One would be pressed to say these aren’t trying times for many New Orleanians, for many have perished and their lives have changed forever during the past year, but every cloud has a silver lining; where the luminous colors of the rainbow appears after the storm. In our city while many have suffered many more through strength and fortitude have triumphed and have persevered proving there is light at the end of the tunnel. Data News Weekly 40th Anniversary Gala this year is a special celebration as it commemorates the survival of a people, and
the continuing mission of a paper that has for four decades given a voice to the voiceless, and been an inspiration for those who dare to dream. It has over the years placed the spotlight on many great people and their accomplishments, and presently is at the forefront of chronicling what is happening in a city that is on the verge of an amazing renaissance.

This year’s event promises to be yet another spectacular extravaganza of food, music, and fun. The date is set for August 25, 2006 at the African-American Museum at 1408 Gov. Nicholls in the historic Tremé neighborhood; which is the oldest surviving African-American community in the United States. The event will place the spotlight on trailblazers from the past year as they will be honored for their benevolence and the recipients of the JMU scholarships will also be honored in addition to the unveiling of the recipient of the coveted Trailblazer of the Year goes one extraordinary individual who has selflessly given of themselves for the benefit of others.

The entertainment as always will showcase some of the best the crescent city has to offer with performances by Phillip Manuel, Kermit Ruffins, Samarih Evans, and many others. Manuel, who is a regular performer at the gala, has said that he feels honored for his benevolence and the recipients of the JMU scholarships will also be honored in addition to the unveiling of the recipient of the coveted Trailblazer of the Year.

Glenn Jones speaks about the importance of education knowing no bounds, it’s like the song says the ‘Children are the Future’ and that is so true.” And in response to being recognized as a Data News Weekly Trailblazer he beams with pride, “The Trailblazer Award is a wonderful honor for it recognizes those who do good works in the community.”

February 2006 Trailblazer Wilbert ‘Chill’ Wilson makes the connection between education and being an essential tool for survival, “I think education is extremely vital to your survival, it is as important as breathing.” As Data News WeeklyTrailblazer he beams with pride, “The Trailblazer Award is a wonderful honor for it recognizes those who do good works in the community.”

As Data News Weekly continues serving the community DNW Marketing and Advertising Vice President Glenn Jones speaks about the importance of this gala and his family’s commitment to the New Orleans community. “This gala is a chance for us to give back to the community.”

And this year’s gala is special in so many ways, it symbolizes the commitment of a paper to continue to give back and be the voice of a community. It is staying true to its motto as truly being the people’s paper. Glenn Jones pride is evident as he speaks of Data News and it’s relationship and importance to African-Americans in New Orleans as it forges ahead. “We take a lot of pride in serving our community, and people know when they look inside the pages of Data News Weekly they can find and view information that is pertinent to African-Americans, and this party is a statement to say we are back and we’re here to serve our community.”

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Upon completion of this form, a spot will be provisionally reserved for your child. To complete this enrollment parents must visit a registration center in New Orleans before August 12, 2006 to complete the process.

Call toll free… to register by phone or to obtain more information 1-877-453-2721

Register by phone to reserve a provisional spot for your child. To complete this enrollment parents must visit a registration center in New Orleans before August 12, 2006 to complete the process.

Hours of Operation:
- Monday-Friday: 9am – 5pm*
- Saturdays: 11am – 3pm

* Open until 7pm on Tuesdays, closed on Sundays and on Labor Day (Sept. 4th)
Chief Warren Riley is the fierce leader of the New Orleans Police Department. He has inherited a department that is attempting to rebuild itself after coming under scrutiny during Hurricane Katrina. With the recent surge in crime that included two high profile murders many citizens are afraid that we may return to the city of old where we once led the nation in the number of murders. Chief Riley is a twenty-five year veteran of the police force and is an eloquent, polished, articulate-field general attempting to lead his troops and the department in a new direction in the fight against crime in the serving and protecting the citizens of New Orleans. Data News Weekly had the unique opportunity to talk with Riley in an exclusive in depth interview:

**EB:** What are your feelings about the recent surge in violent crime?

**WR:** From a law enforcement perspective we may look at it differently than the citizens, when we look at our data we are actually down 54% in our overall crime rate. This year right now we have 84 murders which are too many, but last year at this time we had 187 murders, but we are waiting for some population figures to come out so we can do it on a per capita basis. Yes we have had some high profile murders recently, and the national media has reported that but I think it’s been an injustice how they have portrayed the city on a national level, but overall crime is down and the city is safer than it was a year ago.

**EB:** It’s interesting you mention the media; do you think that the focus on the crime problem is more media hype, or is it an indication that there is a serious problem that citizens need to concern themselves about if and when they return to the city?

