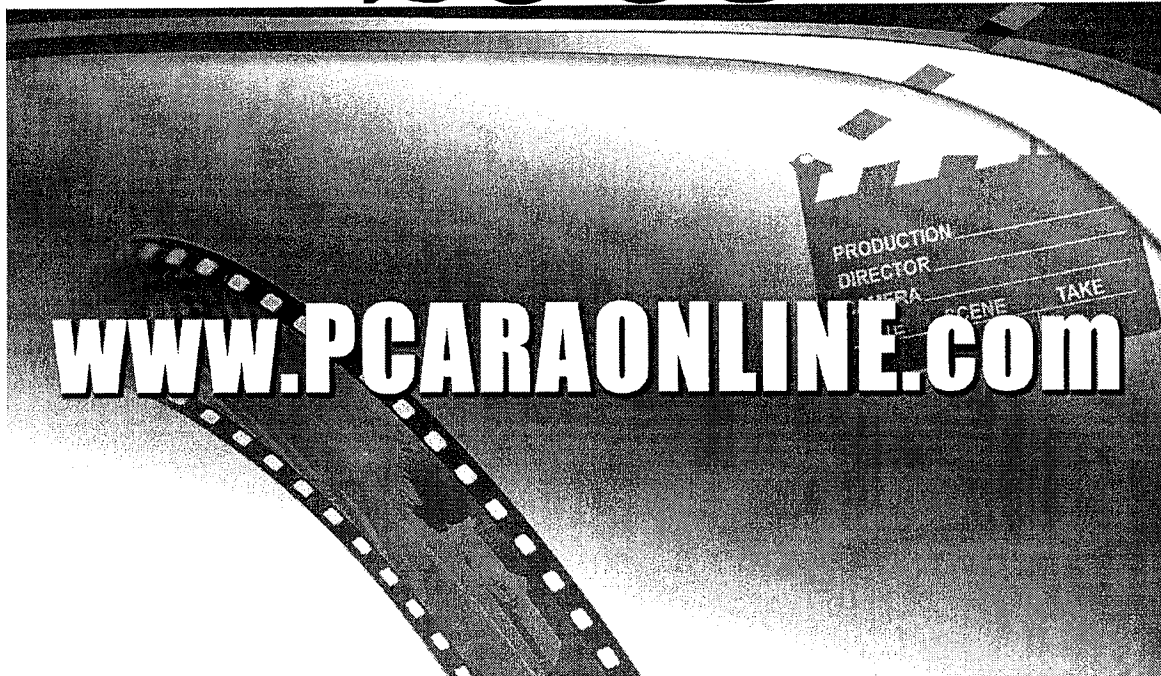
"Since we are based in Gulf Breeze, a lot of the kids have had a rough go of it, but they are ready to perform and do their thing," she said. "Five days after the hurricane, we got everybody together, and one of the little girls told me her family lost everything on Pensacola Beach, but she was ready to do what she loves. It's a good outlet for them."

Despite all the hurdles, seasoned performers can never give up, turn off the footlights and sit in the dark. They will keep on performing, believing what they offer is hope and restoration.

"There's something special in being with other people at a time like this," Yolanda Reed said. "It's not escapism. It's knowing that the arts are still there and life does go on."



**2003**





## PCARA's 'Faith Is The Key' reveals answer

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." Matthew 17:20

PCARA based its upcoming play, "Faith Is The Key", on these words spoken by Jesus Christ. The play is

2003, at the Pensacola Saenger Theater at 7:00pm.

"Faith Is The Key" is a spiritually-uplifting gospel

about a young lady who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness who believes that her deep, abiding faith

through this trying time in her life. This unique theatrical production is considered more of a ministry

"Faith Is The Key" will bring souls to Christ and will be talked about for years to come. "Faith Is The Key" is com-

ing, superb singing and an uplifting message. You don't want to miss this blessing that God has just



Monique Wiggins (r) comforts Karen Sigler during rehearsal on Monday.



Anita Johnson, who plays Elizabeth, has fainted, and her daughter Brittney, played by Breyonna Williams, is trying to wake her.



(l) Paula Dean plays Carmen - a know-it-all church member. (c) Leroy Williams (Vonshae), Wiggins and Tonya Green (Shirley). (r) Daryl Wiggins (doctor) rehearses his lines.

