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## Let's keep improving Frederick in 2007

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2007

NAACP notes  
Guy djoken

The executive officers of the Frederick County chapter of the NAACP and I look forward to working with you to improve our quality of life in 2007.

Building on the groundwork placed in the last two years, and well aware of the challenges ahead, we promise to keep building the necessary coalition to be a true advocate for positive change.

We know the challenges are great, and require that we come together to tackle them. Those of us who have made it out of "chronic and perpetual dependence" have the duty to emulate Harriet Tubman, a former slave who ran away in 1849 but returned to rescue others.

Bruce Gordon, the national president and CEO of the NAACP, nicely put it in these terms:

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“Despite years of attention to the achievement gap, African-American 12th-graders continue to perform at about the level of white ninth-graders in reading and math. In health care, African-Americans are far more likely to rely on hospitals and clinics — frequently missing the primary and preventive care often available to white Americans. Blacks are underrepresented in our universities and boardrooms and overrepresented in our prisons.

“Slavery and colonialism have, over the years, worked seamlessly to ensure that many people of color start a couple of rungs down on the ladder to success. Many have had to adapt to make the best out of very bad situations, with a worthwhile result: successful sons and daughters. That is the good news. Today, 30 percent of black households fall in the middle income range — a big jump since 1967, when about 20 percent did. And the portion of black households making \$75,000 to \$99,999 jumped nearly fourfold between 1967 and 2003.

“It is these black professionals, whose ancestors fought bravely to overcome class and racial hurdles, which are now competing with the very best in the world.

“And, if the civil rights movement is to adapt to the needs of our times and move forward full steam, it is these growing numbers of black professionals who must lead it. There is simply no alternative.”

Please join us by purchasing a membership to keep us moving forward.

Let's celebratethe life of MLK

You may also become involved by joining us Monday as we commemorate the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Two ceremonies are scheduled. The first event is scheduled at the FCAA Youth Center, 413 Burck St. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (E-mail Sharida Gaines at SharidaGaines@hotmail.com for further information.)

The second event is the 16th annual MLK dinner to be held at the Evangelical Reform United Church of Christ at 5 p.m. After dinner, the group will discuss Dr. King's message as it relates to today's events.

A number of King's writings will be the subject of discussion. Those interested in receiving

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Other events commemorating the life of Dr. King will include the Frederick County Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Annual Dr. Martin L. King's Birthday Observance & Awards Breakfast scheduled for Saturday at the FSK Holiday Inn, and the Frederick County Public Schools' Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration to be held at Gov. Thomas Johnson today.

Dialogue between religions a success

On Dec. 31, in response to Imam Yahya Hendi's invitation, I joined the Islamic Society of Frederick at Lynnfield Event Complex to celebrate Eid al-Adha.

It was gratifying to observe that the incessant calls of Imam Hendi for an inter-denominational dialogue were a resounding success. The ceremony brought together hundreds of Muslims, Jews and Christians to share this important event.

During his sermon, Hendi reiterated his call for peace and harmony among all the children of Abraham, inviting all participate in community building through volunteerism and education on the fundamental values of religion that teach the virtues of love and compassion.

I applaud Hendi's openness and commitment to reach out and educate non-Muslims about the peaceful nature of the Islamic faith, and invite all of us to rally behind him to spark a positive movement that may start in Frederick and resonate throughout the country and beyond.

Guy Djoken, president of the Frederick County branch of the NAACP, writes monthly. His e-mail is [naacpfrederickbranch@hotmail.com](mailto:naacpfrederickbranch@hotmail.com). To send a letter to the editor in response to this column, e-mail [frederick@gazette.net](mailto:frederick@gazette.net).

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