SHOWTIME

Bill Cosby, the warm and gentle comedian

MANSFIELD, Mass. — For Bill Cosby, turning 50 felt like a trip to the Fun House when he was a kid, playing games with both mind and body.

The king of TV situation comedy rolls his eyes and breaks down into an elastic grin as he talks about the way things are breaking down.

He grabs two thick handfuls of waistline that didn't used to reside around his middle.

"I know it's fat," he says, "because when I pinch it, it doesn't hurt."

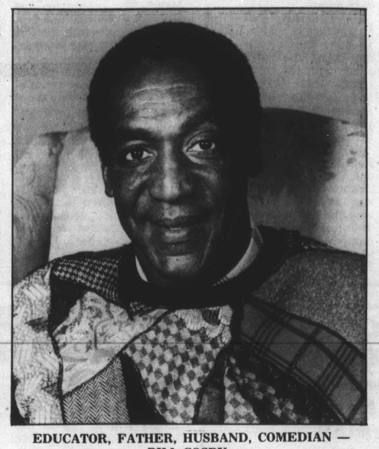
On the stand-up comedy circuit, where his craft was honed long before television discovered him, Cosby now examines the landscape of life from the perspective of a male Erma Bombeck.

This night before a near-sellout crowd at the Great Woods Center for the Performing Arts, Cosby is dressed in black sweatpants, an emerald windbreaker over a Hampton University sweatshirt, a baseball hat and sneakers. A chair and microphone are his only props on the orchestra-size stage.

He snaps the elastic waistband on his baggy pants.

"My waist is 38," Cosby says. "My 'ego' pants at home are 34 and I promised them I'd be back."

He looks down, then mentions how he can only see the tips of his feet in the shower. ("At least I hope they're mine.")



EDUCATOR, FATHER, HUSBAND, COMEDIAN — BILL COSBY

Many in the audience nod in agreement, nudging their companions and laughing until it brings tears.

But it isn't just the body that plays tricks on us. Cosby spends ten minutes of his two-hour schtick showing, and telling, what happens when the mind goes sour. Forgetting what you went into another room to get. Dialing the phone and as it rings, forgetting whom you're calling.

"I don't know why my brain does this to me, because I was good to my brain when I was young," Cosby said. "I took care of it."

Everyday life has always been fertile ground for Cosby's universal truths.

He offered a localized zinger on driving in Boston, a place he says that many outsiders believe is where the Pilgrims live.

"You don't expect Boston people to be going sideways and cursing at each other," Cosby says. "Once you get to downtown Boston you might as well sell your car. Any turn you make is wrong."

On stage, he is the guy next door. Not America's favorite TV dad. Not the face in the prime time commercials. Not the shrewd businessman. Not one of the richest performers alive.

In his early comedy days, Cosby racked up five Grammy awards for his comedy albums. He talked of growing up. The stories of his younger brother Russell, of Fat Albert. The imagined conversation in which God tells a skeptical Noah to build an ark.

With that same warm and gentle humor, his forte is now about being hip (something your children always are, and you never will be until you become a grandparent), insects, dogs, and dentists, the dumb things men do, and marriage.

"With five children (ages 23, 22, 18, 15 and 12 going on 60) all I want is my wife back," Cosby says.

Santana, Shorter team up for jazz tour

Rock guitarist Carlos Santana's musical heroes are jazz greats Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock, whom he sees as constant reminders that creativity means always moving ahead, never to stagnate.

In what figures to be a historic tour, Santana has hit the road with one of those greats. He and Shorter, the veteran jazz saxophonist, are on a five-week festival tour taking them to nine U.S. cities followed by 18 or more in Europe.

Both musicians defy categorization. The co-leaders promise the same of the music that will filter through their band in concerts stretching from the Mellon Jazz Festival in Pittsburgh on June 24 to their finals July 31 in Athens, Greece.

The band includes Patrice Rushen and Chester Thompson, a longtime Santana colleague, on keyboard; bassist Alphonso Johnson; drummer Nudgu Chancler and percussionist Armando Peraza.

"There is spirit to our sound. "Santana said during a break from rehearsals last week in San Francisco. "It has that 12 o'clock noon, street festival rejoicing, and that 12 o'clock midnight party atmosphere. I like people to put aside their worries, their toil, and just enjoy. I love all that."

Both men said the repertoire will evolve from show to show, shifting as the mood and inspirations dictate.

Shorter has written several new songs, Santana is throwing in some new melodic ideas, and they're pulling from a diverse mix of composers from "Las Vegas Tango" by jazz composer Gil Evans to Jimi Hendrix and reggae master Bob Marley.