**WR:** As I said before crime is down in our city. New Orleans today is safer than it has been in probably fifty years. The sad part about it is that most of the victims of violence leading to death are young black men under thirty. And what do you do when you think about it is that most of the victims of violence leading to death are young black men under thirty.

**EB:** As I said before crime is down in our city. New Orleans today is safer than it has been in probably fifty years. The sad part about it is that most of the victims of violence leading to death are young black men under thirty. And what do you do when you think about it is that most of the victims of violence leading to death are young black men under thirty.

**EB:** With this recent increase in violent crime we have a lot of people that are concerned about the safety of their city. Can we do anything as citizens to keep our city safe?

**WR:** It’s our job to protect the citizens of New Orleans. Data News Weekly had the unique opportunity to talk with Riley in an exclusive in depth interview:

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**WR:** It’s our job to protect the citizens of New Orleans.
**STATE & LOCAL NEWS**

**Slaughter commits Southern to Black publishers: ‘You are our gatekeepers’**

By: Cora J. Lester

Black newspaper and magazine publishers from across the state gathered in Baton Rouge earlier this week for the bi-annual meeting of the Louisiana Black Publishers Association. Southern University System president Ralph Slaughter, Ph.D., delivered a riveting keynote address recommitting the historically black college system to better relations with the publishers.

“You are the gatekeepers of our communities,” said Slaughter. “We need better access into the communities and we know you can do it. You willingly tell the story other media refuse to tell.”

Slaughter said he will build on Southern’s collaborative with the association, keep the publishers informed and work with them to disseminate positive news. “We will be more responsive to you.”

**Festivities for Judge Bonin Brings Out The Community**

Over 550 friends and well wishers attended a fund raiser/victory party for Judge Bonin held at The Republic. A host of elected officials attended including Judge Sean Early, Constable Lambert Boissiere, Sheriff Paul Valteau, City Council Members Cynthia Williard Lewis, Arnie Fielkow, James Carter, Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Judge Robert Jones, Judge Ronald Sholes, Judge Nadine Ramsey, Judge Roland Belsome, Dale Atkins, and many others. Pictured above are (l to r) Judge Bonin, Gail Barnes-McConduit, & Data News Weekly Publisher, Terry Jones.

**New Orleans-area Barnes & Noble Names Local Best-seller “Chummy’s Spirit”**

New Orleans, LA - Barnes & Noble in Harvey, LA named Chummy’s Spirit, the debut novel by Hal Clark, host of WYLD-FM’s Sunday Journal, a book club reading selection for the month of September, as part of the store’s focus on promoting outstanding fiction by African-American writers. The culminating event, consisting of a reading, discussion and signing, happens Friday, September 15th at Barnes & Noble, 1601 Westbank Expressway in Harvey, beginning at 7 p.m. “Hal Clark takes readers on an incredible journey. A journey filled with tremendous highs and abysmal lows,” says Travis Williams.
Art is an expression of the soul, it is the essence of taking the non material and making into the material, it is the manifestation of the inner depths of the soul; it is the ultimate gift; a connecting of oneself to the world around them through aesthetic expression. This statement epitomizes the life’s mission and work of August 2006 Trailblazer Jamie Jones.

His life began as a young boy growing up the fifth of seven children; in this large household he would first experience his love of art. “My older brother Timothiy would draw pictures of comic book characters, and entertainers like Bootsy Collins, and martial arts expert Bruce Lee, and I would go in when he wasn’t home and trace them.” Years would pass and Jones would privately hone his craft, it wasn’t until years later while a student at Delgado Community College where he discovered his love of art could become his life’s work and passion, “These years sparked my interest, I began designing sets in several stage productions, and I found I truly enjoyed the creative process seeing something you picture in your mind actually come to live.”

His interest in working with kids began while working as an educational art assistant, at the New Orleans Children Museum where he worked for seven years. “From that point on I felt I wanted to work with children so I changed my major to Art Education and transferred to Xavier University.” While a student at Xavier he began working with Young Audiences, in addition to the African-American Museum. Over the years he has worked at the Rosenwald Center, and presently is a resident visual artist at Fisher Elementary School in Algiers. As he has taught children to explore the inner depths of themselves through art conversely, he has learned much from them, “I’ve learned to appreciate the simple things in life, they draw pictures of things we as adults think aren’t significant.” He continues, “There are no boundaries to their imaginations aren’t significant.” He continues, “There are no boundaries to their imaginations.”

The historical legacy of race has doused the flames of many who have had a burning desire to succeed but see race as and impediment, Jones understands this but yet has not let that stand in the way in his quest towards to strive for excellence in every aspect of his life, “I feel sometimes we as African-American let the color of our skin limit our true potential and our ability to dream.” Continuing his thought, “It reminds me of W.E.B. DuBois in the Souls Of Black Folks when he talks about the idea of double consciousness; to understand one is unique in that he or she is American, but yet more unique in that we have a different perspective in that we are African-American.”

