



**2008**



## Spotlight



News Journal file photo

Monique Turner (Lois), left, and Donna Johnson (Sadie) escorts a very drunk Bud, played by Leroy Williams, from the Sho'nuff Good Donut & Coffee Shop in the 2007 Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association production "The Unbelievable Man." The group has a new gospel play, "Too Blessed to Be Stressed," that will debut Friday.

# PCARA production presents message of God's blessings

Barbara Todd

News Journal correspondent

Spreading the gospel using slapstick comedy?

Award-winning playwright Leroy Williams does it every year to packed audiences whose tears of laughter flow like the River Jordan.

"Too Blessed to Be Stressed," Williams latest gospel play in which he also directs and acts in, opens Friday at Pensacola High School.

Produced by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, which was founded by Williams 20 years ago, is the vehicle through which he strives to provide skills that would enable youth to resist drug use, teen-age pregnancies and violence. Things that were prevalent in his neighborhood when he grew up. His plays are just one of the ways that PCARA helps fund its many programs.

"I've written 20 plays since we started out," Williams said. Each one has a message couched in humor.

In this year's production, Lena Harvey, 72 and the oldest cast member, plays Lottie Bee a feisty, mature woman. "In real life I'm like that, too," the exuberant Harvey said. "So, I just let myself be me and have fun."

Monique Turner, 45, plays Earthline, a controlling and demanding woman who is on the lookout for a husband. Nevertheless, Turner said, Earthline does her best to follow the Ten Commandments.

"These plays are a good way to get people that may not want to go to a church," Turner said. "But they get the same message from the plays that they get in

church."

Turner and her now-grown children have been involved with PCARA since the children were 8 and 14 and they've appeared in many PCARA productions.

Shameka Abney, Monique Turner's 19-year-old daughter, will be doing praise dancing in the present play. She attends Pensacola Junior College, majoring in nursing.

"PCARA has offered workshops on non-violence and teen pregnancy," said Abney, who has participated in many PCARA programs. "Every Tuesday at 4:30 at Pensacola Junior College Student Center [PCARA] has tutors to help with your homework." PCARA members must maintain at least C+ average.

Charles Gibson, 30, plays a drunken Rufus Pippen in "Too Blessed to Be Stressed."

A non-drinker himself, he said in order to play the part he had to closely observe several friends who toss a few back.

"That's what actually turned me off on drinking," Gibson said.

You won't find many perfect people in any of PCARA's productions and Williams strives to write, direct and act in a manner to which everyone can relate.

"Young, old, black or white," Williams said, "Everyone will see something of themselves in the plays."

Apparently his audiences agree with Williams because his productions draw full houses with a diversity of age and ethnicity. Two of his plays have received awards from The American Gospel Mu-

### Want to go?

- **WHAT:** "Too Blessed to Be Stressed"
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 4 p.m. Sunday. (Doors open one hour before showtime)
- **WHERE:** Pensacola High School, 500 W. Maxwell St.
- **COSTS:** \$20 and \$22 at the door.
- **DETAILS:** 298-5345.

sic Association.

In "Too Blessed to Be Stressed" Williams plays Robert-Lee-Earl-Ray-Dully, a God-fearing man who is filled with joy, happiness and the Holy Spirit, very much like Williams. But along with joy and happiness, Dully encounters several of the same problems that most of us face in our daily lives.

Still, he is able to work through those problems because he knows he's not alone. He knows that the holy spirit is in his corner; that God's blessings are enough to avoid the daily stress of living in the real world and he's not shy about sharing that message with everyone.

Williams considers PCARA his ministry and not only does he talk the talk through his plays, but he walks the walk through his contributions to the community.

"We're not a religious organization and I'm not a pastor by any means," Williams said. "But I really believe that all we do and all our accomplishments come from God." Amen.



Turner



Gibson

### **Too Blessed To Be Stressed?**

7 p.m. today and Saturday, Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association Productions presents a gospel stage play that depicts the life of Robert Lee Earl Ray Dully, a God-fearing man who is filled with joy, happiness and the Holy Spirit. Robert Lee tells everyone he meets that he is too blessed to be stressed. The play is written, produced and directed by Leroy Williams. Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$22 the day of the show. Pensacola High School, 500 W. Maxwell St. Leroy Williams, 293-5345.



**LEROY WILLIAMS**

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# LOCAL

## Cookout brings people together

### Event helps battle drugs and violence in the community

Louis Cooper  
lcooper@pnj.com

Free hot dogs, hamburgers and live entertainment greeted people Saturday at an event intended to highlight the positive opportunities in Pensacola.

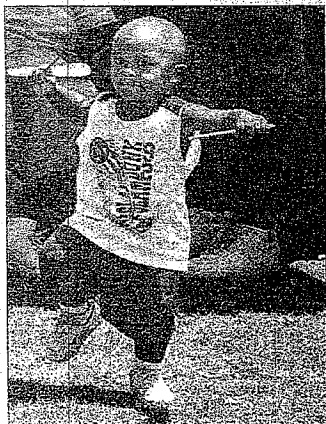
The 15th annual Big Community Cookout was organized at Magee Field in Pensacola, with vendors, entertainment and free food.

The cookout is actually 21 years old, having been called United Together for a Non-violent and Drug Free Community for the first six years.

The cookout is hosted by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association.

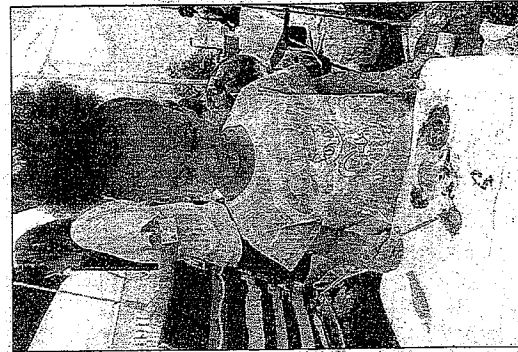
"Our mission is to reach out

See COOKOUT, 5C



John Blackie/jblackie@pnj.com

Jayden Randolph, 1, dances Saturday during the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's community cookout. **More photos, Page 2C.**



**LEFT:** Eamest Stanberry plays and Yan Thee of Teump Tye sings as part of the entertainment Saturday at the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's cookout at Magee Field. **ABOVE:** Eboni Riser, 4, enjoys painting at the cookout.

2008

Pensacola News Journal

5C

## LOCAL

"Our mission is to reach out in our community to replace violence and drug abuse by putting God first with unity, love and respect."

— Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association cookout organizer Leroy Williams

## Cookout

FROM 1C

in our community to replace violence and drug abuse by putting God first with unity, love and respect," said event organizer Leroy Williams. "Today is a day of festive gathering, businesses connecting to the community, free food and live entertainment."

Williams said 2,800 people attended last year's cookout, and he expected 3,000 Saturday. He said groups from as far as Fort Walton Beach, Crestview and Mobile were expected to attend.

Yolanda Calhoun brought her daughter, Kierstan, 9, and her sister, Maya, 12, to the cookout.

"This is the first year we've come," Calhoun said. "We heard about it, and it was something that I thought would be good to bring the kids to. We came to see some of the positive things going on, and to have a good time."

This marked the first year for the cookout to be at Magee Field on Davis

Highway at Scott Street. The cookout had been at Terry Wayne East Park, but that facility was damaged by Hurricane Ivan. The cookout had moved around since 2004.

"We're very happy to have this on the east side of Pensacola," said John Allbritton, chief executive officer of the Pensacola Youth Sports Association, which runs Magee Field. "The city has just renovated the park (in October) and this is the biggest event that we've had here so far."

The cookout was sponsored by: Solutia; the Studer Group; Baptist Health Care; the Escambia County Sheriff's Office; the Escambia County Human Relations Commission; Alcohol, Drug Abuse, Mental Health; WEAR-TV; Pro-Legal Copies; Magic 106; Gulf Coast Community Bank; Wal-Mart on U.S. 29; WRNE 980; Winn-Dixie; U.S. Marine Corps; Terrence A. Gross, P.A.; the Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency; Levin-Papantonio; the City of Pensacola and Truth for Youth.