## COVER STORY

# New play offers a key lesson about faith

**Andy Metzger**  
News Journal correspondent

The Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association (PCARA) presents the gospel stage play "Faith is the Key" Saturday at the Saenger Theatre. The performance begins at 7 p.m.

Previous productions presented by PCARA at the Saenger include last year's "Youth Gospel Extravaganza," along with plays such as "Prayer Changes Things," "Back In the Good Ol' Dayz," "70s," "How Johnnie Mae Got Her Groove On" and "Love Ain't Got Nothin' to do With It."

Each of these events has drawn large, enthusiastic audiences.

As with several previous productions,

"Faith is the Key" is written, produced and directed by PCARA administrator Leroy E. Williams Jr.

This latest effort tells the spiritually uplifting story of a young lady who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness and who believes that her deep, abiding faith in the Lord will see her through this trying time in her life.

"I feel very positive about this



Anita Johnson plays the main character, Elizabeth, in "Faith is the Key."

production," Williams said. "It's an emotional subject, and a reality that many people have to deal with. Personally, I feel there are a lot of people who are willing to go to God with small problems, but there's a tendency to not have enough faith when the time comes to ask for a miracle.

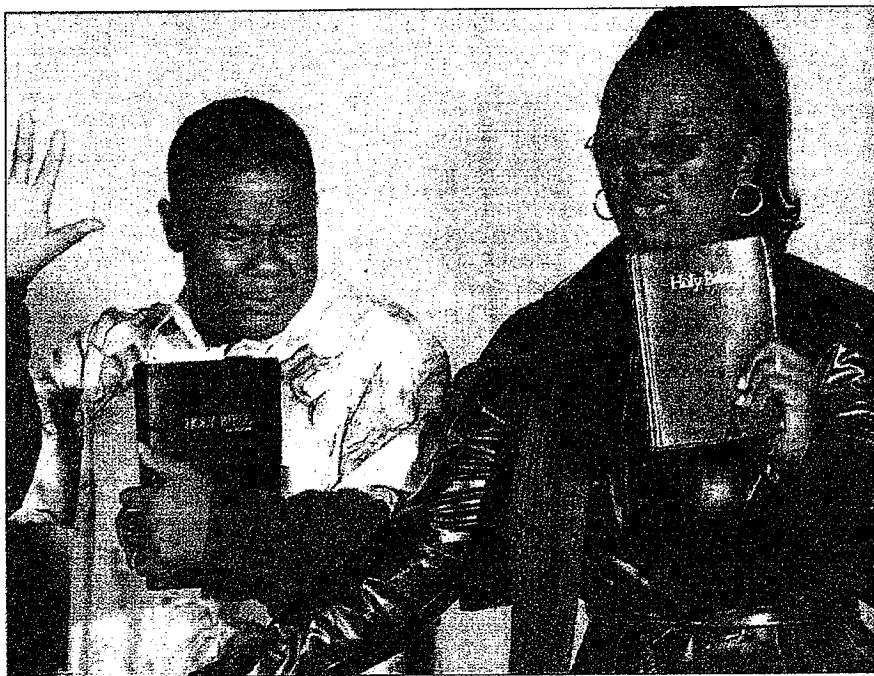
"We feel that each person, at some point in their life, needs a miracle from God, and the key to this is having faith."

PCARA has been serving the greater Pensacola area for more than 15 years, and these songful productions with a message are an important aspect of their mission.

"PCARA's mission is to keep our youth drug-free and vio-

lence-free, and to assist in avoiding teen-pregnancy," said Charisse Charles, PCARA assistant administrator.

"One of the many ways we try to direct our youth and attain this mission is through stage plays like 'Faith is the Key' and 'Prayer Changes Things.' We strive to instill in our youth the importance of prayer and having faith in God



Photos by Katie King@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Leon Blandon and Karen Sigler hear the news that the main character is terminally ill in the play "Faith is the Key," presented by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association. The performance starts at 7 p.m. Saturday.

and in themselves to accomplish their goals."

Charles said "Faith is the Key" has "made me take a hard look at myself and has reminded me of what it was that helped me to survive some very trying times in my life."

