

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone

Page 8

Dreamgirls Destiny is a Hit!

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Jefferson Goes Back to Washington



The Soul of New Orleans

Page 2



NewsMaker | Angela Davis
Page 4 | Speaks Out



Inside Data | Saints Dole out a Whoopin!
Page 5

COVER STORY

Congressman William Jefferson Wins Re-election



Rep. Jefferson thanks his many supporters in his victorious campaign to hold his 2nd District Congressional seat.



Derrick Shepherd speaks to crowd at Jefferson campaign celebration.



New Orleans City Councilperson Cynthia Willard Lewis speaks words of support to the Re-elected Congressman

By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Glenn Summers

William Jefferson won in his recent re-election bid one which was a bitter hard fought contest against State Representative Karen Carter who led in the race in terms of fund raising and endorsements, but lost where it counted most; at the polls. This election defies the old adage that lightning never strikes twice in the same place; which is in fact more of a myth than reality, but these incumbents overcame what looked like insurmountable odds during the Mayoral Election and now the race for the Second Congressional District Two. Holding onto their offices as the

city is fighting to recover after Hurricane Katrina and the breaching of the levees left the city in a state of devastation. In both races we found embattled incumbents who were engaged in tough re-election campaigns where the local political, business, and mainstream media establishment turned their backs on them in support of their opponents in the name of moving the city and state forward in these trying times as the city struggles to recover. It is believed that now is the time for the city to receive a political makeover and reshape its image; ironically, in the case of Ray Nagin who was once was a symbol of change and deemed as a savior for a scandal ridden city hall in four years had become the poster child for what was wrong

with the Crescent City and for some a polarizing, political pariah. During his re-election campaign he ran against a well-known well financed scion of a political family who in all cases the pundits predicted would unseat Nagin. But he rose like the Biblical Lazarus and fought like David against the political Goliath convincingly defeating his opponent Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu. Previously, Congressman William Jefferson seemed unbeatable through his eight terms in the U.S. Congress becoming a powerful figure in Washington D.C. suddenly found himself defrocked from his powerful position on the House Ways and Means Committee amidst allegations of wrongdoings in a federal probe that netted results with the seizing of 90,000 dollars in

Continued next page.

INSIDE DATA

Cover Story
page 2

Newsmaker
page 4

State & Local News
page 5

National News
page 11

Data Zone
page 8

Opinion
page 6

Commentary
page 13

Health News
page 12

Dollars and Sense
page 12

Sports
page 15

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COVER STORY

Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

marked bills in the congressman's freezer. While Jefferson has throughout this fiasco maintained his innocence others took advantage of what they saw as a vulnerable incumbent and a number of candidates put their hats in the ring including several well known candidates including a former city council member a state senator and a well financed state representative. His ethics, morals, and integrity became an issue throughout the election cycle, and the attacks became personal and venomous even by Louisiana standards. And yet with all the attacks coming from every direction Jefferson prevailed, and people from around the country are scratching their collective heads asking the questions how and why? And wondering is the city as well as the state serious about cleaning up its tarnished image, but one must remember that one election cannot purge something that has taken many years to create, and even if some of the faces change, the vestiges of residue of a political culture where the politics of the unusual and strange are the de rigueur may be an exercise in futility.

Pundits and people from all around the country are asking what happened, why people would vote for the Congressman given his troubles. But for the uninitiated Congressman Jefferson's dilemma is not without precedent; throughout the city and state's history colorful figures have been part and parcel of the political landscape and have been the collective painters of this portrait of Louisiana Politics which lends itself to the title of John Kennedy Toole's novel, A Confederacy of Dunces, and a banana republic. From Huey "Kingfish" Long with his patronage and strong arm tactics against his adversaries and his brother Earl Long who once jokingly said, "One day Louisiana would elect good government and they won't like it." And in our more recent past we received a black eye with the ascendance of former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke who became a Louisiana State Representative and later a serious contender for the U.S. Senate and Governor garnering the majority of the white vote in the primaries.

Then in another strange twist of events Governor Mike Foster paid 150,000 dollars for Duke's mailing list which he initially denied but later paid a fine in violation with the state code of ethics. Also former candidate for the U.S. Senate candidate Woody

Jenkins paid 82,000 dollars for Duke's mailing list as well; then in 2002 Duke pleaded guilty to charges of tax and mail fraud. And if it could get any more bizarre you have the popular former governor Edwin Edwards who is now serving a ten year sentence where he was convicted on 17 of 26 counts, including racketeering, extortion, mail and wire fraud, and his son Stephen was also convicted on 18 counts. But what is so interesting is that you still hear people saying if he were Governor today he would be able to straighten out what's going on with the slow process in this recovery effort.

So as we sit and wait for a possible indictment, Congressman Jefferson remains as he has for the past sixteen years as the Representative of District 2. But as we enter the final phase of the open primary came to a close as of June 2006 when Governor Kathleen Blanco signed a bill into law returning Congressional Races to the closed primary system; this will perhaps provide a sea change in 2008 for we will not see two persons from the same party in a run-off election. And if Jefferson is eventually indicted and tried but cleared of all charges the political landscape will be very different next time; for now the citizens have spoken with their votes vowing their continued support to Congressman Jefferson.

Locally, and around the country everyone from ordinary citizens to political pundits are baffled asking how can the citizens do the same thing twice; vote for an embattled incumbent instead of attempting to place a new face and to change the tarred image of the city and the state. But the sad and ominous truth may be found in the joking words of Earl Long many years ago that was stated earlier in this piece about Louisianians electing good government and not liking it. And to go even further by likening some politicians but particularly Louisiana and New Orleans that they are like the old saying about wheels. "You can't reinvent the wheel, but you can put a different spin on it," and what we are seeing in many of our politicians are the same wheels spinning in different directions, but we're still in the same place. And now as we face this monumental and unprecedented task of rebuilding we need leaders whether it is old faces or new ones that are on the horizon at the city and state level to steer us in a new direction.

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NEWSMAKER

Angela Davis: The Struggle Continues!..

By Edwin Buggage

She's an author, human rights activist, scholar and cultural icon, Angela Davis' image is forever embroidered in many people's memories as the voice of revolt of the cultural and social revolution that took place during the turbulent 1960' and 70's. Throughout her life she has been at the forefront of the struggles for human rights for people across the globe, recently Angela Davis was in the Crescent City at the invitation of Critical Resistance to observe International Human Rights Day, and took time out to speak to Data News Weekly about Hurricane Katrina, racial and class struggle and a whole range of other important issues.

EB: You were in town for International Human Rights Day for those who are not familiar with it can you tell us a little about what



state and federal government responded initially and in the aftermath of the disaster. Had not the areas most severely affected been populated by primarily poor and black people there would have been an emergency response that would have called on possibly all possible available resources. And now of course when one looks at the more affluent areas that were hard hit by Hurricane Katrina you see the signs of rebuilding, you see the signs of habitation, perhaps you see trailers located in front of a home that is in the process of being refurbished. But in the Lower Ninth Ward, where primarily poorer Black people lived there is absolutely nothing going on it's a ghost town; there is no one there its almost as if the memory of human habitation is being wiped out.

EB: Let me ask you a broader question along the same lines. Years ago when you were at the Sorbonne in Paris and you aligned yourself with the Algerians in their struggle with the French. What's your feelings about racism as a global problem?

AD: Racism is clearly a global problem particularly in the post colonial era and I can use the example of the prison industrial complex in order to demonstrate how central race and class have become in the working of nations particularly in the post colonial era around the world. Following the led of the United States Government countries like France, the Netherlands, Italy and Scandinavian countries have increased their rates of incarceration and as a matter of fact if you visit prisons there which I have done you discover that there is a disproportionate number of people who are from the southern region of the globe. That is to say people whom we would refer to in this country as people of color, and just as in Louisiana and in New Orleans the majority of the people behind bars are people of color or Black and increasingly we see the same thing around the world. And I feel prisons have become an apparatus under the reign of the prison industrial complex become an apparatus for addressing a whole range of social problems that are produced by governments and corporations failure to address

Continued page 14.

the day symbolizes?

AD: International Human Rights Day is a day in which people from around the world reflect on the various types of human rights violations and what could be done to remedy them. The day is connected to the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was formulated in 1948 and so for the last 38 years. I believe about after 10 years of the initial formulation people throughout the world have been using this day December 10th to reflect on the struggle for human rights.

EB: As you've toured the city and witnessed its condition what were some of the thoughts going on in your mind?