# THE PENSACOLA VOICE

SERVING THE WEST GATE TO THE SUNSHINE STATE

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50¢



Voices of Victory Radio Choir

## PCARA Hosts Big Community Cookout

by David King

The sweltering heat did not keep hundreds from attending the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's (PCARA) 15th Annual Big Community Cookout. The cookout, which was held last Saturday at McGee Field, offered free food, and entertainment for both children and parents.

Although the venue of the yearly PCARA cookout has changed over the years, the goal of the event has always remained the same; to provide an afternoon of fun and faith for children, to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs and violence and to act as a venue for performing artists, storytellers, comedians and other aspiring talent, said PCARA founder, Leroy Williams.

"We've been a part of this event for the past four years," Velma Franklin, member of the Voices of Victory Radio Choir said. "We've got gospel rap, individual solo artists, praise dancers, and just a lot of local talent." PCARA has been host-

tion is all about.

"Our major objective is to give back to our community, and to work with our adults and young people to lead them in a positive direction," he said. "We do this by offering acting singing, modeling, aerobics, boxing, karate and whatever else interests young people."

The organization is also active in the performing arts. "That's where God led us and that's where we went," Williams said. "God has blessed me as a professional playwright, and that is what we use to fund our all-volunteer program."

The faith-inspired message permeated the PCARA cookout. Many of the plays advertised at the event were Christian oriented and a lot of the talent, regardless of the genre was gospel based. Double Trouble, Ty Cross and The Voices of Victory Radio Choir are just a few of the artists who performed at the event.

"If we don't keep Christ as our center, we are going to lose our youth," performing artist Ty Cross said. "This is

### Big Cookout continued from pg. 1

else it starts in the community."

"We are not a religious organization but are an organization that believes in putting God first and that is why have been so successful," Williams said. "This park is filled with lots of people who come not only for the freebies or the entertainment, but they come because they know it's a positive message. It's something they can depend on year after year."

In addition to the cookout, PCARA is hosting its Eighth Annual Youth Extraganza June 28th at 6 p.m. at Pensacola High School. The event will feature more live and local talent. Williams encouraged youth of all ages to attend. PCARA holds weekly meetings Tuesdays and Thursdays at Pensacola Junior College.

# NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY NEWS

## Spotlight



News Journal file photos

Members of Mt. Pilgrim Praise Dancers perform for the crowd last year during PCARA's annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza at the Saenger Theatre.

## PCARA ready to showcase area youth's level of talent

From staff reports

The Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association will present its annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza, featuring 31 acts and 127 youths, at 6 p.m. Saturday at the Pensacola High School auditorium.

This year's theme is "moving our youth's talents to the next level," according to Leroy Williams, founder of PCARA and director of the gospel event.

"The purpose of the extravaganza is to give talented youth in the community an opportunity showcase their given talents and to interact with others youth from across Pensacola and surrounding areas," explained Williams.

He added that the youths range between 7 and 22 years old and performers have been rehearsing for six weeks.

Williams easily musters energy for this annual event. "I feel that our youth are our most precious commodity and will

### Want to go?

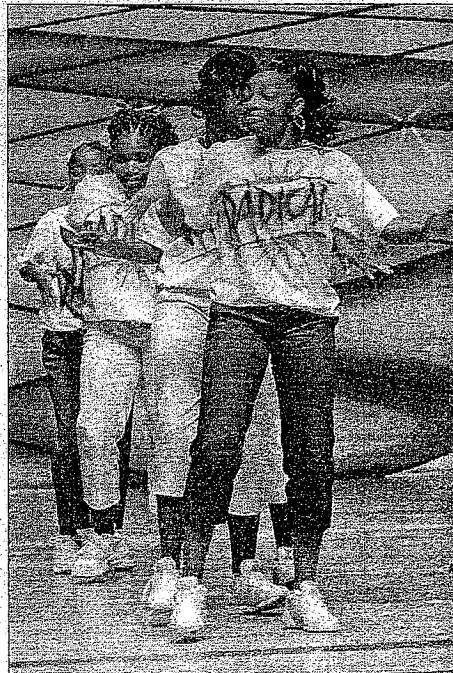
- **WHAT:** PCARA Gospel Extravaganza.
- **WHEN:** 6 p.m. Saturday.
- **WHERE:** Pensacola High School, 500 W. Maxwell St.
- **COSTS:** \$8 in advance; \$10 day of show.
- **DETAILS:** 293-5345.

become the leaders of tomorrow," he said.

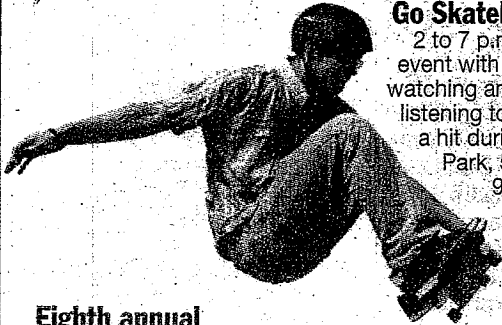
PCARA's goals are to reduce teenage pregnancy and drug use and to involve parents in children's activities.

Some of the groups scheduled to perform include the MJJ Praise Dancers, Double Trouble, the Crowned Saintz and PCARA Faith Dancers.

Admission to the extravaganza is \$8 in advance and \$10 on day of the show. Tickets can be purchased at [www.pcaraonline.com](http://www.pcaraonline.com).



The group Radical dance for the crowd during the Youth Gospel Extravaganza last year. This year's event will be Saturday at Pensacola High School.



### Go Skateboarding Day 2008

2 to 7 p.m. Saturday. Celebrate this national event with hundreds of other skaters by watching and participating in competitions, listening to music, viewing demos and taking a hit during the car bash. Free. Milton Skate Park, 5629 Byrom St. Linsey Williamson, 983-5466 ext. 208, or e-mail linsey.williamson@ci.milton.fl.us.

### Eighth annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza

6 p.m. Saturday. The Youth Gospel Extravaganza features performances by the PCARA Faith Dancers, Brandon Jones, the MJJ Praise Dancers, Shemeika Junior, Double Trouble, Tempest Batch, the Crowned Saintz and other praise dancers, drill teams, Gospel rappers and singers. \$8 in advance; \$10 day of show; Pensacola High School, 500 W. Maxwell St. Leroy Williams, 293-5345, or visit [www.pcaraonline.com](http://www.pcaraonline.com).



News Journal file photo

### Sankofa Juneteenth Heritage Festival

Noon to 7 p.m. Saturday. The 2008 festival celebration, "The Journey" will feature music, fun, games, food, arts & crafts, poetry and vendors. Free. Pensacola Junior College Warrington Campus, 5555 U.S. 98 West, 316-0376, or e-mail [sankofajuneteenthfestival@yahoo.com](mailto:sankofajuneteenthfestival@yahoo.com) or [talindas1@aol.com](mailto:talindas1@aol.com).



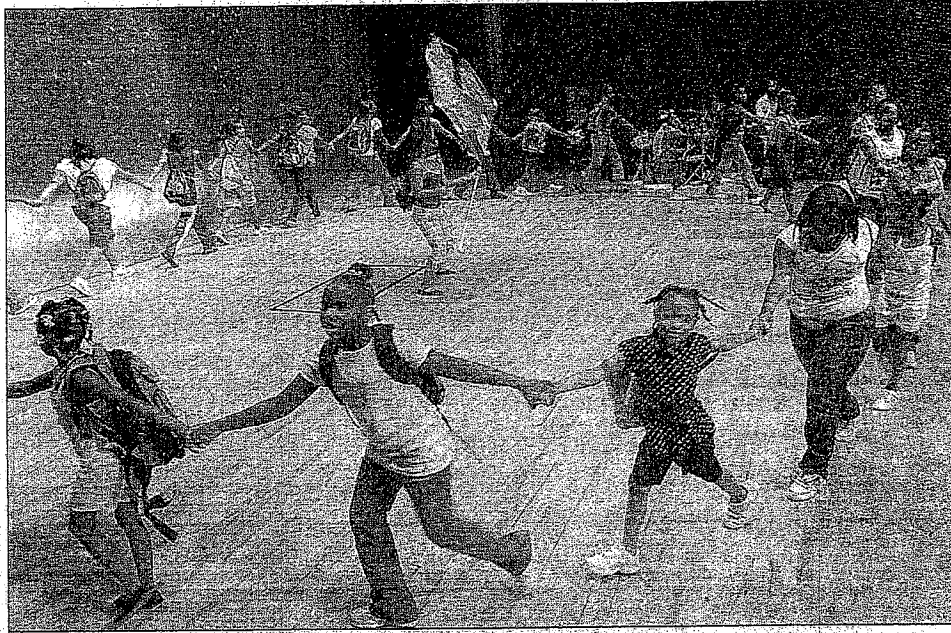
Brandon Jones will be among the performers at PCARA's eighth annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza.

