

AAHMSNJ NEWSLETTER

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

AAHMSNJ NEWSLETTER, July 1, 2009
A. T. Glapion, Editor

RALPH PETERSON: FROM ATHLETE TO CIVIC LEADER

This new exhibit at the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey provides a glimpse into the events that contributed to the making of the man who served four terms as Mayor of the City of Pleasantville, NJ.

His Golden Gloves championship and boxing career are highlighted in news clippings, photographs, and memorabilia. He is shown as a young police officer and as Chief of Police in an exhibit that is part of a continuing effort to chronicle the lives of local community leaders who have made positive contributions to society.



FOUR UNIQUE EXHIBITS - RECEPTION SUNDAY, JULY 19 2:00-4:00 P.M.

Show runs from July 1 to September 26, 2009 at the Martin Luther King Center in Newtonville

RE' BANFIELD/ R.E.B. MANNING



In the Main Gallery, the inspirational photographs and poems of Re' Banfield a.k.a. R. E. B. Manning combine for an exhibit with a twist. His photography complements his poetry in this exhibit of his work. A busy artist, Banfield/Manning also serves as Organist in the service of his church. An educator by day, Banfield/Manning describes himself as a modern artisan with faith in the possibilities of life and love.

DONNETTA IRVIS

Her paintings of flowers and stylized figures are rendered in brilliant acrylic colors that relate a sense of calm and ease when viewed. Her imaginative assemblages are intricately crafted from mixed media. Ms. Irvis' expressive works reveal a quiet wit seasoned with a bold appreciation for nature and a zest for life. The artist accepts commissioned work at her studio in Hammononton.



ROSALYN W. WOODING



The cigar box pocketbooks that contemporary artist and cartoonist Rosalyn Wooding creates are portable, whimsical, wearable works of art. She incorporates vibrant color in her expressive designs. Whether artfully displayed on a pedestal or dangling from one's wrist, her one-of-a-kind purses make an emphatic fashion statement. Her son, Jordan, helped to design two of the creations on display.

SOMETHING ABOUT OUR PERMANENT COLLECTION

Today the "N word" is recognized as a racial slur by a more evolved and socially conscious world than it was in the 19th century when John Harper, Ltd. of Willenhall, England marketed the "Jolly Nigger" mechanical bank as a toy for the amusement of children. When a coin is placed in the black man's cast iron hand and the lever on his shoulder is lowered, the coin will be deposited in his mouth as his eyes roll back in his head. This toy surely taught its young owners a lesson about racism. The bank with its broad nose, rolling eyes, and gaping red lips was only one of many racially offensive objects that supported a system of hierarchy based on race.



The rolling eyes emphasized a stereotyped image of blacks that was universally accepted at the time of its manufacture in the late 1800s. Blacks in entertainment venues were portrayed as objects of derision and cowards afraid of their own shadows. These black actors were never the "hero." They served as a foil for the leading actor by highlighting his heroism and innate intelligence while giving exactly the opposite impression about themselves. The act of rolling their eyes and shuffling their feet was a device that was often employed to illustrate their subservient role.

The highly collectible bank is classified as African or Black Americana. Objects in this category are often items that entertain or perform a function. Film director, Spike Lee, featured this bank in his provocative satire, *Bamboozled*, which may have been inspired by his collection of black memorabilia. Other famous collectors of Black Americana include Michael Jackson, Oprah Winfrey, Whoopie Goldberg, Bill Cosby, and Justice Clarence Thomas.

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Admission is free
Donations encouraged

Groups interested in
visiting the Museum should
call to arrange a docent led
tour.

We are located in the
MLK Center at
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Newtonville, NJ 08346

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The two banks pictured above are in our permanent collection and may be seen during our regular hours. Their presence in the museum is a reminder of how far we have come since the days when this sort of imagery was widely accepted.

There is much more to see and learn at the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey. Visit us soon to see what's new.

AAHMSNJ Board Members: Ralph E. Hunter, Sr., President; Brian Jackson, Vice President; Patricia King, Treasurer; Anne Glapion, Secretary; Elwood Davis, David Greenspun, Jeffrey Light, Anthony Mack, David Pinto, Stacy Hunter-Withers, Rev. David Mallory, Ellis Peoples, Braxton Plummer, and Jesse Tweedle, Sr.