

THE ADAMS REPORT

Fashion, Beauty & Stuff

By Audrey Adams



Audrey Adams

The 'A' word

dry skin problems either. You may be reluctant to do anything about it, but flaky skin is unattractive on anyone. If you like feeling soft skin, you can bet she does too. Go for it!

Before you do *anything* remotely cosmetic, check with your dermatologist or doctor. Sometimes skin problems are the result of food allergies or contact dermatitis or indicate other, more serious medical problems. Only your medical provider knows the true difference between just plain old ashy skin and a serious rash that may benefit from medical attention.

I know that you don't want to hear this next suggestion, but it works: Your skin needs to be hydrated, and the best hydrator in the world is water. So drink plenty of water and again, check with your doctor to see how many glasses he/she recommends that you drink each day. Soda doesn't count, nor does the water in your coffee or tea. Plain old water is fine. Water helps flush your system and remove toxins from your body, as well as keeping your skin moist so it maintains elasticity.

This may sound like a silly question, but are you using a lotion or water-soluble body oil after you bathe? A good soothing lotion or oil will help to seal in the moisture, and besides it just feels great on your skin. If you're allergic to fragrance, look for a fragrance-free lotion for sensitive skin. Years ago, I remember dropping a closed jar of Vaseline into my hot bath so that I could experience "Vaseline La-Hot." I loved massaging the warm melted petroleum jelly into my skin and the feeling of a

smooth satiny softness.

Remember the snake I mentioned earlier? Well, molting is what I would call the ultimate exfoliation process, but you can exfoliate as well. There are several inexpensive products you can buy off the shelf to easily remove dry skin, from salt scrubs to exfoliating lotions and creams. My favorite way to exfoliate gently is to combine baking soda with a gentle lotion-type cleanser. It's great for your entire body, doesn't scratch your skin, and washes down the shower drain easily. You can use a soft wash cloth to gently rub the dry skin away. Remember, your skin is a very delicate organ and does not appreciate being scrubbed too hard. And don't forget those elbows and knees they need love, too. Summer follows spring, so if you want your skin to look good in those muscle-man tees, swim trunks, sleeveless tops, shorts and miniskirts, you'll want glowing, ash-free skin. It's possible if you start now. Think about it. See ya next week.

Visit my website, TalkWithAudrey.com and check out my online radio and TV show, *Talk! with Audrey* for a series of interviews that will inform, motivate and inspire you.

Audrey Adams, former director of corporate public relations and fashion merchandising for ESSENCE continues to motivate and inspire women through her syndicated columns and motivational speaking engagements.

All around the country we've had strange weather patterns. I can remember always being able to count on running to Los Angeles to bask in the omnipresent sunshine and warm Santa Ana breezes whenever I wanted to escape New York's snow and freezing temperatures. Now I find that more often than not, I need my winter coat in Los Angeles and that New York temperatures are warmer than in sunny southern California.

But have faith! Regardless of the type of weather we are experiencing, spring is on the way! Have the changing climates reeked havoc on your skin? Perhaps you're beginning to notice that your skin is dry, itchy and flaking. You know that beneath the dryness is a brighter more beautiful layer of skin, but you just can't get to it! It's covered by a thin later of-and yes I'm going to say it-ASH!

If you were a snake, you could count on crawling out of your skin in the spring, but alas, that's not an option for us. So what can you do to improve the look and feel of your skin?

All you men out there listen up! These tips aren't just for women; you're not immune to



Krystal Joy Brown

LOVING IT!

Diana Ross rejuvenated

By Tony Felton

Breaking box-office records on Broadway, *Motown The Musical*, just days shy of its one year celebration at the Lunt-Fontanne Theater, has a new leading lady: Krystal Joy Brown. Most performers in bio-musicals only have to fill 'two' shoes. Miss Brown has 'four' (actually six) to conquer. For not only has she the challenging task of portraying one of the most iconic living legends of all time, Supreme Diva Diana Ross, she now must establish her own identity, distancing herself from the Tony nominated, jaw-dropping performance of the ill-fated Miss Valisia LeKae. And surprisingly (get ready), she has never seen Miss Ross nor Miss LeKae perform live.

"No, I haven't," Brown chuckles. "But I did do my research. I read Miss Ross' self written bio. I read Berry Gordy's book. I even read (original Supreme member) Mary Wilson's book to get a different perspective on Miss Ross' life. I've watched her performances on Youtube. I've seen both shows at Central Park. The Vegas shows. And as you can see, my dressing room is adorned with pictures of her as a Supreme and as a single performer."

