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New Orleans

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COVER STORY

Nia's Defining Purpose

By: Edwin Buggage

The word Nia in Swahili means purpose, and over the years Nia Long's purpose has been to dazzle and captivate audiences with her acting ability. Her luminous beauty has graced both movie and television screens, mesmerizing many of those who have witnessed her huge talent. She has played memorable roles that many have come to know and love. Most notably, in the films Love Jones and The Best Man in addition to her role in the television sitcom the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air has cemented her image as an Urban American princess; the ultimate girl next door.

Recently, she has branched out exploring new territory co-starring in the psychological thriller Premonition where she is a co-star in a film with another sultry siren of the silver screen Sandra Bullock. She says of the film, "It is kind of a mind twister for the audience because the film goes from reality to Sandra Bullock's character premonition of her husband being killed in a car accident." Speaking of her role in this suspenseful mind thriller, "I play Annie, who is Sandra's best friend in the film." "Annie is single and still in search of the husband and the white picket fence."

In real life Nia Long is a single mother raising her young son; her character and Bullocks in the film is a case study in the dilemma facing many single and married women today about love and marriage and does it equal happiness. She talks about the differences in their characters that may be the chord



“Most of the people of New Orleans, the black people were enjoying life, but it wasn't a fancy life or necessarily a rich life and to lose the little bit that you have is emotionally devastating.”

that connects them in their friendship in the film comparing the two and their world views saying, "I wonder what it's like to have a husband and family? But the wives are like, God I would do anything to

be single again." "So you kind of find yourself living vicariously through the friendship."

She has played many roles over the years and says all the character she has played has a little bit of herself in them. Saying that this is a very common

thing for most actors, "It is hard for any actor to avoid when choosing a role because there is something you have to connect with whether it's a spiritual or an emotional thing." She says when speaking of herself people see her one way but there are other

sides to her personality. When most think of Long they think sassy, sophisticated, and sexy, but she says what a lot of people don't know about her is that she at times can be very silly, "A lot of people don't know I'm very silly." "When I'm hanging out with my girlfriends, I'm always cracking jokes and trying to keep everybody loose and happy." "So lately I've been doing a lot of comedies, and I really enjoy them, because I get to really not care what anyone thinks, and just be me and have fun with it."

On a more serious note Nia who is not a stranger to Louisiana; a state that is in the process of recovering after the ravages of Hurricane Katrina has worked in New Orleans previously on Big Momma's House 2. Her current project Premonition was filmed in Shreveport Louisiana, and while filming she came face to face with many of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina who worked as crew members on the film, and was given first hand accounts of the horrors

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COVER STORY

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that befell the Crescent City something that visibly moved her as she spoke of the character and resilience of the people of New Orleans, "The people of New Orleans are some of the most gracious humble hardworking

people I have ever worked with." "And I think it comes from the sense of spirituality and the senses of belongingness black people have in Louisiana, with Mardi Gras, and the music and voodoo and all the other things that sort of give Louisiana this mystical quality."

She says it saddened her what happened to the people of the region, "You know it's like you work hard so hard to build a safety net for your family." "Most of the people of New Orleans, the black people were enjoying life, but it wasn't a fancy life or necessarily a rich life and to lose the little bit that you have is emotionally devastating." "But to see these men come back to work with smiles on their faces made me think we all have issues and problems that we work through, and that is just part of life, it made

me think you know what I am blessed to be alive, breathing and have food on the table."