AD: I was extremely moved between the contrast in the city in the areas that are functioning as if nothing ever happened in New Orleans and then there's areas of the city that are absolutely abandoned. I just left the Lower Ninth Ward and I can't begin to tell you how troubled I feel about the fact that there were once so many human beings who were once there whose live has seemingly become superfluous to this city.

EB: How much do you think race and class played into the federal response and even in terms of the recovery effort?

AD: I think race and class define the way in which the city,



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STATE & LOCAL

Xavier University President Dr. Norman C. Francis Receives Presidential Medal of Freedom



Xavier University President Dr. Norman C. Francis

By Edwin Buggage

Xavier University President Norman C. Francis has been awarded the country's highest civilian honor; The Presidential Medal of Freedom. He along with nine others which includes blues great B.B. King, and Negro Baseball League standout and trailblazer John "Buck" O'Neil will be honored at a White House ceremony presided over by President George W. Bush. Francis, who was clearly moved said, "I'm deeply grateful of course, and honored, but humbled at the same time." Continuing he says, "These are the sorts of things that happen in one's lifetime that you never expect."

Since 1968 Dr. Francis has been a leader in the New Orleans community and has led Xavier University in becoming one of the top institutions of higher learning in the country. He is the longest serving college president in the country, and throughout his years at Xavier it has become a shining example of excellence leading the nation for the last ten years in placing African-Americans in medical school.

Francis influence goes far beyond Xavier's campus where he is a sought out community leader who has served in an advisory capacity to four U.S. Presidents. His reach also has him consulting with leaders in the business community; he is chairman of the board of Liberty Bank and Trust. He is also a recognized

civic leader; most recently he received accolades from several organizations receiving the "Legend" award from the National Urban League, and the "Man of the Year" award from the 100 Black Men of America. While the city fights to recover from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath Dr. Francis again has been sought out to help in this drastic time of need for the region in his present capacity as the chairman of Governor Kathleen Blanco's Louisiana Recovery Authority.

Although today Dr. Francis walks among heads of states and captains of industry he remembers his humble beginnings and so many of the people who have helped him in his journey through life. Those who have inspired him to reach for the stars, setting his goals high and pursuing excellence, and he stands today as a product of all those life's lessons and he is a shining example of hope and the best the Crescent City has to offer. Ever selfless and humble which is an admirable quality for one who has accomplished a such great deal reserves the acclaim for those who gave him the courage and the will to strive for greatness, "I accept this award for all the people who made this possible whose shoulders I'm standing on and who helped me be encouraged to work hard and to serve the career that I chose."



COMMUNITY SUPPORT ORGANIZATION MEETINGS: Keep up on the planning process.

New Orleans is your home. As the city rebuilds it's important to stay involved every step of the way—for instance, by attending the Community Support Organization (CSO) meetings at the New Orleans City Council Chamber.

The CSO is the committee responsible for overseeing the progress of the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP), the city's unified rebuilding effort. Comprised of representatives from the Mayor's office, City Council, the City Planning Commission, the Greater New Orleans Foundation and a resident from each of the city's five voting districts, the CSO is in place to keep you informed as the planning process continues.



CSO MEETING
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For more information about UNOP, please visit
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The Unified New Orleans Plan is funded by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Greater New Orleans Foundation and the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund.



OPINION

Beyond The Rhetoric



Harry C. Alford
NNPA Columnist

It seems like a decade, but it has only been 13 months since the major disaster known as Hurricane Katrina struck and the subsequent failed rescue. The city of New Orleans looked like a bombed out German city after World War II. But it wasn't a piece of history or a victim of a world war. It was an American city that experienced the biggest administrative blunder and mismanagement in the history of this great nation. Decades of malfeasance in the levee system and a new Homeland Security Agency that was pitiful.

A city that had a population approaching 500,000 was reduced to a pile of debris and holding no more than 40,000. New Orleans was just about down for the count. However, changes have been slow but changes have come. Today, there are more than 200,000 resilient souls bringing the city back. Many won't return but there are significant numbers of new people coming to make a new start for themselves and join in the making of a new city. New Orleans is becoming economically diverse and appealing to a strong Black middle class. Within the next decade the city will exceed its old population of 500,000 and will have a much smaller percentage of poverty. Employment and opportunities will be the main reasons.

Mayor Ray Nagin has so far lived up to his pledge of opening doors for Black-owned businesses. Historical procurements are taking place and it has been made clear to the previous crew of 'good ol' boys' that the times have changed. Diversity in the procurement process is now real. It seems that every educated person we meet in New Orleans is thinking entrepreneurial. They either want to participate in the business infrastructure of New Orleans or they want to assist via their professional roles in furthering the new environment along.

In the past many minority businesses were denied growth because they weren't bondable. Major bids required surety bonds and they just weren't available to deserving minority businesses. The main reason was that local insurance agents were discriminating in how they offered their policies. But today, like the Delfonics, we say 'didn't we blow your mind this time'. The National Black Chamber of Commerce and the Surety and Fidelity Association

have identified minority agents around the nation to work with New Orleans minority contractors who win bids requiring bonding. Contractors are now being able to compare bonding rates and quotes. They have a choice of which company they are going to choose to grow with. Those who are not yet bondable are given technical assistance so that they can become bondable within a short period of time.

A bonding assistance program and a city that demands minority participation in every project reminds one of Maynard Jackson's Atlanta or Harold Washington's Chicago. Could New Orleans become the next 'Boom Town' for Black owned businesses? I feel it certainly can and it is unfolding right before my eyes.

Now that the playing field is starting to level the city is going to demand a good inventory of Black owned businesses and entrepreneurs. The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) alone will let contracts worth over \$5 billion in neighborhood building. This will have, as a minimum, 20 percent minority participation, 5 percent women business participation and 10 percent Section 3 (training and employment for people living under the poverty level). Note that I said neighborhood building not affordable housing. Major projects will require a mix of scattered single family homes, multi-family residents, quality school availability, retail areas and modern medical facilities. We are talking about the real deal! A quality of life for the residents of New Orleans is starting to take form.

In all, there is going to be during the next 10 years at least \$70 billion in development and construction alone in New Orleans. From a new airport and Trump Towers to city infrastructure and levee protection this city will be humming. At every turn Black business will be involved. We are talking about a new 'Mecca' for Black business. Are we ready?

Next year will be the 'call' for qualified and bona fide architects, engineers, program managers, construction managers, contractors, realtors, investors, developers, trucking companies, landscapers, accountants, IT professionals, and retail store operators. I can go on and on. Also, and equally important, will be the fact that there will be an extremely high demand for employees. There are more jobs than workers right now and it will become more so in the coming years. This equates to great pay scales and consumable dollars for the local businesses. Business owners and hard workers New Orleans wants you. Consider making a change.

Harry C. Alford is the President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce. Website: www.nationalbcc.org. Email: president@nationalbcc.org.

How We 'Deal With It'



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

We are taking a beating. Perhaps it isn't financial or physical, but even those of us who did alright and didn't flood and had roofs that pretty much held, feel like life is moving in slow motion, nothing changing fast as we thought. Eventually we all finally begin to understand that what happened to us never happened in America and what we thought wasn't based on anything but wishful thinking.

There's just not enough people to do it all. Even government agencies and their contractors who are doing recover work are having a difficult time keeping good worker bees. I would like to make the point there is some gain for this pain, and remind us that the labor situation is creating opportunities for people who may be entering the workforce for the first time and because companies and agencies have such need, they are more willing to invest in the training that may have been needed by this person for a long time.

No, I'm not talking about any formalized programs, but the patience in a supervisor that comes from needing someone to be in place in the morning, and the person in front of you is your best shot. The last year provided me with quite a few examples of people who superseded every expectation, once someone hipped them to a thing or two, I guess what they call soft skill training in the trade.

Like myself, others ended up in roles having more responsibility than they had ever achieved or even sought, simply because employers had to trust their instincts with the folk who were available. Some of us thrived and some failed, and some got by all right, but they learned some things about themselves, as did those who benefited or suffered from their management skills.

For a long time, we have needed these opportunities. Almost anybody can make some money in New Orleans, and the experience, and personal recommendations that some are earning have become the credentials that were missing in their pre-Katrina lives. People who never had jobs or jobs with any responsibility now have the experience and recommendations of people for whom they worked, sorely

needed proof of employability.

I am not so naive as to think that everyone who is getting these step up opportunities is taking proper advantage of them, and yes, I am hoping that if you are blowing your chance to create a good work record for yourself, someone stuffed this column in your hand and told you, You better read this and stop acting like a fool. If something like that happened then you really have someone in your life who cares about you enough to let you be mad. If they just snuck it to you, you must be a real a-hole, but someone cares anyway.

