

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone



Theatre Returns to New Orleans

Page 8

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The Soul of New Orleans

Remembering Coretta Scott King

1927-2006

Page 2



Newsmaker



One on One with Oliver Thomas

Page 4

Inside Data



Death of a Neighborhood

Page 15

COVER STORY

Remembering Coretta Scott King

By. Marian Wright Edelman



Dignified, elegant, refined, courageous, strong. For more than 50 years these words were used to describe Coretta Scott King—human rights and peace activist, the wife and partner of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the “First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement.” We are hearing them one more time as people around the world mourn her passing. Coretta Scott King was a good, strong woman and keeper of the dream that was Dr. King’s and America’s dream. She stood by his side through

thick and thin and fought tirelessly to keep his legacy alive.

Coretta King said that even as a child, she felt she was going to lead an extraordinary life. Many people might not have expected that from a little Black girl who grew up in very rural Alabama during the Depression, picking cotton and walking several miles each way every day to attend a segregated one-room school. But from the start, she was exceptional. She attended a semi-private high school in Marion, Ala., where she, a gifted young musician, was able to study

piano and voice and graduated valedictorian of her class. She got a chance to leave the segregated South when she won a scholarship to join her older sister as one of the few Black students at Antioch College in Ohio.

Coretta King was already politically active. She joined the college’s NAACP chapter and Race Relations and Civil Liberties committees, and was a delegate to the founding convention of the Young Progressives organization. She first majored in early education but was inspired to change her plans after she sang on a program

Continued next page.

INSIDE DATA

**Cover
Story**
page 2
Newsmaker
page 4

**State & Local
News**
page 5
National News
page 6
Data Zone
page 8

Health
page 11
Opinion
page 12
Special Report
page 15

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Continued from previous page.

with Paul Robeson at an NAACP event. He encouraged her to study voice full-time and she dreamed of having a career like his that combined music performance with social activism. After college she pursued that dream with a scholarship to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where a friend set her up on a date with a theology doctoral student at Boston University named Martin Luther King, Jr.

Coretta King wrote that at first she was reluctant to get married because she knew it would change her career dreams. As it turned out, of course, becoming that young minister's wife gave her the opportunity to serve on an entirely different national and world stage. Less than three years into their marriage, Dr. King was thrust into the national spotlight with the Montgomery bus boycott. Her own activism and deep commitment to civil rights made her an ideal partner as he became the international symbol for the Civil Rights Movement. She often took on a behind-the-scenes role, staying at home with their four children while Dr. King traveled as a public leader. But in the most important battles of the Civil Rights Movement, she was always right by her husband's side.

After Dr. King's death, instead of retreating with her young children or into her grief, Coretta Scott King stepped out into the forefront to continue her husband's legacy. She began this the day before his funeral, leading the sanitation workers' march he had gone to Memphis to support. She continued standing up for social justice all the rest of her life. She was devoted to preserving Dr. King's legacy and fought successfully to establish the King Center and the national holiday recognizing his birthday and became an internationally recognized human rights leader in her own right.

A strong antiwar and anti-apartheid activist, she spoke to audiences around the world, calling for racial equality and economic and social justice and received many honors and awards for her tireless work. Mrs. King was especially passionate about women's rights, and urged women to take their rightful place at the table to create a better nation and world. She once said, "If American women would increase their voting turnout by 10 percent, I think we would see an end to all of the budget cuts in programs benefiting women and children." How true this remains in this era where a Congress of the United States, aided and abetted by a callous administration, has just cut \$39 billion from the budget from programs low-income children and families need in order to give tens of billions of new tax cuts to powerful special interests that don't need it.

Throughout her life, Mrs. King was a lantern for freedom and justice. We will all miss Coretta Scott King's presence but carry her and Dr. King's spirits as we continue the struggle. May she rest in peace and may we work for peace with justice with renewed vigor.

Marian Wright Edelman is President and Founder of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council.

I am convinced that if I had not had a wife with the fortitude, strength and calmness of Coretta, I could not have stood up amid the ordeals and tensions surrounding the Montgomery movement. I came to see the real meaning of that rather trite statement: "A wife can either make or break a husband." Coretta proved to be that type of wife with qualities to make a husband when he could have been so easily broken. In the darkest moments she always brought the light of hope.

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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NEWSMAKER

Data News Weekly Exclusive Interview with Councilman Oliver Thomas

By: Edwin Buggage

He is more than New Orleans City Council President; he is the true definition of a renaissance man. In addition to being a politician he is a poet, stage actor, and an avid advocate of bringing back New Orleans to its previous state pre-Katrina and making it even better. Data News Weekly had a unique opportunity to catch up with him after he gave a magnificent performance in Anthony Bean's Theater Company production of August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* where he talked about art, life, politics and his love affair with New Orleans.

EB: How did you get involved in theater?

OT: Well Anthony Bean called me one day because he knew I did spoken word poetry and said he wanted to start a theater company that would work with young people



and help develop talent in New Orleans and asked if I could help him. In seeing how committed he was I agreed, but told him I was

not an actor. (Laughter) Then he said you're a politician it's just a question of whether you wind up being a good actor.

It's been a wonderful experience, it's been therapeutic. I think more people need a something like this it's a great cultural outlet.

EB: How and what were you feeling when you saw the devastation that occurred in the city after Hurricane Katrina?

OT: Personally, I had eight feet of water in my house, I had holes in my roof, and lost most of my stuff, it was devastating. But I thought what about those who weren't as fortunate as me, what about the people who were struggling everyday just trying to get by. I felt bad for them, and I think everything we do about this disaster should be in remembrance of people who lost their lives, and all their possessions. Also I felt abandoned, and thought we were not given the respect as Americans we were due.

EB: How do you see the future of New Orleans and how important is maintaining the culture that makes the city unique?

OT: It's going to be a struggle, it's going to be a battle, and that's why tonight was so important. The soul of a community is its artistry, its creativity. We've performed from the slave ships to Congo Square that's how far

our creativity goes. It's important that theater is back, artistry is back because it is the soul and the pulse of our community.

EB: What is the city doing to bring back its residents and more specifically members of the artistic community?

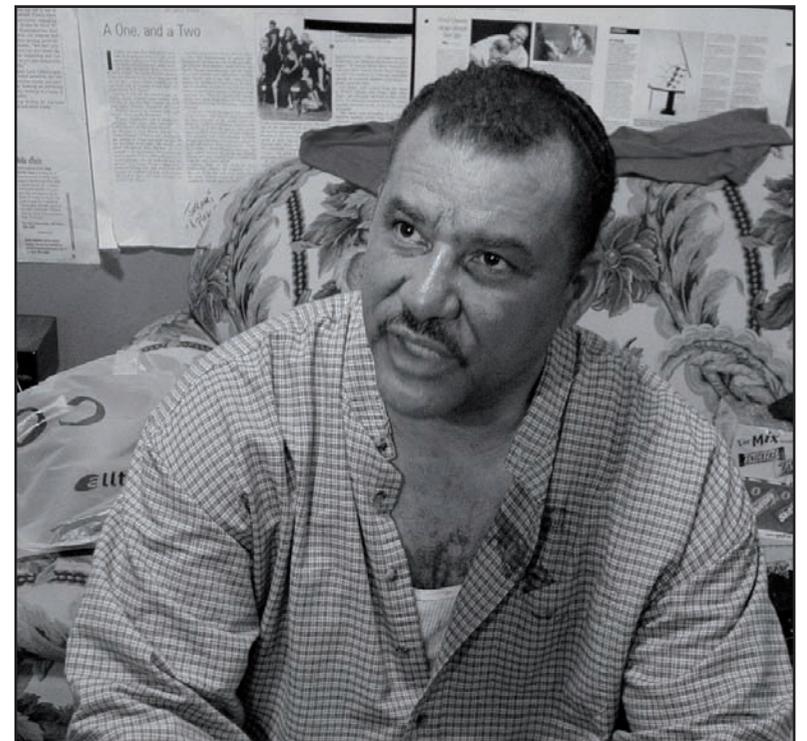
OT: I don't know how much the city is doing, but I do know that people like Anthony Bean are doing things and you all at Data News are doing things. But I believe you cannot have a city without its artistry. It is the soul of the city. Think about how powerful our culture is despite all our problems we produce some of the best talent in the world. We produce people who never went to music school, but who are some of the best Jazz Musicians in the world. We produce actors

country one thing, what would it be?