Striving for excellence has been a constant in Jones’ life, as Staff Sergeant and a member of the 1192nd Transportation Terminal Brigade of the Army Reserve he has served in the military for 14 years. In his recent past he would experience a true test of his will, courage, and fortitude as this all came to a head when he found himself as one of the many reservist deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom. “I felt a great sense of pride in serving my country and making the ultimate sacrifice in supporting my country in its mission to spread democracy around the world.” He served on active duty for eighteen months stateside providing supplies for soldiers fighting in Iraq, reflecting on this trying time in his life he says, “At times it was very demanding, it tapped into a part of me that I didn’t know was there; to push myself to go that extra mile to accomplish our mission.”

Upon returning to the states, and needing some time alone; he left for Germany where he spent several weeks reflecting on the eighteen months he spent deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom, “I needed a moment of clarity, some time to think about what I’d been through, and counting my blessings that I made it back alive.” Soon after returning from Germany the waters of Katrina ravaged the city and the breaching of the levees left many in the city homeless including Jones who found himself in Houston like many considering his future, and his options, like many he thought of starting anew in another city, but then made a tough decision to come back to the Crescent City. “I decided to come back to New Orleans, because I started something I wanted to finish, and that was to graduate from Xavier University, and when I heard the words of Dr. Norman C. Francis when he said Xavier will re-open I decided I would come back and complete my degree.”

Jones came back focused on accomplishing his goal which was to complete his studies. For his senior Art Show his piece would hold special significance; as it the culmination of his experience as a soldier. His project was entitled ‘Formation’ in it Jones with assistance of a close group of friends, many of them fellow soldiers helped him put together an exhibit that would feature 2436 dog tags displayed paying tribute to the lives of soldiers that have died during Operation Iraqi Freedom while serving their country. “The passion in his voice as evidence of his commitment as he stated, “Whether you agree with the war or not I do have my own feelings on the subject, but I feel it is irrelevant when it comes to this exhibit.” “What angers me most of all, is that these young men and women are dying and their ultimate personal sacrifices are being forgotten by the media and other people who want to politicize what is happening.”

On August 12, 2006 Jamie achieved his goal as he walked across the stage during Xavier University’s graduation ceremony, receiving his B.A. in Art Education. “It was very emotional yet sad, I found myself fighting back tears, I triumphed, and my true source of inspiration my mother who suffers from Alzheimer’s wasn’t able to be there to share it with me.” As Jones moves on to the next challenge in life he continues to work and inspire young people through his work as an art teacher. His immediate personal goal is to begin Graduate School, and get a Master’s Degree in Community Arts. “After that I want to set up art programs in the inner-city where art can serve as an alternative to crime and violence.” Jamie Jones is a teacher, mentor, soldier, and an artist who has truly used his gift of art; giving of his soul and heart positively affecting and impacting the lives of those he’s encountered in his artistic journey. Throughout his adult life he has been a force for change, and that’s why he has been honored as August 2006 Data News Weekly Trailblazer.
Before I get started I just want to remind those who have enjoyed the “Between The Lines” television show, that on Sunday August 7th at 7pm Paul Beaulieu and I along with a couple of younger commentators, Eddie Francis of FM98 and Mark Taylor will be doing a live “performance” we are calling “The Katrina Commentaries”. We hope those who support the show with their viewing will support us in a real live presentation and help us get a solid handle on the moods, feelings, hopes and plans of our fellow citizens. Now, on with the column.

If you are reading this it means that in one way or another you have survived both Hurricane Katrina and forty years of DATA News. One was a severe problem and the other is a serious solution.

A good friend of mine called a week ago to express gratitude for my column about the indecision and confusion in my and other people’s lives who live in New Orleans. His words were, “It’s not just me!

If there is anything about myself that I can put my finger on, its my understanding that other people are pretty much just like me, and try to carefully deal with people based on that assumption. I used the word carefully because there are evil and insane people in the world, and it takes time to tell.

One of the things I assume is that generally the person who starts a conversation needs something from the person they addressed. Truthful, fact filled, compassionate communication is probably the easiest and best way people should get what they need from one another.

It is unfortunate that so many people go through life feeling like the Lone Ranger, because we are only different in our knowledge and experiences, and the more we share those the more we become like one another, and that’s also how bonding and falling and living in love work.

OPINION

What Do You Want From Me?

So I know that is you approach me, you want something from me, even though it might be nothing more than a minute’s companionship, but you need something from me. Now what if I were to get an attitude every time someone needs something from me? Hell, I’d be angry (and miserable) all the time. I prefer to withhold judgment until I know what you need, because I’ve also discovered that what most people need is information, they just need to tap into my knowledge.