The disaster that Katrina brought cost us all deeply: lost lives, separation from family and friends, lost homes, possessions and businesses. It will be a greater disaster if our people don't share in the opportunities. I agree fully that all levels of the process need to address our involvement, and I support those/any who are diligently protecting our interests, but pity the fool, who doesn't even try.

First offenders, non violent convictions are getting shots if they show up right and have someone to vouch for them, perhaps a relative or friend already on the job. Some applications are almost as short as name, age, sex, address and social security number. Everybody needs to be networking finding out who's hiring and who has an in with the boss. And that brings up another thing.

How are you going to help your friend or a family member get on if you aren't on your game and getting along with the one who hires and fires. Hell, talk some college football or stock cars (or QVC or HGTV) for a minute every now and then, it ain't going to kill you and you might be able to get someone else on board, and then they owe you one, and if they do a good job the boss will feel like you did him or her a favor. You're getting to be powerful and influential now just because you got that chip of your shoulder and decided to do what works instead of what you feel like.

I'm glad I got focused on that! I feel better now about how long its taking to rebuild. It really isn't about what happens, but how we deal with it.

Go To LLOYDDENNIS.COM for more information. Lloyd Dennis is also available as a speaker; email him at LD@LLOYDDENNIS.COM, fax 866-357-1144

News Orleans Data News Weekly

TRAIL BLAZERS

Charles Belonge

By Renetta Burrell Perry

When you hear the name Charles "Bam Bam" Belonge, you immediately think, cool voice, hot songs, but the former club scene sensation and WYLD air personality offers far more than just the latest hits. He is a complex conversationalist with the keen ability to fluently expound on a plethora of issues from education to politics, then to engagingly reminisce vividly about the New Orleans we knew way back when. He is a self-described perfectionist who is passionate about our children educating themselves and preparing for the stiff competition in the job market. And he is a humanitarian who has given his time to various organizations to support this community.

The soundtrack of Belonge's childhood would be best described as eclectic. Growing up in the late 60's/early 70s provided a rich musical landscape. "I grew up with dreams of being on Soul Train like the Jacksons, Shalimar and Rufus and Chaka Kahn," he remembers. But he also listened to white artists via local stations WTIx and WNOE which he says had stronger signals than WYLD. "Music was all around me. You were able to appreciate more than what you heard in the black community. You had balance," he says drawing contrast between he and many youngsters today who tend to immerse themselves in one genre. His love for the infinity of music was the catalyst for his illustrious career, which began with him playing the clarinet in the Raphael and Beauregard Elementary School bands, progressing to play the piano which he was "gifted" at doing. "I was very creative with my instruments," he says.

That creativity resonated as the young Belonge found himself using music to sustain him through the coming-of-age period of adolescence. "I was a troubled young man because of a lack of male guidance, but being raised in a spiritual family, the spiritual foundation was laid first and because the roots were there, the tree was able to become fruitful,"



Charles Belonge

he recounts adding that his adolescent life was tumultuous, a time when he would often act out in school amidst the pressures of being driven by his peers. He would get into fights and change schools often, but his intelligence remained intact and he was accepted into McDonough #35 High School where he discovered the glitz of the high school talent show. His early-on preparation, playing his grandmother's piano paid off for him. Competing in numerous shows across the city, Belonge became a regular even finishing in first and second place in several of them. He laughs heartily as he remembers singing Michael Jackson's "She's Out of My Life," in 1979/1980 - a performance which landed him the 1st place trophy and lots of respect on the high school talent show circuit. "I had a long Rick James Jehri Curl back then," he says, "but mine didn't drip." Whether it was the curl or the voice, Belonge knew that music was his calling.

And the events that followed his high school heydays, proved to be, as he would describe, steps orchestrated by God. While attending a high school dance with one of his sisters, he became fascinated for the first time with the art of D.J'ing. He emphatically explains the feelings that came over him as he watched the crowd become more and more joyous as the D.J. played their favorite songs. The roar of the crowd coupled with the magic of the smoke machine provided the whimsical combination that would transform the

lover of music into a master of it. But there was work to do, people to meet and venues to pack.

With his steps ordered by a higher authority, this would soon come in the form of a band called the Disco Players. With their leader Raymond Webb, a Jefferson Parish coach at the helm the group played the high school dances from St. Mary's to Kennedy and all in between, even some Jefferson Parish schools. "In 1981 I put my clarinet down and learned how to mix. When I joined the group I could not mix, but once the light went off, my natural musical ability came out." It was during this time that Belonge may have discovered that he is a perfectionist, working hard to compete with the guys that were in the group and were already really good at what they were doing. "There was a lot of competition in the group. The guys could really mix." The thing that was driving all of us was Slick Leo Coakley, "shares Belonge who credits Coakley with being a prolific figure in New Orleans radio. The Disco Players eventually hit what Belonge says was "super star status" filling gymnasiums and ballrooms with hundreds of high schoolers and on Easter Sunday 1983, coach Webb rented a quadrant in the Superdome where 2,000 high schoolers came to dance. Belonge had found his niche.

The staging of smoke blowing over a crowd at that high school dance years prior would prove to be small when compared to the lights and glamour of the clubs where Belonge would become legendary in the 80s and 90s. In 1984, a chance meeting with Billy Powell would become another one his life's ordered steps. Powell, he says, was just flipping through records at Peaches Records on his way to what was a hot spot of the time - A Touch of Class Night Club where he was the top D.J. Powell agreed to let Belonge come watch him at work, and the rest is history. "He starts to mix 'Must Be the Music,' with 'Let the Music Play' and that's it for me," he excitedly remembers adding that the atmosphere in the club that night blew him away. He reminisces about the club scene pointing out how fortunate clubbers were to have a city that afforded them such rich music, fine venues and virtually no worry

crime. He recalls how people stepped out in class - dressed mostly in suits. He is saddened that that era is all but gone. He then delights in naming all of the clubs he played for: A Touch of Class, Brass Bull, New York, New York, Foxy's the Exchequer, Nexxus, Stars, Secrets, Amnesia. "The venues are the same, only the names change," he jokes.

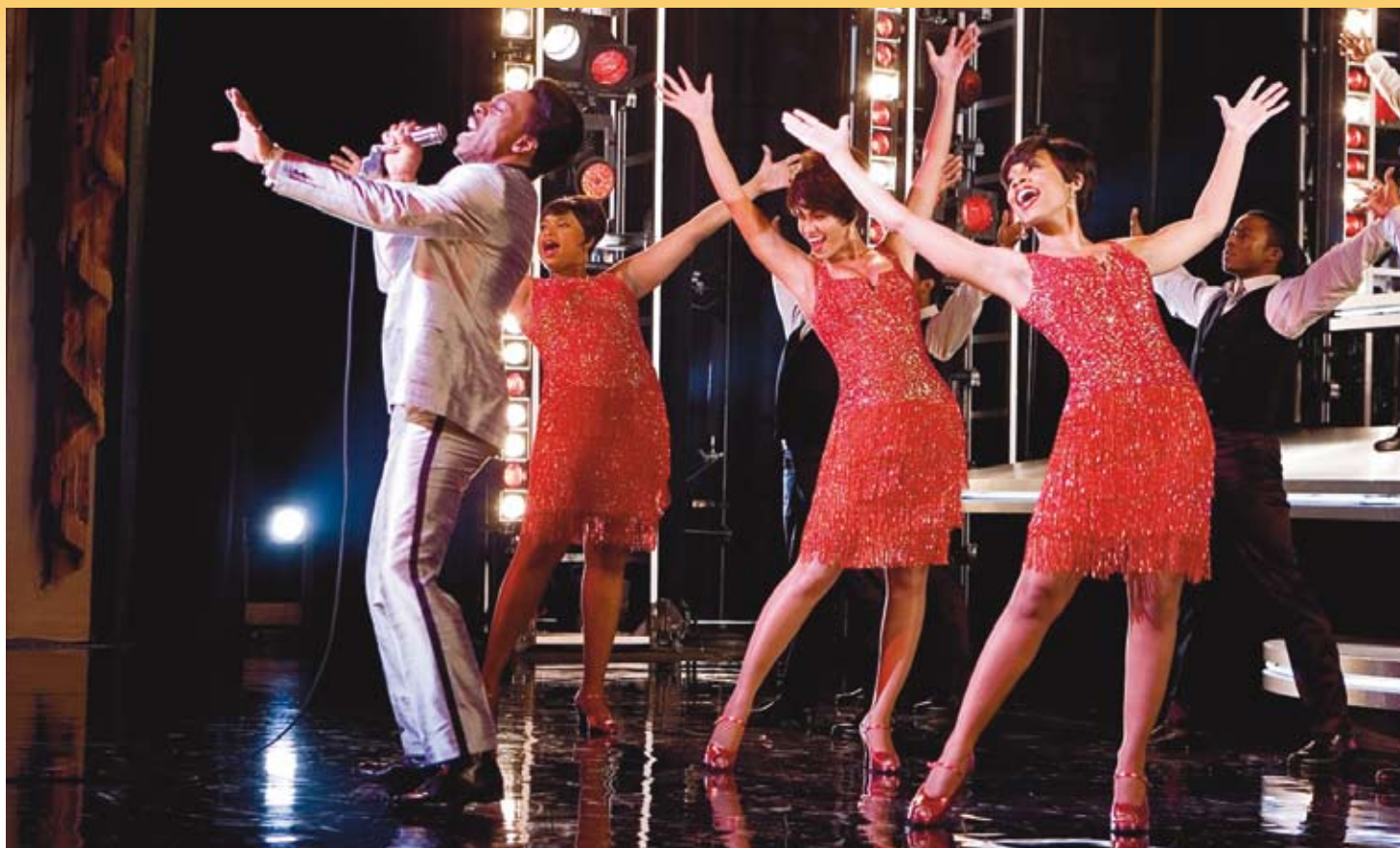
Lauded as a phenomenal D.J., a superb dresser and a master at the turntables, it was only natural that Belonge's steps took him from the club to the radio where he became a premier personality at FM98 in 1992. His popularity and credibility garnered him scores of new fans in addition to those whom he'd gained from the club scene. Calling him one of the hardest working men in radio would be an understatement, as he balanced his time playing radio, clubs and events. One thing that has stood out with Belonge is versatility. He reflects on his upbringing (his mother being a speech pathologist who demanded that he spoke properly) and credits it to his ability to being able to present himself eloquently - a skill that he says many kids lack today. "We tend to shun what's correct for what's popular." The eloquence translated into versatility has gotten him into many doors as a D.J. he has played for all types or audiences for all types of events in all types of places. And from major conventions, to wedding receptions, from all white audiences to all black audiences, he has risen to the occasion with excellence. "I am a perfectionist. Things have to be orderly. I present the very best." Graciously, he again credits another individual, Jimmy ("Soul Man Jimmy") Young for helping perfect the technical aspects of the job. He still works with Jimmy today.