OT: If someone said can I take your soul would you let them? If they said can I cut out your heart, would you let them? If they said if I could take every good memory, would you let them? I would say stay connected because if we lose the city, if we don't stay connected, that's what it would be like taking our soul, our heart, and our memories.

EB: There are rumors buzzing you may be seeking higher office is there any truth to that?

OT: It's something to consider, right now I'm City Council President, and I can run for reelection. I can run for mayor, congress, or governor. (Laughing) I love this community so much



and actresses far away from Hollywood who tear it up. But that's what's in us, a knack for excellence, and that is something that we all who are from New Orleans are connected with. And it's something special and unique that you can't explain to someone who is not from here they don't understand it. Its funny people from a lot of other cities can live in other places but people from New Orleans have to stay connected because there's no other place like it in the world.

EB: If you could tell the people from New Orleans who are scattered all over the

I might run for President of the United States. Right now though I am considering all my options, that's how much I love this town.

EB: Do you any final thoughts?

OT: Yes I would like to thank Data News because it's given our community a voice. Like its name Data that's just what it is, it's information, it's our fact finder, it's our beat to the street. So I want to thank the Data Family for always giving us real news, and for everybody else stay true and stay New Orleans.

She took a stand

by taking a seat >>

Rosa Louise Parks
(1913-2005)

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery, Alabama near the intersection of Commerce and Montgomery Streets after working for eighteen hours. Her courageous act in refusing to give up her seat on a bus she had paid to ride sparked the modern-day civil rights movement and led to the breakdown of segregation in the United States.

BellSouth salutes Rosa Parks and thanks her for sitting even in the face of danger.

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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Rev. Jesse Jackson initiative for housing and jobs

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - The Rev. Jesse Jackson stepped in a patch of mud and squatted to view crushed debris beneath a hulking rusty barge that had smashed through a levee breach and into the lower Ninth Ward during Hurricane Katrina.

"We fear people are under this barge, dead," Jackson said Monday. The now-landlocked barge, along with the still inaccessible wreckage beneath it, is a symbol of the government's neglect of many of the storm's hardest-hit victims, Jackson said. Now he and several state lawmakers, along with civil rights activists, are trying to organize a massive march on April 1 to protest post-Katrina policies that they fear will unfairly marginalize New Orleans' black community, both politically and economically.



State Rep. Charmaine Marchand

The announcement came during Jackson's latest tour of the lower Ninth Ward, a lower-income, mostly black neighborhood that for months has showcased some of Katrina's worst destruction. The neighborhood remains a wasteland of upside-down cars resting on piles of bricks and splintered wood that often are the only remnants of so many obliterated homes. Many of those who lived in that neighborhood remain scattered in temporary housing across the country, while workers from Eastern Europe and Latin America have taken rebuilding jobs, Jackson said.

"Why must people here look at people coming in from out of the country to do the work? That is humiliating," Jackson said. "There are no jobs that cannot be done by the people who once lived here."

Jackson said the failure to quickly provide temporary housing closer to New Orleans not only has prevented many displaced residents from coming home to get jobs, but also has made it more difficult for them to follow campaigns and vote in already delayed elections now rescheduled for late April.

And while it appears that predominantly black areas of the city were the worst hit, Jackson

said he hoped all displaced residents would join the cause. "Displaced citizens - white, black or brown - should have the right to return and the right to protect their vote," Jackson said.

The group with Jackson included two black state lawmakers who have virtually no constituents left in the districts they represent. They have blasted recommendations by the internationally renowned Urban Land Institute to study whether the worst damaged and flood-

prone parts of the city should be rebuilt or turned into parks that could act as drainage basins during future storms.

State Rep. Charmaine Marchand, who lived in the lower Ninth Ward, said levees should be made much stronger, utilities restored and financial aid offered to

residents in her district who need help to rebuild. Blaming the federal government for the current state of her neighborhood, Marchand noted that catastrophic damage occurred after the levee along the city's Industrial Canal broke, not from the initial storm surge that sent water pouring over the top of the levee. "Prior to this levee break we had approximately two feet of water in the community, people were walking around in ankle deep water," Marchand said. "When the levee broke, that's when the devastation occurred."

Rep. Cedric Richmond, who's wiped out district includes eastern New Orleans, said allowing residents to come back to inspect devastated property is not a sufficient plan to protect an American citizen's right to return to their property. "Before Katrina we paid taxes, and after Katrina we will pay taxes, so this government owes us a reinvestment into our community," Richmond said.

Jackson said he plans to hold the April 1 public march across the Crescent City Connection, a major Mississippi River bridge that was blocked Aug. 31 to keep people fleeing from New Orleans from entering the West Bank. Gretna officials said that the city had no more room for evacuees

Louisiana Seeks High Quality Providers To Run Orleans Schools



Cecil Picard

BATON ROUGE, LA - The Louisiana Department of Education is seeking high quality, non-profit providers with a proven track record of improving educational achievement to run schools in Orleans Parish which have been placed in the Recovery School District.

Legislation passed in the November 2005 Special Session of the Legislature expanded the definition of a "failed school" in Louisiana to include schools scoring below the state average in school systems declared to be in Academic Crisis with at least one school labeled as failing for four or more years. Currently, only Orleans Parish falls into that category. A total of 107 schools have been placed in the Recovery School District in Orleans Parish; however, only 38 schools are

continued on Page 14.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Critics Say Budget Cuts Hurt Women, Children

By Allison Stevens

Special to the NNPA from Womens-enews

WASHINGTON, D.C. (WOMENSE-NEWS)-As GOP lawmakers argued last week for budget legislation that cuts \$39 billion in spending for federal programs during the next five years, Democratic leaders and other critics said the legislation belied the president's avowals of compassion during his State of the Union address.

"Last night in the State of the Union we heard a great deal of rhetoric about investments the president was going to make," House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of California said on the House floor during the budget debate. "But this budget today tells a different story... The truth is that this budget is an exact contradiction of the rhetoric the president presented last night."

Pelosi said the policies in the budget would widen the U.S. deficit by \$300 billion and heap "mountains of debt" on the country's children.

The legislation squeaked through the House of Representatives by a two-vote margin, with a number of moderate Republicans supporting

Democratic opposition, and now goes to the president to be signed into law.

Republican leaders brushed off criticism and said the bill will help move more people off the welfare rolls and into work. The law will accomplish this even as it trims \$99 billion during the next 10 years from the ballooning federal budget—a savings they said will rein in federal spending and help reduce the deficit.

The bill's backers also praised the new welfare rules, which would require states to increase work participation rates among welfare recipients and would channel \$1.5 billion to marriage promotion programs. The budget bill also gives states the option to eliminate family planning services for beneficiaries of Medicaid.

The \$39 billion in cuts are "a very modest savings" that is "a step toward smarter, more competent government," said Rep. Adam Putnam, a Republican from Florida.

However, Rep. Hilda Solis, a California Democrat who co-chairs the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, argued on the floor: "Just last night President Bush spoke about working together" to help Americans. "But this legislation pays for the

prosperity for the richest, the wealthiest in our society."