The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

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COMMENTARY

Doing Business and Finding Work in the Gulf

Beyond the Rhetoric

By. Harry C. Alford
NNPA Columnist

It has been almost a year since the Lord unleashed the most devastating hurricane to hit the coast of the United States. It seems like yesterday that the neglect, incompetence and abyss that followed were portrayed on world television. The United States was going through World War III devastation and appeared to be heading straight for a new holocaust. Two and a half million citizens were spread throughout the United States like destitute refugees. May this tragedy never repeat itself.

As the storm approached the United States, FEMA sat at the table and began cutting up the huge no-bid contracts. The recipients were mostly part of the Military Industrial Complex (MIC), the same guys milking Iraq for no-bid contracts while your children are put in harms way are now enjoying the fruits of rebuilding. Billions of dollars have been handed over to those members of the MIC or new players who have hired the right lobbying firms. An example is Ashbritt, a Florida firm rather new at the disaster recovery game. They hired the lobbying firm of Haley Barbour, the governor of Mississippi, and miraculously are now receiving contracts approaching a billion dollars.

Initially, the MIC members had the lock on what was available. If a Black business owners wanted work, they had to approach them. Basically, what MIC members did was rake their desired profit off the top of a pending project and then shop the actual work on the street for a desired reduced price. The second tier would come in and then emulate the same practice to a third tier. Some of these levels went on for four or five rounds. The last tier would be the “sucker”. This would be the firm that was removing debris for $16 a square yard while the MIC member got $40 for the same square yard. The levels in between took their reduced share and finally the “sucker” did the actual work for very little profit. He would be lucky if he got paid at all. Many of the lower tiers were quickly formed limited liability companies that would pile the debt up while the profit went to the actual organizers. The “sucker” would be scrambling around trying to get paid and the LLC organizers had left the state and never to be found.

The above happened too many times. But there are some success stories. Business owners with background in debris removal and the contracting process approached the big boys like Shaw, Bechtel, etc. on a second-tier level and performed straight up business. A nice Black couple in Mississippi has been doing very well. Perhaps the best is my guy Vern in Louisiana. Vern grew up in the debris hauling and trucking business. He worked the Hurricanes Camille, Andrew, Hugo and others. To date, Vern’s company has done more than $68 million in debris removal and has hired just about his entire church and neighborhood. The Mississippi couple, Vern and others know what they are doing and can meet the demands. This is no place for perpetrators or amateurs.

The good work is around the corner. Thank God! The Gulf Coast Workforce Initiative has taken form. We will be training more than 20,000 residents in construction trades and put them in the new Gulf Rebuilding workforce. I am happy to say that the first training classes have graduated 90 percent minority in Mississippi and 60 percent in Louisiana. These classes are now known as GREAT – Gulf Rebuild: Education, Advancement and Training. If you have 8th grade reading and math skills and are drug free, please call 1-888-524-7328 or visit www.imgreat.org and sign up for a class in your community.

With money finally flowing, we are about to see the biggest rebuilding job in the history of America. New Orleans will see at least $60 billion in new development and Mayor Nagin has declared a 35 percent goal for minority businesses. The Housing Authority of New Orleans, HANO, has long been the model for contract diversity and they will have close to $4 billion in new affordable housing that we must get totally involved in from beginning to end. I firmly believe that 50 percent of this activity will involve Black owned businesses. We are prepared, willing and able. New Orleans is about to become the next Atlanta. Are you ready?

The US Army Corps of Engineers has changed its mindset and, locally, is now committed to working with our businesses. The New Orleans District Office is the place to contact. The Small Business contact is Randy Marchiafava. You can contact him at randy.j.marchiafava@usace.army.mil or 504-892-2627. Their website is www.mvn.usace.army.mil/.

 Hustlers, schemers, etc. beware – we are going to keep it real.

Harry C. Alford is president/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce. www.nationalbcc.org. Email: info@nationalbcc.org
We’ll Be Back!

By Shedrick ‘Big Shed’ White

It is the land
Of brass bands
Second lines on Sundays
Red beans and rice on Mondays
And any given day, the bus stop
Is a backdrop
Of a peculiar picture
And strange mixture
Of gold teeth and dreadlocks
White Ts and Reeboks
Gold weave and Daniel Green Flip Flops
They call it the city that care forgot
But I call it home
So I roam
Any part of the city
Uptown, Downtown, in the East and Gentilly
Taking pleasure in small joys
Of Gumbo and Po Boys
Where young boys
Tie soldier rags around their head

