

Parallels drawn: South Africa, suburban Detroit have people separated by color

By Susan Steinmueller
staff writer

It started as a talk on the struggle of South African blacks to win rights and equality. It ended with a discussion in which parallels were drawn between the separation of people by color in South Africa and in Detroit and suburban neighborhoods.

"How is it that we are going to break down the insulation?" Carol Scaffe of the Bloomfield Hills PTO asked in an audience discussion afterwards.

The event was a talk in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, whose Jan. 15 birthday is today celebrated as a national holiday in 43 states, including Michigan. Speakers were South African natives Dr. Leonard Suransky and the Rev. Mangedwa Nyathi.

Suransky is a college lecturer and educator residing in Ann Arbor. Nyathi is assistant pastor of Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit.

Approximately 50 people attended "Perspectives on Apartheid" (the South African policy of separation of races), held Saturday morning at Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills.

Sponsors were the community education departments of Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and the West Bloomfield school districts, the

Bloomfield Hills Education Association, and The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies of Wayne State University.

MARTIN LUTHER KING has helped the struggle of South African blacks, although often indirectly, both speakers said. Nyathi said that as a theology student in South Africa, he listened to albums and tapes of King's speeches.

"They were quite inspiring," he said.

"I would say that Martin Luther King learned from Africa when African leaders were struggling for freedom," he said. "Africa impacted Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King impacted other generations. We have learned from him, and he learned from us."

BOTH SAID that Martin Luther King had also been inspired by Gandhi, and Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent protest as a means to change.

Gandhi was in a way his master, Suransky said. "He inspired Martin Luther King. In turn, what happened in this country, inspired South Africa."

"The African National Congress was inspired by Gandhi. That inspired them for 50 years to be non-violent," Suransky said. Suransky said of the Rev. Alan

Boesak and Bishop Desmond Tutu, South African black leaders: "When you read the speeches of these men, you hear the refrain of Martin Luther King."

However, the philosophy of non-violence is one that South African youths are tiring of, they said, because they feel that the process of change is too slow; in addition, they are often treated violently.

"In the South African context it's very difficult for a Bishop Tutu to talk about non-violence," Suransky said. "It's not that different from here in the '60s, when many were saying the only way is to fight and to kill."

"It was with great bitterness and hesitation" that the leaders of South Africa turned to the violence, according to Suransky.

"In South Africa, police came not only with dogs, but with guns. They shot people who were unarmed, people who were not fighting."

The government subsequently banned the group.

Nyathi called the threat of communism a "scapegoat." Both said sanctions against South Africa are one means of pressuring the government to change, although they might also hurt some blacks by causing them to lose their jobs, Suransky said.

"I HAVE increasingly come to believe that we are all the same.

The Gandhis and the Martin Luther Kings say to us in their writings, we are all the same, and we share the same problems," Suransky said.

"If there is misery in downtown Detroit and in some way it affects us, we think we can put it aside and live up here, or live in Ann Arbor, but it affects us."

"My message would be take that extra step across the boundary, see what happens, be careful, but take that step. Have the guts to go and speak to someone who's different from you and see what happens. It might change your life."

Nyathi told the story of a man at Auschwitz who was left for dead on a pile of bodies there when saved by a young American soldier.

The rescued man asked the young soldier if he was Jewish. When he replied that he was, the man slapped him, and asked, "Why are you so late?"

"The people of South Africa, when we do get there, to show our concern and our help, they will ask us who are coming from the West, why are we so late," Nyathi said.

"If we can think about that, maybe it will help every one of us to not lose time, to do something, to educate our fellow man, our neighbors, or our friends about the situation in South Africa and you will not be one of those who are late."



King's non-violent activism portrayed

"We Are The Dream," an Emmy Award-winning production, is being brought to the area by the community education departments of the Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Pontiac, Southfield and West Bloomfield school districts in further celebration of Martin Luther King Day.

Starring Al Eaton as Martin Luther King, the national production will be given at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23, in the auditorium of Seaborn High School, 2346 W. Lincoln at the corner of Cranbrook Road in Birmingham.