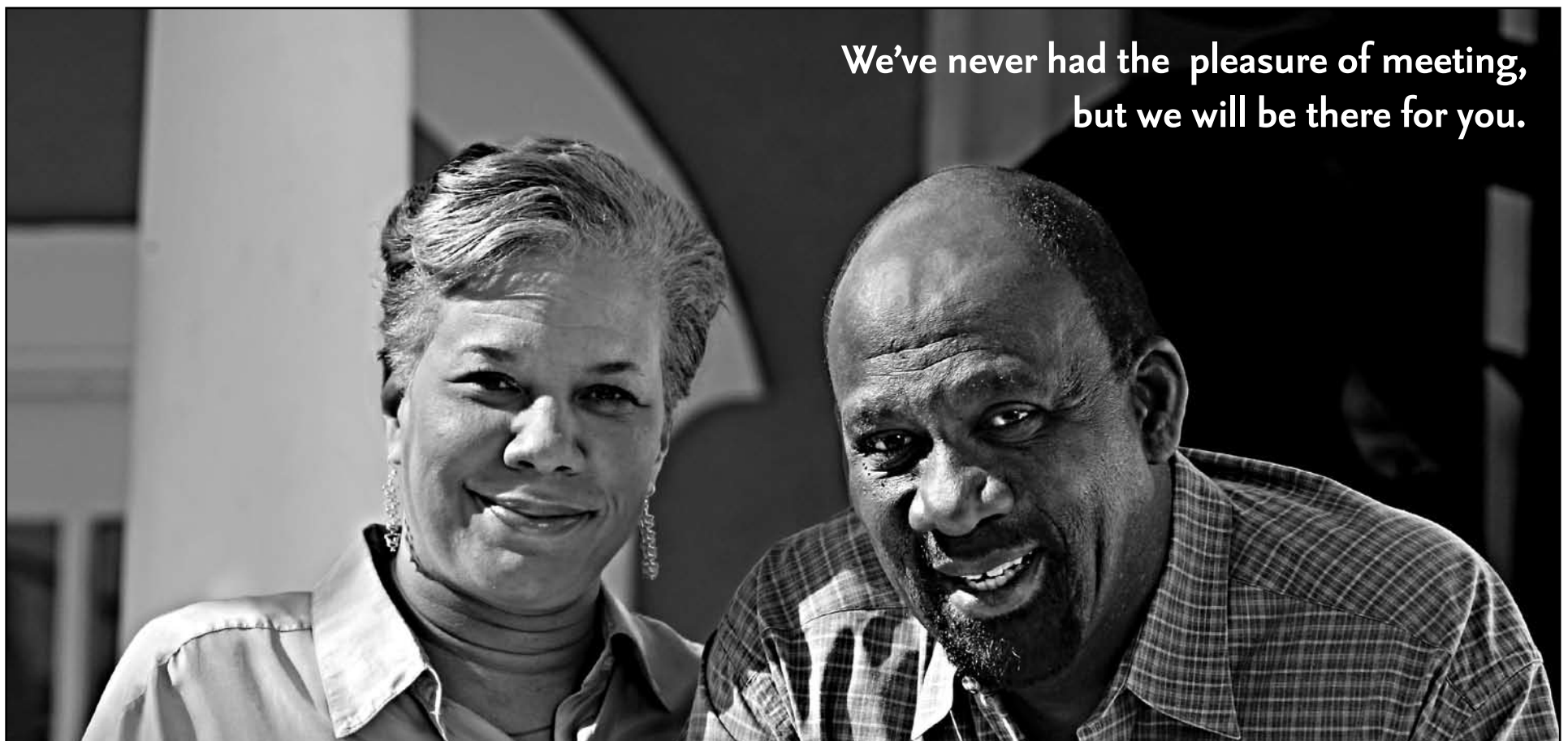
As of late Nia Long has been on her own spiritual and professional journey and has been working to become a power broker in the entertainment industry. She has added the title director to her already long resume. She has directed several videos more recently by Gospel Music superstar Yolanda Adams; she speaks of her admiration for her and her desire to do more directing in the future. "I love Yolanda Adams, the first time I heard her sing I think I was 19 years old and she brought tears to my eyes, I will never forget that." Continuing she says, "I've followed her career and really admire her sense of being human, but also a woman of God." "I can't say enough amazing things about, she is by far one of those people you meet during your journey and she is one I will never forget, because she is just amazing, and hopefully we will do it again soon."

Also during the filming of *Premonition* her experience with the survivors of Katrina was akin to



a personal epiphany as she spoke of mortality and of what one's greater purpose in life; alluding to what was lost for many victims of the storm and the idea of what someone's legacy may be. Her words echoing with passion and conviction in her voice says, "My heart went out to all the survivors, because I know it's not just them, it's their families, its generations, it's their grandmother's china cabinet that was passed along to you, its pictures in your home, it's the legacy you leave behind." Long, one who is seemingly grounded in herself and purpose asserts that a legacy doesn't have

to be one showered with the spoils of Hollywood glamour, "A legacy is what you've maintained, we've educated our children, we've worked hard, whether you work at McDonald's or you work for a corporation or on a movie set we're still human beings." "I think it's important for people in the entertainment business to connect with the world in that sense." "We do all the same things to survive, it may be on different levels monetarily, but the feelings and emotions are still the same."



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NEWSMAKER

Housing Progress Report

Story and Photos by Eddie Francis



Lafitte still sits boarded up.

By Eddie Francis

More than 18 months after the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina affordable housing remains a hot-button issue in New Orleans. The issue has even kept national attention on the Big Easy while local advocates for affordable housing keep fighting. As all parties push through discussions about affordable housing for low-to-moderate income residents, displaced renters and public housing residents are still wondering whether or not they are wanted.

Where's the money?

Recently U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) visited New Orleans and other parts of the Gulf Coast to assess the progress (or lack thereof) of affordable housing. On February 22nd the Lawless Memorial Chapel at Dillard University was standing room only to hundreds of emotional citizens. Public housing residents and renters filled the chapel in order to witness Rep. Waters' subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity grill local, state and federal officials about affordable housing.

Rep. Waters conducted two field hearings—one in New Orleans and the other in Biloxi. It was at the New Orleans hearing that she said in her opening comments, "Home owners who want to rebuild are being asked practically the impossible through the Road Home program." She continued, "Many lost everything and have yet to receive a dime from the state of Louisiana," to an applauding audience.

Rep. Waters is chair of the subcommittee and she sought to find out where Louisiana's portion of \$16.7 billion allocated by Congress has gone. She reminded

the audience that \$10.4 billion had been set aside for Louisiana yet the funds were "temporary for housing needs." The money was part of federal community development block grant funds. Additionally Rep. Waters publicly questioned whether or not it was wise for Congress to give over \$65 billion to FEMA in order to solve housing issues.

Local, state and federal officials took turns providing testimony and heard how attendees really felt about their testimony. Some of the moments that drew responses from the audience included an exchange between U.S. Representative Albio Sires (D-NJ) and Donald Babers, the Housing Authority of New Orleans' (HANO) Recovery Advisor. Rep. Sires accused Babers of having a cavalier attitude towards public housing residents and questioned Babers' commitment to planning and policy on behalf of the residents. Babers insisted that he was not cavalier and had been working to solve the housing issues at hand.

Residents' frustrations were evident during some testimonies. Even Mayor Nagin drew sporadic jeers as he spoke. Rep. Waters had to work with the audience at various times in effort to control their emotional responses.