**21**  
**SATURDAY**



# Spotlight

## Baptists host Gospel Extravaganza



Photos by Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

The First West Florida Baptist Association Praise Dancers perform Saturday night at the eighth annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza held at Pensacola High School.



**ABOVE:** Cheryal Lymons applies makeup backstage Saturday afternoon at the eighth annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza held at Pensacola High School.

**TOP RIGHT:** T & J Mime Boyz perform.

**MIDDLE RIGHT:** Terry Womack performs at the Gospel Extravaganza.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Dyjuan Clark, right, and Dyjaun Clark of Double Trouble perform Saturday afternoon.



**ONLINE** Visit pnj.com to see more photos from the Gospel Extravaganza.

# PCARA Presents Annual Youth Extravaganza



Hundreds of young people as well as adults gathered at Pensacola High School auditorium Saturday night to showcase their talents at the Pensacola Community Arts & Recreation Association (PCARA) 8th annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza. Singing, dancing and rapping, students performed to an energetic audience. People rocked and clapped their hands as songs filled the air and dancers stirred to praise God with their inspirational moves. Founded by Leroy Williams, PCARA is a non-profit organization formed to assist in the prevention of illegal drugs use, pregnancy, and violence among the youth throughout the Pensacola community.

# THE Independent Voice

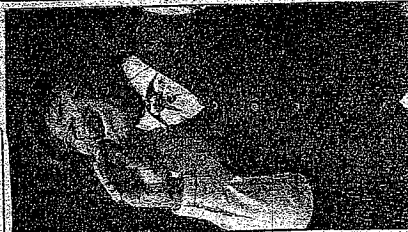
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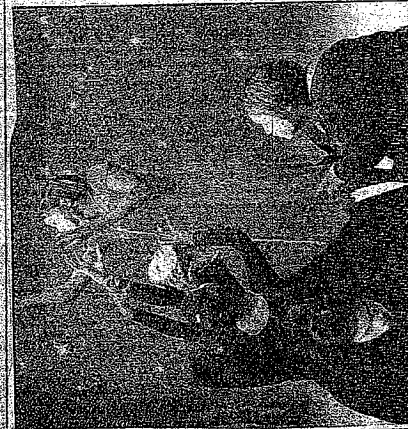
## PCARA hosts annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza at P.H.S.



First West Florida District Baptist Association Praise Dancers



Terry Womack



PCARA Praise Dancers



T & J MIMME Boyz - S.A.V.E.D. Ministries



Ladeia Webster



PCARA Praise Dancers

PCARA hosted its 8th annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza on Saturday, June 21st, at the Pensacola High School Auditorium. The extravaganza showcased Pensacola's most talented youth. "We want to provide a platform to showcase our youth's talent," explained Leroy Williams, founder and executive director of PCARA. Williams, who has a dream to build a PCARA Performing Arts School, was pleased with the community support and elated with the youth who performed.

Photos of the many performers can be viewed at [www.alhendersonphotography.com](http://www.alhendersonphotography.com).



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Katie King/kking@pnj.com

Sisters (from left) Armani Jenkins, 12; Aja Jenkins, 14; and Jentry Jenkins, 19, recently won a national gospel contest.

## Meet the Jenkins Sisters

Three Pensacola sisters recently won a nationwide gospel contest, and will soon head to Detroit to record their first CD

**Kate S. Peabody**  
kpeabody@pnj.com

Look out, world. Here come the Jenkins Sisters.

The three Pensacola sisters are poised to make waves on the gospel scene.

Jentry Jenkins, 19; Aja Jenkins, 14; and Armani Jenkins, 12, recently bested hundreds of other contestants and won a whopping \$5,000 cash prize in the nationwide Gospel F.O.C.U.S. (Find Out Can U Sing) contest in Detroit.

The Word Network, Frontline Productions and MOLife Entertainment, all big players in the national gospel music industry, sponsored the competition.

To top off their win, the sisters also walked away with a recording contract with MOLife Entertainment, a leading gospel music recording company. Escorted by their parents, the Rev. Juan and Beatrice Jenkins, the sisters will travel to Detroit in a few months to begin recording their first gospel album.

"They are a breath of fresh air," said Ron Ellison, CEO of MOLife. "They definitely have charisma, the singing ability, stage presence and pretty much



**Beatrice Jenkins**



**Juan Jenkins**

the whole package."

The sisters will get a chance to tour with two of gospel music's hottest stars, Kirk Franklin and Tye Tribbett, later in the year. They also have a planned television appearance with popular gospel show host, Bobby Jones.

Youngest sister Armani is looking forward to "meeting all these celebrities" and going to all the different cities on the tour bus," she said.

This is "a really, really big deal," said Armani, a seventh-grader at Jim Bailey Middle School.

In the world of gospel music, the girls new-found fame "is very big," said Leroy Williams, founder of the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association.

Williams, who has directed several gospel events in the area, compares the FOCUS competition to other popular reality talent shows such as "American Idol." The only difference, he says, is that the event is not televised during the competition. It did air later on The World Network, an urban religious channel.

"This gives (the sisters) the opportunity to get their talent out to the country. The next step to that is, if the nation accepts them, then they are on their way," Williams said.

Their success, the girls say, is rooted in their faith.

"I never thought we would be at this point, because we were singing just to be singing for the Lord," said Jentry, a University of Phoenix Technology and Engineering Student.

Chiming in, Aja said she is "still trying to soak it all in."

"The night of the final still runs around in my head everyday," said the ninth-grader, who is home schooled. "But I would give all the credit to God. I never thought God would have taken us this far so quick."

See JENKINS,



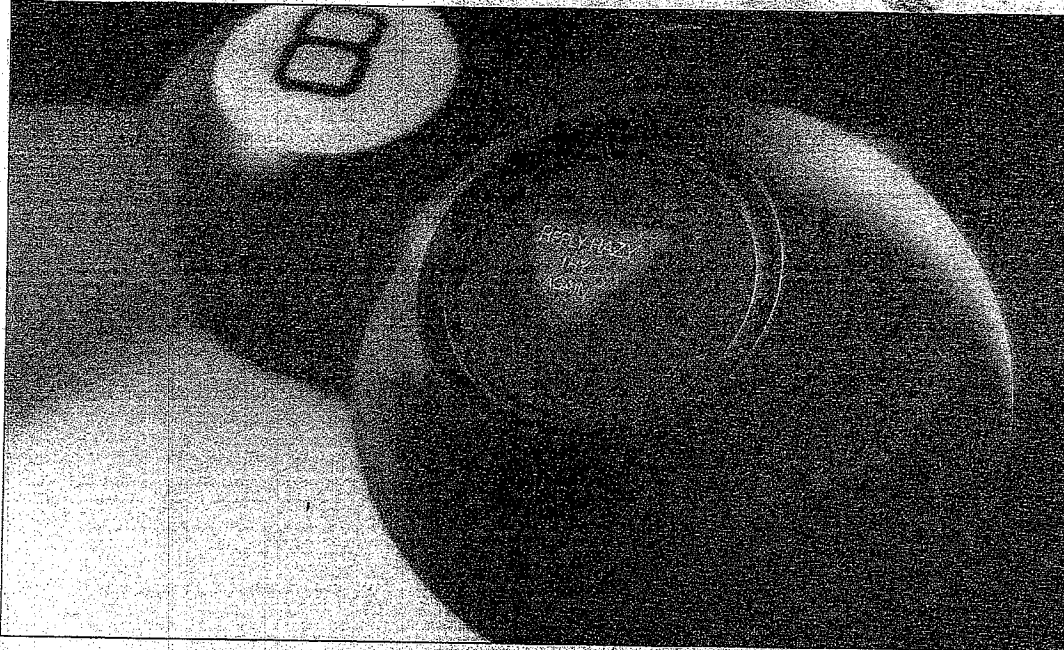
# SUNDAY *etc.*

SECTION E / PAGE 1

Pensacola News Journal

Everything that counts

Sunday, December 28, 2008



Special to the News Journal

## A YEAR OF POSSIBILITIES

### Locals rate '08 and give predictions for '09

Rebecca Ross • rross@pnj.com

According to Chinese astrology, 2008 was the Year of the Rat. According to who else you ask, it was also the year of history-making politics, high gas prices and the financial crisis.