"We Are The Dream" is described as a moving portrait of King and the impact of his non-violent activism on the civil rights movement.

A limited number of tickets are available at \$10 for adults and \$8 for students. Tickets are available through the community education offices of any of the sponsoring school districts.

Telephone numbers are Birmingham - 433-8444; Bloomfield Hills - 433-0885; Pontiac - 857-8373; Southfield - 423-6833 and West Bloomfield - 851-7600.



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—Rev. Mangedwa Nyathi



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—Leonard Suransky

Firefighter hurt; blaze heavily damages house

A firefighter injured her knee in a blaze that caused at least \$200,000 in structural and content damage to a \$400,000 house overlooking a wooded stream in northeast Farmington Hills Saturday, investigators said.

Firefighter Lynn McDaniel was treated at Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills.

The fire, on Herndonwood Drive, may have originated in the kitchen because of a cooking accident, said Deputy Chief Peter Baldwin of the Farmington Hills Fire Department.

He said the homeowner reported

discovering the fire after cooking oil was left unattended on the stove for a short time about 2 p.m.

Late Saturday afternoon, homeowner Ronald Simpson watched grimly as Farmington Hills police and fire investigators sifted through the burned remains of his home in an effort to pinpoint what caused the fire.

IT TOOK 40 firefighters nearly an hour to control the flames, which were leaping from the main living area when they arrived.

Heavy flames and smoke, as well as a wide expanse created by a cathedral ceiling, challenged firefighters. Damage was extensive in the living area, Baldwin said.

Simpson, his wife and their two young children moved to the neighborhood last fall. The three-story, U-shaped house, once owned by basketball star Bob Lanier, was built some 12 years ago, neighbors said.

The house features an indoor swimming pool, a sauna and a five-car garage.

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CHAMBER FORUM
Networking will be discussed at the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce membership luncheon at noon Thursday, Jan. 21, at the Clamdiggers, 30555 Grand River.

The guest speaker will be Timothy Napier, president of the Ann Arbor-based Center for Corporate Training, a training and consulting firm specializing in the area of interpersonal communication, leadership, supervision and sales.

Since 1985, Napier has developed customized training programs for 40 organizations and designed and conducted customized employee attitude and opinion surveys.

His background includes management, training and sales experience in the medical and office automation industries. He is author of "Sales Leadership in Action," an exploration of tension and its role in sales negotiation and decision making.

A professional speaker, he has appeared on both radio and television.

The social hour starts at noon. Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. The price is \$10 per person. Call the chamber for reservations, 474-3440.

NAMED ADMINISTRATOR
Marsha Tomas of Howell was named administrator for Williamsburg Care Center in Farmington Hills.

She is responsible for efficient operation of the long-term care facility, including ensuring high-quality patient care.

Tomas comes to Williamsburg Care Center from Greenbriar Care Center in Howell, another Care Centers of Michigan facility, where she worked as admissions/discharge coordinator.

She pursued her administrator's license through Michigan State University and has been a licensed administrator since August.

BRITISH TOUR
Farmington Hills AAA Michigan Travel Agency employee Patricia Gow can help a curious tourist pick his way through Piccadilly Circus, enjoy Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon or select the best pub for fish and chips and a good draught.

Gow was one of 15 AAA Michigan travel agents who flew to London and spent six days touring the city, plus Stratford, Bristol and Eastbourne.

"We made all the traditional tourist spots in a double-decker bus," Gow said. "After reading about Windsor Castle, Oxford University, Big Ben and Westminster Abbey for so many years and sending people off on tours, it was great to actually visit them myself."

"Now that I've experienced the

trip myself, I'm better able to plan itineraries for veteran travelers as well as those visiting England for the first time," she said.

Travelers may obtain videos of many vacation destinations, including London, from the AAA Travel Agency, 33133 12 Mile. Videos will be loaned without charge for up to seven days.

The Farmington Hills office is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Call Gow at 563-3700 Ext. 286.

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