Wednesday's narrow legislative victory, Republicans hope, will help the GOP reclaim the mantle of fiscal conservatism as they enter the 2006 mid-term election year. Under President Bush, spending has soared due to the war in Iraq, a new prescription drug benefit and emergency disaster relief.

Republicans also hope to pass a proposed \$70 billion package to extend current tax cuts that critics said primarily benefits the wealthy.

If that happens, not only will single-parent families suffer from stiffer welfare rules and scaled-back government services under the budget changes, but they would reap little from a tax relief package skewed toward wealthy individuals and corporations, critics of the bill argued.

"What this bill does is ask the most vulnerable people in the society to tighten their belts so that the most affluent can have a tax cut," said Paula Roberts, a senior staff attorney at the Center for Law and Social Policy, an advocacy group for the poor in Washington, D.C. "That's morally wrong."

National Park Service Attains Carter G. Woodson's Home

PHILADELPHIA - A former mayor of New Orleans said Thursday he hopes government officials put the same effort into rebuilding the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast as has been put into helping New York rebound from the Sept. 11 attacks.

Marc Morial, now president of the National Urban League, told a symposium at the University of Pennsylvania that the rebuilding

Morial criticized the response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and called for government officials to be more unified in Katrina recovery efforts. The effort will be judged a decade from now and beyond, he said, by whether the region has rebounded like other disaster-stricken cities have.

"FEMA needs to be completely rebuilt so that it is in keeping with



would also be much like challenges posed by Chicago's Great Fire of 1871 and the devastating San Francisco earthquakes in 1905 and 1906.

"In the case of New York City, no one spared a resource. ... Will we reach to the standard of New York City?" said Morial, who served two terms as mayor of New Orleans from 1994 to 2002. "No one said, 'This is too expensive.'"

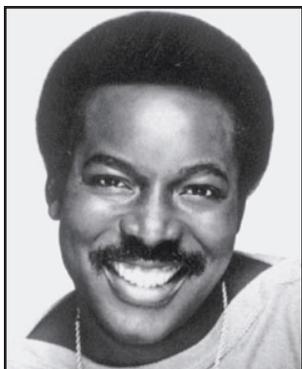
The two-day symposium, "Rebuilding Urban Places After Disaster: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina," is focusing on ways to help cities recover from natural disasters and events such as terrorist attacks. The forum includes discussions about helping economies recover, accommodating people forced out of their homes and making cities less vulnerable.

the needs of 21st century disaster response," Morial said. He also said the military should have a more established "standby" role when helping out in disaster responses.

Earlier this month, Morial expressed concerns about suggestions that officials focus on rebuilding New Orleans' least damaged neighborhoods and that some devastated areas could be turned into marshland or open space. He also has vowed to fight a proposal for a four-month moratorium on new building permits in heavily flooded areas until those neighborhoods prove their viability.

In the fall, Morial called for the creation of a compensation fund for Katrina victims similar to the fund created for victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks

Mourners Remember Soul Singer Wilson Pickett



Caption: Singer Wilson Pickett famous for such songs as Mustang Sally and Wait til the Midnight Hour, passed at the age of 64.

LOUISVILLE (NNPA) - More than 800 mourners attended the funeral of Soul Singer Wilson Pickett, Jr. at the Canaan Christian Church here.

As the church was filling up, Pickett's hit songs including "In the Midnight Hour," and "Don't Let the Green Grass Fool You," played through the church's public address system. Born

in Alabama, Pickett, who moved to Detroit as a teen, died after suffering a heart attack in a Reston, VA. hospital on January 19. He was 64.

Celebrities in attendance included Little Richard

and members of the Falcons, Pickett's first R&B Group. Aretha Franklin and King Solomon Burke were listed on the program, but did not attend.

Falcon member Willie Scofield said he had read on the internet that Pickett said he had knocked on many doors. "Well, he knocked on my door that day and that was the last one he had to knock on. Doors opened, I mean really opened for Wilson." The Falcons had a hit with "I Found a Love" in 1962 with Pickett as lead singer. He went on to record hit records, such as "Mustang Sally," "634-5789" and "Funky Broadway."

Wearing a black suit with a jeweled collar and sunglasses, Little Richard spoke at the funeral. He said he had recently attended funerals for comedian Richard Pryor and singer Lou Rawls.

Talking about death, he said, "We all gotta do this." "Ain't nobody immune. You don't get too rich. You don't get too famous. You don't get too pretty. And anybody that thinks they are, just tell 'em to shut up."



Caption: Singer Little Richard (center) gave a tribute to Pickett Credit: Bud Dorsey/Louisville Defender

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DATA ZONE Entertainment

A Post Katrina Theatrical Affair

Joe Turner Come and Gone

By Glenn Summers

A man of dramatic proportions, August Wilson was a poetic illustrator of the African American experience. A chronicler of the human experience and a genius in his own right he brought to the spotlight rural and inner city experiences plaguing black souls throughout America. His literary illustration of the inner city blues and hardships is not only about the affects on the African-American soul but are reflections of American souls as a whole. His plays have been powerful testaments conveying how we view ourselves as human beings.

The Anthony Bean Community Theater paid homage to this great playwright of our times by showcasing August Wilson's classic Play, Joe Turner's Come and Gone. The opening night, January 27, 2006 was symbolic of a new beginning for ABCT and New Orleans considering hurricane Katrina's wrath on the city. Opening night proved that the artistic culture is very much alive and thriving in New Orleans. Anthony Bean says, "The importance of the theater is to enrich, enlighten and evoke self-awareness; inducing theatrical communication between performer and audience." Bean did an outstanding job directing,



Joe Turner Come and Gone, he has the uncanny ability to bring the best out of his students along with the seasoned actors who round out his cast constantly proving he is a cunning, shrewd director who knows how to get the most out of his cast.

I observed as the audience anxiously anticipated the start of the play. When the house lights went down they became silent and attentive. The set design was superbly crafted. Bringing nostalgia and authenticity that

brought you back into an era of hard times and misfortune.

The setting of the play took place August 1911 in a boarding house in Pittsburgh, PA. The characters were played by Wilbert Williams

Jr. as Seth Holly, Gwendolyn Foxworth (Berth

Holly) his wife, Harold X. Evans as (Bynum Walker) the Rootworker, Charles Bosworth (Rutherford Solig) A peddler, Donald Lewis, Jr. (Jeremy Furlow) a resident Oliver Thomas (Herald Loomis), Chloe A. Tillis (Zovia Loomis) his daughter, Brittney M. James (Mattie Campbell) a resident, Tony Felix (Reuben Scott) the boy who lived next door, Karen Kaia Livers (Molly Cunningham) a resident and Valencia D. Williams (Martha Loomis) as Herald Loomis' wife.

The premise of the play revolved around Oliver Thomas' character, Herald Loomis who was obsessed with the search for

that plagued his soul with self-doubt and inner rage. Finally, his frivolous journey leads to a triumphal closure freeing himself from his inner demons.

The play projected the early essence and spirituality of African Americans at the turn of the 20th century. It also captured a sense of the genuineness and innocence that Americans once possessed. One of the unexpected highlights of the play was the stellar performances of the child actors. Chloe A. Tillis and Tony Felix both captivated the audience with their performances that was truly heart warming. They are naturally gifted and profoundly talented kids who are destined for future success in life.

And as we have lived through the real life Drama of Katrina, the theater continues to be a great institution for shaping and building personal character for both actors and the viewing audience. The theater lays the foundation for life and enlightenment of our souls. Furthermore, it influences the way we think, feel, and interact as human beings; and as we march into the future of New Orleans Anthony Bean's Community Theater is a vital asset to our city and our culture.



his wife. His obsession drives him to near insanity; summoning the inner demons of his past;

James Rivers Jazz Brunch Returns to New Orleans Hilton



In another sign of New Orleans resurgence, James Rivers will return to his jazz brunch performances at the New Orleans Hilton beginning Sunday, February 12, 2006.