Earning the wrath of the public

Jeffrey May understands the frustrations of public housing residents and renters all too well. May is the former executive director of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) and is currently observing the situation from afar. He is a project director for a consulting firm in Silver

Spring, Maryland; but he still deals with housing issues in New Orleans. Asked to grade officials' handling of affordable housing in New Orleans, May gives New Orleans a "B-", Louisiana a "D-" and the federal government an "F".

Starting with his grade for the federal government, May says that the appropriations for single- and multi-family units are inadequate. "There is a huge shortfall between the number of families affected and those who will be compensated," he says. As it turns out there was a need to service nearly 130,000 families but fewer than 112,000 are projected to receive some sort of assistance.

The devil is in the details according to May. New Orleans is a city in which over 50% of the population consisted of renters pre-Katrina. Many of those were families. With approximately 80,000 rental units there only exists compensation for 30,000 units.

The state of Louisiana earns its D- due to problems with the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) says May. He maintains that the state had the right idea in assembling its all-star panel but they do not have the proper tools to be effective. May believes that the process for home owners to receive money is too rigorous. May points to the fact that Mississippi residents have six points of verification on their assistance application whereas Louisiana has ten; that slows the process down significantly for those who apply for LRA money.

May says that displaced Louisianans in the Washington, DC area are discouraged by Mississippi's progress versus Louisiana's lack of progress. "They want to know why it's taking so long," he says. Incidentally, Rep. Waters was complimentary of Mississippi's progress with residents during her field hearings in Biloxi.

May attributes his high grade for New Orleans largely to the acquisition of Dr. Ed Blakely and the city's efforts to plan. "He's the right person and well respected," says May. Not only that, May compliments city officials for "embracing planning as a requisite for redevelopment."

Whose city is it, anyway?

New Orleans is still as a place that no longer welcomes low-

to-moderate income residents 18 months after Katrina. One of the many organizations critical of the "new New Orleans" is the Advancement Project. Aggressively defending the rights of public housing residents, the Advancement Project, along with the NAACP Gulf Coast Advocacy Center, hosted Rep. Waters' subcommittee's field hearings.

Throughout the process the Advancement Project has served as a megaphone for those who have championed the rights of public housing residents, in particular. Among those who have worked with the Advancement Project are local attorney and executive director the NAACP Gulf Advocacy Center, Tracie Washington, and Bill Quigley, a human rights attorney and a professor at Loyola University's School of Law.

The Advancement Project has populated its web site, www.advancementproject.org, with a variety of content about the issues with public housing post-Katrina. The site even features a documentary called "This Is My Home: The Fight for Public Housing in New Orleans". It also gives users an opportunity to contact U.S. Representatives Barney Frank (D-Mass.), Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Waters. There

and HANO in an effort to put residents' anxieties into context. He relayed an account of the controversial redevelopment of the St. Thomas community pre-Katrina.

Those anxieties extend to renters and even home owners as affordable housing seems to be slipping away more and more in New Orleans. Among the major concerns have been the excessive rents and rising insurance for property owners. In some cases one has fueled the other.

May says that for property owners supply and demand served as a motivator but the circumstances of home and property ownership has shifted. "First there was a gold rush (among rental property owners) because jobs were plentiful, (jobs) were paying well and places to live were a premium after the storm. That was the motivation for price gouging," May told DNW. "Now insurance for property owners is three times the pre-Katrina premiums"

The culprits, now, are lenders according to the New Orleans native. "Before price gouging was being committed by folks whose property was in tact after the storm. Now lenders require that owners have repairs in place before they refinance the property," he



B.W. Cooper Homes remain unoccupied and fenced in. New legislation could remove those fences and allow residents back in.

is even a document by Quigley called "Twenty-Seven Legal Problems With HANO-HUD Demolition Plans".

Those types of concerns carried over to the Waters field hearings. Current executive director GNOFHAC, James Perry, used his time to give the panel history on the strained relationship between public housing residents

relates. The Achilles' heel of New Orleans recovery, however, is the availability of affordable housing. Of renters' and public housing residents' thinking May says in a somber tone, "If I'm not able to make the leap from renter to home owner, then I'm not likely to be in New Orleans within the next 10 years."

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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Tornado Sweeps Through Orleans and Jefferson Parish

This is a reprint of the article which ran in the 2/24 issue of Data News Weekly but was incomplete. Due to the importance of its content, we felt it was necessary to re-run it.

Story and photos by Edwin Buggage



New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin assessing damages and talking to residents.

It was reminiscent of the Wizard of Oz, but this was no fairy tale. In the calm wee hours of the morning winds twisted and twirled at over one-hundred miles an hour from Westwego in Jefferson Parish to Pontchartrain Park in Orleans Parish leaving in its midst destruction adding to the devastation that many gulf coast residents have already suffered due to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

Gabrielle Turner, a recent college graduate stands outside of their family home in Hollygrove, a section of uptown New Orleans affected by the tornado with her sister Gabrielle Turner a graduate student at Southern University at New Orleans and her father Ivory Turner a small business owner and a former Chaplain at Orleans Parish Prison. As downed power lines lie on the ground among muck, mud and debris with electricity going out throughout the neighborhood causing traffic jams on major streets causing their quiet street to become a major thoroughfare for utility trucks and other vehicles. Gabrielle recounts what happened, "It was around three fifteen A.M. and I felt something shaking, and then I saw lightning flashes that woke me up out of my sleep and it lasted about a minute and a half, and then my mother and I came out and we saw all the debris and shattered windows, and as we went to the back of the house our windows were busted out in the kitchen and bathroom."