Throughout all of Belonge's ups and downs, he reflects on his unwavering faith in God and the blessing of being led to special people who helped him carve his career. From Belonge you fail to hear the voice of a bragger, one who is wrapped up in himself, instead you hear the voice of maturity, gratefulness, community and consciousness. You will note that instead of gloating, he is giving back to our youth. "I really thank God for every opportunity that I have to give back. It's unfair to have a piece of the pie without contributing to the making of it."

presented by



DATA ZONE



Dreamgirls

Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

Words of betrayal cut like a knife. In Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, "Et tu, Brute" was as sharp as the daggers plunged into Caesar's chest. In Dreamgirls, "Effie, Deena's singing lead," pierces the heart and leaves a gaping wound.

After years of delays, the Tony-award winning musical Dreamgirls hits the silver screen, and its faux Supremes Diana Ross/Florence Ballard/Mary Wilson-like high drama remains as powerful as ever. The rise and fall of a black girl group, complete with ambitious manager/Svengali (Berry Gordy), is one of the strongest pieces of musical theater ever to grace the Great White Way. The film is even more intense. Powerful enough to bring Ballard back from the grave in vindication.

Deena (Beyoncé Knowles), Lorrell (Anika Noni Rose, 2004 Tony award winner for Caroline, Or Change) and Effie (Jennifer Hudson, an American Idol semifinalist with a winner's voice) are superb as "The Dreamettes"; three innocent young singers who get their first break when a Cadillac dealer and music mogul-wannabe Curtis (Jamie Foxx), scouts them at a talent show.

The girls' fortunes grow when they become the backup trio for

James "Thunder" Early (Eddie Murphy); a lecherous soul singer. Their mojo is so strong, before you can say "do-wop, do-wop," Curtis has transformed them into headliners, "The Dreams." Stealing Early from his manager (Danny Glover) and breaking the two acts out of the chitlin' circuit into the mainstream – everyone's star is on the rise.

Everyone, that is, except Effie. Effie's big bluesy voice, prickly attitude and volatile, volcanic mood swings spell trouble. Even courting Curtis can't save her eventual fall from grace. Deena, Lorrell and Effie's brother, C.C. (Keith Robinson), the group's songwriter, turn their backs on her when Curtis utters, "Effie, Deena is singing lead" She's demoted and then tossed out like an old shoe, no matter how fervently she pleads for mercy.

Twenty years later, time has been kind to this classic drama and its indelible characters, as rewritten by director/writer Bill Condon from the original book and lyrics by the late Tom Eyen. Effie, the central protagonist, haughty at first bowed and broken in the end, lets you ride her emotions like a rollercoaster. Drug abuse, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, death, payola, scandal, race relations and of course, betrayal, are riveting. The dialogue, between

songs, reverberates.

Curtis to a defiant Deena: "You know why I told you to sing lead? Because your voice has no depth." Condon, who also wrote the screenplay for Chicago, gives Dreamgirls its sure-footed rhythm.

Artful close-ups, newsreel footage and signs of the times (including Diana Ross and Motown styled album covers) provide visual splendor and memorable epochs. Condon directs veterans and ingénues alike with a Midas touch.

A lesser production might have cast some MTV, VH1, or BET starlets who can't sing but look pretty, but Dreamgirls' singers blow you away – they can blast their voices well beyond the cheap seats.

And Eddie Murphy? The ghosts of Marvin Gaye, Otis Redding and Jackie Wilson inhabit his performance. It's absolutely haunting. This is Murphy's finest, most nuanced interpretation, yet. He most certainly deserves an Oscar nod for Best Supporting Actor and should win.

Dreamgirls succeeds on all levels: Perfect casting and acting, astute direction, Toe-tapping music, stunning images. Dreamgirls hits all the rights notes and packs an emotional punch. "Dreamgirls will never leave you. All you've got to do is dream."

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DATA

Ryan & Brian

DATA ZONE

Local singer uses versatility and style to pave her way to success

by Eddie Francis



Anais St. John

Her voice is a reflection of natural elegance and charm. Combine those qualities with her exotic features and sleek frame and you have the captivating chanteuse Anais St. John. Even her name, Anais, means "graceful." The mezzo soprano makes no secret of the fact that she longs to be a talent recognized around the world.

The 33-year-old New Orleans native has spent most of her life in the Crescent City yet her world view is what keeps her focused on success. "I want to be one of the top New Orleans performers and I think that's achievable," says St. John. "I've come a long way in (the past) year."

Like any other musicians St. John recognizes that her career is a work in progress. The good thing is that she does not mind the work. When she is not performing, St. John spends a lot of her time teaching at Trinity Episcopal School and De La Salle High School. Tourists can catch her as Essie Whitman in the famed "Living History" tour in the French Quarter.

Music is literally in St. John's blood, so she has had no problem walking that path. Her father is famed jazz saxophonist, Marion Brown and she cites Whitney Houston as one of her early influences. She looks up to one of New Orleans most elegant personalities, Germaine Bazzle whom St. John says "wows" her. Another legend that St. John holds dear is Etta James who elicits the sentiment, "I love her confidence."

At the age of 6 she started singing at Corpus Christi Church. "I was never shy about it," she recalls. "I didn't know what I wanted to sing, I just

knew I wanted to be a singer." Her journey took her to Xavier University where she majored in music. Under the tutelage of John Ware, St. John discovered that her voice had not nearly reached its potential. Ware used operatic training to reveal the true power in her voice. It was then that she learned of another musical influence—opera legend, Leontyne Price.

She comments that she sometimes has to convince her students that operatic training does not mean that she is trying to push them to sing opera so much as she is trying to help them discover what their voices can really do. With the characteristic passion of a classically trained musician St. John insists that anyone who wants to be a singer will preserve his/her voice over the long haul by learning proper technique.

St. John's attitude has been a major part in her developing an impressive résumé. Not only has she performed with impressive groups including the New Orleans Opera Association, the Jefferson Performing Arts Society and Le Petit Theatre but St. John has also ventured into diverse genres. St. John has done everything from opera to jazz and blues to cabaret to burlesque. She has not stopped there over the years she has also worked as an actress and model.

And where does St. John see herself in the next few years? Her short range goal is to perform with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. Down the road she sees herself touring Europe and performing in Carnegie Hall. She is also working on a CD with her group, the Anais St. John Trio.