Principals among the 30-plus cast members include Anita Johnson as Elizabeth Ann Jones, Breonna Williams as Brittney, Monique Wiggins as Regina Bell, Kimberly Lane as Keshia, Leroy E. Williams as Vonshae, Tonya Green

as Shirley, and Paula Dean as Carmen. Assisting Williams with the production are Keith Harris as music director, Charles as sound and cue manager, Chris Randolph as stage manager, Robert Lane and Charlotte Macklin as assistant stage managers and Marilyn Byrd as props manager.

Tickets can be purchased at the Stage Right Christian Music Store in University Mall and at all Ticketmaster locations.

For more information about PCARA, call 444-0646.

### Want to go?

■ **WHAT:** "Faith is the Key"

■ **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Saturday

■ **WHERE:** Saenger Theatre, 118 S. Palafox St.

■ **COST:** \$18 advance tickets, \$20 the day of the show.

■ **DETAILS:** 444-7686.

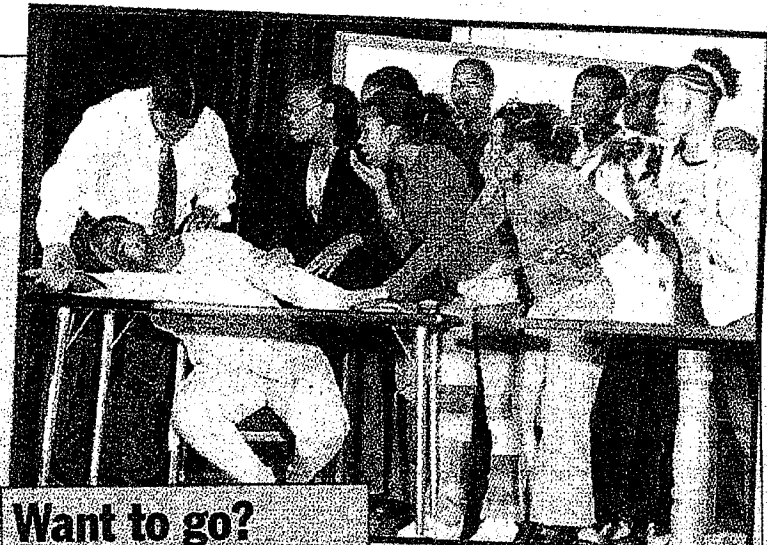
## 'Faith is the Key'

The Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association presents the gospel stage play "Faith is the Key" on Saturday at the Saenger Theatre.

Written, produced and directed by local playwright Leroy E. Williams Jr., "Faith is the Key" tells the spiritually uplifting story of a young lady who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness and who believes that her deep, abiding faith in the Lord will see her through the trying time.

PCARA has been serving the greater Pensacola area for more than 15 years, and songful stage productions with a message — such as "Faith is the Key" — are an important part of its mission.

Principals among the 30-plus cast members include Anita Johnson as Elizabeth Ann Jones, Breyonna Williams as Brittney, Monique Wiggins as Regina Bell, Kimberly Lane as Keshia, Leroy E. Williams as Vonshae, Tonya Green as Shirley, and Paula Dean as Carmen.



Katie King @

PensacolaNewsJournal.com

▲ Anita Johnson, left, who plays Elizabeth Ann Jones, is the center of attention during a rehearsal for the play.

Randolph as stage manager, Robert Lane and Charlotte Macklin as assistant stage managers, and Marilyn Byrd as props manager.

The performance begins at 7 p.m. For more information about PCARA, call 444-0646.

— Andy Metzger  
News Journal correspondent

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Assisting Williams are Keith Harris as music director, Charisse A. Charles as sound and cue manager, Chris