During this tornado hundreds of homes would be damaged to the point where they were unlivable, only few blocks away Annie Tyler a life long resident of New Orleans who is presently

residing in Florida recently came to visit her daughter who is raising a small family in their modest uptown home. She as many are trying to put the pieces of their lives back together repairing their home, as the winds came what was their roof lied in the middle of the street

with part of it coming down smashing the windshield and hood of a car parked in front of their home. Ms. Tyler says of the night's events as a U-Haul truck stands in front their home as family members try to gather what keepsakes they have out of their home as the street reeks with the smell of what seems to be a gas leak. "It sounded like a train but it passed so fast, it was only a few minutes, but it did so much damage, we didn't know the roof collapsed until the next morning." Marisol Rodriguez is a young Latina woman who is new to the city, and is a native of Honduras she came to New Orleans to seek a better life for herself and her young son Axel. She is a neighbor of the Tyler family and says she was awakened at about three in the morning by lightning flashes and shaking, hearing sounds of windows crashing and she says she immediately went to check on her son and sat in the bathtub until it passed.

Near South Claiborne and South Carrollton Avenue Mayor Ray Nagin was out talking to and consoling citizens about the damage to their homes and neighborhoods, assessing damage and assuring them he will do everything in his power to help them. He walked inside the home of Linda Conerly whose uptown home that was recently renovated had a projectile come through her roof damaging the second level of her home. "I was not home at the time, but as I got closer to my house I saw debris, and I didn't know what I would be facing, then I saw that their was damage to my roof and I was hoping their was no more damage on the inside." "As I got upstairs I noticed that

the ceiling in my bathroom had been broken, and a brand new air conditioner."

With the amount of damage to the city and how it temporarily crippled the city, feelings about the city's capability to handle a crisis is mixed. Linda Conerly is optimistic, "I was back a month after the storm and I've been able to see how the city has come back from the devastation to where it is now." But she sympathizes with those who have had tough times during the recover, "I live in an area that came back a lot quicker than some areas, I do understand that in other areas it is more difficult to get things done, but I have been back to see from when there was a time when there was not a working traffic light to now where stores are re-opening and things are getting closer to being normal again."

In the face of the tornado and its ensuing damage Gabrielle Turner looks around at her ravaged neighborhood and says the city as not ready to handle a crisis and also points out that the city leadership have misplaced priorities in reference to providing services to certain areas of town. On the heels of the Mardi Gras festivities she says of this problem, "Mardi Gras is a money making industry and they clean up right after the parades, and they don't seem concerned about areas like Hollygrove it's not a priority to them, their priorities are all mixed up." Her sister Stephany Turner is also distressed by the level of progress in the city and also feels the city may not be able to handle a major catastrophe. "I'm not surprised by the lack of action on the part of the city leadership, and I don't think the city can handle a major catastrophe especially after post-Katrina because there aren't a lot of resources there, so seeing the backed up traffic and the debris." "There is not enough police the fire department is down, we're not working with a lot right now, but this is normal for New Orleans and its sad, but I think as far as preparing for a tragedy and cleaning up your neighborhood its going to have be up to the people in the community."

New Orleans Partners With Premier Education Program

New Leaders for New Schools will Recruit & Train Principals Over Four Years to Lead the Majority of New Orleans Schools and Serve over 16,000 Students

(NEW ORLEANS, LA)—New Leaders for New Schools recently selected the city of New Orleans as the next partner for its award-winning initiative to drive academic achievement for every child, it was announced last month by a broad coalition of city- and state-wide leaders and New Leaders CEO, Jon Schnur. New Leaders for New Schools is a nationally recognized non-profit organization, which serves as a new pathway for passionate and effective educators to become successful principals in high-need communities.

The announcement marked the launch of recruitment efforts for the first cohort of New Leaders principals in New Orleans. New Leaders for New Schools seeks talented and passionate individuals with an unyielding belief in the capacity of all children to achieve at high levels, outstanding instructional and leadership skills and a relentless drive to lead the city's schools. Coalition members gathered at the Samuel J. Green Charter School for the announcement that over the next four years, New Leaders will recruit, select, train, and support as many as 40 highly talented and motivated new principals to lead the majority of public and public charter schools in New Orleans.

New Leaders for New Schools has begun accepting applications for its New Orleans fellowships online. Individuals interested in applying for this prestigious full fellowship or in nominating strong candidates should apply or go online now at www.nlns.org, email neworleansinfo@nlns.org, or call 504-210-9017. The application deadline for the New Orleans program is March 20th, 2007. The first New Orleans cohort will begin its training in June 2007.

New Leaders is targeting for recruitment both educators in New Orleans, and those who have left New Orleans and are seeking to return. Applications will also be accepted from candidates across the country who seek to

serve New Orleans' children. New Leaders recruited through this program are expected to make a long-term commitment to serve New Orleans schools. All New Leaders must commit to achieving ambitious goals for students, including 90%-100% student proficiency in reading and math in schools led by New Leaders principals.

The New Orleans coalition includes the support of Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, Mayor C. Ray Nagin, Xavier University President and Louisiana Recovery Authority Chair, Dr. Norman C. Francis, Recovery School District Superintendent, Robin Jarvis, Orleans Parish School System Superintendent, Darryl Kilbert, New Schools for New Orleans President/Founder, Sarah Usdin, and New Orleans City Council and Education Chair, Cynthia Hedge-Morell. Over the past eight months, the coalition has worked with New Leaders for New Schools to build a student-focused partnership that is tailored to the needs of New Orleans schools.