"We're pulling from all kinds of element. We're leaving a lot of room so we can just call things. When it flows through you spontaneously, it makes the best kind of music anyway," Santana said. "The spirits are knocking, and we're going to be receivers and project. Our imaginations are working overtime."

CARLOS SANTANA

Santana said the project in some respects is a "throwback to the 1960s, when musicians could just get together regardless of label. The word 'fusion' wasn't created yet. We need to bring that back."

These two former street kids have similar backgrounds.

Santana, a major rock figure for 20 years, is the Mexican-born son of a Mariachi musician. He grew up in Tijuana and San Francisco, and drew both the hard blues and Latin music into his sound.

Shorter grew up in Newark, N.J., then cut his jazz teeth with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers beginning in 1959. Five years later, Miles Davis hired him for his pioneering fusion band that included Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams. Shorter stayed for six years and 13 albums leaving in 1971 to form the fusion band Weather Report with keyboard ace Joe Zawinul.

Shorter says the music this new band will be making to be recorded live at some point on the tour may be unpredictable. That for him, is part of the excitement.

"We're sticking our necks out. It takes a lot of guts. You may hear something familiar played in a fresh and welcoming way, or something unfamiliar in the same way — and be glad of it.

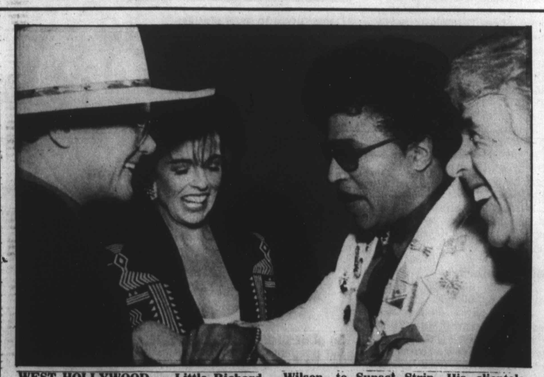
"It feeds instincts," Shorter said. "When we were kids, we did something different on the same vacant lot each day. That was the fun of it."

Shorter said he feels the same kind of "mystical" rapport with Santana as he did in the '60s with Davis and Hancock, and later with Chick Corea.

Santana, veteran of the consciousness-raising Woodstock Festival, gave it a stab.

"Music is the ultimate communicator," he said. "The universal language."

The U.S. itinerary for the Santana-Shorter tour is the Mellon Jazz Festival, Pittsburgh, June 24; the Mellon Jazz Festival. Philadelphia, June 26; Meadowbrook jazz special event, Detroit, June 27; Riverside Theater Milwaukee, June 28; JVC Jazz Festival. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, June 30; Nautica, Cleveland, Ohio, July 1; Newport Jazz at Finger Lakes, Canandaiqua, N.Y., July 2; and Newport Jazz at Saratoga, N.Y. July 3.



WEST HOLLYWOOD — Little Richard shows off his latest diamond bracelet to Larry Hagman and Linda Gray under watchful eye of Nicky Butler as Hollywood's royalty turned out to welcome London's jeweler to the royals, Butler & Wilson, to Sunset Strip. His clientele already includes Princess Di, Michael Jackson, Joan Collins and Ali McGraw. Richard and Gray co-hosted the party to welcome Butler to the states.

Have you heard?

ALBERTA HUNTER

GREGORY HINES

By Penny S. Demps

THAT Gregory Hines' self-titled debut album, "Gregory Hines," should be on the stands by now. Produced by Luther Vandross, the LP was preceded by a new single, "That Girl Wants To Dance With Me." Although Hines is best known for his dancing and more recently, acting ("White Nights," "Running Scared," and "Cotton Club"), his musical roots go back to childhood, sharing the spotlight with legends like Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington as part of Hines & Dad. Gregory has just completed work on his next film, "Tap," co-starring Sammy Davis, Jr., it's slated for a fall release.

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THAT tickets will be available beginning July 1 from "Tampa's Jazzin' Jubilee: An American Music Festival," a four-day musical extravaganza to be held from Thursday, September 1 through Monday, September 5 over Labor Day weekend. The entertainment, which focuses on everything from ragtime to blues, will feature professional jazz bands from international, national, state and local arenas. For further information, call (813) 223-1111.

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THAT comedian Eddie Murphy has signed with CBS to star in three annual specials and to develop a half-hour series and series pilots. Murphy, who first became nationally known as a star of NBC's "Saturday Night Live," will exclusively produce for and appear in network TV broadcast on CBS during the term of the three-year contract with Eddie Murphy television Enterprises, Inc.

