

DETROIT

NATIVE SUN

Telford Telescope: Our National Action Network

Ambassador Cup to bring high performance Santa Cruz 70



Dr. John Telford
Sun Columnist

The Michigan Chapter of Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network meets every Saturday morning at 10 o'clock at the Greater King Solomon Baptist Church in the 4000 block of 14th Street in Detroit, two blocks southeast of 16th Street at McGraw, where I grew up in the 1930s and 40s.

This historic church where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X spoke in the 1960s is pastored by Rev. Charles Williams and his enterprising son Charles II, who is also the president of the National Action Network's progressive and effectively militant Michigan Chapter, whereof I have been a paid-up lifetime member for many a year--and where the aggressive street-petition-organizer and dynamic activist Sam Riddle co-chairs the Saturday morning N.A.N. meetings with the Rev. Dr. Charles Williams II--a bright young rising star who bridges the black church, public policy, social justice, and public health to advance equity in underserved communities through faith-rooted organizing, public scholarship, and community-based research.

What I like best about their co-chairmanship is that both Charles and Sam invariably encourage members Bill Davis, Helen Moore, Michelle George, Lory Parks, Aliya Moore, Mary Waters, me, and others to hold forth at the podium on our several and various activist endeavors (see me with expressively raised forefinger in the photo taken by new N.A.N. member Chris Connell).

Charles and Sam also give public officials and assorted (and sometimes opposing) political candidates an opportunity to address the N.A.N. membership. Recent visiting speakers were Detroit Public Schools Community District superintendent Nikolai Vitti, U.S. Senate candidates Abdul El

Sayid and Halie Stevens, State Senate candidate Toinu Reeves, and State Representative candidate Willie Burton. Along with the ACLU--on whose old Oakland County Board I served when I was unilaterally integrating the then-98 percent white Rochester schools' instructional and administrative staff when I was the embattled deputy superintendent there throughout the stormy 1980s and early 1990s, N.A.N. under the leadership of Dr. Charles Williams and Sam Riddle has become one of the two most powerful civil rights organizations in Michigan--and every ounce of that power is sorely needed now in this nightmarishly corrupt and Hitlerian Trump era.

A world-ranked sprinter at WSU in the 1950s, John Telford coached city and state track champions during the 1960s and again during the 1990s in the Detroit Public Schools, where he served as the superintendent in 2012/2013. Read his monthly Poet's Corner column in the Detroit Monitor, and hear him on WCHB AM1340 Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.--plus all week 24/7 on DETipTV.com. Contact him at (313)460-8272 or email at DrJohnTelfordEdD@aol.com. His books can be ordered at amazon.com.

Racing to Detroit's Riverfront

DETROIT, Mich. — The Detroit River will become the stage for an exciting weekend of high performance sailing as the Ambassador Cup Santa Cruz 70 Regatta comes to downtown Detroit August 28-30, 2026.

Free and open to the public, the Ambassador Cup brings Santa Cruz 70 racing directly offshore from the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, transforming the Detroit Riverwalk into a front row seat for elite yacht racing. Spectators will witness tactical mark roundings, close finishes, and the teamwork required to compete aboard these powerful 70 foot racing yachts, all against the backdrop of the Detroit skyline.

Visitors are encouraged to save the date, explore the full weekend schedule, and sign up for event updates at www.ambassadorcup.com, where they'll also find information on sponsorship opportunities, volunteering, and the Port Detroit Sailing Village.

Born from a friendly match race between two Santa Cruz 70 crews on the Detroit River, the Ambassador Cup continues to celebrate the camaraderie, sportsmanship, and Corinthian spirit of Great Lakes sailing while opening the sport to a broader audience through a spectator-focused experience.

"The Ambassador Cup has always been about bringing sailors together," said Kent Colpaert, Founder and CEO of Detroit Charter Company. "Today, it's also about bringing Detroit to the water. We want people to experience the excitement of competitive sailing while discovering everything our waterfront and maritime community have to offer."

A Regatta Designed for Spectators
Unlike many sailing regattas where the racing takes place miles offshore, the Am-

bassador Cup is intentionally designed to keep the competition close to shore.

Throughout Saturday and Sunday, spectators will enjoy multiple races featuring tactical boat handling, close competition, and dramatic finishes visible from the Detroit Riverwalk and Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority.

Whether you're an experienced sailor or seeing the sport for the first time, the Ambassador Cup offers an exciting opportunity to experience competitive sailing from a unique perspective.

Port Detroit Sailing Village

Located at the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, the Port Detroit Sailing Village serves as the public gathering place throughout race weekend.

Visitors can connect with sailing organizations, explore sponsor exhibits, learn about Detroit's maritime history, and engage with community partners dedicated to expanding access to the sport.

The Ambassador Cup proudly partners with organizations including the Detroit Community Sailing Center and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan, reinforcing its commitment to making sailing more accessible to youth and families throughout the region.

Through educational programming, community outreach, and interactive experiences, the event offers opportunities for visitors to discover sailing while celebrating Detroit's unique relationship with the river.

"The racing may be what brings people to the waterfront," Colpaert said, "but our mission is much bigger. We want to introduce more people to sailing, inspire the next generation, and activate Detroit's waterfront in ways that strengthen our maritime community."

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