



Photo by Leroy Hamilton
Karen Bass (in red) is sworn in Tuesday as Speaker of the California Assembly. Looking on, from left: former speaker Fabian Núñez; Bass' stepdaughter, Yvette Lechuga; Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Bass sworn in as Assembly speaker

First Black woman to lead a state legislative body feels "the weight of history on my shoulders."

BY BETTY PLEASANT
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SACRAMENTO — Karen Bass, assemblywoman for the Southland's 47th District,

entered the history books Tuesday when she was sworn in as the 67th speaker of the state Assembly — the first African-American woman to head the house of a state legislature in U.S. history.

Bass basked amid many rounds of rousing displays of joy from her fellow lawmakers on the floor and the hundreds of people in the gallery who came from as far away as Mexico to

witness her historic installation.

"I do feel the weight of history on my shoulders," Bass said after taking the oath of office from outgoing Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez. And in what was universally hailed as "a great speech," she went on to say: "If we could only harness the power of our common humanity, I don't think there's anything we couldn't do for the people of this state."

In taking over the 80-member Assembly, Bass spoke bluntly about the fiscal troubles the state faces with an estimated

See **SPEAKER** on page A2

BY NO MEANS SOFT

Gritty win helps Crenshaw High School's softball team advance in the playoffs

Page 8



Killing by police rocks Inglewood

Activists call for federal investigation into Sunday morning slaying of unarmed 19-year-old Black man.

BY OLU ALEMORU
STAFF WRITER

INGLEWOOD — Nation of Islam Minister Tony Muhammad has called for a federal investigation into Sunday's fatal police shooting of an unarmed teenager, accusing law enforcement agencies across the nation of targeting African-American men.

Muhammad spoke minutes after a Wednesday afternoon press conference during which Inglewood Police Chief Jacqueline Seabrooks addressed the shooting death of 19-year-old Michael Byoune.

Seabrooks reiterated comments she made at a press briefing Monday, that the officers involved were in fear of their lives when Byoune was killed. Both the Inglewood Police

Department and the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office have launched investigations into the incident.

"It appears there is a national standard operating procedure for police whenever they do something wrong," said Muhammad. "It's almost like part of their training. All you have to do is

say I believe that my life was in danger. That statement alone allows you to hide behind the badge."

Byoune was fatally wounded as police fired on a vehicle containing him and two friends. The driver, Larry White, also 19, sustained a gunshot wound to his leg and was transported to a local hospital where he is in stable condition.

A third occupant, Christopher Larkin, was unharmed. He was taken into custody, questioned and released. The officers were not injured.

See **SHOOTING** on page A2



Photo by Gary McCarthy
Inglewood Police Chief Jacqueline Seabrooks prepares for a Wednesday news conference on the killing of Michael Byoune.

THE RACE FOR SUPERVISOR

Finding new methods of reaching voters

Volunteers gather at Mark Ridley-Thomas' campaign headquarters to drum up support for Barack Obama's White House bid.

BY OLU ALEMORU
STAFF WRITER

SOUTH LOS ANGELES — State Sen. Mark Ridley-Thomas' bid for a Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors seat intersected with national politics on Saturday, when the L.A. legislator's campaign office hosted more than 400 people for a voter registration drive in support of Barack Obama's presidential campaign.

The small army of volunteers fanned out across the 2nd district in which Ridley-Thomas is running and, according to Obama campaign organizer Ben Arnon, returned having registered more than 700 new voters.

Prior to the door-to-door

See **RIDLEY-THOMAS** on page A7



Courtesy photo
A handmade sign reflects the goals of volunteers who set out Saturday to solicit support for Barack Obama's White House bid.

Bernard Parks offers his views on development in a candidates' forum, and rolls up his sleeves during a campaign stop in Culver City.

BY LEILONI DE GRUY
STAFF WRITER

VIEW PARK — Taking part in a candidates' forum in which the most-discussed topics skewed toward his perceived strengths, county supervisorial candidate Bernard Parks said last week that sound development and proper zoning would help strengthen the business environment across the 2nd District.