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THAT the first biography of one of America's most beloved blues singers, Alberta Hunter, is now available on paperback. Frank C. Taylor brings the late blues songstress' indomitable spirit to life in "Alberta Hunter: A Celebration In Blues," and sets it against a fascinating backdrop of the jazz scene spanning nearly a century. When she was asked to explain the secret endurance that would one day merit her being labeled "a natural treasure," she replied, "I never smoked, drank, cussed, took drugs, owed nobody nothin' and never did musical exercises to warm up. All I ever did was open my mouth and sing." The book is based on her private collection of memorabilia, letters and papers.

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THAT the JVC Jazz Festival, the world's premiere jazz event in spotlighting musical giants and rising stars, promises to be a big band lover's delight. The festival, successor to the old Newport, R.I., Jazz Festival, began its 10-day reign June 24 in the Big Apple and upstate venues. The music of Louis Armstrong, along with the music of Billie Holiday and concerts by Mel Torme, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn and Carmen McRae will be featured. Trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie, Wynton Marsalis, Clark Terry, Jimmy Owens, Randy Sandke and Roy Eldridge are also spotlighted. Scattered across 10 days at nine sites in three states (N.Y., N.J., Conn.), the festival will offer jazz, blues, R&B, Latin, avant garde, tap dance, and a piano series, with guest stars Miles Davis, Lionel Hampton, Gerry Mulligan, Dave Brubeck, Carlos Santana, Wayne Shorter, Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams and Stan Getz.

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THAT the four-part documentary series "Islam In Turmoil," from the Christian Science Monitor Reports, will receive a National Education Award for the Advancement of Learning through Broadcasting. The NEA cited the series as a "beautifully photographed and carefully researched examination of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism."

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THAT the ruby red slippers worn by none other than Judy Garland in the classic "The Wizard Of Oz" went for a record $165,000 during a New York auction. An anonymous bidder is the new owner.

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THAT a new "fad" toy is gearing up to hit the streets and stores in the fall. It's called "Yah-But" and sports a gunmetal color body and charcoal ears. Why the odd name? Well, how many times have you earnestly asked if something was possible, only to receive that dreaded reply: "Yah-But..." The eight-inch character's designers believe the critter is a cuddlier update of the pet rock. Is America ready for this little guy? Yah-But...

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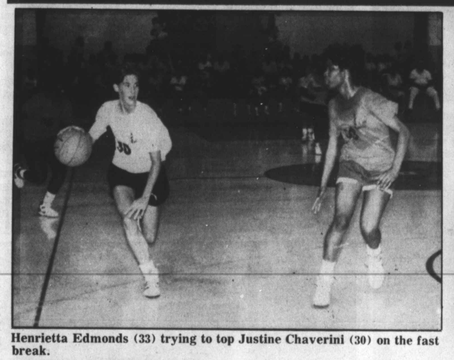
THAT a new PSA is slated for TV and radio. The spot features Jimmy Smits, a Hispanic and a leading actor on the weekly TV series "L.A. Law." The announcement advises individuals of their rights as employees to work free of discrimination on the basis of national origin or citizenship status. Smits also advises persons who feel they have been victims of such discrimination to call toll-free 1-(800)-255-7688.

METRO PROFILE

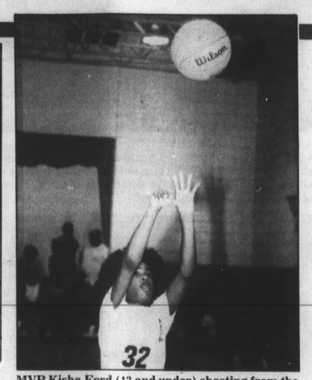
■ Community Living 2C
■ Kids Talk 4C

Summer leagues full of excitement

Baltimore Neighborhood Basketball League ends in flurry



Henrietta Edmonds (33) trying to top Justine Chaverini (30) on the fast break.

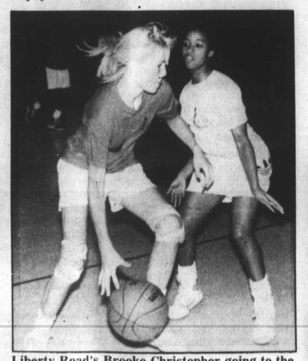


MVP Kisha Ford (13 and under) shooting from the free throw line.

Liberty Road 16 and under (left and right) Back Row: James Peters—Coach, Latonya Nixon, Brenda Mellerson, Dana Johnson. Front Row: Glenda Major, Sharowda Reid, La Keisha Gallman.