In order to experience lovely and talented Anais St. John, music lovers only have to make their way to downtown to catch a glimpse of this rising star on the horizon. She performs every Saturday at the Windsor Court Polo Club from 9 p.m. to midnight. It is a show that she describes as "sultry but not sleazy." St. John simply describes it as "Me, piano and bass." Her full schedule is available at www.anaisstjohn.com.

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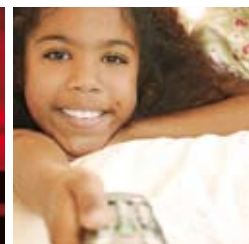
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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Mayor Nagin Awards Two Lucrative Sanitation Contracts to Minority Owned Firms

By Benjamin Bates

Amidst scrutiny and criticism from some on the city council Mayor Ray Nagin's Office has made a monumental and historical step by awarding two of the three lucrative sanitation collection contracts to minority owned firms. As the city recovers many African-Americans were concerned about the lack of minority owned companies receiving large government contracts. In a previous interview with Mayor Ray Nagin he told Data News Weekly he was committed to helping minority business get a larger share of the economic pie stating that he would be awarding two of the three garbage collection contracts to minority firms.

As part of the 33 million dollars allotted for garbage collection

over two-thirds of the monies have been awarded to two local minority owned firms. Metro Disposal owned by Jimmie Woods have received an 8.7 million dollar contract and Richard's Disposal owned by Alvin Richard whose firm is presently part of a joint venture with the city's current hauler of sanitation Waste Management has received the lion's share of the deal with a lucrative 15.8 million dollar contract. With the third contract going to SDT Waste and Debris Service which is a Chalmette based company.

The new services are scheduled to begin January 2nd, as several changes will be taking place to make trash pick-up more efficient with a state of the art upgrade as automated trucks with robotic arms will be lining the streets

according to Sanitation Director Veronica White. The city will soon begin registration at City Hall and online for residents to sign up for lidded garbage cans free of charge from the city of New Orleans.

As the city recovers, some division still abounds, but the announcement by the Mayor to award these hefty contracts to two minority firms is a step to show his commitment to assisting minority business move beyond the fringes of the economic power equation as the city is facing the national spotlight everyday and the awarding of these contracts is a historical and relevant as the city tries to re-write some of the chapters of its sordid racially and economically imbalanced past and cleanse itself for future generations

Recovery "Overwhelming" for Most Small Business

NEW ORLEANS – More than a year after Hurricane Katrina finds recovery for most of New Orleans small business thwarted by a confluence of mounting debt and strong-arm tactics by unscrupulous big corporations. Since September of 2005, the New Orleans metro area has lost more than 60,000 small businesses, with more losses expected as the city begins year 2 of its recovery process.

One Crescent City entrepreneur whose recovery efforts have been stymied is realtor Danette O'Neal, owner of Danette O'Neal Realtors. With post Katrina sales down a whopping 70%, O'Neal's company has joined a growing list of Gulf region business owners who now face the nearly impossible challenge to rebuild. The city is still without a master plan to rebuild and over thirds of its residents remain displaced elsewhere, which has left many business owners without the support and resources to reestablish their livelihood.

As if those troubles weren't enough, O'Neal must deal with the added woes of a legal threat to her company in the form of recent lawsuit filed by Coldwell Banker. "They are suing me for 10 years of potential income (franchise fees) in a market that has lost more than 2/3rds of its residents," she comments "How can Coldwell Banker be so insensitive to expect projected profits for the next 10, 5 or even 3 years, when the infrastructure of New Orleans is so badly damaged."

Over the past 16-years Danette O'Neal Realtors had built a successful reputation for working with predominately black low to moderate income 1st time home buyers. Prior to the Katrina evacuation, O'Neal's company boasted over 52 agents who worked from two offices based in the city. Since the storm, the company suffered the complete loss of its principal Canal Street location, plus substantial damage to its other office space. Although the company reopened 3 months after the storm, only 6 agents were able to return to aid in rebuilding efforts.

According to the release issued by The Robertson Treatment, "a member of the Cendant Family (the largest franchise in North America), Coldwell Bank is no stranger to trouble. Last year they made headline news in Georgia for two of the largest Fair Housing violations against them." However, they have aggressively waged a civil suit against O'Neal in spite of her company's circumstances. "I understand business, but all of America knows of our plight in New Orleans," says O'Neal. "The actions that they have taken threaten not only my business, but my home, personal possessions and the future of my children. I just want to rebuild my company. I am still trying to restore my company after the loss of my contents and business interruption, but instead I must fight Coldwell Bank's threat to take away my legacy to collect 10 years of potential income."

A respected figure in the real estate community, Danette has been very active post-Katrina working for Governor Blanco as one of the Commissioners for the Louisiana Housing and Finance Agency. She also chairs the Single Family Committee that has been instrumental in developing programs for residents to purchase homes, and has traveled extensively educating evacuees about the Louisiana Recovery Programs for returning residents.

O'Neal is equally passionate in her belief that the rebirth of New Orleans is directly tied to the survival of small businesses. "Small businesses employ more people than any other entity in the Gulf region," she says. "To revitalize this city, small businesses must be in the mix to contribute to the local economy. This is a crucial time for the redevelopment of the Gulf region and what small business owners really need right now is relief support and assistance to become healthy again."

DATA AROUND TOWN First Friday's



Huzefa, Cleveland and friend of Ebonetworks share a laugh at First Fridays on December 2nd, where American Idol Ruben Studdard was the featured performer.



Khalila and a friend enjoy the music at First Fridays.

NATIONAL NEWS

New CBC Chair Plans to Expand Clout by Expanding Technology

By. Hazel Trice Edney
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) U. S. Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (D-Mich.), the new chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, says her role will be to galvanize the clout of CBC constituents to help Democrats win the presidency in 2008 in part, by using technology.

"That's what it's all about. It's about 2008," says Kilpatrick in an interview. "We represent 40 million Americans in 26 states. So, that's an awesome database. We've got a great opportunity. And the technology is available. So, that will be my claim to fame. We've got a lot of work to do and we're ready to do the work."

Kilpatrick, who succeeds Rep. Mel Watt (D-N.C.), says the 43-member CBC will now be strengthened through the use of cutting-edge technology.

"We want to establish a national Internet, Web cast, podcast, blog system where we are able to talk to each other elected and appointed officials as well as leaders and our natural allies, our national organizations and our ministerial groups," she says. "We've got to maintain Democratic control of the House [the Senate] and [gain] the presidency; thereby you get your issues and your public policies and your resources back. We've had 12 years of an America with Republicans in charge loss of jobs, big deficits, interest rates high, you name it, health care system in collapse. All of that has got to be changed and you have to have the presidency to do it. We've got 24 months to do the jobs and I'll be working diligently to make sure that that happens."

The Congressional Black Caucus, in its 35th year, has grown to a new level of influence. Three of its members now chair major House committees: Michigan Congressman John Conyers (the Judiciary Committee); New York Congressman Charles Rangel (Ways and Means) and Mississippi Congressman Bennie

Thompson (Homeland Security).

Amaya Smith, spokeswoman for the Democratic National Committee, says beyond the CBC chairmanship and subcommittee chairs, key members are becoming powerful players in the presidential race because of their influence. That includes Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), the new majority Whip.

"He is a member from South Carolina which is now an early primary state," says Smith. "A lot of people are going to talk with him and have his ear over the next several months."

South Carolina, with a Black voting-age population of 31 percent, is the second primary in the country and the first primary in the South. The state is highly coveted for its potential Black voting power. Black voters in South Carolina make up 40 percent of the state's Democratic electorate, the nation's largest contingency of Black Democrats.

The courting has already started.

"I guess over the last year, I've talked to every one of them whose names have been mentioned," says Clyburn. He says he had an hour-long meeting with Sen. Hilary Clinton in October, had lunch with Sen. Barack Obama two weeks ago and has had recent conversations with former vice presidential nominee Sen. John Edwards three or four times.

But Clyburn says it won't be as much the intra-politicking between Democrats that will win in 2008 as it will be how Democrats as a party handle the crucial issues at hand and getting out the vote. Clyburn, a former chair of the CBC, applauds Kilpatrick as the right person for the moment.

"We all see her as having the right attitude as far as outreach and taking the message out of the beltway," Clyburn says. "She's been speaking that language for a long time. I look forward to working with her because I think she will maximize, not just the involvement, but the effectiveness of the Caucus."

CBC leaders perceive that part of that effectiveness will be the

Continued page 14.

