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AMERICAN IDOLS Live in Diverse Neighborhoods



by Robert L. Woodard
The Wynnefield Barber

With all the negative news going on in the City of Brotherly Love, it was very refreshing to see the positive energy that entered this city via the *American Idol* tour.

Americans came together as neighbors and enjoyed the entertainment at the Tower Theatre on August 14th. My nephew, Michael J. Woodard, was part of the tour and I was proud to see him on stage giving an outstanding performance.

The Tower Theatre was packed with diverse cultures from around the world. Performers on this tour included Maddie Poppe, this year's *American Idol* winner; Caleb Lee Hutchinson, Gabby Barrett, Michael J. Woodard, Cade Foehner, Catie Turner and Season 8 winner Kris Allen. Each one of these performers made it an outstanding evening. Some of the best entertainers in the world started at the Tower Theatre. The World Renowned "Queen of Soul" Miss Aretha Franklin was one of them. I send my condolences to her family for their loss.

I can recall Mr. Georgie Woods, "The Guy with The Goods," discussing the highlights of the excellent performances held at the Tower and Uptown Theatres, where he introduced many rising stars. A prominent Philly DJ, Georgie Woods was well respected in the music industry for showcasing new talent.

Aretha Franklin was one of those performers and became one of the most well-known superstars in the world. I remember getting a phone call at my barbershop for Mr. Woods while I was cutting his hair. I asked who was calling and she said, 'Aretha.' Georgie took the call. He seemed a little upset when he hung up. His last words to the young lady, in a stern voice, were, 'You tell him to call me, now!' A few minutes later, a second call came in for Mr. Woods and again, I asked, 'Who's calling?' He said 'David.' Georgie took the receiver and responded quickly with a few very strong words. After his haircut, Georgie shared with me who was on the line on the two

calls. The first was Aretha Franklin and the second was David Ruffin, lead singer of *The Temptations*. I was totally shocked that The Queen of Soul called Woodard's Barbershop. I was equally shocked by the second caller.

Georgie Woods was like a father to many entertainers. He was a great problem-solver. He had a way of bringing people together to resolve their differences. Hence, our police and community must work as a team to become problem-solvers. This will help them aid each other in resolving dilemmas that permeate neighborhoods throughout our nation. The number of shootings and killings are at an all-time high. Communities along with police nationally must collaborate to make our world a better place. **Captain Javier Rodriguez** of the 25TH Police District is a team worker and practices ways to bring police and community together. His Precinct recently sponsored a Community Appreciation gathering to remind the neighborhood that police do care. Hats off to Captain Rodriguez for helping us build a better future by bringing police officers and the community together.

We, as Philadelphians, have to share our American Idols in every neighborhood. Our city encompasses people from a multitude of cultures and ethnicities who, together, can help solve our national and local problems. Remember, the goal is to share our differences and gain more understanding about one another. I appreciate the entertainers of the world-renowned *American Idol* organization. As a service, they share their love of entertainment, which brings all cultures together as "One Human Race." I believe that we as individuals can all become American Idols within our communities. That way, we as neighbors can learn to view "Race" as singular – the *human* race – and not plural. Take the "RACE Test" today for a better way at www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org. Remember, neighbors come in all shades, cultures, shapes and sizes. Being a "Good Neighbor" is the greatest title and service that any human being can have. **PRH**



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