I still can remember the first time I said
‘Throw me something mister’
I miss the
Traffic
From the Bayou Classic
But at night
Street life
Can be tragic
Bourbon Street, booze and black magic
Wards, warriors, and whooties
But they all know me
And they all show me...LOVE
Because
We are the Big Easy, shaped like a crescent
And no flood water can stop his blessing
My city will rise like a phoenix
Shine like a star
Well We’ll be back in the street partying for
Mardi Gras

An American Tragedy

World Premiere Screening
Hosted by Spike Lee • New Orleans Arena
Wednesday, Aug. 16 at 7:30PM
Spike Lee Premieres
When The Levees Broke: A Requiem In Four Acts

Story and Photos by: Ramone Jones
August 16, 2006 was a historic occasion in the city of New Orleans, renown filmmaker Spike Lee premiered his much anticipated documentary When The Levees Broke: A Requiem In Four Acts at the New Orleans Arena. A capacity crowd was on hand to experience a film that amazingly captured the essence of this American tragedy. Data News Weekly was on hand to capture this historic event.

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City of New Orleans Communications Director Cecon Quiet, Kenya Smith Head of N.O. Intergovernmental Affairs and Data News Weekly Advertising and Marketing V.P. Glenn Jones
Two of the many N.O. residents who appear in the film Hot 8 Brass Band members L-Harry Cook and Dinerral Shaveres with L-Alicia St. Cyr and Tiffany Shaveres.

Data News Glenn Jones and When The Levees Broke one of the persons profiled in the film, the outspoken Phyllis Montana LeBlanc.

Dr. Corey Hebert is one of the many New Orleanians who came out to witness and be part of this historic night.

Mayor Ray Nagin and Sen. Bill Jefferson share a light moment before the film.

Dr. Corey Hebert is one of the many New Orleanians who came out to witness and be part of this historic night.
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A new breed of urban mayors appears to be bringing a new attitude and approach to revitalizing ailing inner cities and making the African-American community a bigger player in that process.

They’re building upon the foundations laid to help minorities to gain educational, economic and political power – via affirmative action, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act – and pushing the envelope with innovative ideas and assertiveness.

The National Urban League’s 2006 conference last month featured a panel discussion regarding revitalization of the nation’s inner cities. The session featured Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Baton Rouge Mayor Melvin “Kip” Holden and Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, three mayors from very different cities in very different regions of the country. Regardless, they’ve all got one mission in mind – to resurrect our ailing inner cities.

“We vote. We pay taxes. We are part of the economy – of the economic, political and social fabric of the cities. As such, we expect to be a part of the building and rebuilding process from beginning to end – from the planning boards to completion,” said moderator John W. Mack, former president and CEO of the Los Angeles Urban League and current president of the Los Angeles Police Commission.

Essential to the urban renewal process must be a commitment to collaboration or as Villaraigosa phrased it – pooling our strengths and not dividing our power.

“I’m here to say that we need to get together. I’m here to say we need to stay together. We need to lead together. We need to engage the fight on behalf of all disadvantaged families struggling in America today,” said Villaraigosa, who rode a wave of multicultural support – a broad coalition of blacks, Latinos, Asians and whites – to become the city’s first Latino mayor in 133 years.

“Some people would say I snuck into UCLA through the back door. But one thing’s for sure: I got out through the front door. And I’m here today because the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act opened up our country. I’m here today because there was a labor movement to protect and sustain my community. I’m here because I had access to a good public education,” he said.

Getting a strong public education these days is a serious challenge for inner-city minorities in Los Angeles, where nearly 60 percent of African-Americans drop out of school. That is why reforming the Los Angeles Unified School District is his administration’s top priority.

“There may not a governor blocking the schoolhouse door. We may not see the ranks of the National Guard lining the streets in riot gear. But the barriers to opportunity today are every bit as insidious as they were in Birmingham or Montgomery or Central High School in Little Rock, Ark., in 1957,” he said. “We can’t widen the circle or increase minority participation in the economic life of our cities or deliver the promise of opportunity, if we don’t stand up and address the failure of our public schools in cities across the country.”

This new breed of urban mayor is also trying to increase minority participation in economic development by lending more transparency to the city contracting process.

For years, the city of Baton Rouge, La., relied on the good-ole-boy network to get things done. That was until 2005, when Mayor Melvin “Kip” Holden took office. Holden immediately assessed the city’s contracting practices and found minority representation to be seriously lacking.

Holden made fixes to the way contracts are granted, requiring many more to be approved by city council than in the past. The state’s Association of General Contractors, which had been long opposed to efforts to send more business to minority firms, finally conceded. They realized that by not opening up the process to more minority firms in the area that would mean losing business to companies outside the region.

