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THE CAPITAL RALLIES



Glenn Beck speaks at the "Restoring Honor" rally at the Lincoln Memorial.



Differing dreams

- Beck declares nation is turning 'back to God'
- Critics say commentator co-opts MLK at speech site

BY JENNIFER SMITH
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WASHINGTON — Stirred by patriotism, faith and the deeply-held conviction that the United States has lost its way, tens of thousands rallied yesterday at the Lincoln Memorial for an event organized by conservative commentator Glenn Beck.

Beck and speakers such as Sarah Palin, joined by a multicultural slate of religious leaders and veterans, called fervently on followers who packed the Mall, asking them to return to traditional values.

"America today begins to turn back to God," Beck told the roaring crowd in a sermon-like speech that touched on Moses, Native Americans and the religious dissidents who settled the country. "For too long this country has wandered in darkness . . . We once again say may God bless America, may it be one nation, under God, in Christ's name, amen."

Thousands from a different end of the political spectrum also marched in the Capitol later in the day to commemorate the 47th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have

a dream" speech — a moment the Rev. Al Sharpton and some civil rights leaders said they felt had been co-opted by the Beck event, held on the same steps where King spoke in 1963.

"On these grounds where we are so honored to stand today, we feel the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King," Palin, the former Alaska governor and vice-presidential candidate told the Beck rally, adding she spoke in her role as "the mother of a soldier."

Organizers of the Beck rally had been accused of insensitivity in selecting the MLK anniversary — a date they in turn described as a coincidence, though appropriate given their message of unity. Those at the King rally were largely African-American. The Beck rally drew a predominantly white crowd, though a number of speakers and performers were black.

Billed as an apolitical day to honor U.S. troops and chart a return to the nation's founding principles, the event drew throngs of people, many energized by the tea party movement.

At least 200 supporters from Long Island attended the event, according to organizers of the Suffolk 9-12 Project, an offshoot



The Rev. Al Sharpton, flanked by my civic and political leaders, marches in downtown Washington after Glenn Beck's rally.



Al Borrelli of Sound Beach was among the Suffolk 9-12 members at Beck's rally.



Kevin McManus, of Setauket, attended the rally with his 17-year-old son Liam.

of a movement Beck launched last year to rally citizens around family, religious faith and loyalty to the Constitution.

Many who attended said they came to feel fellowship

with thousands of like-minded people and to show their support for members of the military. "I didn't come here to express hate for my government, but to express love for

Back on track? Too early to tell

BY MATTHEW CHAYES
AND KEITH HERBERT
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Long Island Rail Road passengers will know by late today whether train service tomorrow — the start of another workweek — will return to normal, an LIRR spokesman said, after an electrical fire last Monday at the Jamaica station caused days of commuter angst with cancellation of trains, delays and other service disruptions.

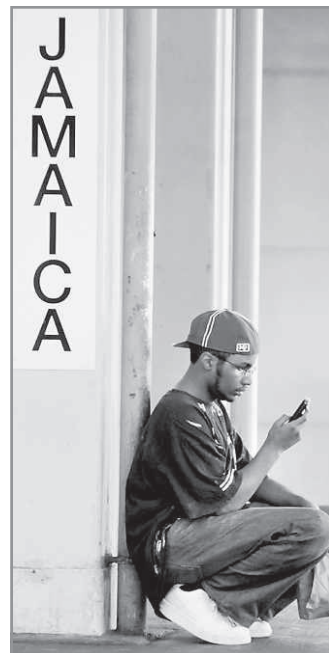
“We’re not making any decision about Monday until Sunday,” spokesman Salvatore Arena said, later adding, “Our goal is full service.”

He said LIRR workers were about halfway through testing procedures undertaken to make certain no wiring remains damaged by the electrical fire that knocked out the crucial station’s switching system.

About half of 300 separate tests involving routes and switch operating had been completed as of yesterday evening.

Work on the wire testing was expected to continue around the clock, and LIRR customers should be prepared for a “modified” schedule for tomorrow’s morning rush, Arena said.

“In terms of repair work, they’re testing each and every switch to see that the [electrical] connection is made,”



NEWSDAY PHOTO / DANIELLE FINKELSTEIN

A commuter waits at Jamaica station yesterday.

Arena said.

Schedule updates are on the LIRR’s website, mta.info/lirr.

Yesterday at the Jamaica station, where the less-frequent weekend trains were running mostly on time, riders said they were girding for the worst if tomorrow’s train service doesn’t return to normal.

“The commute already is horrible. It’s just going to be worse,” said Matthew Washington, 34, of Bensonhurst as he

waited to take a train to Ronkonkoma. “People are going to be upset and complaining.”

Huntington’s Michelle Cuthbertson, 43, who was returning from a trip to Ireland with her children Hunter, 11, Elizabeth, 9, Aidan, 7, and husband Mark, 44, a Huntington councilman, said the delays are coming at perhaps the worst time for parents who want to take the train with their kids the week before school starts.

“There’s nothing worse than waiting with your children” because of train delays, she said.

“That’s true!” Hunter added.

At the LIRR stop in Farmingdale, day-care provider Kimberly Decicco, 38, of Bay Shore, said she worries that continued delays could mean she loses her job.

“If I’m even five minutes late it’s a problem,” said Decicco, explaining that if she’s late the mother of the children she cares for has to wait and be late to her own job. This domino effect, she said, made her stay home Thursday because she feared that the delays would cause another day of lateness.

Last week, repairs to the fire-damaged switching system forced cancellation of about 25 percent of trains during daily morning-rush periods and 32 to 34 percent of evening-rush trains daily.

With Yamiche Alcindor



AP PHOTO

in D.C.

one nation under God,” said Al Borrelli of Sound Beach, visibly moved by the event.

Still, a number aired frustrations with the Obama administration and political leaders in both major parties. They said they yearned for a return to personal responsibility and more limited government.

“When people say what they say, they have to mean what they say and follow through,” said Kevin McManus, 44, a Suffolk 9-12 organizer from Setauket, who attended with son Liam, 17. “We want to bring that back into Washington, bring that home.”

As the Beck event wound down, Sharpton supporters gathered nearby at the future site of the King Memorial, awaiting marchers who walked the five miles from the city’s Dunbar High School. Chanting and carrying signs emblazoned with King’s image, they shouted their support for President Barack Obama. At times verbal spats broke out between lingering people in tea party shirts and Sharpton’s group.

Still, Debbie Sawyer, 52, of Suffolk, Va., said she didn’t resent the Beck followers massed at the Lincoln Memorial. King’s message, she said, was big enough to share. “If we don’t embrace one another, we’re going to break this country down internally,” Sawyer said. “We have to come together sooner or later.”



This is a day that we can start the heart of America again . . . It has nothing to do with politics. It has everything to do with God. Everything [to do with] turning our face back to the values and the principles that made us great.



— Glenn Beck

It is so humbling to get to be here with you today, patriots — you who are motivated and engaged and concerned, knowing to never retreat.



— Sarah Palin

People are clear in what Dr. King’s dream was about, and we will not react to those who try to distort that dream. — The Rev. Al Sharpton



MAN WHO FORGAVE ROBBER DIES

Mohammed Sohail, a Shirley convenience store owner who gave a robber \$40 and a loaf of bread (shown holding a \$50 bill later sent anonymously with a letter of apology), has died at age 48.

OBITUARY on A32

NOW ONLINE
Our videos on the Sohail story at newsday.com

FILE PHOTO BY JAMES CARBONE