Dept. of Recreation and Parks recreation programmer, Charles Colaianni presenting MVP trophy to Dwuana Lee.

Flag House 16 and under champions. (Left to right) Back Row: Nia Jones, Asst. Coach, Samadhi Martin, Afriquah (Keya) Woods, Trevette Mitchell, Terray Martin, Jacqueline Shilkins, Wardell Selby, coach. Front Row: Tawanda Scott, Asst. Coach, Monica Daily, Tonya Harlee, Dana Chambers.



Liberty Road's Brooke Christopher going to the basket against John E. Howard's Erika Dailey.

By Fred Lindsey
AFRO Sportwriter

At the girls' BNBL finals, John E. Howard continued to build its reputation for fine basketball by winning both the 13 and 18 and under championships, Monday at Virginia Baker Recreation Cener. Flaghouse took the 16 and under title.

In the 13 and under game, after a later start, John E. Howard displayed and aggressiveness that carried them to a 28-20 victory over Liberty Road.

With the spendid all-around play of Kisha Ford and the floor leadership of Tina Faunteroy, John E. Howard took a half-time lead of 19-10. Ford had nine points in the first half.

Although the second half stared with an exchange of baskets, it was largely filled with turnovers before Kelly Evans made consecutive baskets to give John E. Howard a ten point lead at 25-15 with four minutes remaining in the game. Despite a late run by Liberty Road, John E. Howard held on for the win.

"Coming into the game, we felt very confident," said John E. Howard's coach Kevin Wiliams. "We had a very positve attitude, as well as two veteran players. Kisha and Kelly played last year, so we thought that we would do well."

"But," continues Williams, "we would like to give Liberty credit for their fine showing. They had people hurt and they still made a game of it down the stretch."

John E. Howard's Kisha Ford was named the MVP of the game. Sonia Chase was high scorer for Liberty Road with seven points.

The 16 and under game was far the most exciting of the evening. With two seconds remaining in the game, Jacqueline Shilkins caught a pass and shot a twelve foot turnaround jump shot that rolled in to give Flaghouse a come-from-behind 24-22 victory over Liberty Road.

It was a climatic end to a game that saw both teems through the ball away on numerous occasions, but fitting for Flaghouse who overcame a 14-5 halftime deficit to pull within striking distance aat the two minute mark of the late period, at 21-18, and staging a 4-1 run before Shilkins eventful shot.

Mistakes and turnovers hurt Liberty Road during crucial segments of the games and perhaps they missed Erica Herbert, who was home fighting a slight case of pneumonia, but for Flaghouse coach Wardell Selby the victory was one of complete satisfaction.

"From the beginning, I told the tirls that they were winners," Selby said. "Some of them are reserves on their varsity teams and I wanted to instill a measure of confidence in them and this victory is a major contribution to that."

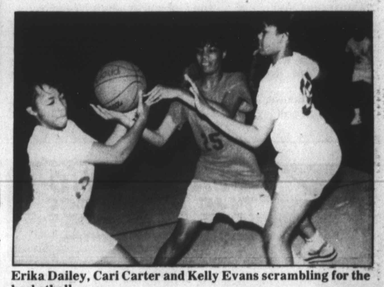
"I've been in the finals two or three times before," Selby adds, "but this is my first championship. The victory is also good for Flaghouse."

Flaghouse's Dana Chambers was selected the game's MVP.

The 18 and under gams was pretty much a hum-drum affair after John E. Howard easily defated Lieth Walk 37-26.

Outclassed from the opening tap, Leith Walk, with the exception of Henrietta Edmonds, played with little intensity and appeared to be losers before the game ended.

Dwuana (Daphne) Lee was the game's MVP, scoring 17 points, but the play of Rosemary Kosiorek and Justine Chaverini was significant to the victory.



Erika Dailey, Cari Carter and Kelly Evans scrambling for the basketball.

Photos By Paris Gray

Leith Walk 18 and under (left to right) Back Row: Patricia Gee, Anna Green, Dorothea McCoy, Adriane Gillis, Henrietta Edmonds, Roshea Goode, June Thomas—Coach. Front Row: Alicia Morgan, Kiah Stokes, Susan Buckson, Amy Conyers.

John E. Howard 13 and under champions. (Left to right) Back Row: Jeremiah Burroughs, Asst. Coach Kelly Evans, Tabitha Chambers, Kisha Ford, Nakia Downing, Danielle Davis, Kevin Williams, Coach. Front Row: Erika Dailey, Felicia Burroughs, Tina Fauntleroy, Kristen Brooks, Michaelle Mann.