Indeed, her dressing room is surrounded by a plethora of black & white/silver framed photographs of not only Diana Ross, The Supremes, but, distinctively also of two other "artiste noire": Josephine Baker and Lena Horne. A tribute to those who came 'before.' Lifting the word of gratitude to another level. Thanking God and all of the civil rights workers who helped make the ca-

reers of Diana Ross and The Supremes, Miss LeKae, and now Miss Brown just a little bit easier to be achieved.

A veteran of the Broadway stage with songwriting skills to her credit, Miss Brown reflects on her Motown connection. "I grew up listening to Motown music! I can remember in our house at Christmas time, listening to the Supremes' Christmas album. And for as long as I can remember, I have been told that I look like Diana Ross. That my mouth is like hers. She and I share in wanting to be the best entertainers we can be. We love our audience. Miss Ross is a perfectionist. She loves to please her fans. And for me, to be a leading lady on Broadway is something that I have always dreamed of. Ever since I saw my first Broadway show, *Chicago*, I've wanted to do this. To be on stage, singing. To be part of the story telling process. I love it!"

Motown: its story of 'Rags to Riches' has been told over and over and over by those on the inside and out. Its founder, Berry Gordy, Jr., failing in every job he undertook growing up in Detroit, Michigan, started a record company with an eight hundred dollar loan from the entrepreneurially minded, close knitted Gordy family. He modeled his company after the metamorphic process of the making an automobile in America. Taking young, raw, talented singers, songwriters and producers 'entering' as caterpillars, then transforming them into beautiful butterflies; enabling them to soar to even greater heights that only dreams are made of.

Motown The Musical is a stirring, eye-popping, seat rocking look into

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Is integration racist?

By Amadi Ajamu

Equality for African people in the United States remains illusive. The post slavery century of "separate but equal" Jim Crow laws never delivered the 'equal' part. The civil rights movement was a struggle for equality. We paid our taxes and we demanded political and economic equality. Equal access to vital resources for our children's education was the spark that lit the fire.

"When Mr. Oliver Brown's law suit against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas [decided in 1954], his complaint rested on the inequality of resources provided to black schools compared to white schools. He demanded the same quantity of funding for books, desks, building maintenance, and the like," explained Viola Plummer at the opening of a Black History Month series of forums held at Sistat's Place in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn themed "Integration is Racist".

"Some how Brown's very fundamental and basic demand for equality was calculatedly trans-

lated in a US Supreme Court hoodwink as 'integration'. After which we witnessed our children escorted to school by heavily armed national guards and terrorized by mobs of rabid, racist, and ignorant whites. We witnessed our children bused to white neighborhoods, isolated and alone in hostile and dangerous territories. Schools in our community deteriorated. More and more conscious black teachers were replaced by whites who had no respect for our history, culture, or community. These conditions persist today in every aspect of our social, political, and economic conditions under the guise of integration."

Case in point, recent news reports have focused on Ms. Calderon, a technology teacher at PS 201 in Flushing, Queens, who gave her fourth grade class a black history month assignment. She told the children to write about a black leader of their choice. Nine year old Eliakim Brown decided to write about Malcolm X. Calderon told him he could not, declaring Malcolm X "did it the bad way," and told him to write about Martin

Luther King, Jr. instead. Calderon told another child in the class who wanted to write on Malcolm X, "No, Malcolm X was violent."

Both children told their parents who immediately complained to the school administrators about the "banning" of Malcolm X and a series of intense meetings with the school and the NYC Department of Education [DOE] have ensued. Parents, Frank and Cleatress Brown and Angela Minor are mobilizing other parents, demanding an immediate change to the DOE curriculum to include a comprehensive African history component including the works of renown historian, Dr. Molefi Kete Asante.

On the issue of Black businesses, political activist and radio personality Bob Law, led a forum focusing on Communal Economics. "Integration, like multicultural and diversity, is presented as a good idea. But those ideas in a political context, in a cultural context, are anti-black and leads to a decline in so many other conditions in the community. The way integration

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14 NYS to preserve \$457M in SNAP benefits for 300,000 households

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Assistance Program (HEAP) benefit of SNAP recipients in

certain living situations for whom heat is included in the rent. By receiving the higher HEAP benefit, these households

will remain eligible for the highest SNAP allowance for their energy costs, which enables them to continue receiving

SNAP benefits at the level for which they are currently eligible.