2009 will be the Year of the Ox, but what else, besides new menus at your favorite Chinese restaurant, will the coming year bring?

We consulted our trusty Magic Eight Ball, but all it will say is "Ask

Again Later," so we asked some of our sources to offer up their 2008 reflections and 2009 predictions, instead.

What will 2009 be the year of? Read on ...

#### 2009: 'Year of Accomplishments'

Leroy Williams, Pensacola playwright and founder of the Pensacola



Williams

Community Arts and Recreation Association, said that in 2008, history was made.

"2008 will stand as a measurement of how far this country has come in dealing with issues of race and diversity, but more importantly, it will show that we are a country that has learned to believe in one another and support one another, regardless of the color of someone's skin," he said. "2008 was a year of breaking barriers."

He predicted that 2009 will be a year of accomplishments, for both the nation and Pensacola.



**2007**



# LIFE

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2007

## Wonderful winter

Local happenings heat up the cold months

promoters are realizing they'll do well here."

Not enough entertainment? Country singer Sara Evans, comedian Ron White and South African singers Ladysmith Black Mambazo will grace the Saenger Theatre stage in the next several weeks, along with Broadway musicals "CATS," "Camelot" and "I Can't Stop Loving You."

Some local performers will offer a hand-clapping, toe-tapping good time at the Saenger in "The Unbelievable Man," at 4 and 7:30 p.m. Feb. 3.

The gospel stage play is the latest production of the Pensacola



Williams

Community Arts and Recreation Association, a nonprofit organization which is celebrating 20 years of community outreach. The play

was written by PCARA founder and president Leroy Williams, who will direct, produce and act in the production.

"It's a fabulous production, filled with music and humor," Williams said. "Ultimately, it's about the one man who appears unbelievable to the unsaved, and believable to the saved, and that man is Jesus Christ."

Past PCARA productions have included "The Boogie Woogie Preacher" and "A Message in the Storm."

"PCARA's hope for 2007 is to begin realizing our dream for a new performing arts studio, where we can do for the community in two years what we have done

over the last 20 years," Williams said.

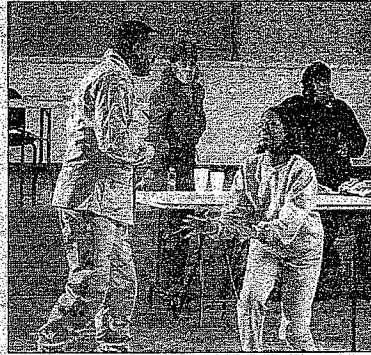
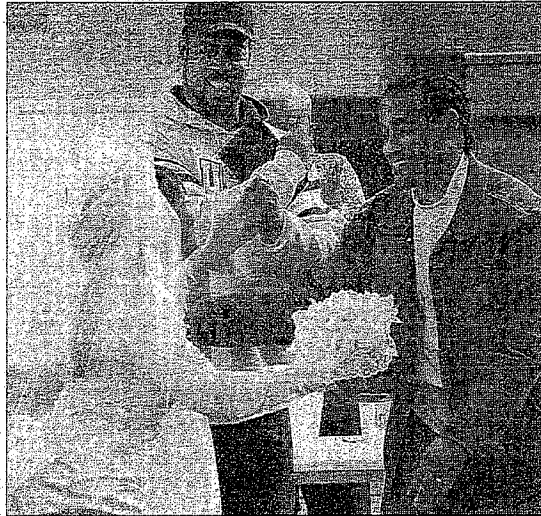
Tickets for "The Unbelievable Man" are \$20 in advance and \$22 day of show, available at the Saenger box office, all Ticketmaster locations, Broadway Men's Wear on North Davis Highway and Stage Right Christian Music Store in University Mall.

Details: 293-5945, or visit [www.theunbelievableman.com](http://www.theunbelievableman.com).

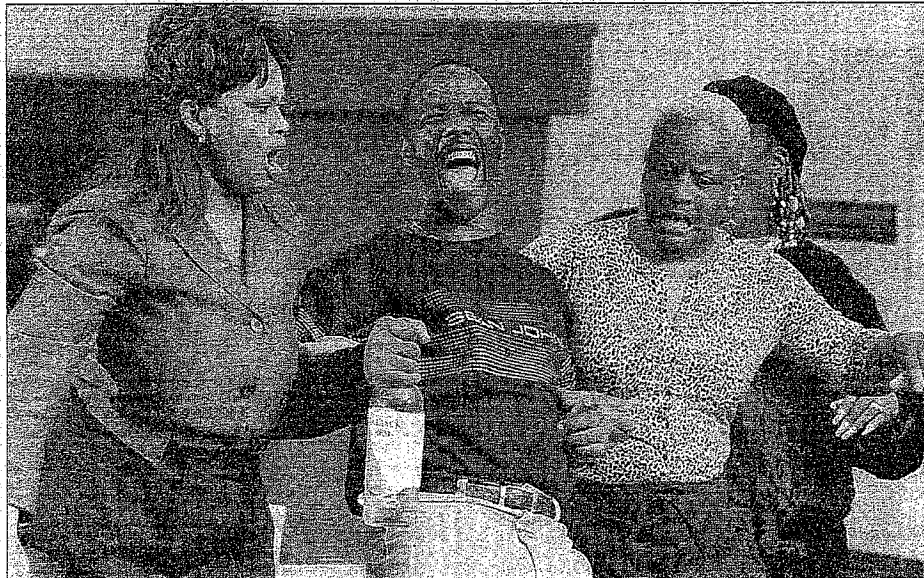
Here are some of the local events scheduled through March:

# NEIGHBORS

[pnj.com/neighbors](http://pnj.com/neighbors)



**ABOVE:** Gregory, played by Jon Brooks, has returned early and caught his wife, Diane, played by Nora Slish, with another man.  
**LEFT:** Vincent Warren, center, playing the Rev. Rasberry, pronounces Pauline Jackson and Thomas Mitchell as man and wife in "The Unbelievable Man."



Monique Turner (Lois), left, and Donna Johnson (Sadie) escorts a very drunk Bud, played by Leroy Williams, from the Sho'nuff Good Donut & Coffee Shop.



# NEIGHBORS

pnj.com/neighbors



Photos by Bruce Graner/bgraner@pnj.com

Millie Baldwin, seated, who plays Sister Wylie, talks about the man she's just married to the surprise of Monique Turner (Lois), left, Leroy Williams (Lonnie) and Donna Johnson (Sadie) during rehearsal for the PCARA production of "The Unbelievable Man."

## PCARA play looks at 'unbelievable' behavior

Barbara Todd

News Journal correspondent

Leroy Williams' latest gospel play takes place in a doughnut shop, but nothing like this has ever happened at Krispy Kreme.

"The Unbelievable Man," a slapstick comedy with a serious message, is directed, produced, written and performed by Williams, 43, an award-winning playwright and president/founder of the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, known as PCARA.

"The play takes a look at some of the unbelievable sides of man," Williams said. "Unbelievably good and unbelievably bad."

Williams founded PCARA in June 1987 to assist in the prevention of illegal drug use, teen pregnancy and violence among the community's youth. It provides young people with social and academic skills in a structured learning environment and sponsors many family events throughout the year. These events are funded, in part, from the proceeds of the gospel plays.

Rehearsals for the 18th annual production were well under way on a recent Wednesday evening when some of

### Want to go?

- **WHAT:** "The Unbelievable Man."
- **WHEN:** 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Feb. 3.
- **WHERE:** Saenger Theatre, 116 S. Palafox Place.
- **COST:** Advance tickets \$20. Box office, day of the show: \$22.
- **DETAILS:** 293-5345 or [www.pcaraonline.com](http://www.pcaraonline.com)

the cast members took a break to talk about their roles.