Race Debate at Hopkins turns Ugly

By. Sean Yoes
Special to the NNPA from
Afro Newspapers

BALTIMORE (NNPA) - Last month Johns Hopkins University student Justin H. Park was suspended from the school until January 2008. He is the author and distributor of the "Halloween in the Hood" party invitation characterized as racist by many in the community. A group of Hopkins students protested Park's punishment, which they claim impacts free speech on the campus, and they demonstrated in a manner similar to that of the school's Black Student Union, which originally protested the Halloween in the Hood incident.

The party hosted by Park's fraternity Sigma Chi, encouraged revelers to wear "regional clothing from our locale ... fur coats, bling bling ice ice grills, hoochie hoops, white tees" and characterized Baltimore as, "the HIV pit" and "the mother f---ing ghetto."

Just beneath the surface of

the discourse on campus race relations and the free speech protest lies a litany of racially charged threats and accusations being hurled through cyberspace at Hopkins' BSU and its president Christina Chapman.

"You should be ashamed of yourself for being an attention seeking whore who ruined a kid's education as well as the most racially diverse fraternity. By playing the race card you forced the university to violate our right to free speech. I hope you know that most of the university hates you," wrote Wayne Atwell, a White Hopkins student, in an email to Chapman.

Most of Chapman's detractors aren't as bold as Atwell, who attached a picture of himself wearing a cape, a crown and wielding a sword. (According to Chapman, Atwell was admonished for the email by Hopkins' administration and he later apologized to her by email.) The vast majority of the verbal attacks

leveled against the soon to be 21-year-old senior and the BSU have been transmitted anonymously and in most cases via Hopkins' internet forum "The Daily Jolt."

The gutless administration is going to cave to at least some of the demands of those idiot protesters. Apparently that b— - Christina Chapman won't shut her mouth either," someone anonymously wrote on Nov. 3 under the subject "Cowards" on the internet forum. Yet, despite the vitriol aimed at her, Chapman, a biomedical engineering major, seems undaunted.

"A lot of the comments they only bother me in the sense that I feel like people have such a great misunderstanding of issues of diversity," said Chapman. "The students on campus say that we Black students tarnished the school's reputation like the Black students aren't also part of the school."

Chapman did find at least one "Daily Jolt" post which discusses

Continued page 14.

Talk Back!

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Each week, Data News Weekly brings you the information we think you want to know. In an effort to better reflect the thoughts of the community, we are offering you Talk Back. Take this opportunity to let your community, government officials and our editor know what your opinions are on the subject. Selected submissions will be published in the Data News Weekly Talk Back section and a compilation version will be sent to the candidates for Mayor for the City of New Orleans.

This week's question:

What has your experience been with the LRA and the LA Road Home Program?

Have you received any compensation yet?

Was it enough to cover your rebuilding costs?

How was your experience working with their representatives?

Is there too much red tape?

Go to **www.ladatanews.com** and click on **Talk Back** and let your voice be heard.

HEALTH NEWS

The Face of AIDS in America Today



Larry Lucas
Data Columnist

A lot can happen in 25 years — an entire generation of babies are born, grow into adults, maybe even start their own families. In 1981 Ronald Reagan was president, the United States was locked in a Cold War and the “MTV generation” was just tuning in. It was also 25 years ago that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first cases of a rare pneumonia and skin cancer among gay men. These were the first recognized cases of AIDS.

We’ve learned so much in a quarter century. We now know that AIDS “Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome” is caused by infection with a virus called human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). This virus is passed from one person to another through blood-to-blood and sexual contact, not casual contact like hugging and shaking hands. We know HIV and AIDS can infect anyone — women and men, gay and straight or young and old.

We also know a lot more about treating HIV and AIDS. If you were diagnosed with AIDS in 1990, you might expect to live for only 26 months. During that time, you would be likely to contract a number of opportunistic infections that would make your remaining days unpleasant and painful. The only treatment available had to be taken every four hours — around the clock — and had serious side effects. But thanks to the approval in 1995 of protease inhibitors — and further advancements in new medicines and combination therapies in the decade since — the AIDS death rate has fallen by 70 percent. If diagnosed today, a range of treatment options (including different combinations of drugs) might be able to keep you symptom-free for years to come. In fact, there are 77 new medicines and vaccines in development to treat HIV/AIDS and related conditions, according to a new survey by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

And yet, in spite of these treatment advances, HIV is what Newsweek has called “an epidemic among black women, their husbands, boyfriends, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters.” African Americans make up just 13 percent of the U.S. population but account for more than

half of new HIV diagnoses, according to the CDC. The situation is so serious that Cathy Cohen, a political scientist at the University of Chicago and author of a book about African Americans and AIDS, called HIV “the life and death of black people” in a recent interview with Newsweek.

Lack of awareness is a big obstacle to combating AIDS in the African American community. Many people, especially women, may not realize they are at risk because they do not know their partner’s risk factors — such as unprotected sex with multiple partners, bisexuality or intravenous drug use. Adding to the risk, many more might be in the dark about whether or not they have been infected with HIV, refusing to be tested. For example, a CDC study showed that of participating African American men who tested positive for HIV, 67 percent were unaware of their infection.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS, there is hope. Since the virus that causes AIDS was first identified more than two decades ago, 86 medicines to treat HIV/AIDS and related conditions have been approved. These discoveries are making a life-or-death difference for many coping with these conditions.

“AIDS didn’t become a disease you could actually live with until the late 1990s,” said Dr. Michael Gottlieb in an interview with ABC News; Gottlieb treated the first reported AIDS patients in Los Angeles in 1981 and has treated hundreds of AIDS patients since. “It’s only within the last seven years to 10 years that cocktails of medications can drive the virus into a very deep remission and allow people to get better immunologically and feel reasonably normal.”

Managing HIV/AIDS often requires taking a combination of cutting-edge medications. But these innovative treatments don’t help anyone if they remain out of financial reach. Fortunately, there are assistance programs available. Last year, America’s pharmaceutical research companies launched the Partnership for Prescription Assistance (www.pparx.org or 1-888-4PPA-NOW), bringing together more than 475 different public and private assistance programs in one place. So far, more than 3 million people have been connected to programs that can provide free or nearly free medicines.

AIDS is not an issue we can afford to ignore. If the last 25 years have taught us anything, it should be that. We must work together — lawmakers, pharmaceutical companies, advocates — to face down this enemy. If you need information about HIV/AIDS, including testing locations, please contact the CDC 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 1-800-CDC-INFO or www.cdc.gov/hiv/. No one is immune, everyone is affected.

DOLLARS & SENSE

Are Women’s Financial Needs Different?



Donald Smith
Data Columnist
GE-34840 (02/06 (exp.02/08))

Are women’s financial needs really different from men’s? Both men and women should understand how to create a financial strategy that will help them reach personal goals. And both men and women rely on the same tools and techniques that make up the basics of financial planning.

What is often different are the attitudes and experiences men and women may bring to investing. Here are some of the key differences.

1. Traditionally, women haven’t had as much experience managing money. Until relatively recently, most married women did not work outside the home. And, as a rule, they didn’t get involved in the family’s financial decisions, either. Many women — even those with their own incomes — were raised to expect that the men in their lives would take care of investing.

But things have changed. Whether or not a woman has her own income, she needs to know how her family’s money is invested. That’s because most women will have to manage money on their own at some point in their lives.

2. Women save less. Whether married or single, women have less financial security because they have less money. Full-time working women earn only 76.5% of what men earn. And single mothers may be

more likely to spend for their children’s needs — dental work, extra tutoring — perhaps even at the expense of sacrificing the opportunity to save for their own futures.

If you have family obligations, especially if you’re the only breadwinner, you have to weigh your obligations against your needs. Of course, you want to put money away for your children’s education but you also need to plan for your own retirement. Setting priorities is a key element of financial success.

3. Women live longer, so their money has to last longer. Even though women, on average, live 5.4 years longer than men, the average woman actually accumulates less money for retirement than the average man. Why?

‘Women are less likely than men to have pensions, according to the 2005 Employee Benefits Research Institute. While full-time working women actually have a higher participation rates than men, many women work part-time or for service and retail businesses that don’t offer such plans. 47.2% of working women participate in a pension plan.

‘Fewer years in the workforce. Taking time out to have children means fewer years to build up retirement funds in a 401(k) or other plan. It also may mean lower social security payments when she retires.

This material is not intended as tax or legal advice. You should consult with your personal financial, tax or legal advisor regarding your specific situation before implementing any estate or business strategy.