The city has also put in place a banker’s roundtable to pressure banks to pool their resources to fund minority businesses and is working with local universities and high schools to target and recruit promising minority engineering students. Opening up the realm of opportunities to all just made sense to Holden.
Michigan Governor Asks Judge to keep Affirmative Action

By. Diane Bukowski
Special to the NNPA from the Michigan Citizen

DETROIT (NNPA) — Gov. Jennifer Granholm has thrown her support behind a federal lawsuit to keep affirmative action as state law. She joins the effort to keep the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative’s anti-affirmative action proposal off the state ballot in November.

The lawsuit was filed by Operation King’s Dream, Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, two union locals and signers of petitions for the proposal. The Detroit City Council, the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus, Keep the Vote No Takeover, and the Arab-American Anti Discrimination Committee among others have passed resolutions supporting the suit.

In a brief filed Aug. 14, Granholm asked Tarnow to conclude “that the MCRI campaign was designed to deceive targeted Michigan voters — especially African American and Latino voters — into supporting an initiative they passionately oppose . . . To allow this initiative to remain on the ballot pollutes our voting system and undermines the freedom of political choice that necessarily accompanies the right to vote.”

The MCRI has proposed to amend Michigan’s constitution to ban all affirmative action in government and public school hiring, contracting and admissions. The group is funded by ultraconservative California businessman Ward Connerly and other wealthy right wing supporters.

Granholm noted that Michigan courts had ruled that the MCRI initiative did not violate state law. She asked Tarnow to rule that it does violate the federal Voting Rights Act, under a section which says, “if, based on the totality of the circumstances, it is shown that that political processes leading to the nomination or election . . . are not equally open to participation by members of a class of citizens [protected under the act].”

She cited the testimony of hundreds of petition signers and circulators at four hearings conducted by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and authorized by her office, that they were deceived into thinking that the MCRI proposal supported affirmative action.

She noted particularly the testimony of Detroit pastor Nathaniel Smith. Smith testified in Lansing that he circulated MCRI petitions because he was told they were pro-affirmative action, until he discovered that he had been lied to.

“I’m very politically active,” said Smith during that hearing. “I started letting everybody know the true meaning of what the petition was about. But I was totally hurt that there were hundreds, hundreds of people that had signed the petition, totally 100 percent under false pretenses.”

MCRI executive director Jennifer Gratz claimed that Granholm’s action was calculated to help her with her base in the November election. Gratz has said she supports Granholm’s Republican opponent, Dick DeVos.

One United Michigan, a broad-based coalition of business, labor, social and religious organizations, is campaigning across the state for a vote against the MCRI initiative if it remains on the ballot.

A similar initiative in California, also sponsored by Connerly, was successful. It has reportedly resulted in severe drops in the numbers of African-American and Latino admissions to that state’s universities, although recent census figures show that whites are now a minority in that state.
Dear Readers:

On behalf of the staff at Data News Weekly, I am offering my thanks to the people of New Orleans who have been our loyal readers for making it possible for Data News Weekly to celebrate our 40th Anniversary.

For four decades, Data News Weekly has served as a beacon of truth and information vital to the citizens of New Orleans. As with any family owned business, times were not always easy in it’s history, these recent days being the most difficult, however, throughout trials and challenges faced, Data has remained steady, and has kept it’s place in the forefront of the community. This has in no small way, impacted this city, especially today, in a profound and meaningful way. I offer my commendation to you the people, for your perseverance after the Katrina disaster. To my staff, it goes to say, that being the first publication in New Orleans to get back on it’s feet, and get the news out to the people, was a tremendous accomplishment, and I salute you for your dedication.

I also would like to thank the many readers who called us, wrote us, and directed us in covering and made sure that we played an important role in the recent City of New Orleans Municipal Elections. Data’s commitment to ensuring that every citizen of the City of New Orleans, whether they were in New Orleans, or in one of the many temporary cities throughout the country, had all of the information they needed to cast their votes, was vital in keeping our people engaged and in control of what happened with their city government, and will eventually lead to all those who want to return home, being able and welcome to do so.

As publisher, I am committed to cultivating and maintaining our heritage which is wholly New Orleanian. At the same time, I want to, on this occasion recommit myself and Data News Weekly to the constant challenge of telling the news that matters to our community. Those stories that have historically gone untold, those that have been mistold and those which need to be retold. These are the stories you will continue to read in Data, and as always, we will work to make certain that we continue to be “The People’s Paper” for the next 40 years.

I invite all of our friends and citizens to join me as we celebrate on Friday, August 5, At the African American Museum, 7pm. We hope to see you there, and we hope that you will continue to support Data News Weekly.

Sincerely,

Terry B. Jones
Publisher
Twenty-five Years into the Epidemic, AIDS still ‘Outpaces’ a Cure

By George E. Curry

NNPA Editor-in-Chief

TORONTO (NNPA) – The math is maddeningly simple. Between 2003 and 2005, a period of rapidly expanding AIDS funding, the number of people in low- and middle-income countries receiving antiretroviral drugs increased by an average of 450,000 per year. During that same period, the number of new infections averaged 4.6 million a year. The bottom line: For every person who was treated for AIDS, another 10 became infected.