"The Unbelievable Man" marks Vincent Warren's first appearance in a PCARA gospel play. The 44-year-old Pensacola resident is a professional gospel singer and Christian inspirational speaker who has traveled the country with his Christian message.

"I play Reverend Raspberry," Warren said. "A traditional black gospel minister that, when he begins to speak, he really gets into it. I think most people will see themselves or someone they know in this play."

Many of the women in the 47-mem-

ber cast are just as unbelievable as the men. One of the wacky women, Pauline Jackson, 28, was decked out in a resplendent wedding gown for her part as Doreen, a new bride.

"I leave my husband at the altar," she said. Later, regretting her actions, the bride searches for the jilted groom in an effort to apologize for her "unbelievable" behavior.

Julius Benson, 32, vice president of PCARA, has performed in every one of PCARA's gospel plays and has been a dedicated PCARA worker since the program began. Benson coaches the PCARA kids in dance, acting and mentors them as well. He plays Papa Smurf, a young-at-heart 77-year old.

"My adopted daughter in the play is trying to hook me up with a Mama Smurf."

That precocious adopted daughter is played by Breyonna Williams, the real-life daughter of Leroy Williams. The 10-year-old fourth-grader at Longleaf Elementary School is a veteran PCARA performer, having appeared in nearly every one of the organization's productions.

"The play's about people who do crazy, unbelievable things," she said.

# NEIGHBORS

pnj.com/neighbors

## 'La Traviata' performance wonderful; PCARA slated for Saturday

If you had asked me 12 years ago if I liked opera, I would probably have said, "Not really." But that was before I had an opportunity to attend several operas put on by the Pensacola Opera.

If you missed "La Traviata," you missed a fantastic performance. Olga Chernisheva as Violetta and Chauncy Packer as Alfredo were wonderful. They were the "guest stars" and sang the lead roles to perfection.

But there were others on stage who did a great job and some of them you will be hearing again if you regularly attend the opera. One of these was Tim Kennedy, education director for the opera. He sang the part of Dr. Grenvil, who ministered to Violetta on her deathbed. We teased him after the

in residence with the Pensacola Opera last year. I saw her perform several times last year and have heard her at least three times this year and have been very impressed.

The male members of the group, Zachariah Baker and Sean Damin, also are excellent.

Mark your calendars now for March 9 and 11 for "The Marriage of Figaro." I'm really looking forward to that one.

As long as you are marking your calendars, I have another Milton event to add on Feb. 9 and 10

— "Toll Art and All That Jazz" at the Milton Woman's Club. See the story on this page to get all the details.

If you are looking for things to do this weekend, don't forget the Christ Church Antiques Show on

Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I suggest getting there in time for lunch because they always have an excellent one.

And don't forget PCARA Productions' performance of "The Unbelievable Man" on Saturday.

Two shows are planned at the Saenger Theatre, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

If you go to the early one, you can still make "Jazziest Goes On" at Seville Quarter that night.

I know where many of you will be Sunday evening — sprawled in front of a TV watching the Super Bowl, and I'll be there with you.

Being a dyed-in-the-wool Cleveland Brown fan from the "Dawg House" days, once I left Ohio — and so did the Browns

— I pretty much lost interest in professional football. Plus, I've been working Sundays for several

years. But my schedule changed recently and when friends invited me over for their Super Bowl Party, I said a quick yes. Even if I did have to check the paper to see who was playing.

I'm not sure which team I'll root for. I'm really more interested in the party part of the equation, as in food and drink and friends.

But it sounds like a fun way to spend a Sunday evening — almost as much fun as the FUN (Forever Ubiquitous Nonsense) Group's "White Trash" party last weekend.

**CLAUDINE KRISS**  
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## Gospel play packs Saenger

Event raises funds  
for PCARA group

Jennifer Stewart  
jestewart@pnj.com

Playwright Leroy Williams drew two nearly packed houses to the Saenger Theatre on Saturday for his latest production, "The Unbelievable Man."

"He does very well. We call him our local hero," said Saenger manager Kathy Summerlin.

The gospel play is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, which strives to prevent illegal drug use, pregnancy and violence among local youth.

Commonly called PCARA, the organization was founded in 1987 and has an all-volunteer staff. The group conducts a number of plays, skits, black history programs and gospel concerts throughout the year.

Money raised goes toward PCARA's activities for kids, which include acting, singing and aerobics classes, and self-awareness and cultural diversity workshops.

The total proceeds from "The Unbelievable Man" performances were not available Saturday night.

Edith Graves Wilson, a playwright from Mobile, was among those attending Saturday's evening performance.

Wilson, who knows Williams and other cast members from the New Dimensions Christian Center in Pensacola, said she was there to "be entertained with family and see a product by an extraordinary playwright."

Williams' "Boogie Woogie Preacher" was named "Best Play of the Year" at the 2005 American Gospel Music Awards. Williams is writing a play called "Too Blessed, to Be Stressed."



Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

Julius Benson plays Papa Smurf on Saturday during "The Unbelievable Man" at the Saenger Theatre.

More photos, 7C

# NEIGHBORS

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Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

Lonnie reacts to hearing about Sister Wylie's 91-year-old boyfriend in "The Unbelievable Man." Lonnie is played by Leroy Williams and Sister Wylie is Millie Baldwin. The gospel play, written by Leroy Williams, is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association, which works to prevent illegal drug use, pregnancy and violence among youth in the Pensacola Bay Area.



Available On DVD!



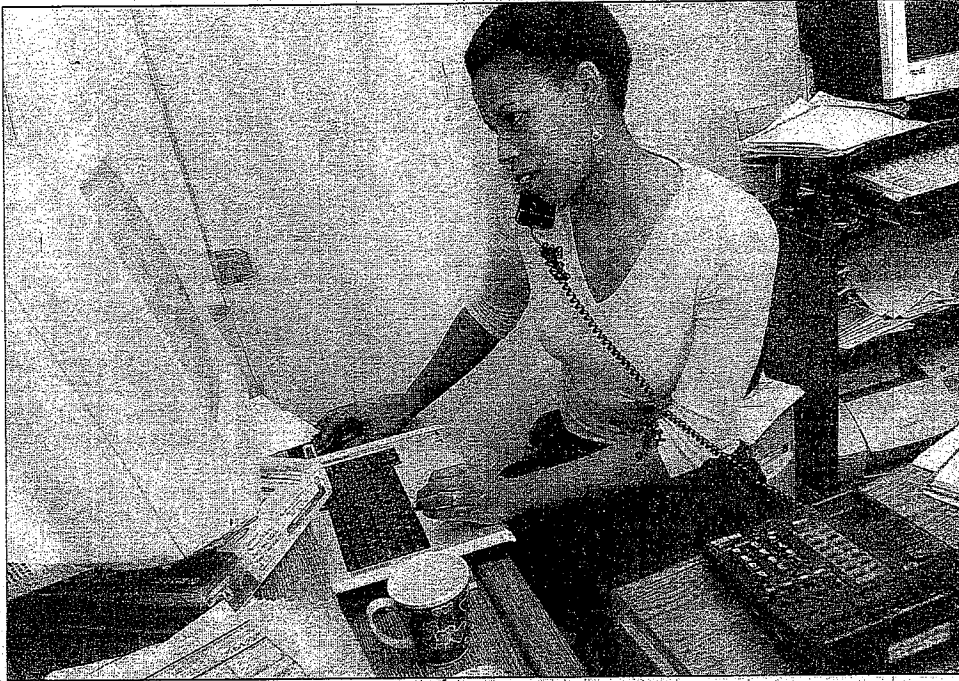
PCARA Productions Presents LIVE!

# The Unbelievable



An Up-lifting, Gospel Stage-Play

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Katie King/kking@pnj.com

LaDonna Spivey, publisher and editor of The Pensacola Voice, Pensacola's longest-running black newspaper works at her desk at the newspaper.

# Newspapers important in the black community

**FROM IB**

there will always be a place for minority-focused community newspapers, he said.

"The faces have changed, but many of the issues are the same for the black community," said Henderson, who places his paper's circulation at 25,000 in the two-county area. "There is always going to be a need for a public forum to air these issues and tell our stories."