In a profession notorious for its instability, JAMES RIVERS wears very well, indeed. Six years at Sylvia's and eleven at Tyler's Beer Garden are a testimony to

his ability to draw an audience through good times and bad. This will mark James's 12th year at the Hilton which well may be a New Orleans record for longevity at a hotel venue.

In his formative years, Mr. Rivers performed with such musical legends as Gladys Knight and the Pips, Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, Huey Smith and the Clowns, Brook Benton and Jimmy Reed.

A high note in Mr. Rivers career was his collaboration with actor Clint Eastwood in the production of the sound track for the motion picture Tightrope in 1984 and, subsequently, the soundtrack for the motion picture Bird, Eastwood's telling cinematic tribute to Charlie Parker.

His cameo appearance in the movie "The Bridges of Madison County", where he wrote and performed his own original

composition, led to a highlight of his career when he was invited by Clint Eastwood to perform at Carnegie Hall in the Eastwood After Hours midnight concert.

The band, appropriately called The James Rivers Movement, appears at the New Orleans Hilton's Jazz Brunch each Sunday from 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM at Kabby's at the River.

DATA ZONE *New Orleans Out & About*



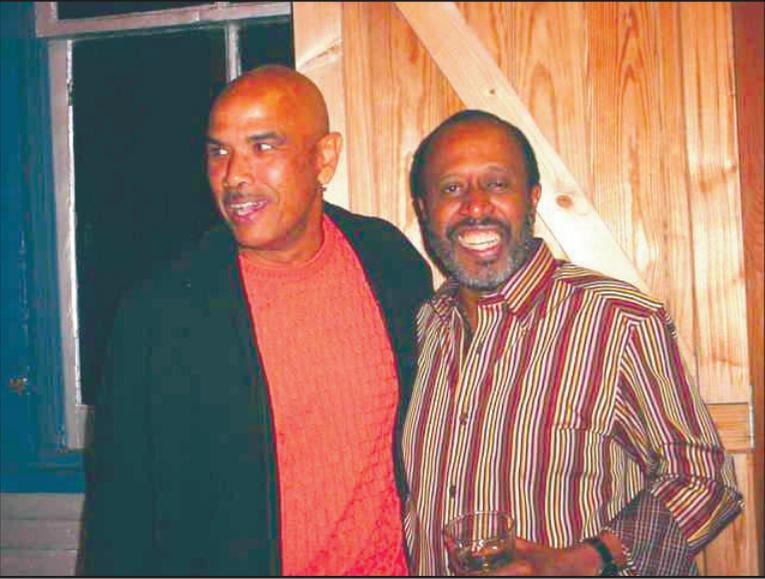
Well wishers Rod Burke, Clarence Williams and Raynard Sanders and friend join Julius in his celebration



Rev Watson, Councilwoman Cynthis Willard Louis, and Blue Line Karate Academy owner Eric O'Neal take time out during the Town Hall meeting during last month's King Holiday weekend.



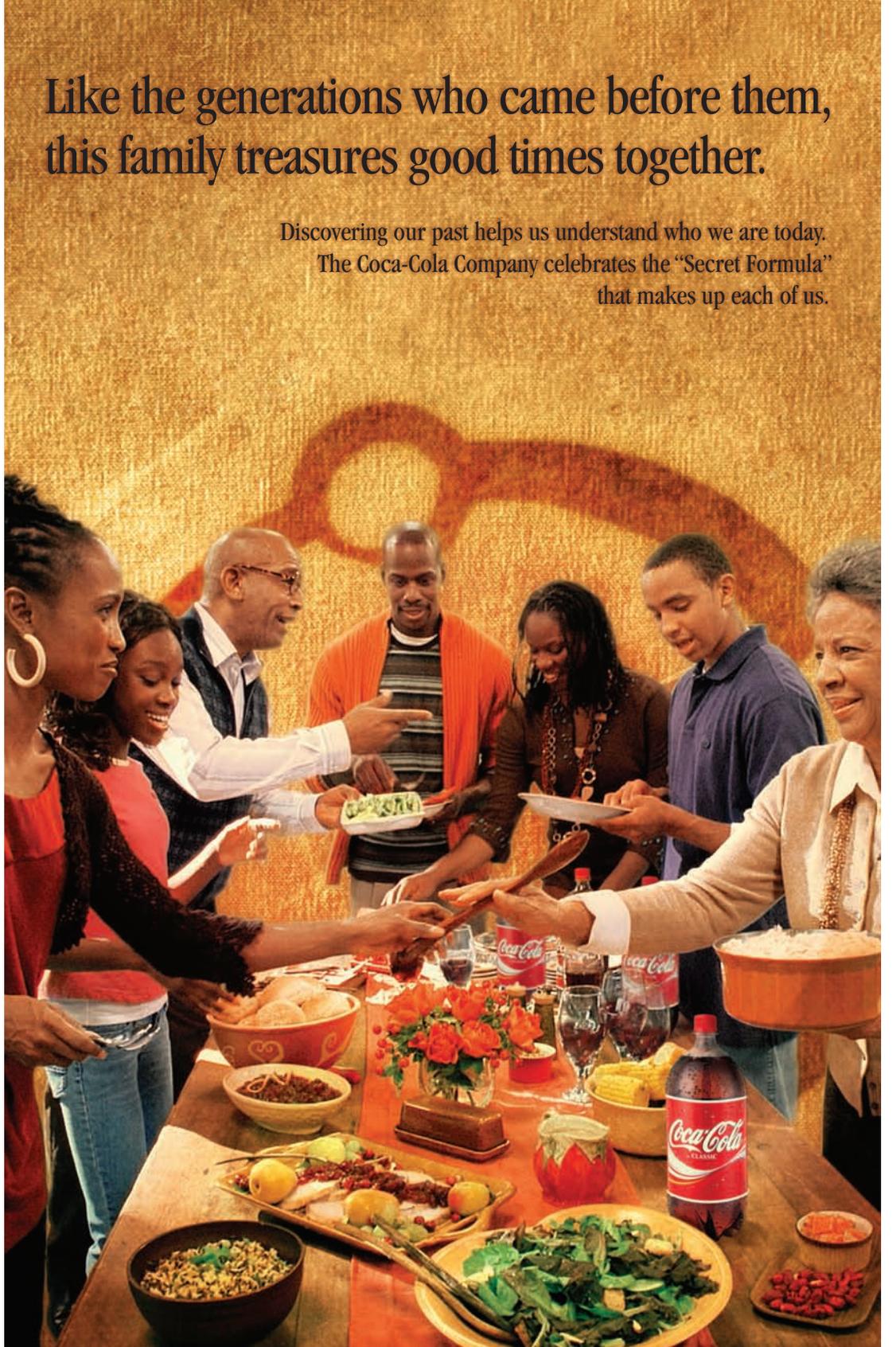
LRA Board Member Donna Brazile comments during the recent session of the Louisiana Recovery Authority board meeting held in Baton Rouge.