What's  
happening  
the week of  
February 7-13,  
2003

# WEEKENDER

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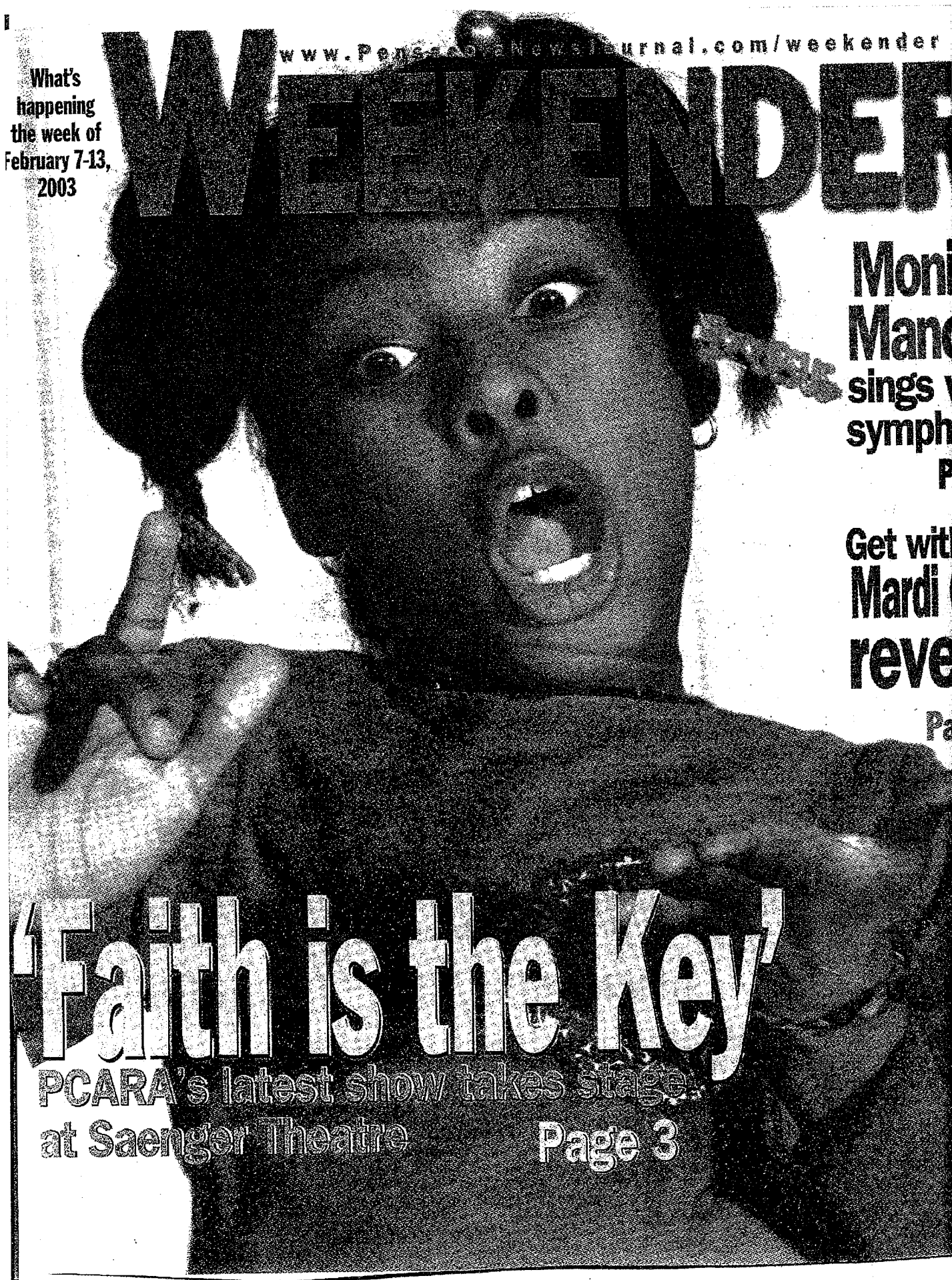
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## 'Faith is the Key'

PCARA's latest show takes stage  
at Saenger Theatre

Page 3





Section C

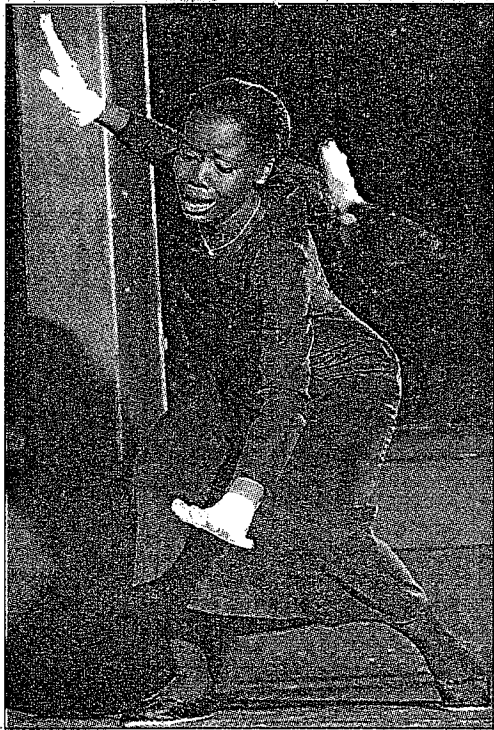
PENSACOLA  
News  
Journal

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# LOCAL

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2003

BELOW: Ulyna Johnson performs a dramatic presentation during the talent portion of the scholarship pageant.