For LaDonna Spivey, the business of telling those stories comes as naturally as "brushing your teeth."

The 35-year-old is the publisher/editor of The Pensacola Voice, Pensacola's longest-running black newspaper, founded by her grandfather, the late Les Humphreys, in 1967.

"It's just how I grew up," she said. "The newspaper has always been a part of our life."

Her mother, Jacqueline Miles, remembers pounding out story copy on old-fashioned manual typewriters for Humphreys, her father, at age 14.

"Now, that was hard work," Miles said. Although her father and Voice writers worked aggressively to uncover and publish stories on hot-button issues such as racial injustice in the '60s, Miles said she never felt any sense of danger.

"It was an exciting time for me. I never worried about the paper making someone mad. I was always out there,

in school and in the neighborhoods, listening for stories," she said.

Growing up, Spivey spent summers with her grandparents, working at the newspaper.

"I would complain that I wanted to go to summer camp like the other kids, but my grandfather would just say, 'We have to get the paper out,'" she said with a laugh. "Today, I wear the 'big hat,' and it's a responsibility, especially trying to keep up the high standards that my grandfather would expect," she said.

Part of those high standards includes providing a voice for the community, something an independent newspaper can do well, Spivey said.

Larger newspapers must appeal to a mass market, so they can't specialize on one group or another with the "laser focus" of smaller, independent newspapers, she explained. And many people underestimate the need for independent newspapers.

"There is a tendency with the majority to assume that their thought processes and opinions are shared by everyone else. There needs to be a diversity of opinion and thought, and even if you don't agree with something, you should know it's out there," she said.

That diversity of thought applies to the black community as well, she said.

"There is no monolithic thought process for the entire black community.

We are just as diverse in our opinions as the community at large, so even a minority-based paper has to try to represent those divergent views," said Spivey, whose paper reaches more than 38,000 people in the Gulf Coast and surrounding areas.

One issue all newspapers share, regardless of size or focus, she said, is the need to modernize and build a presence online.

"That's one direction that Pensacola's black newspapers are going to have to go, to reach a wider audience. That's the future of journalism," said Spivey.

Future editions may be a mouse click away, but Leroy Williams, founder of the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association (PCARA), said he still enjoys settling down with a copy of "The Independent Voice."

The Pensacola resident is a fan of community newspapers in general because of the specialized focus and resources they offer readers.

"I read the Independent because I know it's going to cover minority issues that might affect me and it's going to tell me about local African American events, including PCARA's," he said. "That type of 'personal' coverage means a lot to our community."



Williams

# Community cookout aims to show youths the way out of poverty

Aside from a time to commemorate the U.S. men and women who died in military service to their country, Memorial Day weekend is the traditional kickoff for the summer season, and many people will be cooking out for family and friends.

It takes a lot of time and energy to have a family cookout. So imagine the effort — and expense — it takes to cook out for hundreds of people.

There will be a whole lot of cooking, eating and entertaining today at Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's annual "United Together for a Nonviolent and Drug-Free

cookout.

Organizers have ordered 4,000 hamburgers and hot dogs. They have invited about 30 groups to perform, including



**Williams**

a hip-hop rap group. About 3,000 people showed up last year. They expect at least 4,000 to attend this year.

Besides free food and music, the big community cookout will have exhibits, guest speakers, storytellers, comedians and free

## More Reggie online

Looking for more from Reggie? Read his previous columns at: [pnj.com/reggie](http://pnj.com/reggie)

giveaways.

The biggest change from the previous 13 years is the location.

Because of renovations at Terry Wayne Park on Jackson Street, today's cookout will be at Legion Field just north of Garden Street between G and I streets. As founder and president of the PCARA, Leroy

Williams for two decades has coordinated a variety of educational and social activities designed to help prevent drug and alcohol use and violence among our youth.

"This is what I live for — this is my life," said Williams, 43. "When it ended last year, we began preparing for this year."

The annual community cookout and association, which he founded in the late 1980s, are community-minded and community-driven events that show young people there is a way out of poverty and a life away from the dangers of the street. More than 70 volunteers, many of them members

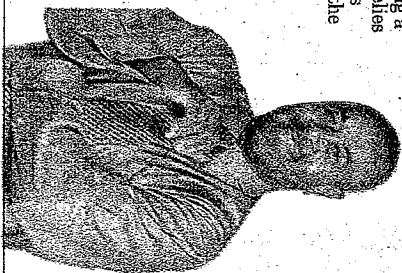
## Want to go?

- **WHAT:** Community Cookout.
- **WHEN:** Noon to 6 p.m. today.
- **WHERE:** Legion Field, between G and I streets, just north of Garden Street.
- **DETAILS:** 293-6345.

of PCARA and the U.S. Marines Corps, give their time and energy to assist with setting up, cooking and serving food, and cleaning up afterward. Even though the costs are enormous and the hard work trying, Williams said he has

never considered charging a fee for the cookout. He relies on donations, fundraisers and sponsors to provide the food and entertainment.

"We believe that if the community, businesses, families and friends can come together in a drug- and crime-free environment for one day we can make our community a better community to live in," Williams said. "Our goal is to replace violence and drug abuse by putting God first and practicing the principles of unity, love and respect for each other."



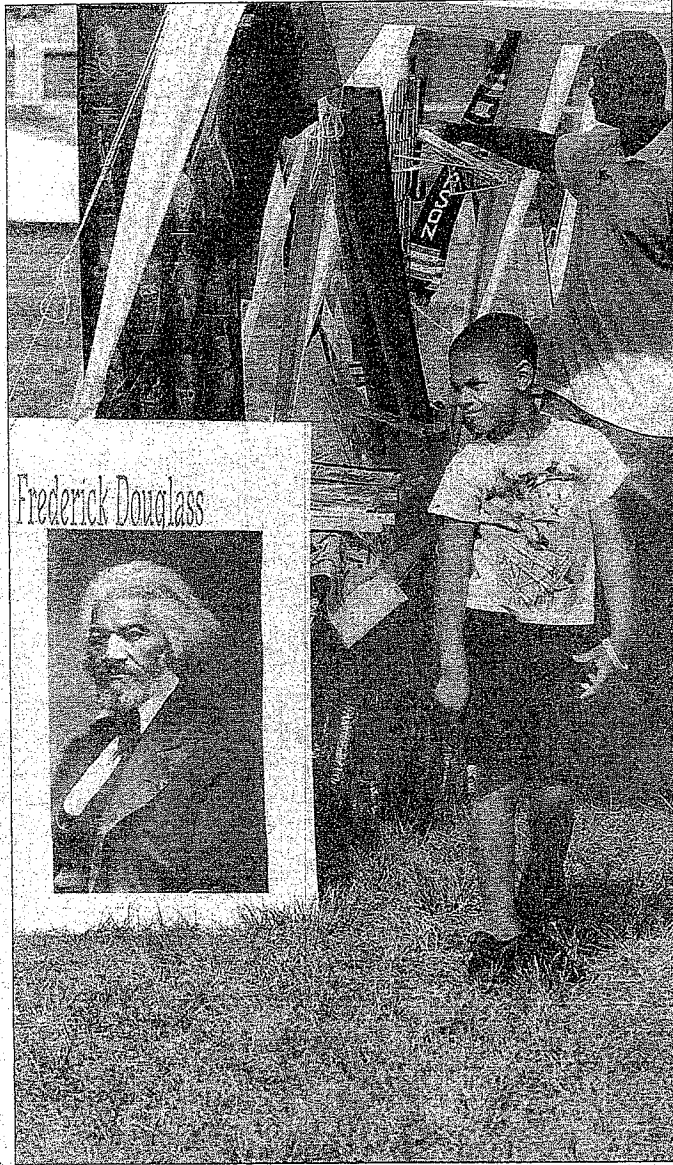
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## Cookout fun



**LEFT:** Jajuan Martin tries to decide Saturday what he wants to do next. This was the 14th year that the cookout has been conducted in Pensacola. Hundreds of people turned out for food, to browse vendors' exhibits and enjoy musical performances by several local gospel artists. The event is meant to turn youth away from violence and drug abuse. "Our cookout has been very successful over the years because of the positiveness that it offers," said Leroy Williams, president and founder of Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association.

