



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

A newsletter about fair housing, community development, & neighborhood quality of life

GREETINGS!

Welcome to this edition of *Fair Housing News!*, a newsletter produced by the GBCHRB as a public service. Contact us for a free copy of any article or if you would like this regularly e-mailed to you: 410-453-9500 / 800-895-6302 / mail@gbchr.org. More info/resources: <http://www.gbchr.org>.



NATIONAL NEWS

In Fair Housing News.....

Save the Date! The Annual HUD Maryland Fair Housing Conference will be on April 18, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the War Memorial Building, 101 N. Gay Street in Baltimore. The Conference - commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the passage of the landmark Fair Housing Act of 1968 - is being sponsored by the HUD Baltimore Field Office; the Maryland Commission on Human Relations; the governments of Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard. The Conference is titled "Celebrating 40 Years of Fair Housing: A Response to the Foreclosure Crisis." For more information, email lorraine.richardson@hud.gov or telephone 410-209-6636.

Study Finds American Muslims Often Lose Discrimination

Cases. A study by the director of the International Assessment & Strategy Center, a Washington research group, found that of the 69 employment discrimination decisions involving Muslim plaintiffs in 2007, only 1 resulted in a victory. The study also found that only a dozen Muslim plaintiffs claiming religious discrimination have prevailed in US courts. The study concluded that two trends have emerged: "the number of civil cases brought by Muslim plaintiffs is growing fast, and the plaintiffs almost always lose." (New York *Times*, February 19, 2008:A15)



In Honor of the 40th Anniversary of the Assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Baltimore Church Leaders Plan "Campaign

for Peace." The Campaign, beginning February 25th, includes prayer vigils, consecration of sites where violent crimes occurred, and a commemorative march in Baltimore on March 4th. The spokesperson is the Rev. Hoffman F. Brown, III, pastor of Wayland Baptist Church. (Baltimore *Sun*, February 16, 2008:3B)

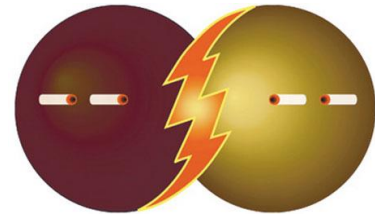


Replace hate with understanding,
compassion and acceptance



Matthew Shepard Act Hate Crimes Law Not Passed. On December 10, 2007, congressional powers failed to get a bipartisan bill passed to update hate crimes legislation. The Law would expand the definition of hate crimes and make crucial improvements in the federal enforcement. The Act would add crimes committed because of the victim's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, or disability. Shepard, who was gay, was beaten to death in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, says "she is still committed to getting the Matthew Shepard Act passed." The Act is supported by the National Sheriffs' Association and the National District Attorneys Association. Incidentally, the Matthew Shepard Foundation has a very informative web site: <http://www.matthewshepard.org>. (New York *Times*, December 10, 2007:A26)

Survey Finds Friction Among Minority Groups But Also Hope. The survey by New America Media found tension and negative stereotypes are present in relations between African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans, but the groups share core values and hope for ending these divides. Findings included: 40% of Hispanics and Asians said they are "generally afraid" of African Americans; one-third of Asians and half of African Americans said Latin American immigrants are taking away jobs and other benefits. far fewer African Americans than Asians or Hispanics believe that every American has an equal opportunity to succeed. Spokesperson Sergio Bendixen said all three groups live in relative isolation contributes to tensions, and more interaction would do much to reduce the problem, adding "If you share an afternoon of baseball and a barbecue, you are less likely to be afraid of people or think they came to steal your job." Richard Rodriguez, prominent author on race identity and relations, commented that "Americans have forgotten how much the immigrant brings to this country: a basic optimism about the possibilities of changing and improving your life, as well as a noticeable patriotism." (Washington *Post*, December 13, 2007)



Mortgage Lending News.....

An Important Report On Foreclosures In Maryland Has Been Completed And Is Available. The report states that the United States Joint Economic Committee just estimated that 15% of subprime mortgages currently in Maryland will go into foreclosure before the end of 2009, and will cause a \$2.73 billion loss in property-related wealth to Maryland residents and a \$19.1 million loss in property tax. The full report: <http://www.preservehomeownership.org>.



Governor O'Malley Announced Emergency Regulations to Address Foreclosure Increase.

The regulations require loan service companies to tell the State when residents are in danger of losing their homes so help can be provided. The number of foreclosures has greatly increased, especially in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties where the rate doubled between 2007's third and fourth quarters. After meeting with several lenders, the Governor proposed tough new legislation to address the mortgage problems. Additionally, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation Tom Perez announced new regulations to combat abuses within the mortgage and financing industries. For more information, the Department's site has important up-to-date mortgage and foreclosure information here: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/finance/mortfore.htm>. (Washington Post, February 20, 2008:B1)



NeighborWorks® America Awards \$130 million to 32 State Housing Finance Agencies, 16 HUD-approved Housing Counseling Intermediaries and 82 community-based NeighborWorks organizations, to provide counseling to families and individuals facing the threat of foreclosure.

In total, more than 700 local counseling agencies and local NeighborWorks organizations (e.g., Neighborhood Housing Services) have been listed as partners and participants in this effort. It is estimated that 350,000 to 400,000 families facing the threat of foreclosure will be directly assisted with this funding – and others will be helped by the training of foreclosure counselors, provided through the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program, funded through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008. A subsequent funding pool of \$37.8 million will be awarded later this year. (Press Release, February 28, 2008)



CALENDAR

A Conference on "Metropolitan Dilemmas & Solutions: A Focus on Housing in the Baltimore Region" is at

Towson University on March 7th. Panels on subprime mortgages, the credit crunch, community development corporations, and the effect of gentrification, among others, will be held. More info: 410-704-2852 or <http://www.towson.edu/metro>.