Musician Phillip Manuel and Julius Kimbrough celebrate Julius' 65th Birthday



Data News Weekly columnist "The Love Doctor" Lloyd and Ann Dennis enjoy the festivities



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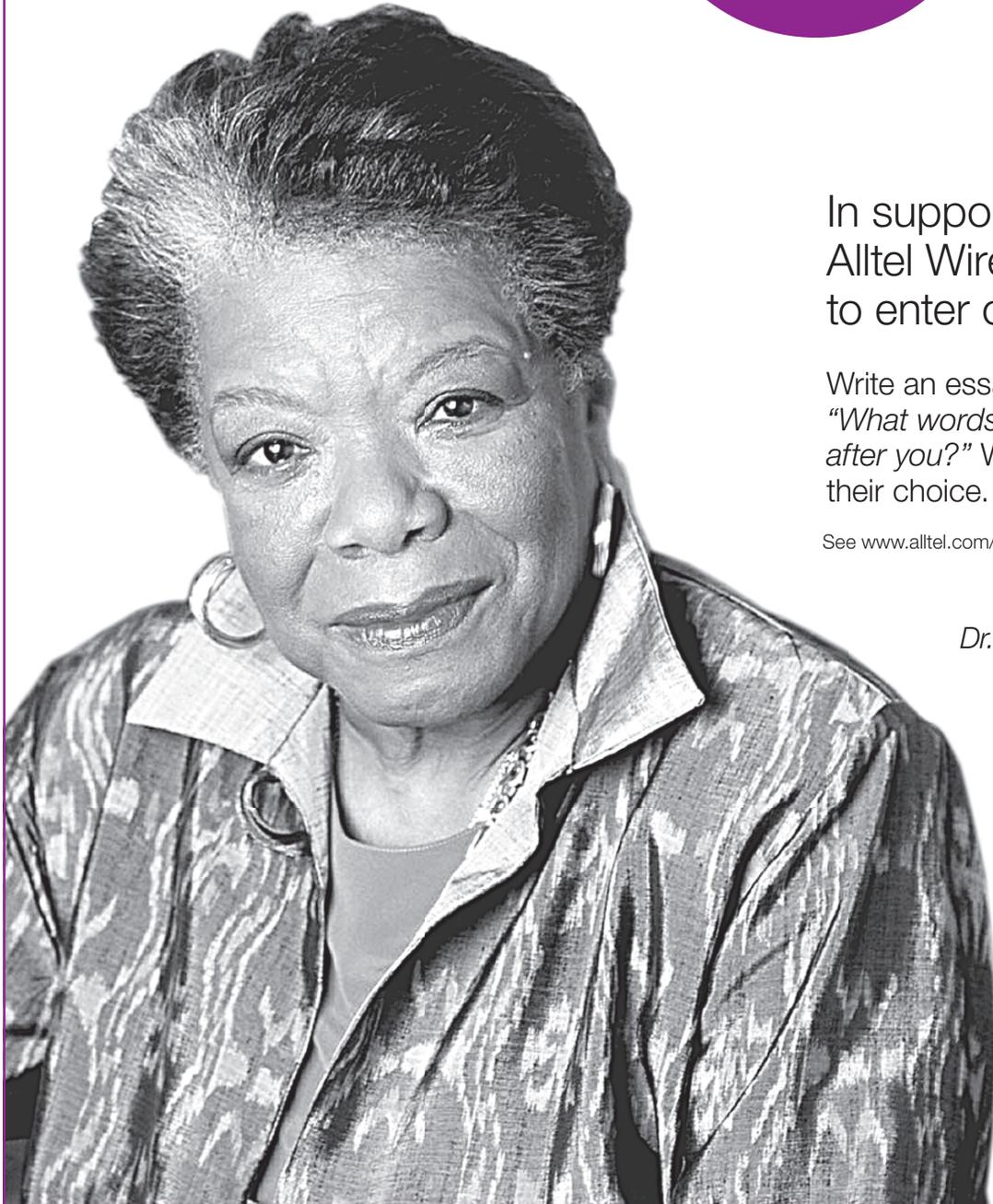
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New Orleans
DATA
News Weekly

The People's Paper

DATA ZONE Health

Health Resolutions

By Larry Lucas

It's that time of the year again: the time we make promises to ourselves that 2006 will be the year we eat better, exercise more, spend more time with our families and maybe even volunteer with our church or community group while we're at it!

A survey by Kaiser Permanente found that nearly 60 percent of Americans make health-related New Year's resolutions. But just 10 percent of us reported keeping resolutions faithfully. And the largest group – 24 percent said they make and keep health resolutions only "occasionally."

Many people take their health for granted. We are fortunate to live in an age when prescription medicines are readily available to cure or treat everything from hypertension and ulcers to cancer and Alzheimer's. Every day, millions of Americans rely on these medicines to live longer, healthier, more productive lives.

But we can't be complacent. To fight diseases like diabetes and many forms of cancer, you have to get your health checked regularly. Importantly, if your doctor starts you on a course of medicine take it regularly and do not skip a dose. Studies show that up to 50 percent of prescriptions are not taken properly, which means many people aren't getting the full therapeutic benefits.

Be sure to ask questions so that you understand how to take your medicine before leaving the doctor's office or pharmacy. Ask your doctor if your prescription needs to be refilled. If you are taking medicine for your high blood pressure or to lower your cholesterol, you may need to take your medicine for a long time. The number one thing you can do to keep healthy is take steps to prevent needing medicines in the first place.

First, you have to eat right and exercise. We've all heard it before a holiday season full of calorie-laden sweets and treats can mean an extra (or two!) around the waistline come January. A study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) confirms that people at a healthy weight put on about a pound during the holidays. But overweight participants – and that's an estimated 65 percent of U.S. adults – gain an average of five pounds during the holidays and keep it on well past the snowy season.

This is a dangerous trend. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), being overweight or obese increases the risk of many diseases and health conditions, including hypertension, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, respiratory problems and some cancers.

Obesity isn't limited to adults. In the last 20 years, the percentage of children who are overweight has more than doubled, and African American girls and boys have

higher rates of being overweight than white children in the same age groups.

There are easy ways to help incorporate healthy eating and exercise into your family's daily routine. Walk with your kids to school, limit the time your kids spend in front of the TV or video games, take the stairs whenever possible, plan your meals in advance and keep healthy snacks in reach so you're less likely to indulge when you're tired or stressed.

Making a commitment to better health in 2006 isn't just about taking care of your body – you have got to take care of your mind too.

According to the CDC, African Americans are more likely to experience mental conditions than others and less likely to seek treatment. Mental conditions can be as disabling as cancer or heart disease in terms of premature death and lost productivity. But there is help available:

80 to 90 percent of mental conditions are treatable using medication and other therapies, according to CDC.

In 2006 resolve to take your medicines as prescribed, visit your doctor regularly, exercise and eat right 365 days of the year – not just on January 1. Your body and your mind will thank you.

Larry Lucas is the deputy vice president for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).



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AN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY FROM...
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OPINION

New Orleans

(A Chocolate City with Vanilla on Top and A Few Nuts)

By: Edwin Buggage

Mayor Ray Nagin verbal snafu during his Martin Luther King Day speech invoking God and making reference to New Orleans being a Chocolate City made great fodder for talk shows, and news organizations hungry for ratings as they jumped on this story. It in fact gave our city another black eye, and made it seem more of a banana republic than before. Some would blame the mayor for making his off the cuff statements as unbecoming of an elected official, and that is true, but to think that his statements would have any long term affect on the city is naïve. And also those who deem his statements to be patently racist are also shortsighted into what racism is, and particularly how it will affect the future economy of New Orleans.

This city as well as the state of Louisiana has been a hot bed for racial animosity and controversy for many years now, and the question is how it has affected the economy of New Orleans if at all. The answer to that is an unequivocal no as proven by several incidents occurring during the past several years. For example when former Ku Klux Klan Leader David Duke was embraced by local whites in neighboring Jefferson Parish he ascended to the level of state representative then later received the majority of the white vote in the primaries in his bid to become the governor of the state of Louisiana.

Another example is when our former Governor Mike Foster surreptitiously purchased Duke's mailing list for 150,000 thousand dollars and became a two term winner. His ties with a noted former leader of an infamous hate group did not affect our local economy one bit, so why would we think now the words of Ray Nagin who has never been part of any hate group, and quite honestly has been nothing but a friend to the white community would damage our city's image and economy in any way.