**BELOW LEFT:** Malcolm Pressley plays catch with his mom, Cassandra Pressley.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Pastor Darrell D. Kelly sings for the crowd.

Photos by  
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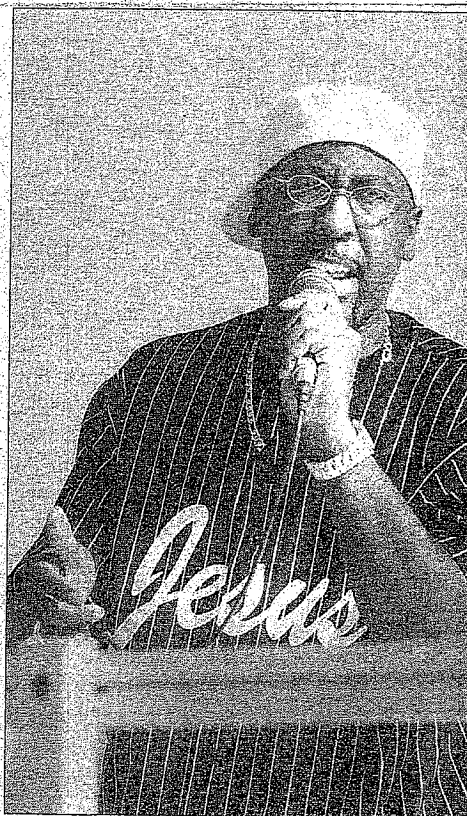
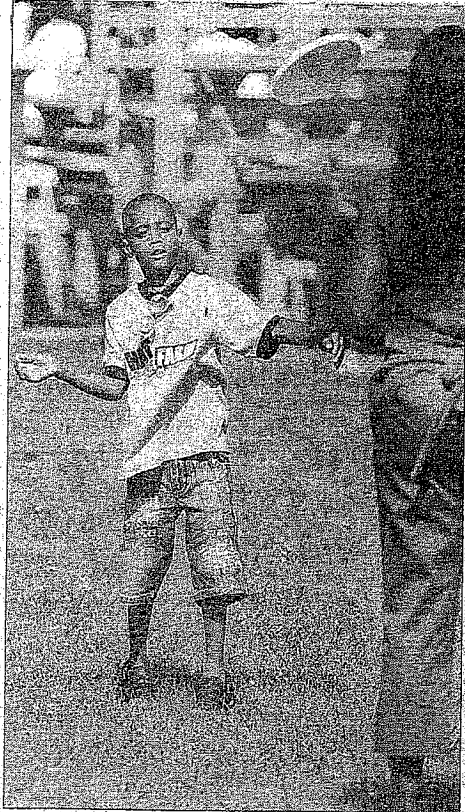


# SUNDAY'S News Journal

SUNDAY, MAY 27, 2007

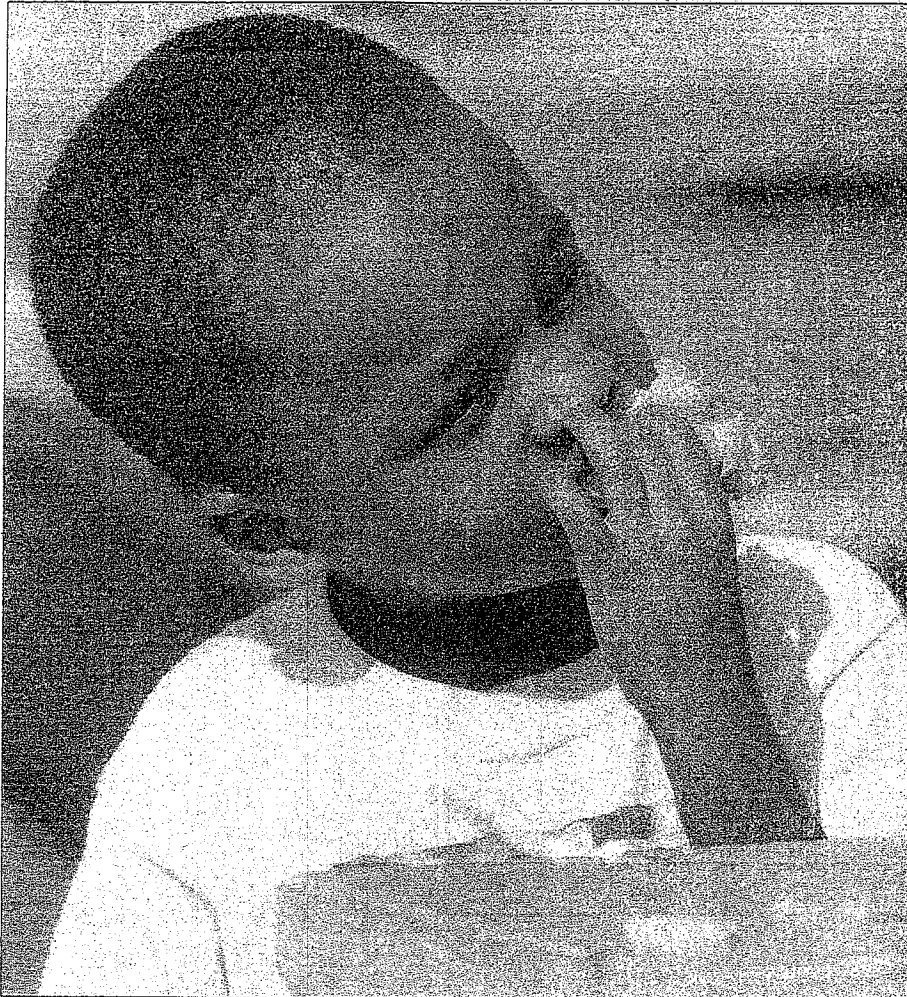


**COMMUNITY  
COOKOUT:**  
Event offers  
good time,  
good food  
for young  
and old  
**STORY, 1C  
PHOTOS, 2C**



# LOCAL

SUNDAY, MAY 27, 2007



John Blackie/jblackie@pnj.com

Chris Hunter, 4, enjoys a hamburger Saturday during The Big Cookout sponsored by Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association.

## Cookout spreads positive message Youths warned about dangers of drugs, violence at event

Alvin Peabody  
apeabody@pnj.com

The fence around Legion Field Park was dotted with posters warning about the dangers of drugs and violence and touting the need to respect one another.

The Pensacola park was the scene of the 14th annual community cookout, where hundreds of area residents came Saturday to eat, browse vendors' exhibits and enjoy musical performances by several local gospel recording artists.

The cookout is one of many events sponsored by Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association aimed at bringing people together to help replace violence and drug abuse with love, respect and unity, said Leroy Williams, PCARA's president and founder.

### About PCARA

■ **FOUNDED:** 1987

■ **GOAL:** Enrich lives of youths, socially and academically

■ **PROGRAMS:** Annual community cookout; athletic activities; performing arts classes; mentoring and after-school classes; and rap sessions.

■ **CONTACT:** 293-5345

"Our cookout has been very successful over the years because of the positiveness that it offers," Williams said.

Last year's event drew more than 3,800 people. This year's estimated attendance at the all-day cookout was expected to top 4,800, Williams said.

Zykeria McIntyre, 13, led a seven-

member Angels of Saints group in a "praise dance" performance.

"We want to show people that they can praise God in whatever way they choose," said Zykeria, a member of the All Saints Holiness Church in Pensacola.

Elnora Smith, 71, stood in the middle of Legion Field and watched as several children played nearby. Her granddaughter, Shantay Harris, 14, was to participate in a dance routine with her group, TSD.

"Even though this event is mainly for the children, I come every year because I want them to know that adults do support their success in life," Smith said.

...THEY HUNDREDS OF AREA RESIDENTS CAME TO CLASSES, AND FOR SESSIONS. ... TO ...

Sunday, May 27, 2007

Page edited by

# NEIGHBORS

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The group Anew sings for the crowd Saturday during The Big Cookout sponsored by the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association.

# LOCAL

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2007



Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

**TOP:** Kayne with the Disciples of Christ performs Saturday afternoon at the Sankofa Juneteenth Celebration.

**ABOVE:** Pensacola City Councilman Ronald Townsend reads from an Escambia County proclamation declaring Juneteenth the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States while Linda Thompson, left, listens Saturday afternoon at the Sankofa Juneteenth Celebration.