"There is a tremendous opportunity in New Orleans to ensure quality schools and high achievement for every child," said New Leaders CEO, Mr. Schnur. "While there will be inevitable challenges over the near term, we know it's possible for every child in New Orleans to achieve at high levels over the next several years with well-supported effective principals and teachers in every school."

Dr. Norman Francis, Chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority and President of Xavier University, said, "Katrina has made New Orleans not just a symbol of devastation, but a symbol of heroism, compassion, human decency and generosity of spirit. We are rebuilding our communities and schools so that they are safer, stronger, and smarter, and with opportunity for all; a partnership with New Leaders for New Schools is essential to this work."

NATIONAL NEWS

Obama Passes Clinton in Black Support

By. Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – U. S. Senator Barack Obama's rock star-like following in his Democratic bid for the presidency has now overtaken Sen. Hillary Clinton's support in the Black community, causing two former Black presidential candidates to skeptically say Obama really could become America's first Black President – if he overcomes major hurdles.

"I guess anyone has a chance," says activist Al Sharpton, a Democratic candidate for president in 2004. "But, the poll challenges him more than anything else. I see the poll saying that he was better than he was, but he's got a long way to go before he talks about winning."

A Washington Post-ABC News poll shows Clinton at 36 percent and Obama at 24 percent generally consistent since January. But, in Black support, the poll shows a dramatic shift since January when Clinton led Obama 60 percent to 20 percent. The most recent poll late last month showed Obama with 44 percent to Clinton's 33 percent. The margins of error were three percentage points.

Sharpton is not impressed.

"He's got to get more than 44 percent of the Black vote. He's got to get double that and a lot of White votes to win," Sharpton says. "With the cover of Time Magazine, 60 Minutes, all of the positive press put together, and he doesn't have 50 percent of the Black vote? That's not good."

The first-term senator from Chicago, who climbed to national fame after an electrifying speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston, appears to be slowly winning the hearts of Blacks who have been uncertain about his stances on issues important to Black America. The same poll shows that 70 percent of African-Americans say they now have a favorable impression of Obama, up from 54 percent in January.

University of Maryland Political Scientist Ron Walters says the more that African-Americans hear Obama, the more they like

him, dispelling early questions of whether he was "Black enough".

"He's reaching out, I think, being at the right places," says Walters. "People were doubting at first because everything they heard about him was Hawaii (his birthplace) and Indonesia (his mother's home, where he spent part of his childhood), etcetera. But, now, he's beginning to roll out his record, I think that makes a difference."

As of last weekend, that record included a key note speech Sunday morning by Obama at the historical Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Ala. as part of a service to commemorate "Bloody Sunday," when African-Americans were beaten during a voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery more than 40 years ago.

But, Obama had company. In the same neighborhood, at Selma's First Baptist Church Sen. Clinton was the Sunday morning speaker. Her husband, former President Bill Clinton, was also inducted into the National Voting Rights Museum's Hall of Honor as part of the commemorative activities.

Sharpton speculates the former president could be Hillary Clinton's secret weapon.

"Hillary hasn't even brought out Bill Clinton yet, who a lot of Blacks rightfully or wrongfully like. If I was Hilary, I'd not be scared of this poll. I'd say wait 'til I bring out Bill who some Blacks called the first Black president," says Sharpton.

But, twice presidential candidate Jesse Jackson Sr. says Blacks will be able to distinguish the difference between a Black presidential candidate and a former White president who was popular with Blacks.

"Let's dispel the foolishness of that. Clinton was a White president," says Jackson. "His reaching out to Black people socially was endearing. There's not a question about that, but this time, there will be intense competition for the Black vote and there should be. No one should be able to take the Black



Illinois Senator Barack Obama addresses supporters. His approval numbers and support is quickly moving up on early front runner Senator Hillary Clinton.

vote for granted or inherit the Black vote."

Jackson and Sharpton agree that Obama must aggressively seek the Black vote in order to win the Democratic Primary. The Black vote could also determine the margin in a general election. Therefore, strategy will be key, they say.

"He must identify areas of interest in his constituents, [Blacks, Whites, Jews, labor], and stay close to them," says Jackson, who won 77 percent of the Black vote in 1984 and 92 percent of the Black vote in 1988. "He must find the lines between constituency groups and the common ground...We are not dealing with who. We're dealing with what. Who has the best plan to end the war in Iraq and to end poverty at home? What is the agenda?"

Sharpton says Obama must become even more personable in the Black community.

"If he's got more than half of Black people saying they're not supporting him, what does that say?" Sharpton quizzes. "Jesse Jackson got 90 percent of the Black vote, I carried every Black district in Washington and Detroit. ... He's going to have to start doing

things on the ground. He's going to have to have organizers on the ground. He cannot do it through the media."

Among the hottest issues for both Clinton and Obama is how to end the war in Iraq. Clinton voted for the war authorization in 2002. But, both candidates are proposing phased deployment strategies. Therefore, for Black voters, they must distinguish their candidacies on other issues. That may be difficult when both have scored 100 on civil rights issues of the NAACP Congressional Report Card and the Children's Defense Fund's Score Card.