## Weir takes top honors in Miss Pensacola Pageant

Sloane Stephens Cox  
@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Katie Weir can execute seemingly gravity-defying ballet steps in front of a packed theater. "But don't ask me to say a few words in front of a small crowd," she said.

On Sunday, the 18-year-old Gulf Breeze resident and Julliard hopeful proved herself wrong when she won the Miss Pensacola Scholarship Pageant at Seville Quarter, taking home \$2,000 in prizes.

"I was just tickled when they announced the winner," she said, laughing. "I thought: Are they kidding? Are they trying to be funny?"

"I thought, 'What am I supposed to do? Oh, yeah, wrist, wrist, elbow,'" she said, pretending to wave at the judges and audience members. "I wasn't even sure how to hold the bouquet they gave me."

Miss Pensacola, the first since 1998, is affiliated with Miss Florida and Miss America pageants. Fourteen pageant contestants between the ages of 17 and 24 and from

Escambia and Santa Rosa counties competed in four categories: interview, swimsuit, talent and evening gown.

Five young women, including Weir, twirled, belted out, kicked and flipped their way into the winner's circle.

Other finalists were first runner-up Bridgett Helms, 23, a tap dancer and graduate of the University of North Alabama; second runner-up Olga Dancaescu, 21, a singer and business major at the University of Florida; swimsuit finalist Jaime Hanna, a Pensacola Junior College freshman; and talent finalist Colecta Johnson, 20, a sophomore at the University of West Florida, who sang "There's a Winner in You."

Weir, who performed a solo from "Don Quixote," will head to the Miss Florida Pageant, which will be televised from Orlando in June.

"Of course, we think she's talented and beautiful, but it's great to know that other people think so too," said her mother, Viki. "She works so hard. Dancing is her life."

## Big Cookout for community set to promote nonviolence

In an effort to promote a nonviolent and drug-free community, the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association plans to have its 10th annual Big Cookout at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Terry Wayne East Youth Ball Park on West Jackson Street between J and K streets.

There will be free food. Entertainment will be provided by gospel recording artist Tai Oney.

The event is open to the public.

For more information, call Leroy Williams at 444-0646.

### Section C

## Gospel singer to perform at Big Cookout

Mark your calendars for the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's (PCARA) 10th annual Big Cookout at 1 p.m. May 31 at the Terry Wayne East Youth Ballpark.

The family-oriented event offers free food, entertainment by gospel recording artist Tai Oney and other entertainers and more.

The event is held in an effort to promote a non-violent and drug-free community.

Admission is free.

Details: Leroy Williams, 444-0646.

## THIS WEEK'S BEST BETS

### Saturday

### Food, gospel music at Big Cookout

Celebrate efforts for a safer community at the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's (PCARA) 10th annual Big Cookout this weekend.

The family-oriented event offers free food, entertainment by Panama City gospel recording artist Tai Oney and other entertainers and more.

The event is held in an effort to promote a non-violent and drug-free community.

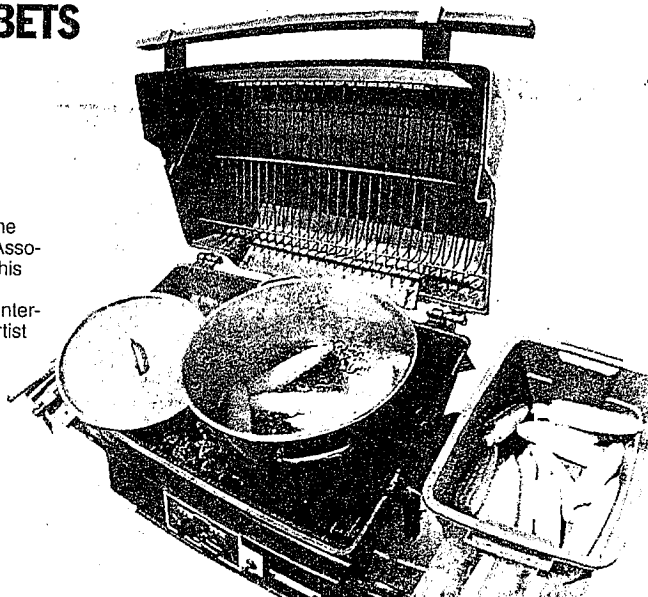
■ **WHEN:** 1 p.m. Saturday.