While many in the mainstream media both local and national attacked Mayor Nagin, I feel it's hypocritical because when the shoe is on the other foot and white racism both institutional and individual are many times overlooked, or ignored. For example New Orleans police mistreatment of blacks is rampant, in the French Quarter bars it was proven that they discriminate against blacks, and at any given time in the CBD from nine to five you would think New Orleans is majority white. So when people talk about black racism and how it would affect the city bottom line, I ask with all things white that are perpetrated against blacks why the outrage in the white community isn't the same and why hasn't it

affected whites from coming and enjoy the city?

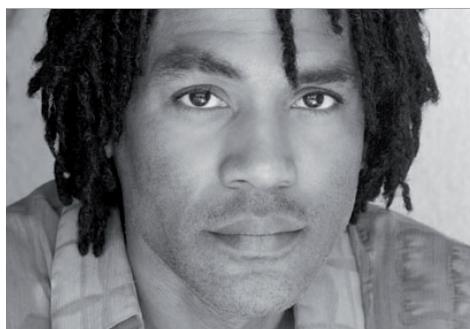
The truth is that many of the tourist or conventioners who come into the city could care less about the local politics as long as they are able to eat, drink, and be merry in a town where they believe that anything goes. So the fact that many in the media have given this story legs, in turn giving it some sort of validity is a sad commentary on the state of our mainstream media, but the sad truth is that it has no bearing in reality. If the past is any indicator of what will happen in the future the city most likely will not suffer any economic backlash, because of Ray Nagin's comments.

Yes his 'Chocolate City' metaphor was novel and made a great sound bite, but unfortunately Nagin is the latest victim of a news media's that's fascinated with the odd, unusual, and sensational that passes as important news. But really these words were simply taken out of context, and this situation became front page news when in fact it shouldn't have been. Secondly, he made statements about black on black violence, but did that appear in most newspapers or television shows? Absolutely not, as we all know this story will soon fade from the headlines, and the question will still remain what will become of New Orleans?

When all the hoopla is over we will still be faced with a city with much of its African-American population displaced and trying to figure out how and if they will be able to come back to the city. We will still be faced with the question will the city ever have a black majority similar to pre-Katrina. And the answer if it were today would be no. As you look around the city the mayor wasn't completely of his rocker, maybe he wasn't very tactful, but the sad reality of present day New Orleans and this is something that even Stevie Wonder could see is that there aren't many black people back in the crescent city.

The city for better or worse seems destined to become, a whiter city and with this demographic shift will probably change the make up of our city's government, schools, and neighborhoods. But I believe there is one thing for certain, that regardless of the composition of the city some things won't change and to be honest, I can't determine whether that's good or bad. But looking around at the city I love, I know in my heart the future will again be chocolate, vanilla and everything in between, and of course as always in everything associated with New Orleans and Louisiana a few nuts.

Coretta Scott King was Sensitive to Gays and Lesbians



Phill Wilson
NNPA Columnist

The traditional civil rights era of the 50s and 60s officially ended on January 30 with the passing of Coretta Scott King, the mother of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Some might argue that title belongs to Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hammer or even Dorothy Height. But if Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the father of the civil rights movement, then Mrs. King was clearly the mother.

After her husband's assassination, Mrs. King picked up the pieces, gathered her children to her bosom and assured us that we would get by. And like a good mother, she never played favorites. She was committed to including all of us—the civil rights one, the peace one, the labor one, the gay and lesbian one, and eventually the HIV/AIDS one. While there were some old guard civil rights leaders who thought "justice" meant "just us," Mrs. King never wavered. When the traditional "civil rights" house defined by the narrow paradigm of racial discrimination became too small, she moved us to a new "human rights" house big enough for all of us.

In 1990, when her son, Martin Luther King III, made disparaging remarks about gay and lesbian people, Mrs. King hosted a Black gay and lesbian summit at the King center. She was also one of the first Black leaders to speak out about HIV/AIDS and the need for Black people to pay attention.

"AIDS is a human crisis, no matter where you live," she said while addressing a gathering of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "Anyone who sincerely cares about the future of Black America had better be speaking out about AIDS, calling for preventive measures and increased funding for research and treatment."

Speaking out is something Mrs. King did often. She traveled throughout the United States and world as an advocate of racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, gay and lesbian dignity, religious freedom, the needs of the poor and homeless, full-employment, healthcare,

educational opportunities, nuclear disarmament and ecological sanity. She was never afraid to address topics others tip-toed around, such as homophobia and AIDS.

I had the pleasure of sharing the dais with her a few times. At the 20th anniversary of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded by her late husband, she said: "I have a special responsibility as a human rights activist to speak out against homophobia, which I am convinced contributes mightily to the spread of AIDS. Homophobia encourages discrimination, which undermines the effort to improve research, prevention, and treatment. It prevents people from getting properly informed and treated. Homophobia also contributes to the failure of elected officials to adequately fund needed AIDS programs." She helped us understand that AIDS was all of our problem by publicly disclosing that even a member of her family was living with HIV.

Martin and Coretta are both gone now. It's been nearly 38 years since Dr. King spoke of that Promised Land he saw from the mountain top on the eve of his assassination. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the first diagnosed cases of what we have come to know as AIDS.

Black people still face a world in need of change. We have always born the brunt of the AIDS epidemic in America. Of the estimated 1.3 million Americans living with AIDS today, nearly half are Black. Fifty-six of the new HIV infections among young people in the U.S. are Black, and among women with AIDS, Black women represent nearly 70 percent of the new cases.

February 7th was National Black HIV/AIDS awareness day. AIDS is not just a health issue. It is a human rights issue. It is an urban renewal issue. It is an economic justice issue. As we grieve the loss of a great hero in the struggle, we must commit to not just "keeping the dream alive," but to fulfill the vision by continuing to push toward the mountain top while always reaching back to anyone who might be left behind regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or HIV status.

Phill Wilson is CEO and founder of the Black AIDS Institute in Los Angeles. He has participated in numerous international conferences on AIDS and was selected by the Ford Foundation in 2001 as one of "Twenty Leaders for a Changing World." Wilson has been living with HIV for more than 25 years and with AIDS for 15 years. He can be reached at Phillw@BlackAIDS.org.

Rebuilding A Greater New Orleans

After 25 years of serving New Orleans, Cox Communications is committed to rebuilding the Greater New Orleans area better than ever.

Cox has already given a \$10 million gift to help our citizens recover from this tragedy. The American Red Cross, United Way, Habitat For Humanity and Boys & Girls Clubs have received these donations to help begin to rebuild our community.

This city is our home too and we are looking forward to the next twenty five years... and beyond.



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NEWS

State & Local News cont'd.

Schools, continued from Page 5.

available to be run by providers for the 2006-07 school year. The other schools have substantial damage and will not be ready in time.

"We are looking for the best of the best," said State Superintendent of Education Cecil J. Picard. "We are looking for providers that can show results, a commitment to high standards and a dedication to the children attending Recovery School District schools. This will be a very rigorous process," Picard emphasized.

"We only get one chance to run these schools," said State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education President Linda Johnson. "It is imperative that we set the bar high for these providers because they will have a tremendous job ahead of them and we will not settle for anything but improved results."

Prospective providers are encouraged, but not required, to submit an Intent to Apply form no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2006. The Intent to Apply form will allow staff to keep prospective providers informed about Recovery School District activities. Technical assistance will be offered to potential providers the week of February 6, 2006 in New Orleans. Confirmed dates, times and locations will be posted on the department's website as soon as possible. The deadline for submitting an application is Monday, March 20, 2006. Approval of providers is tentatively

Applications, forms and general information concerning the Recovery School District can be found on the department's website, www.louisianaschools.net, by clicking on the Recovery School District logo located on the left-hand side of the homepage. Providers interested in submitting an application should periodically check the website for updated information and timelines.

Louisiana law prohibits the Recovery School District from contracting with for-profit private providers, but it does actively seek participation from colleges or universities.