“By negating the impact of these harsh cuts to maintain SNAP benefit levels, we are taking action to preserve vital nutrition assistance that makes a real difference in the lives of so many low-income households in New York State, including senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, children and low-income workers,” said OTDA Commissioner Kristin M. Proud.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand said, “I want to thank Governor Cuomo for ensuring New York families are not punished by the Farm Bill. This is a heroic step to stave off hunger in New York. I hope other Governors in heat and eat states will follow his strong leadership.”

Dr. John Ruskay, executive vice president and CEO, UJA Federation of New York said, “We applaud the Governor’s bold action to make certain that essential support for food will be preserved for the men, women and children of our state.”

The Hunger Action Network of NYS thanked Governor Cuomo for agreeing to allocate

\$6 million in federal heating assistance (LIHEAP) funds to protect 300,000 households against a loss of more than \$1,500 a year in SNAP cuts (food stamp benefits). NYS recently received more than \$50 million in extra funds from the federal government for HEAP.

“This was a wise investment for NY residents and the local economy. By reallocating \$6 million in federal funds for LIHEAP, state residents - and state food merchants - will see an extra \$450 million to purchase food,” said Mark Dunlea, executive director of the Hunger Action Network of NYS.

The so-called Eat-or-Heat changes were made as part of the federal farm bill. Dunlea said that he expects challenges to this program will continue in the future.

More difficult to replace will be the more than \$300 million in food benefits lost when across the board cuts were made in the SNAP program on November 1. Hunger Action Network has been calling upon the Governor to re-allocate part of the \$1.3 billion federal welfare surplus (e.g., TANF Block grant) to support a state food supplement for SNAP participants.

Michelle Obama hails investments in healthier out-of-school programs

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and physical activity, we are investing in our future and generations to come.”

As part of this commitment:

- BGCA will adopt healthy guidelines in 3,400 clubs, reaching an estimated 3.5 million kids.
- NRPA will adopt healthy guidelines in 2,000 sites, reaching an estimated 1.5 million kids.
- BGCA and NRPA will aim to meet standards of serving

healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables, serving only healthy beverages like water and 100% juice, and provide nutrition education, encourage physical activity, and engage parents by using informational material and activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity.

- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation will provide the technical assistance and support to BGCA and NRPA to implement the new healthy guidelines.

“What we know is that active kids do better—in school and in life,” said PHA CEO Lawrence A. Soler.

“Today’s commitments are another big step forward in getting our kids into more healthier environments throughout their day. I am so pleased to welcome NRPA and BGCA—two organizations that are absolutely critical to the communities, families and kids they serve—into the PHA family.”

President Obama is trying to add substance to Black male initiative

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ties, challenges, and efforts affecting boys and young men of color and

Recommend to the president means of ensuring sustained efforts within the Federal Government and continued partnership with the private sector and philanthropic community as set forth in the Presidential Memorandum.

Flanked by students from Being a Man (BAM), a Chicago-based program that teaches discipline, conflict resolution and offers mentoring, the president shared details of his life that all too-often mirror the experiences of young men of color.

“I didn’t have a dad in the house,” said President Obama. “And I was angry about it, even

though I didn’t necessarily realize it at the time. I made bad choices. I got high without always thinking about the harm that it could do. I didn’t always take school as seriously as I should have. I made excuses. Sometimes I sold myself short.”

The president shared that he “grew up in an environment that was a little bit more forgiving” and that he relied on a support network of family, teachers and community leaders that many young Black men don’t have access to.

The president called on dozens of business leaders, nonprofit organizations and corporations to invest in and offer support for the initiative. The foundations pledged to invest \$200 million over the next five years to lift up programs that are proven to work.

The president was joined by representatives of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The California Endowment, The Ford Foundation, The John and James L. Knight Foundation, The Open Society Foundations, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and The Kapur Center for Social Impact.

“From the White House, the president has been able to shine a light on issues that some of us have been working to address for decades,” said Shawn Dove, the manager for the Campaign for Black Male Achievement at the Open Societies Institute “It’s a clarion call for collaboration and to handle some of America’s unfinished business.”

Another arsenal of lies from the NY Post

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and the maintenance, the affordability of her apartment as well as the ongoing service provided to she and her family by GHHDC.

The reporters state that the 13 buildings managed by the organization have accumulated 650 violations, but they don’t specify the time period in which these violations occurred, nor what kind of violations they were, or that the vast majority of them have been taken care of many years ago.

What readers have to understand is that GHHDC is one of the last locally based non-profit institutions standing who has sustained a welter of economic setbacks that have virtually eliminated all but a few community-based organizations that accepted property from the city with hopes of developing affordable housing.