For more photos of the Juneteenth celebration, visit our Web site.



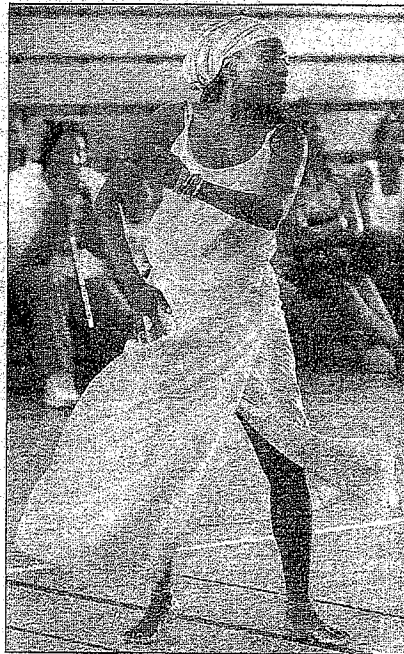
Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

Trumptyte members Big "D" and Theahmad Thomas, right, perform Saturday afternoon at the Sankofa Juneteenth Celebration.



Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

BreYonna Williams, 10, performs a praise dance Saturday afternoon at the Sankofa Juneteenth Celebration.



Jennifer Cecil/jcecil@pnj.com

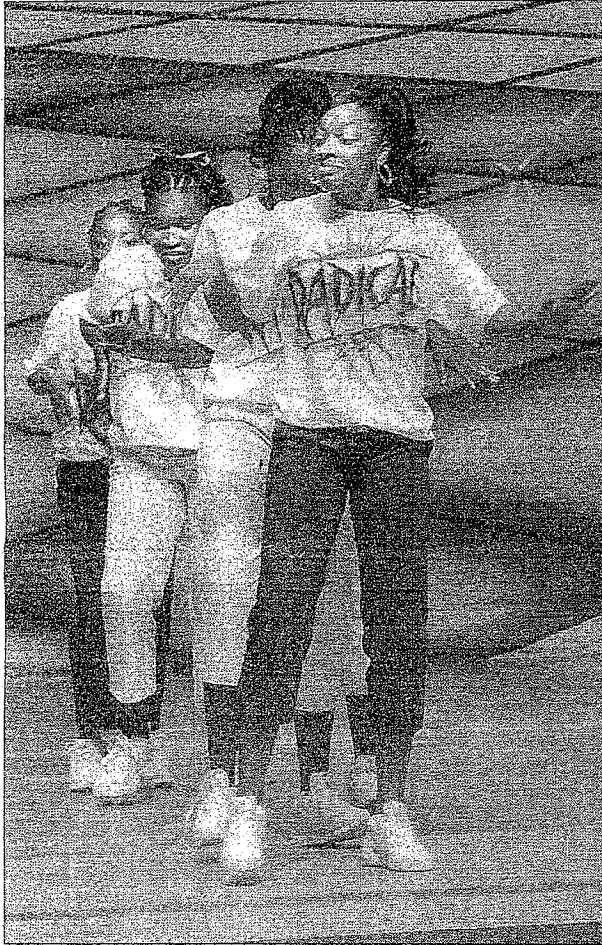
**RIGHT:** Nielah Black performs a praise dance Saturday afternoon at the Sankofa Juneteenth Celebration.



# NEIGHBORS

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## Many performers, all stars ...



**LEFT:** Radical performs for the crowd Saturday night at this year's Youth Gospel Extravaganza at the Saenger Theatre.

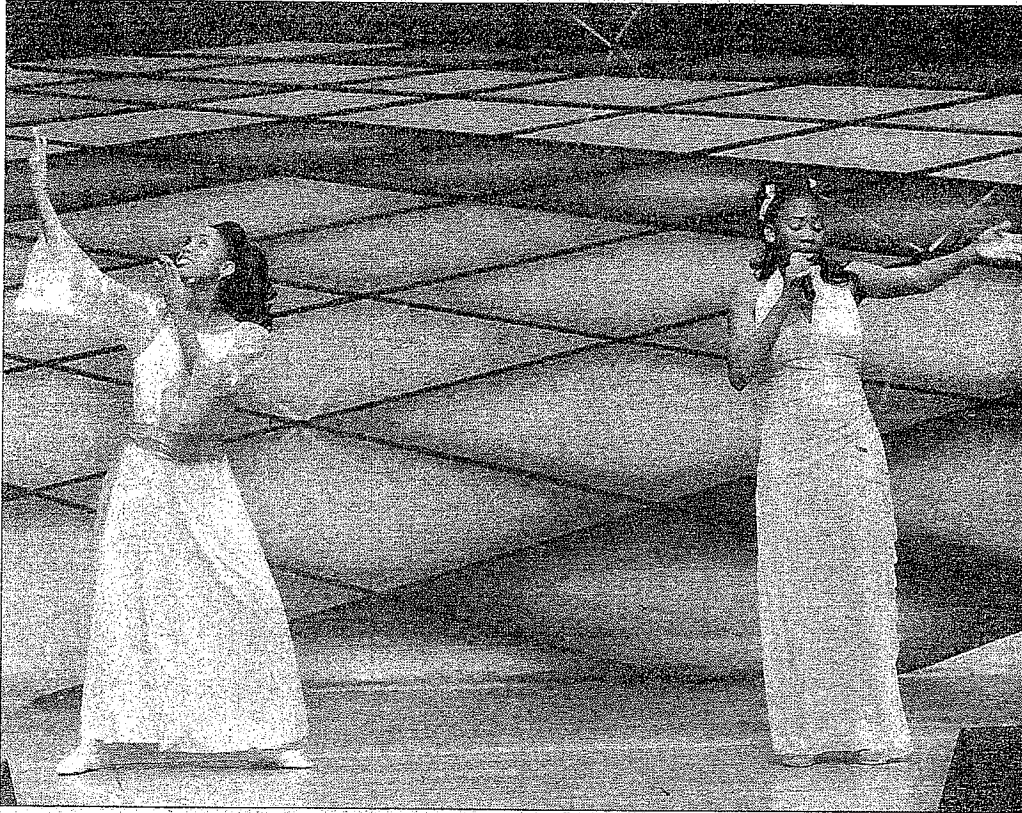
**BELOW:** Rasheed sings for the crowd at the seventh Annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza.



# NEIGHBORS

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## Many performers, all stars ...



Photos by John Blackie/[jblackie@pnj.com](mailto:jblackie@pnj.com)

The Angels of Christ perform for the crowd Saturday night during the Pensacola Community Arts and Recreation Association's seventh annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza at the Saenger Theatre.

# NEIGHBORS

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## Many performers, all stars ...



**ABOVE:** Members of the Mt. Pilgrim Praise Dancers perform for the crowd Saturday night during PCARA's seventh annual Youth Gospel Extravaganza at the Saenger Theatre.

**RIGHT:** Jayla Evans performs during Saturday night's Youth Gospel Extravaganza.

**BELOW:** Natalia Moore performs Saturday night at the Saenger Theatre for the Youth Gospel Extravaganza.

[pnj.com](http://pnj.com) For a complete photo gallery, go online.



## 'Too Blessed to be Stressed!'

An inspirational and uplifting gospel stage play written, produced and directed by Pensacola's own American Gospel Award-winning playwright, Leroy Williams, will be presented by PCARA Productions at the Pensacola High School Auditorium.

Tickets for "Too Blessed to Be Stressed!" go on sale Friday, and PCARA Productions is offering an early bird Christmas special: Buy one ticket and get the second ticket free, Friday through Sunday. Tickets can be purchased at Lifeway Christian Store, 1654 Airport Blvd.; Broadway Men's Wear, 6249 N. Davis Highway; Inspirational Gifts in Cordova Mall; or online at [www.tooblessedtobestressed.pcaraonline.com](http://www.tooblessedtobestressed.pcaraonline.com).

Shows are scheduled for 7 p.m. Feb. 1 and 2.

DETAILS: Leroy Williams at 293-5345.

— Crystal Quarles/cquarles@pnj.com