If the race between Clinton and Obama gets too nasty, political observers speculate voters might opt for other Democratic candidates in the wings, next of which could be former Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina. Former Vice President Al Gore has said he will not run again. The leading candidates among Republicans are former New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and Sen. John McCain of Arizona.

At least for the moment, Obama appears to be making the right moves, says Walters, who was an organizer for both of Jackson's

presidential campaigns. "I do believe he could become the first African-American president. But, I think a lot depends on it."

A benefit for his campaign, Walters says, is that he has distinguished himself from Jackson and Sharpton as well as former Sen. Carol Moseley Braun and the late Rep. Shirley Chisholm, also Democratic presidential candidates.

"Everyone else rose in the margin of the electorate. He had a level of acceptability that was widespread in the middle of the electorate and that had a lot to do with the war and his position on the war," says Walters. "But, also his story, an American story, was very compelling and a lot of that had to do with his intelligence, his charismatic presentation and so forth."

But, at the end of the day, Walters concludes, "The caveat is that just because he is up in the polls doesn't mean that's how they're going to vote."

DATA ZONE

Susan Taylor says we need to Link Arms & Aims in 2007!

by Avery Brewton

NEW ORLEANS- Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu's office on March 5 launched the inaugural conference of the eight city series, "Changing Louisiana: Through Volunteerism and Social Entrepreneurship," in the Ernest Morial Convention Center, to raise awareness throughout the state about the

suicide at alarming rates and young black men are killing each other...Our children are in peril, and we have to be in our right mind to be there for them."

On this 13th day of Lent season, it was evident that the non profits and community leaders of Louisiana at least trying to fast from the negative banter that we grown to expect

Each client receives one suit for her job interview and a second suit and business separates when she secures the job. Two Dress For Success boutiques are scheduled to reopen this year.

Guest speakers of the themed break out sessions represented a myriad of local and national organizations with mission dedicated to important issues including education, housing, crime, race, poverty, economic disparity, health care, the environment and community development. Speakers included Robyn Barnes of SEEDCO; Sandra Reed, Co-chair of Central City Renaissance Alliance; Cathy Peterman of Volunteers of America; Kimberly Reese of Xavier University; and Tony Recasner of The New Orleans Charter Middle Schools.

Break out sessions were packed to the brim and abuzz with

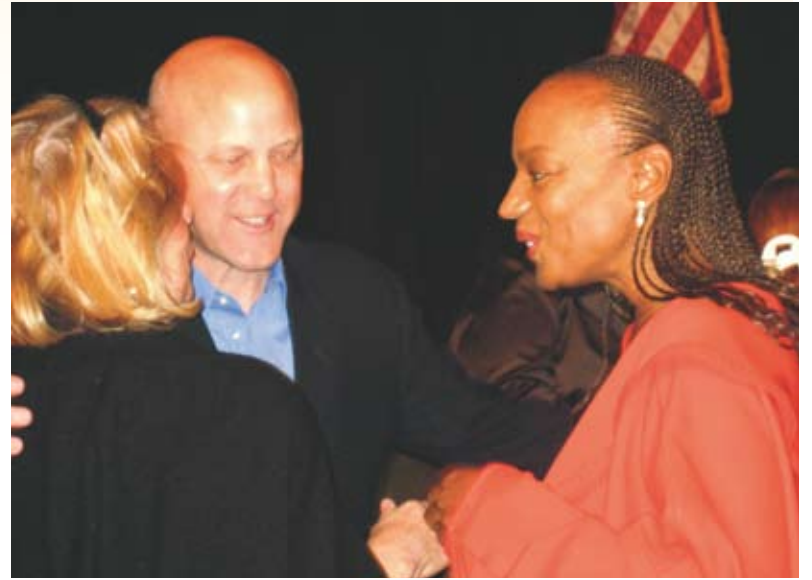


Sandra Reed shares her pearls of wisdom during the Solving Problems through Social Entrepreneurship break-out session

volunteer opportunities that exist in Louisiana and to explore what social entrepreneurship is and what opportunities exist for citizens and organizations that have bold ideas or projects that assist communities in turning cultural assets into marketable products or services.

Seminar Headliner, Susan Taylor, Editorial Director of ESSENCE Magazine opened the seminar with a spirited uplifting message centered around self determination and frank observations about the trivial differences that drive divisive wedges throughout our communities. "Studies show young white males are committing

from leaders. Discussions were focused on building bridges of respect and understanding, partnering resources and taking responsibility for the recovery of New Orleans in the absence of long awaited financial assistance. "We are the leaders we are waiting for," were the sentiments of the charismatic Susan Taylor as she encouraged attendees to step up and get involved in the lives of the youth. CEO of Dress For Success, Joi Gordon stressed how the little solutions make a world of difference. Dress for Success is an international non profit that provides business attire and career development to low-income women seeking employment.



After delivering motivating speeches, Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu and Susan Taylor spend time answering questions

funding programs and volunteer efforts. The next seminars are scheduled for Lake Charles and Shreveport, LA. The seminars are free and open to the public. For

The Lt. Governor created the Office of Social Entrepreneurship in the fall of 2006 and hopes this conference provides the information and motivation needed to encourage nonprofits to become more entrepreneurial in their programs and services thus creating more self-sustainability. "Engagement is the key. If you do not get involved you are personally responsible," says Sandra Reed, Co-chair of Central City Renaissance Alliance.