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COMMENTARY

Sean Bell Shooting: Police Raids Test Delicate Balance



Marc Morial
President & CEO
National Urban League

The recent tragic police shooting of 23-year-old Sean Bell near a Queens strip club on the morning of his wedding gave New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg a golden opportunity to show off his race-relations skills and for Rev. Al Sharpton to prove he could reach out across the aisle in hopes of defusing a potentially explosive situation.

Sharpton, a veteran of previous police-conduct incidents, rose to the occasion within hours of the tragedy, emerging as official point person for the Bell family. He immediately consoled the victims and their family and friends, arranged two news conferences, planned a community rally and courted the mayor, who in his last election did well with middle-class minority voters around the neighborhood where the shooting occurred.

The Chicago Tribune's Clarence Page described Sharpton as a natural choice to take the leadership role in this situation. "Now, just ask yourself: If police shot your son to death before his wedding and wounded two friends after firing 50 shots into their car and there was no gun found in their car, whom would you call?" he wrote recently.

Bloomberg decided to read from a different playbook than his some of his predecessors namely Rudolph Giuliani and Ed Koch, whose administrations were punctuated by unsettling racial incidents. With the help of and on the recommendation of Sharpton, the mayor convened a summit of community leaders in an effort to quell possible tensions emerging between the New York City Police Department and the African-American community, where the use of excessive force by police seems to occur more frequently at least anecdotally than in other communities.

Bloomberg won kudos for describing the shooting as "inexplicable" and "unacceptable" and "excessive" and for respecting the wishes of the Bell family by

not attending Sean's funeral. He had instead sent Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott, a former CEO of the New York Urban League, to be the administration's representative.

"What you've seen in the last week between the mayor and the black elected officials and leaders represents five years of work and developing relationships with people," observed New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, the city's highest-ranking Black official in a December 3 story in The New York Times. "People believe his intentions are good, and I think that goes a long way."

At a private meeting with Bloomberg and New York Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, Sharpton didn't even ask for the commissioner's resignation he lent his support while at the same time joking that most police commissioners who garner his support usually get fired, according to the New York Times story.

News of the Bell tragedy quickly opened up old wounds within the African-American community and raised ghosts of previous shootings incidents in which unarmed Black men ended up on the wrong side of the law's gun. Sharpton and Bloomberg's spirit of cooperation and goodwill may have helped keep those tensions at bay so far but the New York Police Department is doing little to help ensure this delicate balance. Recent police raids tied to the shooting are starting to test the patience of Black leaders who have been preaching calm to their constituents until a full investigation is completed.

"My role is to try to keep things at an even keel," observed Bishop Erskine Williams to the New York Times recently. "But at some point they're going to say, Rev, what side are you on?" "he added, referring to residents who are angry about how the police investigation is unfolding. "On a scale of 1 to 10, the distrust was a 7. Now it's a 10-and-a-half."

Just days earlier, according to press reports, Williams' son, a friend of Bell's party, was picked up by police on a traffic summons. He was one of several people who knew Bell brought in for questioning. Since the shooting, the police seem to be in a frantic search for vindication in their efforts to uncover potentially non-existing evidence that may justify

their hail of 50 bullets upon Bell's car, killing him and injuring two of his friends.

The department is showing little sensitivity for the victims and their families and friends by hauling them in for questions on minor offenses in their zealous quest to find the elusive fourth man who allegedly fled the scene and owned the gun that prompted undercover officers to open fire.

In a recent column in the New York Daily News, Errol Louis took issue with Black leaders' advocacy of calm in light of recent actions by police: "Patience is not on the agenda, nor should it be. Those counseling calm rarely acknowledge - and perhaps don't know - that frightened, under-trained cops have been treating unarmed black and Latino residents with deadly aggression for decades," he wrote.

I have to say I'm starting to agree. That is why the National Urban League has called upon the U.S. Justice Department to keep an eye out on the police's tactics in investigating this tragedy. Employing practices of witness intimidation is hardly a way to get to the bottom of the matter and implement policies to avoid future tragedies.

It's just a matter of time before Black leaders advocating calm will just get up and leave the table. In assessing the significance of Sharpton's light-colored suit in a sea of dark ones at a recent city hall news conference, Washington Post fashion critic Robin Givhan summed up his role in the aftermath of the Bell shooting very aptly. "Sharpton's butterscotch-colored suit was almost a visual taunt, a signal to onlookers that his presence should not be

construed as an indication that he has become part of the team despite the group portrait. He has agreed to play by the rules, but do not underestimate him as an adversary," she wrote.

African-Americans may have come to dinner at the mayor's office but that doesn't mean they're obliged to stay until dessert or even past appetizers. Bloomberg must back his conciliatory efforts up with actions not just words. If the New York Police Department cannot investigate this incident without bias and emotion, the U.S. Justice Department must intervene.

Marc H. Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League

Talk Back!

Data News Weekly wants to know what you think!

Each week, Data News Weekly brings you the information we think you want to know. In an effort to better reflect the thoughts of the community, we are offering you Talk Back. Take this opportunity to let your community, government officials and our editor know what your opinions are on the subject. Selected submissions will be published in the Data News Weekly Talk Back section and a compilation version will be sent to the candidates for Mayor for the City of New Orleans.

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What has your experience been with the LRA and the LA Road Home Program?

Have you received any compensation yet?

Was it enough to cover your rebuilding costs?

How was your experience working with their representatives?

Is there too much red tape?

Go to www.ladatanews.com and click on Talk Back and let your voice be heard.

Talk Back! It's your chance!

NATIONAL NEWS

Race Debate, Continued from page 11.

Hopkins' decision to suspend Park, "particularly important to point out."

"If I do something I'll be labeled a racist...I can make cogent arguments about how it is an injustice that a member of the BSU was on the conduct board. However, that will label me as a racist." The anonymous author rambles a bit more about the conduct board then another unidentified writer posts the following: "Well ... we could always put on masks and lynch 'em ... y'know ... for the sake of hiding our identities."

Perhaps, the person who wrote this was attempting to be irreverent or humorous; it's impossible to know for much of the dialogue takes place anonymously in the vacuum of cyberspace.

Chapman believes it is indicative of systemic racism and ignorance at Hopkins. "A lot of people want to be ignorant. There were two open forums on campus and not one person who was against what the BSU did they did not get up," she said. "They just want to create forums for people who think like them. But, with issues like this its important for there to be an exchange of appropriate information ... I'm just convinced that they don't want to learn they don't want anyone to tell them anything that they don't agree with."

Chapman argues Park and his supporters free speech protest is disingenuous she claims they "don't take Black people seriously."

"He [Park wrote something in our school newsletter where he was justifying it saying, 'Baltimore does have a high rate of HIV, Baltimore is dangerous.' Those are things we know especially in the Black community ... but, that's not the point. It's not whether what he said is or isn't accurate, it's the fact that he thinks it's funny."

Despite the controversy swirling around her Chapman plans to graduate next spring. However, she seems resigned to the belief that Hopkins will be grappling with race matters long after she's gone just as the country's struggle with race could be indefinite. "I just realize how much of a tremendous problem it is. We've been pushing for diversity training. But, I know that alone is not going to do it ... I just feel like this coming out of racism is going to be such a long process in this country."

CBC, Continued from page 11.

funding of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which Conyers has said will be among his top priorities on the Judiciary.

"I think the more that we make the voting process fair, open and transparent, the better off we are as a nation," says Clyburn. "If people don't have confidence in the integrity of their ballot and the effectiveness of it, they tend to drop out of the system. The biggest we need to do is to make sure people's voting rights are protected."

Dealing with domestic issues that mean something to Black people may not be as easy as it appears, says University of Maryland Political Scientist Ron Walters.

"Kilpatrick is going to be a second majority whip because as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus now, she's going to be in charge of 42 votes," he says. "But she's also going to be in charge of getting the agenda together that represents the interest of the African-American community, which will be difficult because she's going to have the Blue Dog Democrats to deal with."

The Blue Dogs are conservative Democrats who frequently vote with Republicans. Their clout increased from 37 to 44 in the November election. Even so, that's just one member more than the CBC. And incoming House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is trying to straddle both ideological camps.

Kilpatrick says she realizes there are schisms in the party, but says she is optimistic they will work out.

"In the long run we will agree on more than we disagree on. I think you'll see that as in any family," Kilpatrick says.

Shoring up young voters will also be a part of the CBC agenda, says Kilpatrick, whose son, Kwame Kilpatrick of Detroit, was elected the youngest mayor of any major U. S. city in 2002 at the age of 31.

Kilpatrick says the CBC will make a concerted effort to recruit and galvanize constituents between the ages 18-40.