■ **WHERE:** Terry Wayne East Youth Ballpark,

located on West Jackson Street between J and K streets.

■ **COST:** Admission is free and open to the public.

■ **DETAILS:** Leroy Williams, 444-0646.



SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2003

## Youths dig music, fun, food at Big Cookout

Steve Mraz  
 ©PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Hundreds of Pensacola residents converged Saturday on Terry Wayne East Park on West Jackson Street to enjoy the 10th annual Big Cookout.

The event was sponsored by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, the Pensacola-Escambia Human Relations Commission and the Florida Division of Children and Families, said Leroy Williams, PCARA founder and president.

The Big Cookout — which targets youngsters as a way to redirect them from violence and drugs toward God first and then unity, love and respect — normally takes place in October. Williams

moved the date up this year to attract youngsters heading into summer break.

Summertime boredom sometimes can lead young people astray, Williams said, so he sought to bring his group's message to the youngsters before boredom could take hold.

"We're trying to catch the kids as they get out of school and address to them the major concerns of drug abuse and violence," Williams said.

The children and adolescents in attendance from the adjacent neighborhoods ate free food, jumped in space walks and listened to gospel music performances.

Gospel music artist Tai Oney came to the Big Cookout from Panama City to per-

See **OUTREACH, 12C**

## Outreach event focuses on youths on vacation

FROM 1C

form. At 18, he said his age helps him connect with young audiences.

"It's a lot easier for me to talk to somebody or sing to somebody my age than to connect to someone older than me," Oney said.



Oney

Ashley Booker, 13, served as a volunteer for the event by supervising one of three space walks.

"We know we can help others and have a good time," she said.

Trevor Benson helped ensure everyone would have a good time by keeping them well fed. As the man in charge of the grill at the Big Cookout for nine years, Benson has picked up a few tricks of the trade. Saturday he wore goggles to keep the grill smoke out of his eyes.

"Usually I go home with a serious headache and red eyes," he said. "I tried glasses, but glasses don't work. The goggles cover me all the way around."

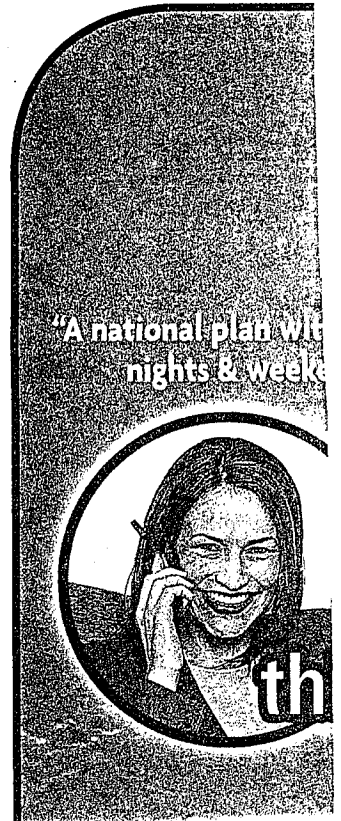
But the 37-year-old Benson also knows that the food he cooked was not the main purpose of the Big Cookout.

"I just hope people don't come for the free food," he said. "I hope they get the positive message of keeping kids off drugs and staying in school."

Benson can rest assured at least one youngster learned a positive message from the event.

As his friends talked about the fun they were having, Qwas'hawn Moorer, 8, spoke up from the back.

"We learn how to do stuff in the community and be involved in the community," he said.