Department officials stress that enrollment will determine exactly how many schools are opened by the Recovery School District for the 2006-07 school year. A comprehensive plan for the Recovery School District will be presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in June of 2006. This plan will detail the short- and long-term plans for schools that fall into the Recovery School District in Orleans Parish.

"We will be talking to the people of New Orleans concerning what they want their school system to look like," Picard said. "These are ultimately their schools, but I do think this is a great opportunity to rebuild schools in New Orleans as the centerpieces of neighborhoods—near parks, near libraries, near universities and near health clinics. We're not constrained to only looking at a series of charter schools for this city," Picard stressed. "We are committed to looking for multiple ways to run schools so that academics and performance are the mission and the focus, but finding quality providers is the first step we're taking."

For more information, visit the Louisiana Department of Education's website, www.louisianaschools.net or call the department's toll-free help line at 1-877-453-2721.

Governor's 2nd Special Session Opens with Speech in New Orleans

New Orleans (AP) - Gov Kathleen Blanco opened a special legislative session with a warning to lawmakers that Washington and the nation consider the hurricane-ravaged region "yesterday's problem."

In a departure from tradition, Blanco delivered her speech Monday at the New Orleans convention center - the same place where many of Hurricane Katrina's victims waited so long for help to arrive.

Blanco said she would press Congress for further help, but was worried by President Bush's scant reference to Katrina in his State of the Union Speech, and said public opinion polls are showing the nation has largely forgotten the storms.

"The harsh reality is that for many people in Washington, Katrina is yesterday's problem and Rita never happened," Blanco told a joint session of the Legislature held at the New Orleans convention center,

rather than the traditional House chamber in Baton Rouge.

The governor outlined how she wants to use the \$6.2 billion in federal hurricane recovery block grants and \$1.5 billion in federal aid to minimize future damage from flooding. Most of the aid, about \$5.6 billion would go to housing assistance.

The special which must end by Feb. 17, was the second Blanco has called to cope with the damage of Katrina and Rita, which struck Louisiana.

Republican Rep. Jim Tucker, chairman of the House GOP caucus, said he was relieved to hear Blanco spell out her plan for spending the federal money. "At least she gave us a basic plan for how the money is going to be spent," Tucker said.

Despite a push for unity, the session started with discord over the location of the governor's speech - the first time in 125 years that the Legislature has convened outside of Baton Rouge - and a

bus tour of hurricane devastated areas.

The speech and bus tour received harsh criticism from some lawmakers, who said the governor was wasting time in a short session and was using sites of devastation and suffering as a publicity stunt to repair her image.

While fewer than half of the 144 member Legislature took the tour, most lawmakers showed up for the speech. Only 20 House members and 12 senators skipped the speech, according to legislative estimates. One House seat is currently vacant.

The governor touted her legislative proposals as long overdue reforms: to consolidate levee boards to strengthen hurricane protection and to merge New Orleans' city government.

"Over the next 11 days, I am asking you to overhaul problems that have begged for reform for generations," she said.

Nat'l News cont'd.

National Park Service Attains Carter G. Woodson's Home

The creator of Black History Month made history himself this year - albeit posthumously. In ceremonies held at Washington, D.C.'s Shiloh Baptist Church, on January 28, Woodson's home became a part of the National Park Services' treasury of registered historic sites. No small feat and, indeed, as it took some heavy financial and political lifting for this great day to occur.

The Shaw neighborhood where Dr. Woodson lived and worked for 35 years had faced decades of neglect and decline after a heyday where notables such as Duke Ellington and Chita Rivera once called home. Offices for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, founded by Woodson, were located at 1538 - 9th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. on the first two floors while Dr. Woodson maintained living quarters on the third floor.

Dr. Woodson, the son of slaves, worked in the coal mines of West Virginia before being allowed to attend high school, which he finished in two years. He obtained a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1912, the second Black to do so; W.E.B. DuBois was the first in 1895.

As the years passed, the brick house, built in the 1890s, fell into disrepair. So did the surrounding neighborhood; they began calling the local middle school "Shameful Shaw." In a June 25, 2001 article in the

Washington Post, it was reported that Edward Smith, history professor at American University, made sure that the decrepit premises remained on his Black History tours in the city. He was quoted as saying, "They've seen the Frederick Douglass house and the Bethune House, and then I say the next destination is the Woodson house, and they expect Woodson to be in the same excellent condition. They are always shocked."

The historic significance of the site was not lost on a group of present and former Shaw residents. Coalescing under the name "Friends of Carter G. Woodson," the group began to hold numerous fundraisers in 1987 to keep the financial wolves at bay. Squatters, who lit matches for indoor grilling,



were moved to safe quarters. Once the premises were protectively sealed and the deed firmly in the hands of its owners, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), efforts turned to securing a future of which Dr. Woodson would be proud. By 2001, the home would enter into the National Trust for Historic Preservation as endangered historic properties.

the work of Dr. Woodson. It publishes the Journal of African American History, the Black History Bulletin, the Black History Month Learning Package as well as seminars and its annual conferences.

Donations can be made to the Carter G. Woodson Housing Fund, 535 Bryant Street, N.W. Suite C 142, Washington, DC, 20059, telephone 202-863-0053. The Web site is: www.asalh.org.

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SPECIAL SECTION

Death of a Neighborhood

KATRINA SERIES - PART 1

This is the first of an 8-part series of stories about the Gulf Coast and the road to recovery after Hurricane Katrina.

By **Zenitha Prince**
NNPA Special Correspondent

NEW ORLEANS (NNPA) — The air was thick with an oppressive silence and the smell of rot. The streets that once teemed with the play and laughter of children, the industry of mothers and fathers were empty now, reduced to mere dirt tracks. On the sidewalks, a lone boot, a mud-encrusted car, an overturned basketball ring, a red tricycle lay like ominous and mocking reminders of a life now lost. Battered, sometimes mangled houses stood abandoned, forlorn in the gathering gloom like looming sentinels of a ghost town.

1229 Deslonde St. was Pamela Everage's home, yet on first sight, she could barely recognize it.

"This is my first time back. It's just awful," she said. "Just driving through the city, it looks like a Third World country."

With a hand on her hip, Everage surveyed her neighborhood from the remains of her front lawn. Dressed in white T-shirt, blue jeans, a white bandana and a pair of sneakers encrusted in black, pungent mud, Everage was the lone smidgen of life on an otherwise dead street.

Then we began to walk.

A slightly rusted sign proclaimed "Beautiful Blocks," an especially unseemly sentiment against the backdrop of decay. A nearby "Dead End" sign seemed much more appropriate.

Everage's face was a study of defeat and worry, wreathed in frowns and dominated by a pair of tired-looking eyes. She had not gotten much news about her extended family. She had seen one neighbor and her son at a shelter, who told her that the morning after the hurricane, people had already begun to walk their dogs and clean their yards before the floodwaters began to rise. She wondered if she would ever see them again.

"That family down there, all three of them were in wheelchairs. I think they got out when my sons left," said Everage, pointing out the houses as she spoke.

"That guy over there, he works off shore. He was gone, too. Those two people in that house over there, they're middle and high school teachers.

"The lady here, an administrator at Charity Hospital—everybody knew each other. People went to high school together, they knew your family."

Having no other idea of her neighbors' fates, Everage read the hieroglyphic markings on the houses, left there by rescue workers to document the dates of their visits and the fates of the inhabitants. A "0" meant no bodies were found, and as Everage surveyed the houses, she breathed a sigh of relief at all the zeros she saw.

Then she came to a house where a single woman lived with her five small children. She looked at the

abandoned car mired in the bog of the front yard, then hesitantly raised her eyes to the markings on the wall. The "6" confirmed what she already knew in her heart.

"They didn't make it," she whispered with a shake of her head. "I taught her son how to ride his bike."