"We will work closely with young leaders around America so that they might be educated about what's going on and how they can get involved politically, how they can set agendas for their own community," she says. "It's the young people who set the trends. I believe in getting them involved early. Then, our communities are better, our families are stronger; the body politic runs better."

Kilpatrick says that the way the Democratic Party handles key issues will determine whether the Party reclaims the White House in 2008. One of those key issues is the war in Iraq.

"Five-hundred billion has been appropriated; \$400 billion has been spent. Those are dollars that we needed in our communities," she says. "And by the way, where is all that money? So, we've got a lot to deal with."

Having just lost the battle for affirmative action in Michigan, Kilpatrick says Democrats must also find ways to counter affirmative action-foe Ward Connerly.

"Ward Connerly told us that he'll be in five or six other states in 2008. So again our job is to educate," she says. "My job is to coordinate and to work with and to get out into America and to mobilize and to educate our voters so that they know and so they will engage. So all of that will be happening over the next two years of my tenure."

Angela Davis, Continued from page 4.

things such as jobs and education, healthcare and housing.

EB: Throughout the years you have been an advocate of Democratic Socialism; in your opinion can a more humane form of democracy ever exist under capitalism as practiced by the United States?

AD: I am convinced more and more that what is referred to as democracy under capitalism is a contradiction in terms. The kind of democracy say of the Bush Administration is attempting to export particularly to the Middle East is a democracy based on the free market; based on the notion that there should be equal access to the possibilities of exploiting other people. And I don't think that's the kind of democracy we would like to see, particularly those of us who have been fighting against racism a long time who would like to see substantive democracy. We would like to see democracy as involving the right to a job, housing, education, and who would like to see democracy as the right to be free from the possibility of spending the rest of one's life in prison. And let me say this Katrina demonstrated that the tendency to imprison people for the slightest pretext is a matter of fact a kind of sign of the democracy that has been afflicted upon us in this country, and I would say that the prison seems to symbolize or appears to be the most obvious face of the kind of democracy we're asked to buy in to. It seems to me that we need to be talking about a different kind of democracy; the kind that would involve the abolition of prison as the main mode of punishment in this society.

EB: You are an iconic figure of the struggle for human freedom of the 1960's and 70's, what do think are the most significant things or gains to come out of that period in our history?

AD: There are a lot of gains of course the ones we celebrate the most are the ones that have to do with Civil Rights Movement. The desegregation of institutions in the south, the right to vote, however, I would say civil rights are only the beginning and of course it

was Malcolm X who said quite some time ago that we should move from civil rights to human rights. And as a matter of fact the Civil Rights Movement was preceded by people like Paul Robeson talking to the United Nations and called for human rights for Black people in this country, and had a petition against genocide that was presented by the Civil Rights Congress to the United Nations in 1951. I also think Civil Rights discourse does not work in the same way it use to, however, now you see used as a pretext to dismantle Affirmative Action programs, we see civil rights used as an excuse for arguing that the efforts to bring about racial equality result in the denial of civil rights to whites particularly white men. Racism in today's society is a much more complicated matter, I think racism today is more deeply entrenched in the institutions of this society and it resides there without the name racism being attached to it, and therefore it is more difficult to identify the workings of racism.

EB: A lot of people know Angela Davis as an image that's fixed in their minds from the 1960's and 70's. What would you like to be remembered for most, and if you could say one thing to the people from New Orleans who are displaced presently, what would you tell them?

AD: I'm not really that concerned about the image that was produced around the campaign for my freedom; I would simply like to be a known as a person who has fought continuously and vigorously to make a contribution to the struggle for justice and equality. And I would tell people who are scattered around the country that are evacuees from Katrina that we will do everything we can to make sure that this disaster is remembered and to make sure that we call for the creation of the kind of habitable city in New Orleans that would merit their return. People should be able to return, they should be able to return to a new New Orleans with schools and housing, healthcare and jobs.

SPORTS

Saints Make an Eye Opening Statement with Win over Dallas



Saints WR Devery Henderson makes a leaping grab as Cowboys S Keith Davis defends. (AP)

Saints.com & NFL.com

Irving, Texas- In a game that was much hyped and anticipated, the New Orleans Saints opened the eyes of a nation with an impressive 42-17 victory over the Dallas Cowboys this evening.

The Saints took the opening kickoff and picked up a first down in the first play from scrimmage, but could only muster two more yards before they were forced to punt.

Steve Weatherford hammered a 53-yard punt to the Cowboys' 21, where they began their first drive. After a two yard pass from Tony Romo to Terry Glenn, running back Julius Jones took an inside handoff and sprinted 77 yards for a touchdown.

The Saints then some rhythm, off-setting the aggressive pass rushing scheme of the Cowboys with quick hitting short passes and power running plays. The Saints began their third drive of the game at their own 12 yard-line and began with a short pass to FB Mike Karney that picked up nine yards, then came right back to the fullback with an eight yard inside run. Brees then connected with Reggie Bush for an 11-yard gain. Following a short run by Deuce McAllister, Brees again connected with Karney for a 12-yard gain. The Saints then had two short plays, which brought up a third-and-nine from close to midfield, Brees hit Marques Colston for an eight-yard slant. Facing a fourth-and-one, the Saints shocked the Cowboys and ran and end around

reverse, with Devery Henderson picking up four yards and the first down. Reggie Bush then picked up 11 yards on a run and a deceptive underneath pass play from Brees to TE Mark Campbell picked up 14 yards and moved the ball inside the Cowboys' 10. The team then faced a third-and-goal from the two and Karney shocked the Cowboys with a thundering behind center/left guard touchdown run.

The Cowboys' Romo tried to come out slinging again, but S Omar Stoutmire snared a Romo offering and took it to the Cowboys' 39. The Saints capped off the drive with a three-yard pass from Brees to a wide open Mike Karney, giving the Saints a 14-7 lead with 10:19 left in the second quarter.

The Saints again halted the Cowboys, this time ending a drive with a perfectly timed pass defended by CB Mike McKenzie on third down.

The Saints took over deep in their own territory after Reggie Bush was collared down with a facemask that wasn't called. But the Saints persisted and methodically marched down the field late in the second quarter, patiently working the middle of the field with quick screens and timely third down conversions. Jamal Jones, a first-year player from North Carolina A&T, was involved in two big plays. The first was a catch over the middle of the field deep down into Dallas territory. Jones however bobbled

the ball as the Saints were trying to run a play after it was ruled a completion on the field. Cowboys Head Coach Bill Parcells threw a challenge flag inside of two minutes, and while the play was ruled an incompletion, the Cowboys were flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct for illegally challenging the play and the Saints picked up 15-yards. On the next play, Brees zipped a seam route to Jones, who scooted the final 5 yards for the TD and gave the Saints a 21-7 lead.

Dallas began the second half by converting a 24-yard Gramatica field goal after they drove the length of the field. McKenzie knocked down a third down pass from Romo in the end zone, very nearly coming up with the interception.

The Saints came right back and started off with a quick underneath pass to Karney for nine yards, they then picked up the first down and four more yards on a power run. On a first-and-ten from the

Saints' 39, Brees took a screen and put some dazzling move on Cowboys defenders en route to the end zone and the Saints' 28-10 lead with 10:00 remaining.

Dallas then received an early Christmas present when they faced a fourth-and-ten at the Saints' 34 with 7:46 remaining in the third quarter. Romo's pass zipped through the hands of CB Fred Thomas, whose left thumb is wrapped in a cast, and into the waiting arms of Terrell Owens, who cruised the remaining yards into the end zone and cut into the Saints' lead, 28-17.

The Saints calmly responded to the adversity, though, taking the ensuing kickoff and starting to hammer away with two Deuce McAllister runs. Brees then connected on a 50-yard play-action pass to Devery Henderson deep into Dallas territory. After a McAllister run to the edge of the end zone, the Saints were flagged for an illegal substitution and marched backwards for five

yards. Brees then connected with Mike Karney for a six yards TD pass and the Saints again led by 18 points, this time with 5:16 left.

The Saints then turned in some trickery and converted a perfectly timed on-side kick against an unsuspecting Dallas special teams and the ball was recovered by Jay Bellamy. Brees then launched a sideline aerial to Henderson for a 42-yard TD that gave the Saints a 42-17 lead in with slightly more than 3 minutes left in the third quarter.

The Cowboys were forced to go into a completely pass-oriented mode to try to get back into the game after trailing by 25 points. Romo occasionally tried the deep sideline pass, but concentrated primarily on underneath crossing routes. The Cowboys final drive in the third quarter ended with an interception by CB Jason Craft.

The game settled down in the fourth quarter, with the Saints focusing on running the clock out.

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