Helene D. Gayle, president of the International AIDS Society and co-chair of the recently-concluded International AIDS Conference here, put it this way: “Today, 25 years into this epidemic, we have a real opportunity to deliver like never before. We have more resources than ever, more knowledge than ever, more political commitments than ever. Still, the epidemic continues to outpace us.”

Another set of figures illustrates Gayle’s point. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS – 38.6 million – is double the total for 1995. In 2005, an estimated 4.1 million people became newly-infected with HIV, accounting for 90 percent of new infections. During that same year, 2.8 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses.

Dr. Peter Piot, UNAIDS executive director, stated without equivocation: “Tragically, the end of AIDS is nowhere in sight.”

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus, the disease that causes AIDS. It destroys certain blood cells necessary for the normal functioning of the immune system, the mechanism that defends the body against illness. AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency. It occurs when a person’s immune system is so weakened by HIV that cancers and diseases develop. Vaccines to prevent HIV infection or strengthen the immune system’s ability to defend itself are being tested around the world. Under the most optimistic projections, a successful vaccine is still years away.

Absent an effective vaccine, those hoping to curb – or at least make a dent in the HIV/AIDS pandemic – are relying on more aggressive prevention programs and better delivery systems, especially in rural areas around the world.

As Phil Wilson, executive director of the Black AIDS Institute in Los Angeles, said at this year’s international convention: “AIDS is a Black disease.” Globally and within the United States, according to UNAIDS, a joint United Nations program that combines the resources of 10 UN organizations with those of the World Bank, AIDS has already claimed the lives of more than 25 million people. The epidemic has taken its greatest toll on sub-Saharan Africa.

Though it has only 10 to 11 percent of the world’s population, the region has almost two-thirds of people living with HIV/AIDS – 24.5 million. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 87 percent of the 2.3 million children living with HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, 5.3 million people are living with AIDS, or almost 1 in 5.

The Caribbean is the second-most affected region in the world. AIDS is the leading cause of death among 15-44-year-olds. In both sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, addressing the problem is complicated by other factors, including poverty, discrimination, unemployment, stigma and gender inequality.

People of African decent face a similar fate in the United States:

• Although African-Americans are only 13 percent of the U.S. population, they represent 49 percent of all AIDS cases diagnosed in 2004.
• The AIDS rate among Blacks was 10.2 times that of Whites in 2004.
• Of new cases of AIDS reported among women, Black females accounted for 67 percent of the cases, White women 17 percent and Hispanics 14 percent and
• Although African-American teens represent only 15 percent of U.S. teenagers, they were 66 percent of all new AIDS cases reported among teens.

While there is no vaccine on the horizon, the medical community is not standing still in the face of those sad figures.

“We want to call on everyone here and around the world to help speed up what we hope will be the next big breakthrough in the fight against AIDS. We have the discovery of a microbubble or an oral prevention drug that can block the transmission of HIV,” Bill Gates told delegates here. “This could mark a turning point in the epidemic, and we have to make that an urgent priority.”

Melinda Gates, in a joint appearance with her husband, explained: “Microbicides are gels or creams that women can use to block infection. They’re the first preventive tools that would be intended specifically for women’s use. Sixteen candidate microbicides are now being clinically evaluated. Of those 16, five are in major advanced studies.”

Another source of optimism, she said, is an oral prevention drug. “The hope behind this research, as you know, is that the antiretroviral drugs that are now used for treatment might also be effective for prevention. Antiretroviral drugs have already been proven to lower the risk of infection for babies born to infected mothers. Some have been successful in preventing HIV infection in animals. Drug trials are planned or underway in Peru, Botswana, Thailand, and the United States. These studies are promising, but we need more trials of more candidates in more places — for both microbicides and oral prevention drugs — if we’re going to stop the spread of HIV.”

Surprisingly, some of the cutting-edge research is determining that one source of protection against HIV is male circumcision. Two years ago, a trial in South Africa funded by France, found that circumcised men had a 60 percent less chance of contracting HIV than uncircumcised men. Similar studies are now underway in Uganda and Kenya.

Former President Bill Clinton told the delegates, “I know the scientific jury is still out, and I know a couple of more studies are being done, but should this be shown to be effective, we will have another means to prevent the spread of the disease and to save lives. And we will have another job to do, a big job — first in selling it, and secondly in providing safe, effective comprehensive and rapid access to it.” He acknowledged that there will be “a lot of trouble to get it done.”

Trouble or no trouble, some worry about sending mixed signals about the procedure.