# THE PENSACOLA VOICE®

SERVING THE WEST GATE TO THE SUNSHINE STATE

Volume 40 Num. 23

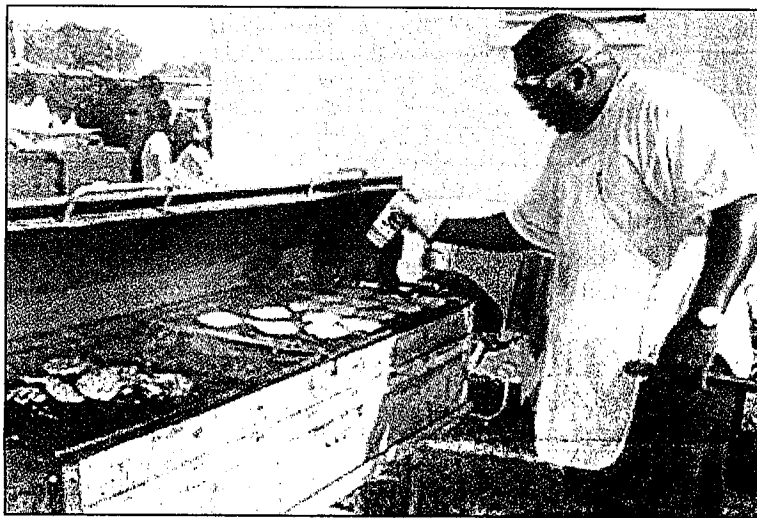
June 5 - June 11, 2003

50¢

## Community Comes Together at 'Big Cookout'



Gospel rap group, Burning Bush, perform



Trevor Benson began grilling hot dogs and hamburgers in the hot sun at 11:00 am and continued dishing up food throughout the day



Kids compete in a game of football

Thousands turned out at Terry Wayne East Youth ball park, last Saturday, for the annual "Big Cookout". Sponsored by the Pensacola Community Arts & Recreation Association (PCARA), and the Pensacola-Escambia Human Relations Commission, the Big Cookout is an annual event that is open to the public. Participants enjoyed free food, games and entertainment.

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## 'Big Cookout' a huge success



PCARA held its 10th Annual "Big Cookout" last Saturday at Terry Wayne Park. Organizers estimated over 3,000 participants.



Despite the high heat index, over three thousand participants filled Terry Wayne Park Saturday to enjoy free food, live gospel entertainment and hear encouraging words focusing on staying in school, non-violence and staying drug-free. Saturday's event was one of the largest in the 10 year history of the "Big Cookout."

The event was sponsored by PCARA (Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association), the Pensacola-Escambia Human relations Commission and the Florida Division of Children and Families.

"This event took a lot of hard work," commented Leroy Williams, president. "Along with teaching our kids to stay off drugs, remain violence free and to get their education, we want them to never forget where they came from. Like PCARA, we want them to stay involved in the community."



## Singing songs of praise



Bruce Graner © PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Lakesha Williams, 18, foreground, performs as one of the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's Praying Angels during rehearsal Tuesday at the Pensacola Junior College Student Center as part of the PCARA third annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza. The group is preparing for its upcoming show at the Saenger Theatre downtown.

HIGHLIGHTS

# CALENDAR

Friday, June 20 — Thursday, June 26

## Gospel show features many local acts

Area youngsters take to the stage to delight audiences during the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's third annual Gospel Youth Extravaganza.

The youth talent showcase features a variety of performances, including praise dancing, drill teams, gospel rapping, singing and more.

■ **WHEN:** 6 p.m. Saturday.

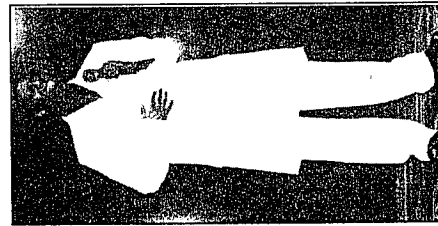
■ **WHERE:** Pensacola Saenger Theatre, 118 S. Palafox Place.



News Journal file photo

9:30 p.m.

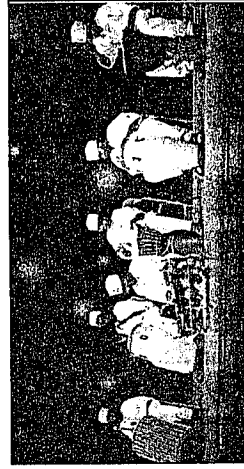
Doves is one of the many groups that performed in last year's P.C.A.R.A. Gospel Youth Extravaganza.



by Diane Pajaud  
Some of Pensacola's most talented young people got a chance to strut their stuff last Saturday at Youth Gospel Extravaganza 2003.