Judy Morse, Director of the Office of Social Entrepreneurship, believes this approach works and hopes that her office will be able to serve as a helpful resource for information and funding for innovative initiatives that addresses poverty and hunger with this approach. Sounds like organizations better get with the program or they will be left behind and out of the loop.



Louisiana State Senator Ann Duplessis addresses the audience

attentive attendees listening and taking notes as panelists addressed topics that clarified the nuts and bolts of social entrepreneurship and gave practical proposal tips for

more information on upcoming seminars, call 504.568.3601 or log onto www.VolunteerLouisiana.gov.

talkback

www.ladatanews.com/talkback

Do you feel the debates like the recent one between Sheriff Harry Lee and Dwight McKenna are productive in moving the race issue forward for New Orleans?

It's your place, It's your space. Make your voice heard!

DATA ZONE

Data Book Picks

"A Wealth of Wisdom: Legendary African American Elders Speak" edited by Camille O. Cosby and Renee Poussaint

How many times in your life have you heard this: "respect your elders"?

Or how about "With age comes wisdom"? That one was usually said by someone who had something to say to you, whether you wanted to listen or not.

Read the book "A Wealth of Wisdom: Legendary African American Elders Speak" edited by Camille O. Cosby and Renee Poussaint, and you'll be very ready to listen. You'll want to know the wisdom these people offer and the stories they tell.

Admit it. There are lots of things you know now that you didn't know five years ago or five weeks ago or even five hours ago. You grow a little older and you learn a little more each day. Imagine the stories and ideas that could be shared by people born before the Civil Rights Movement, before World War II, before the Depression, or even before the First World War.

In this absorbing book that's part oral history, part memoir, and part social commentary, young participants with the National Visionary Leadership Project interviewed elders in the African American community. The editors of this book point out that some of these elders are "living legends". Others are locally influential people who have made significant contributions to the lives of their interviewers and to the lives and well-being of their neighbors. All are people who can look back with pride on seventy decades of life or more.

So what can you possibly learn from someone who

was an educator, a minister, a poet or a musician twenty, forty, or even fifty years ago?

Plenty. The things these elders have to say will stun you in their simplicity, succinctness, and dead-on truth.

From Maya Angelou: "If you're firmly rooted in the ground, you're not so easily pushed over."

From retired educator Georgia Smith Dickens: "Be mindful of others who may need help."

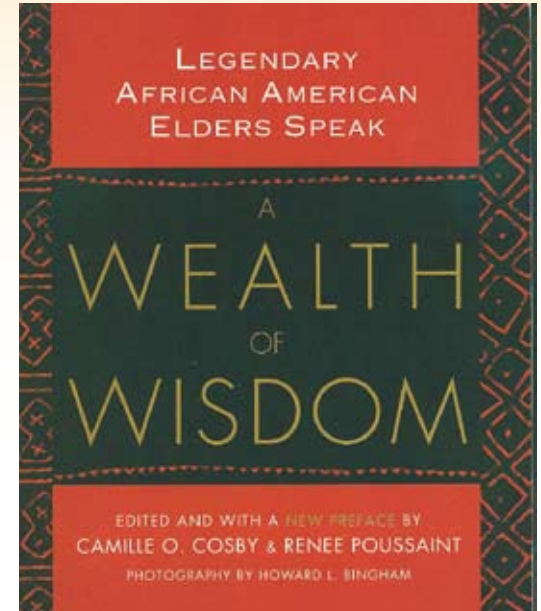
From jazz musician Jimmy Heath: "You must know where you've been to know where you're going."

From dancer and actor Carmen de Lavallade: "If I had stopped to listen to what people said, I would not have done what I did."

From Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman elected to Congress: "Do what you think and feel has to be done, and you'll be able to succeed."

"A Wealth of Wisdom" was first published almost 3 years ago, but in this book, editors Camille O. Cosby & Renee Poussaint have updated the preface with new information on the NVLP (founded by the editors of this book) and on some of the interviewees contained inside. On their expanded website (www.visionaryproject.org), they offer tips on how you can learn to record the stories of your own elders and those who are important to you and your community.

Nobody lives forever and someday these stories will disappear. Now is the time to hear the people who've lived longer than you have and who have important



things to tell. Pick up a copy of "A Wealth of Wisdom", read and listen. To do anything else just wouldn't be wise.

"A Wealth of Wisdom: Legendary African American Elders Speak" edited by Camille O. Cosby and Renee Poussaint

© 2004, 2007, Washington Square Press paperback, \$15.00 / \$18.99 Canada

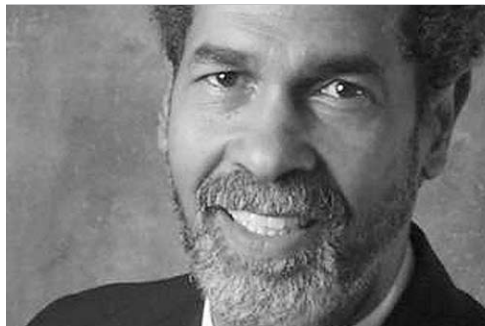


STEVE HARVEY
Weekday Mornings 5-9

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OPINION

On The Radio Everyday... But Not In New Orleans



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

I'm back on the radio, but not in New Orleans, yet. I can now tell you that over the last couple of months I've been working on a radio syndication project that is helping spread my insights and tips about love and family living to a larger audience.

One of the worst things about news coverage all across America these days is this seeming conspiracy to keep urban communities ignorant about what is happening in and to other urban areas, so we here and in other cities begin to believe that there is something uniquely wrong with our city and by extension our black elected officials.