“Even if further trials show a lower risk of HIV infection in circumcised men, male circumcision will not provide complete protection against HIV infection,” Catherine Hawkins, chief scientific adviser for UNAIDS, said in a statement. “Condom use remains essential. In still-HIV-infected and business in the New Orleans area.

BellSouth is upgrading its network with fiber optics and elevating key network facilities. These improvements will enable us to bring the newest technology and most advanced services to our neighbors and businesses in the New Orleans area.

We encourage our customers to review their hurricane preparation procedures and to check the helpful hints posted on our website, www.bellsouth.com/starlines (for consumers) and www.bellsouth.com/businesslines (for businesses).

Our sincerest thanks to our customers for their loyalty to BellSouth as we work together to rebuild our community.

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the District Attorneys Office as well as at the Judicial Level with judges. But crime is also a social problem, what it is in your opinion that citizens can do to help fight and prevent crime?

**WR:** You've mentioned two interesting things one about the criminal justice system and how it relates to getting citizens involved. What we have right now is a broken criminal justice system. What we need to do is restore the citizens confidence because people were afraid to be witnesses pre-Katrina, our system may have not been completely broken, but it was highly deficient, we had a revolving door, people were being let out of jail based on plea bargains and not going to jail. There were some judges who gave ridiculously low bonds to violent offenders. How are you as a citizen going to stand up, when you know he may be back walking down the street in your community three days later, why would somebody want to put their lives on the line when there is no guarantee the system is going to work like its supposed to?

**EB:** If you had a wish list, what is it that you feel the department needs to better help fight crime?

**WR:** The New Orleans Police Department primarily needs a functioning criminal justice system, we need resources, and I must give the federal government credit in that we are finally getting the resources that we need. However, the 7th, 5th and 3rd Districts were destroyed where now many of us are working out of trailers. We need our buildings up and running so we can be more efficient. There are some other things that I'm pushing in that we're dealing demanding more professionalism from our officers, maybe bring in some training and professional development. But one of the positive things that have come out of this devastation is that we have an opportunity to rebuild a completely new police department and a criminal justice system. And we can do the job adequately and give the people a level of service they deserve.

**WR:** If you could tell the people from New Orleans that's scattered across the country one thing what would you tell them?

**WR:** Continue to pray, New Orleans will be back, for those in other places go on with your lives for now New Orleans will be here when you are ready to come back. New Orleans will be a better if not bigger city. It will be a more productive more wholesome city. And stay prayed up and keep the faith.
Ralph Slaughter, Ph.D., delivered a riveting keynote address recommitting the historically black college system to better relations with the publishers.

“You are the gatekeepers of our communities,” said Slaughter. “We need better access into the communities and we know you can do it...You willingly tell the story other media refuse to tell.” Slaughter said he will build on Southern’s collaborative with the association, keep the publishers informed and work with them to disseminate positive news. “We will be more responsive to you.” Slaughter joined representatives from the Governors Office, Liberty Bank, Democratic Party, Spencer Media, Louisiana Legislature, the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Jozef PA the Southern University Ag Center, Citadel Broadcasting, BellSouth, and others in commending the publishers on a job well done.

As part of the meeting’s focus to “Link the State,” LBPA members met with local corporate, small business, and government officials to discuss the role of Louisiana’s Black media in impacting economic and political decisions.

State Representative Michael Jackson encouraged the group to maintain constant connections with leaders to better inform their readers. “Meetings like these are effective,” he said. LBPA president Eddie Ponds said the association is confident that “key friends see us as being more viable and see our publications as critical tools in the various things they are working on.” The group elected the following members to the executive committee: President - Leon Coleman, publisher, Alexandria News Weekly; Vice President - Rev. Ivory Payne, publisher, Baton Rouge Weekly; Press Secretary - William Torrell, publisher, Bluff City Post; Treasurer - Melinda Sylvester, publisher, Faith and Soul Magazine. They will assume office September 19, 2006 and hold the position until 2008.

LBPA is the member organization for Black-owned newspapers and magazines. Its mission is to aid in sustaining Black publications by increasing readability, readership, and revenue. LBPA is headquartered at 118 South 19th Street in Baton Rouge, LA. The office telephone number is (225) 383-4488. The website is www.lablackpublishers.com. government officials to discuss the role of Louisiana’s Black media in impacting economic and political decisions.

James, have been found in Tay Ninh, Vietnam 32 years after he had been reported missing in action. Chummy has never left Louisiana, but seriously considers visiting the site where James’ remains were located. This long-awaited revelation also encourages her to finally inquire about the sketchy details surrounding the death of her husband, Jolly, who was murdered in a New Orleans brothel ten years after James’ disappearance.

Chummy’s, continued from page 5.

Her church community sponsors a series of Saturday afternoon dinners in an effort to raise money for her potential trip. She inspires a host of women who raise money for her potential trip.
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