Everage also worried about her relatives and friends, who lived on the other side of North Claiborne Avenue between Florida and Caffin Avenues, a place where, at the time, soldiers were barring people from entering and where, it was rumored, bodies were still being found.

while in recent times, quaint early 20th Century homes were mingled with shrines of modern life such as barber and beauty shops, small businesses, gasoline stations, eateries, 'washetarias,' a surfeit of churches and the ubiquitous corner store, more than 36 percent of its residents live under the poverty line.

Many attribute the ward's slow economic growth to the flood that ran longtime commercial and industrial businesses and residents out of the neighborhood when Hurricane Betsy devastated the city in 1965.

Now, again, many wonder about the future of the neighborhood that bore the worst of Hurricanes

Hurricane and Rita with most of its 5,601 housing units destroyed and its nearly 14,000 residents scattered, homeless or dead.

Everage felt relief that at least her children were not counted among the latter.

"I spoke to my son two days before the storm and I told him, I got a feeling this storm will really hit so go ahead and take a backpack, go ahead and get out," Everage recalled.

For days, her son

traveled from town to town trying to evade the reach of the storm until he was finally able to board a Greyhound bus to Virginia, where his sister attended college. As she took in the utter ruin of the neighborhood, Everage was glad she had decided not to bring him back.

In her home the situation was equally grim. Foot-high black sludge; waterlogged, capsized furniture and the putrid scent of mould hampered her efforts to salvage mementos of her family's life. And in the end, there was not a lot to save.

"I had a lot of nice paintings on the wall, all my paintings are gone," as well as a computer and other hard-earned items, she said.

Her children's diplomas, some of their trophies, her grandfather's gramophone and her daughter's rusted trumpet were all that was left of years of living.

"I don't think I know what to feel," Everage said. "I haven't processed yet."

But as Everage continued to think about her loss and the loss of her neighbors, many of whom did not have renters' insurance, she knew she could not come back and she became angry.

"We can't come back. The problem's been the levee for 25 years since 1964. Same stuff happened: a lot of people lost their houses and their lives. It's like déjà vu," Everage said, then added, "There's got to be charges against somebody—federal government, state—somebody has got to be held accountable."



Caption 1: Pamela Everage begins the process of recovering valuable belongings inside her home which soaked under water for weeks.



Caption 2: Pamela Everage is dismayed, but hopeful as she returns to her Katrina-battered home in New Orleans.

"I know people on the other side and they are people I grew up with and they're not letting you over there," Everage said. "I know a lot of the old people didn't leave. And I'm afraid that a lot of people — my relatives and other people - didn't make it."

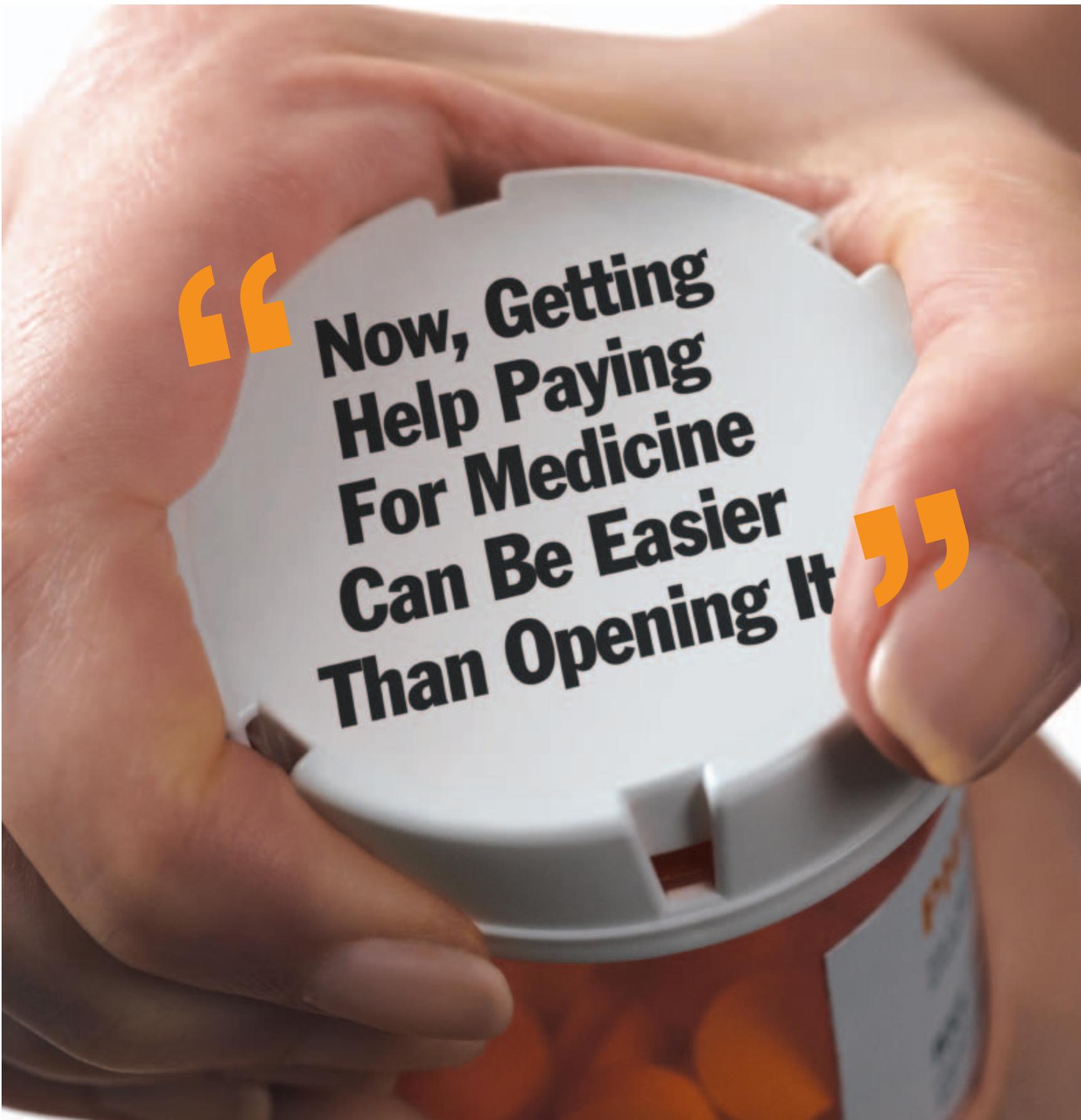
Everage, 39, was working on a cruise ship in Hawaii when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit New Orleans and like many others she observed the devastation of her home on television.

"Everything was crushed and saturated weeks ago and then the second storm hit and I'm watching [television] and saying, 'That's my neighborhood,'" she said. And then they said the lower Ninth Ward got hit the worst. And I'm thinking, 'The levee that broke is right where I live.'"

Everage lived in a largely African-American community best known for producing cultural icons like Antonine "Fats" Domino Jr., the legendary rock-and-roll star and Kalamu ya Salaam, a dramatist, fiction writer and prolific poet.

Like a small city within a city, the Lower Ninth Ward is bounded by the Southern Railway railroad and Florida Avenue Canal to the north, the St. Bernard Parish line to the east, St. Claude Avenue to the south and the Industrial Canal to the west, which effectively isolates the enclave from the rest of New Orleans.

Wrested from the wilds of a cypress swamp by poor African-Americans and immigrant laborers from Ireland, Italy and Germany, the Ward was among the last of the city's neighborhoods to be developed. And



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Millions of people without prescription coverage have already received their brand-name medicines free or nearly free. But many more can use some help. That's why America's pharmaceutical companies are working together with health care providers and community groups to make getting medicine easier.

To see if you may qualify,
call **1-888-4PPA-NOW** or visit www.pparx.org



**Partnership for
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