One thing GHHDC has relied on from its inception are re-

sourceful senior consultants such as Charles Powell, who has coordinated countless social and economic relations for the organization and other community institutions. “GHHDC is now pleased to be working in a very positive partnership with the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and Community Board #10 to assure that not only are there good and affordable apartments, but that we continue to make sure that quality affordable housing is made available in Harlem to reduce the ongoing onslaught of gentrification in our community,” he said. “Over the past two years, our excellent and ever growing working relationship with HPD is providing light at the end of the tunnel for our efforts to maintain quality affordable housing and to properly service our tenants.”

If there remains a violation, a stain on the good works at GHHDC it comes from the New York Post and while many of the leaders assailed by the iniquitous press have

reserved their comments righteously and rightfully believing that at the end of the day, “truth needs no defense,” we of the Black press, in the Black media feel it’s our duty to address these scurrilous insinuations, the bevy of lies that serve to undermine the coalition of communities that is at the heart of GHHDC.

The *Post* is a major player in a malicious pattern to destroy the galvanizing of the Black and Latino communities, and the timing of this current attack is clearly one to disrupt the conviviality and assembly many of us cherish and look forward to during Black History Month.

What the enemy of our people has to understand is that their opposition only stiffens the resolve of the Black press, and this recent attack is nothing more than another wake up call, alerting us of the need to be ever vigilant, to keep our pens poised and our powder dry because, remember, those who come for me in the morning will come for you at night.

Diana Ross rejuvenated

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Mr. Gordy’s vision. The narrative journey takes us through his inspiring recollections of the victorious Joe Louis’ world changing championship fight over Max Schmeling, to his writing songs for the flamboyant Jackie Wilson (*To Be Loved*), to his creation of Motown Records. Churning out a mind-boggling, head-shaking catalog of songs, singers, songwriters, and producers that will never, ever be rivaled again. His love for the business was punctuated by his love affair with the vociferously talented Diana Ross. Transforming her from a skinny, wide mouthed, big-eyed teenager to the Supreme of all divas who went on to make Oscar nominated movies, record breaking live concerts and television extravaganzas that has spanned for over five decades!

And now, Miss Brown is asked to fill the ruby slippers: “I am so blessed to be a part of the Motown history. Music that transcends color. All through the civil rights movement, Motown music was there affecting the lives of the young and old. It helped to change the world. What an honor and a thrill to play the role of Diana Ross. Usually, on Broadway, when a performer comes in to replace the original actor, they are asked to mimic every movement, every gesture. But our director (Charles Randolph-Wright) gave me the freedom to make the role my own. Of course I heard about Valisia’s performance. But having never seen her do it, it wasn’t hard for me to portray Miss Ross as I see her. To put my own stamp on it. I wanted to make her more human. I didn’t want people to see her just as a diva. She drops the ‘F’ word in the show. I did the same when I found out that I got the role. ‘No need to be concerned about tak-

ing new head shots,’ my agents told me, as I tried to interpret their ‘Oh, no. Something is wrong,’ tone. The next thing I heard was, ‘Because you got the role of Diana Ross on Broadway.’ I freaked out!”

Krystal Joy Brown is from D.C. Diana Ross, of course, is from Detroit. Brown adorns a small tattoo on her left arm. Ross does not. Miss Brown offered me water and help with my jacket. Ross gave me a very warm greeting when I ran into her on Madison Avenue in New York. Brown is a vegetarian (apologetically confessing) with a little salmon thrown in on occasion. Ross loves eating steak. Ross married a billionaire. Brown dreams. “I wish that I had her bank account so that I could do the things I want to do for child care. If I wasn’t in show business I would do something like social work.” Ross has five children. Brown dreams of a family. Brown is a novelist (*A Young Girl’s Guide To Dealing With The Devil/Entanglements with New York, Sex, Drugs, And Rock & Roll*). Ross penned her autobiography. Miss Ross prepares for performances by encouraging herself with positive confessions. Miss Brown vocalizes, drinks a honey concoction and prays. Diane Ross performs as DIANA ROSS. Before every performance of Motown The Musical, the cast parts the ‘seas’ for Miss Brown to walk; where she goes to a corner to be alone. The end result: two beautiful ‘artiste noire’ who love to connect with their audiences.

“I do,” Miss Brown beams. “I love to perform! I love the creative process of this business! The Motown Mom and her family (from *The Today Show*) came to see the show. I got to sing ‘Reach Out And Touch’ with the mother. We took pictures on stage after the show. Berry Gordy was there! We hugged. We kissed. It was wonderful! All of this has been so wonderful! I love it! I really do!”