A Film and Talk by Professor Julie Mertus of American University on Nonviolence and Social Justice is on March 7th. As part of Towson Presbyterian Church's Human Rights Film Series, the film and talk will be held at 7:00 p.m. and is free to the public. More info: 410-823-6500 or <http://www.towsonpres.org>.

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition Will Hold its Annual Conference on March 12-15, 2008: "Creating the Vision for a Fair Economy: Investing in People and Communities." Featuring guest speaker Ben



Bernanke, Chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, the Conference also has a one-day focus on "Foreclosing on the American Dream: Recreating Sustainable Homeownership." For more info: 202-628-8866 or go to <http://www.ncrc.org>.

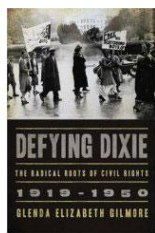


DID YOU KNOW?

Contact the GBCHRB for **FREE Fair Housing Info, Brochures, & Posters in English, Spanish, Korean, and Russian.** We have brochures, Self-Help Guides to Fair Housing for individual counties, curricula for renting & buying housing, and much more! Quantities available for no charge! Contact us at: 410-453-9500 / 800-895-6302 / mail@gbchrb.org.

The GBCHRB's *Neighborhood Beat* TV Show Is on Cable Stations Across Maryland!

Hosted by Dr. Bill Kladky, the 30-minute interview show runs in Baltimore City, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Calvert, St. Mary's, Talbot, Prince George's, and Montgomery, and the City of Takoma Park. Call 410-453-9500 for days and times - or for a copy of a show.



INTERESTING BOOKS

Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots, 1919-1950. Glenda E. Gilmore. W. W. Norton & Company, 2008. 642 pp. \$39.95. This study by Gilmore, a professor of history at Yale, is a "collective biography of activist black and white Southerners" indicating how resistance to the South's elaborate system of racial segregation, often nicknamed Jim Crow, predated the onset of civil-rights initiatives in 1954-55. The book features portrayals of the personalities involved.

Justice: A Global Adventure, Walter J. Burghardt. Orbis, 2004. 275 pp. \$20.00. As Amazon.com summarized: "From immigration to attitudes toward the elderly, *Justice* is a book of substance that is impossible to put down." See below the notice of Father's Burghardt's passing.



REST IN PEACE

Gwendolyn T. Britt, Maryland Senator, 66. Recently a state senator representing Prince George's County, Britt was expected to introduce legislation that would legalize same-sex marriage in Maryland. A life-long civil rights advocate and one of the Freedom Riders who challenged Jim Crow laws in the South, Britt spent 40 days in a Mississippi jail for sitting in a whites-only train station. Carl O. Snowden commented, "She had a broader vision of what civil rights mean. She saw other groups that had historically been locked out of the system - women, Latinos, gays - and she felt all those left out had to have a place at the table. She will be sorely missed." (Baltimore *Sun*, January 13,

2008:1B)

Father Walter J. Burghardt, Social Justice Advocate, 93. The Rev. Burghardt wrote over 25 books advocating social justice, strongly worked for Christian unity through various ecumenical activities, and edited *Theological Studies*. In his last book, *Justice: A Global Adventure* (2004), Burghardt argued that biblical teachings of justice must apply to the poor and oppressed. On July 20, 1969, as the Apollo 11 astronauts prepared to land on the moon, Father Burghardt said he was “excited by man’s thrust into space,” but “concerned about our priorities.” “I simply do not believe that a program comparable to the moon landing cannot be projected around poverty, the war, crime, and so on,” he said. “So, when the first man walks on the moon, my joy will be tempered by sadness. For I shall be thinking of men who still walk this earth.” Amen.



James E. Orange, Civil Rights Leader, 65. The "amiable giant" (over six foot and 300 pounds), Orange was an aide to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. whose arrest in Alabama in 1965 is considered one of the catalysts for the historic Selma-to-Montgomery march. became a project coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, bringing young people into the movement. Orange was organizing a voter registration drive in southwest Alabama in early 1965 when he was arrested in Perry County. “Rumors had gotten out that I was supposed to be lynched in jail,” Mr. Orange told *The Clarion-Ledger* of Jackson, Miss., in an interview last year, describing events on the night of Feb. 18, 1965. Protesters, he said, had hardly left a church “right in front of the courthouse and city hall, and they were brutally beaten.” When Orange was in New Orleans to work on a campaign to unionize thousands of housekeepers, banquet waiters and laundry-room employees working in the city’s hotels; it reminded him of his days in Memphis, in 1968, when he marched with Dr. King in support of sanitation workers: “The workers I saw in Memphis in 1968 were better off than the workers I see here in 1998,” Orange told the *New York Times* during the New Orleans campaign. On April 4, 1968, Mr. Orange was standing below the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis when Dr. King was assassinated. (*New York Times*, February 22, 2008)

Tom Lantos, Congressman, 80. The only Holocaust survivor to serve in the US Congress, Lantos was a strong defender of human rights, a supporter of Israel, worked for more protections for animals and the environment; and was a founder of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in 1983. Lantos' Holocaust survival was due partially to Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands by issuing them Swedish passports and declaring them Swedish subjects. Speaker Nancy Pelosi called Lantos' death "a profound loss for the Congress and for the nation and a terrible loss for me personally." (*New York Times*, February 12, 2008:C13)

