

# Charlie Smith: the oldest man

BARTOW, Fla. (AP) — Charlie Smith stared warily at the microphone propped in front of him and began speaking into the tape recorder.

"I am the oldest person alive, no question of it," he said. "I have crossed the sandy desert and I knew Jesse James."

Smith, who claims to be 130 years old, was being interviewed by a representative of the Martin Luther King Center of Boston University. The center has decided to record and photograph Smith for his unique contribution to black history.

"Smith has personally lived through a vast sweep of American history," said Kenneth Edison, who is staying in Tampa while recording Smith for the center's oral history division.

Charlie claims to remember a distant summer 118 years ago. He was a boy of 12 on the coast of Liberia.

"I was playing on the beach," he said, staring directly ahead in the shadowy

room. "There was a boat tied at the dock, all gaily colored and what. My mother, she was making lard from fat, so we kids went up to the boat. This man came up and said there was 'fritter trees' on the boat."

"So some of us kids went on board and down into the bottom of the boat and there were fritters, with syrup all over them, hanging from this tree on the table. The man told us there were fritter trees all over America. When we went back up to the top of the ship we were out in the middle of the ocean. I never saw my mama again."

The slave ship arrived in New Orleans the first week in July and Smith was soon on the auction block. His real name was M'icha, but a Texas rancher called Charlie Smith gave him his name when he bought him.

Growing up near what is now the Great King Ranch near Galveston, Charlie recalled learning the ways of the cowpuncher. He remained on the ranch the year he

turned 21 when President Lincoln freed the slaves.

"I didn't need to be freed. I'd been treated like a white man all my life." He would stay on until the rancher died a few years later.

The next quarter of a century comes in the hazy swirls of memory belonging to the old man sitting alone on the sofa.

Charlie tells of traversing the great Southwest during the stormy days of the Civil War and claims to have known one of the more notorious men of the time, Jesse James.

"I knew all of the James boys," he says. "It was James who taught me how to shoot."

A Social Security worker found him high in a tree, picking oranges at the age of 115.

The agency ran a check for months and finally found reliable documents in New Orleans confirming his sale into slavery and also found papers in Texas that matched.



Photo by the Associated Press

Charlie Smith ... 130 years old

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- Congratulations! You have created a genuine full color portrait of someone you know and love. Maybe, if he is not your favorite presidential candidate, have patience. You'll see your favorite next in the Flair Election Collection! (Don't forget to ask about Flair's running mate, the Flair Hot Liner.)

## Griffith fund established

A new scholarship fund, to be known as the Cameron John Griffith (Class of 1931) Memorial Scholarship Fund, has been established for the benefit of students at the Altoona campus of the University.

The fund, established by Mrs. L. C. Griffith, of Midwest City, Okla., in memory of her husband, provides for an annual scholarship of \$200. Contributions to augment the original fund of \$2,900 may be

made by alumni, student organizations, friends, businesses, or any other interested individuals or groups.

Preference in awarding the scholarships will be given to candidates who are graduates of the Hollidaysburg High School who have been offered admission as full-time freshman associate degree or baccalaureate degree students at the Altoona campus.

## Jazz Club free to have better concerts this year

By RICK SCHWARTZ  
Collegian Staff Writer

Their hands have been tied until this year, but now they are going to shine. This is how Abbey Konowitch, president of the Jazz Club, described this year's membership prospects.

Konowitch maintained the Jazz Club has not been particularly strong recently due to a directive by the University Concert Committee which states that individual organizations may only spend up to \$1,000 for any one concert. Konowitch said a good jazz group could cost anywhere from \$1,200 to \$2,000. As a result, the Jazz

Club had no concerts last year, although they did sponsor the Bonnie Raitt appearance.

This year will be different. Konowitch said: "People who are really interested in jazz should get in the club." Konowitch said he has gotten approval to go over that \$1,000 limit with approval of the concert committee. In fact, the first concert the club is planning will go over that amount. The group is Weather Report which he described as "an impressive jazz group."

Konowitch is also planning a major reorganization of the club. There were 150 members last year, this year he is shooting for 500 members. He said, "300 or 400 members is operable."

Other reasons Konowitch cited for joining? "We will have at least one major jazz concert per term and one blues concert per year. Members will get a sizable discount on tickets," he said. An example of this is the Weather Report concert. Non-members will pay \$2.50, while members pay only \$1.50.

Members will also have access to the Jazz Club record collection in the HUB, which contains over 150 "up-to-date" albums, according to Konowitch.

Primarily though, Konowitch stressed the activeness of the Jazz Club this year "depends on the support we get from the students, and the type of students we get."

He said, "We are assuming there is a sizable jazz population at Penn State. A lot of them play instruments but want to see someone they're interested in."

Konowitch said he feels a strong club could promote closer-knit activities like jamming together and could work at getting music listening rooms and lecturers. He would also like to see more of an experiment the club had last year with various quadrophonic equipment.

Last year, Konowitch said, most of the jazz club's money was used for loans to the Folklore Society and then was returned.

This year Konowitch plans on "high quality concerts" and none of the inactivity of last year which he feels caused many members to become disillusioned. He stresses, however, that it will largely be up to the quality of the member who joins this year and that member's desire to see a working club.

### Correction

The Daily Collegian incorrectly reported Thursday in a check-cashing chart that McLanahan's, 414 E. College Avenue, does not cash two-party checks. In fact, McLanahan's does cash two-party checks from the parents of the cashier.

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**IMPORTANT ATTENTION NOTICE ATTENTION**

Student treasurer's and/or advisors of the following organizations are requested to attend a meeting with personnel of the Office of Student Activities to hear the new format in accounting for University allocated funds.

**Tuesday, October 3**

<p>7 p.m. Room 202 HUB Atherton Hall Centre Hall East Hall Pollock-Nittany Hall North Hall South Hall South Hall Chapel Choir Glee Club University Swingers</p>	<p>8 p.m. Room 216 HUB Womens Liberation Womens Recreation Assoc. Sports Cluster Free University Veterans Organization Alpha Phi Omega Gamma Sigma Sigma P.S. Amateur Radio P.S. Folklore Society P.S. Players Keystone Society</p>	<p>7 p.m. Room 202 HUB USG ARHS OTIS AWS Pan Hel IFC UUB GSA</p>	<p>8 p.m. Room 202 HUB Student Councils Agriculture Arts &amp; Arch. Business Administ Earth &amp; Mineral Education Human Development Liberal Arts Science</p>
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