Organized by the United Homeowners Association, the May 8 debate between Parks and his chief rival, Mark Ridley-Thomas, was held at the Foundation for the Junior Blind, located in one of the most affluent areas of Black Los Angeles.

See **PARKS** on page A7

Residents speak out at Compton town hall

As community copes with increase in violent crime, law enforcement responds with additional officers, patrols.

BY LEILONI DE GRUY
STAFF WRITER

COMPTON — A recent uptick in violence drew dozens of residents and government and law enforcement officials to a Monday town hall meeting at the Martin Luther King Transit Center, as the city struggles to cope with a rising murder rate and growing concern throughout the community.

Since the start of the year, there have been at least 15 homicides in Compton, six of which occurred between April 17-29. Additionally, two shootings

have been reported involving the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department deputies who police the city.

"We have children who are afraid to go to the park, let alone go across Alondra Boulevard and Wilmington Avenue because they have to cross through all these [gang] territories," said one resident, who did not give his name. "I am now scared to death — not about me, but about the future that I see in the city of Compton until we drastically make some changes in our community."

Responding to community fears about the violence, sheriff's department officials said they have increased the number of deputies working in Compton, and beefed up patrols.

"[W]e brought ... 28 additional [deputies] into the station area, and they've been in there going on the second week," said Capt. William Ryan. "So far with the additional resources that we brought in, gang violence has gone down significantly. With those additional resources, we conducted several different operations, search warrant

See **COMPTON** on page A5

Still pumping iron? Elders ask, Y not?

Without a permanent home for more than a decade, an Inglewood community center resurges with the help of a dedicated group of active seniors.

BY OLU ALEMORU
STAFF WRITER

INGLEWOOD — If you're an active senior like Ida Crittenden — who turns 93 years old this Saturday — then it's fun to work out at the YMCA.

A member of the Inglewood-Centinel Valley YMCA, now housed in the fitness center at the back of the Daniel Freeman Hospital on Prairie Avenue, Crittenden's secrets to a long life are exercise and camaraderie three times a week.

The Y, which moved in three



Photo by Gary McCarthy
Ivon Allen, 92, does a leg workout at the Inglewood-Centinel Valley YMCA. A number of active seniors use the facility.

years ago, is also receiving a new lease on life, having been without a permanent home since closing its building on Kelso Street in 1992.

Available to young and old alike, the center boasts some impressive facilities including a race track, basketball court,

See **SENIORS** on page A3

'Hair' apparent

After a dramatic portrayal won her acclaim on Broadway, Tonya Pinkins lightens up in a tailor-made role exploring the many faces of Black women.

BY MARISELA SANTANA
STAFF WRITER

As a performer who loves the stage, it is hard to say no when an award-winning playwright offers a part written specifically for you, and makes a personal plea that you help carry out her vision.

After winning acclaim in the Broadway smash "Caroline, or Change," that is precisely where Tonya Pinkins found herself,



Actress Tonya Pinkins, who plays a number of roles in "And Her Hair Went With Her," is already a Tony Award winner.

when Zina Camblin asked her to take on the character of Jasmine in the comedy "And Her Hair Went With Her."

Not that declining was ever really an option. "Coming off

of 'Caroline,' which was such a heavy project, particularly in L.A., people assume you are something, so it's difficult to walk in a room and break that image," Pinkins said. "So, I really was excited to have the opportunity to play these very, wild, crazy, hysterically funny characters."

Described by Pinkins as a slice of "hyper-surreal life," "Hair" is set in a beauty salon and costars Tracie Thoms. The story revolves around a pair of salon operators who take turns portraying various patrons, whose assorted hairstyles parallel as a celebration of the diversity that exists within Black womanhood.

"This piece is not like any ordinary slice of life," said Pinkins, who won a Tony Award for the role of Sweet Anita in "Jelly's Last Jam." "Tracie and I play all of the characters, and they are just bigger-than-life

See **PINKINS** on page A3