Sponsored by the Pensacola Community

## Talent Shines at Youth Gospel Extravaganza



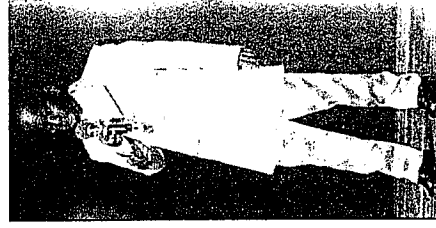
Left to right: Andre Cannal, Rock Solid Outreach Ministry; the Englewood Drumming Tigers, Boys & Girls Club, Pensacola; Joy, New Warrington Baptist Church and Jamal Puryear perform

Arts and Recreation from throughout the area. Parents, friends and church members packed the Saenger Theater as performers participated in the annual event.

Performers, from pre-school to high school, represented churches and community organizations most nervous performers.

"They get exposure from their churches and other places, but they seldom get a chance to perform at this level," said PCARA founder and President Leroy Williams in an earlier interview.

"We want to encourage young people to cultivate their talents. Williams said the group's purpose is to steer



young people away from drug and alcohol abuse. teen pregnancy and violence by steering them to more positive activities. For more information call 444-0646

## Pensacola kid one of America's 10 funniest

Pensacola's Anlecta LaPora Johnson is one step closer to stardom.

The 16-year-old Woodham High School senior has been selected from more than



10,000 entries as one of the top 10 contestants in Nickelodeon's "Are You All That? Search for the Funniest Kid in America" competition.

Anlecta saw herself named a finalist on national television Saturday while watching Nickelodeon. Judges this Saturday will select five finalists to advance to the final round.

The five finalists will appear in person in Los Angeles for a final round. Each finalist will perform in front of a panel of celebrity and expert judges and the viewing audience, who will vote for the funniest kid on [www.nick.com](http://www.nick.com).

The finalist who receives the most votes will be announced as the winner during a one-hour special July 26. The winner will appear as a cast member on the upcoming season of Nickelodeon's comedy sketch show "All That."

— Jahna Jacobson  
@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2003

## Music, food, fun – and a message



Photos by John Blackie @ PensacolaNewsJournal.com  
 Alexander Johnson of the World Changing Ministries Choir belts out a song for the crowd Sunday during the community celebration at Central Park organized by the Rev. John Powell's Truth for Youth ministry.

# Partying in the park



Casmin Wilson does a praise dance during the Central Park community celebration Sunday.

## Youth ministry hosts community celebration

**Carmen Paige**  
 @PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Good music, good information, good fun and good food all made for a good Sunday afternoon in the Rev. John Powell's eyes.

Truth For Youth, his nonprofit organization, was the co-sponsor for a community celebration at Central Park in Pensacola. As information on topics such as voter registration and HIV/AIDS awareness was distributed, young people swam and played basketball while older people listened to music and chatted.

"We want to empower

the community," Powell said. "We want them to vote and be more health-conscious of diseases plaguing this community."

Voting was on the mind of Ellison Bennett, former president of the local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

"I think everybody who is not a registered voter ought to be here and register," he said.

"This (community celebration) is a good, clean effort for all ages, especially the young folks. They can see what's exhibited today and how it could be encouraging to

their lives."

With the aroma of hush puppies wafting through the air, The Renaissance, a Pensacola band, gave the crowd "Happy Feelin's."

"We wanted to give the young people a little bit of the old school music," Powell said. "They say it's off the hook — we say it's all the way live."

Janice Wright, 15, of Pensacola, enjoyed the gathering. The old school music was new to her, but she liked it.

The Pensacola Community Arts & Recreation Association also performed.

Powell estimated more than 600 people came out.



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## Auditions to be held for 'The Boogie Woogie Preacher'

PCARA Productions is seeking males and females who are interested in acting in their upcoming Gospel Comedy Stage- Play, "THE BOOGIE WOOGIE PREACHER!." The Auditions are being held at the Pensacola Junior College Main Campus, Student Center Thursday, November 6, 2003 at 5:30 p.m. This production will take place in February. For more information call Leroy Williams at 444-0646.



## Musical held in honor of local pastor



see more pics on pg. 3