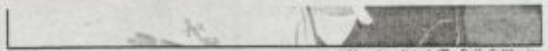
Daily Californian
1/22/93

Mary Jane Urlaub/The Daily Californian

Ray Blair and his wife, Sue, of El Cajon catch up with Morris Wax of Alvarado Estates, center, at the Mercy 1000/Founders Society dinner dance.

bring about, such as CARE 2000, which brings the hospital and all its services back to the patient bedside.

Deborah Szekely, founder and chairwoman of Golden Door, Inc., tal's board of directors) and Alvarado Estate residents Morris and Alice Wax. Yolanda Walther-Meade, another former East County resident, was also there. (mju-cr)



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Rita and George Zorn of El Cajon seem to enjoy the lobster bisque en croute that is served at dinner.

PEOPLE IN ACTION

University professor strives to make King's dream come true

"A real hero helps another person no matter what the cost is. Martin Luther King Jr. did not have super powers, he had super confidence and super ideas. He wanted a rainbow of colors — every color — to live, work, play and go to school together. A real hero can be you, me or anyone that's here with us today," read fifth-grader Rodney Jones, a student at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, from his winning entry in the annual Martin Luther King Poetry Contest held by the YMCA.

His presentation was to a rainbow of color, as many colors were represented by the 400 guests attending the YMCA of San Diego County's Eighth Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast. They had gathered at the Scottish Rite Center in Mission Valley to honor the memory of Dr. King on his birthday, Jan. 15, and the local hero who best exemplifies his character.

Associate dean of the college of business administration at San Diego State University, community activist and chairman of the Black Economic Development Task Force, Harold K. Brown of Del Cerro was that hero. Dr. Leon Kelley, last year's recipient of the YMCA Human Dignity Award, presented that same award to Brown.

"I'd like to say something to those young people (who had

MARY JANE URLAUB
People in action

made presentations). You should understand that what Martin Luther King was doing, many people were doing, even here in San Diego. When we honor him, we are honoring the thousands of people doing the same. When he said he had a dream, he was representing those people. You can find the same role models here in San Diego," said Brown.

Brown earned a bachelor's degree from SDSU and a masters degree from Fordham University. He has been with SDSU since 1970. He was one of the founders of the Black Economic Development Task Force and was instrumental in the formation of Communities United for Economic justice. The latter is a coalition of ethnic groups and women in San Diego. Both are concerned with education, research and the development of black and other minority-owned small businesses in San Diego.

The morning program created quite a moving experience for the audience. Warren Nolan, a seventh-grader at O'Farrell Junior High in San Diego, sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing." The leader of the trio "First Choice" explained how a white slave ship captain was inspired to write the gospel son "Amazing Grace," when he her the tune hummed and the moaning of slaves in the hole of the ship.

Featured speaker Rev. James A. Hargett, pastor of Christian Fellowship United Church of Christ in San Diego, explained how African-Americans were once indispensable to the American economy, only to become useless by the year 2000 because of technical advancements (unless they are educated). Everyone joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome," bringing the morning to a close.

The event was spearheaded by the Jackie Robinson YMCA and corporate headquarters, both in San Diego, with Zoneice Jones, Gwen Vaughn-Copeland, Jock Johnson, Doug Gray, Willie Wallace, Dick Chapel, Diana Decker and Pattie Griffin serving on the committee.

The Davis/Grossmont YMCA located in La Mesa was represented by board members John McTighe, chairman; Steve Conner, East County investor for the Y; Jon Cloud, East County Materials (all three from El Cajon); Gale Lawhead of La Mesa; Bob Feinberg of San Diego, membership and program director; and Steve Rowe of Encinitas, executive director of the Y.

"Teens are involved extensively in our summer camp program as leader's in training. A portion of them come through the Hire-A-Youth and underprivileged in at-risk programs," said Feinberg. Rowe said they work with a number of minorities through the child care programs in El Cajon, Rancho San Diego and Lemon Grove. Johnson Elementary School, alone, has 50 percent Hispanics and there is a high count at Ballantyne and Lemon Grove schools as well. A $250,000 grant enables the Y to offer financial assistance to families who cannot afford the fees. "And, unfortunately, many of those are minorities," he said.

A number of dignitaries were at the head table, including five San Diego City Councilmen, three congressional representatives, a representative from County Supervisor Dianne Jacob's office, Sheriff Jim Roache, Police Chief Bob Burgreen, NAACP president Frank Jordan, and a host of others. Barbara Hunsaker of El Cajon represented Senator Wadie Deddeh.(mju)

Mary Jane Urlaub/The Daily Californian

Recipient of the YMCA Human Dignity Award Harold K. Brown and his wife, Laverne, pose in front a photo of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The annual award is given to a member of the community who best exemplifies King's character.

Volunteers go one-on-one with prisoners and it helps

La Mesa Kiwanians know that fellow club member Ben Holden will make an impression wherever he goes. At the group's Jan. 14 meeting he did just that as he discussed his work with prisoners [illegible] LINK program of [illegible] through [illegible]tside."

"Friend[illegible] first heard of the program [illegible] thought, 'It scares me, but it mi[illegible] be good for me,'" Holden said. [illegible] never been in any kind of [illegible]on — except, maybe, my fir[illegible] barriage." Holden has been ac[illegible]e with the program for more th[illegible] a year.

"I said, 'Give me someone who's [illegible]ver going to get out,'" he said. "We did so well he's probably going to get out in two years. I'll invite him to the meeting to speak to all of you."

Holden then became more seri[illegible]

CARLA EDWARDS
Community news correspondent

ers are substance abusers, he said.

"These people don't know anything about what your life is like," Holden said.

Through the LINK program, volunteers visit the prisoners for one hour, once a month. The purpose is to listen to the prisoners [illegible]

way of life.

"It's been especially rewarding to work with a young black man because he had no idea a white person could be his friend," Holden said. This man now helps run a drug rehabilitation program in prison, he added.

The prisoners are not given the volunteers' home addresses or home phone numbers and do not keep in contact with the volunteers when released.

"Rehabilitation programs in the past haven't worked," said Nelson Koyl, a LINK community coordinator introduced by Holden.

Koyl said studies show that 98 percent of the prisoners who get out are worse than when they went in, using prison as a "training school" to learn how to commit crimes more efficiently. [illegible]

of them are more successful in integrating into society when they get out of prison, Koyl said.

"It's amazing how much a simple, little visit can do in someone's life," Koyl said. "They're locked up 24 hours a day in an 8-by-10 (feet) room. For them to get a visit is a privilege. Many go for years and years and never get a visit from an outside influence."

The LINK program has been in operation for more than 20 years and 43,000 matches, Koyl said. He has never heard of any problems connected with it.

"You can help someone become a productive citizen — not a tax burden, but a benefit to society," he said.

"California has the largest penal colony in the world. You begin to realize that except for the [illegible]

[illegible]