So I'm excited about the opportunity to spread understanding and tips about how to make love and family living work in this crazy mixed up world. The series is actually called "How To Make Love Work" and it is designed to communicate one point, a different point about maintaining relationships and family life, each week day.

Every urban area suffers from the legacy of welfare's replacement of the oppressed man as the family "bread winner". Once little boys began to grow up without the participation of displaced fathers, they displaced themselves in the next generation because that was the lesson learned when your daddy didn't raise you. We even had social activist telling us that we could "redefine" family as what had oozed out of the mire of black male oppression and state support for women and children only.

Well it turns out that without someone to show or teach otherwise, a lot of little black and more and more little white boys grow up with all sorts of confusion about what men are and the responsibilities and benefits of being a father and husband, a patriarch. Few people will disagree with me these days, but there was a time when "patriarch" was a bad word, as though a man accepting responsibility for making his family situation work somehow was a putdown of women and mothers.

Finally, social science has caught up with God's truth, that men are required to "lead" their families. So I became the "love doctor" a decade and a half ago to teach what I had learned leading my family with love and reaping the love and respect of generations, and feeling good about myself

for being willing to grow into the role of family leader.

Perhaps this is where I still differ from many social activist and sociologist. I believe in people and I believe that if I, as a brash and strong headed young man, could "stay the course" of dedicated family living, then so could others. This optimism is supported by the knowledge that many young men are searchers, looking for the truth about themselves, life and living and that their searching comes from a place of wanting to be a better man than their fathers, but they don't know how, so I teach.

So as a happily married father and grandfather with children who are doing the same, I sell family life like McDonalds sells hamburgers. I share the joy and pride of being the man of a house that is pleasant, peaceful and prospering and has produced children who are doing the same. I show how delicious life can be when a man stands up to the challenge of making love work, and then I try to teach "how to" make it work.

Its about showing something as desirable and delicious and then providing information about how to get it. Its called marketing. Its called getting a buy-in, someone choosing to go after what we are selling, and mostly I'm selling people on themselves and their own ability, in spite of the odds and challenges to make family living work.

My commentaries have already started on the Larry Steele Morning Show in Jacksonville Florida on Jacksonville's WHJX, "HOT 105.7", the ruling Hip Hop format in Jacksonville. There are other stations coming on board every week, and yes the new show is designed for hip young folk who will get a heads up about many things in life from an elder who talks to but never talks down to young people like they can't or won't understand. Thanks to an obviously brilliant Larry Steele who must still believe in young people as well being an industry leader.

It really is a shame that young people in Jacksonville can have me on the radio for a few minutes everyday, but the kids who listen in New Orleans can't. I hope we can do something about that situation. Perhaps radio professionals here have given up on young people, believing that they cannot ascertain wisdom and truth when they hear it, or that they don't want to have happy prosperous lives. What I know is that as long as all we feed them is the crap they get from one another all they will understand is what confused fatherless children can teach one another: how to be confused, frustrated and left out of the real deal I call family living.

Check out a sample of my new syndicated "How To Make Love Work" radio segments. Go to www.lloydenniss.com and click on the link to sample the new show. And, please if you know someone in radio, anywhere we have young people, encourage them to do the same.

Reflections on Racism

By Lisa Felton
Guest Columnist

Recently, The N.O. Tribune published an article about the many hats of Sheriff Harry Lee stating one being a KKK hood. Needless to say the article stirred uproar in the already racially tense community. Channel 6 News had the Sheriff and one of the publishers from the Tribune, Dr. Dwight McKenna on the Hot Seat, their after the evening news program to discuss/debate the article. Both men are well known in the communities for their outspoken personalities, so we're sure many viewers were anticipating a knock down drag out conversation.

Over the years, the Sheriff has blatantly, stated that racially profiling is encouraged in Jefferson parish, he's used the "n" word and he says he doesn't care if he's called a bigot. His concern is catching criminals and they all just happen to be black. He never denied being a member of the KKK, only that he was offended by the article. He also stated that Jefferson parish black constituents were very happy with his work. After speaking to blacks in Jefferson parish one realizes that most of them are happy with the crime control however to be belittled is insulting. This brings us to the point made by Dr. McKenna. No one is saying Lee isn't doing a good job, however he needs to work on his public relations skills. Blacks have struggled for years for equality and an end to stereo typing. Lee acts as if his position gives him cart Blanc to demeaning an entire race. We are not blind to the fact that the majority of blue collar crimes are committed by blacks over the entire country, not just in Louisiana. However, not every one black is a criminal. Its 2007, and so many blacks are accomplished professional that this dated Jim Crow attitude of Harry Lee is intolerable. We all know as Americans, freedom of speech is a first amendment right, however we would have hoped Mrs. Lee (Harry's mom) would have taught him that you don't HAVE TO SAY, everything you're thinking, as my mother taught me. Most of Lee's comments are not well thought out and his hatred is explicit.

The one thing that bothered me most, with the debate was the word RESPECT, never came up in the discussion. The two men just ranted on about their disgust for one another's opinions. At this time of rebuilding and all of the nation's eyes on us, it is imperative that we stop being so ignorant. The nation's opinion of the south is already low and Harry Lee's bigotry stem's all the way back to Huey P. Long days. Will we ever overcome this hatred and reach for mutual respect? Most of the crimes committed are because this younger generation has no respect for one another, however if they don't see the older generations (supposedly, the wiser

generation) giving respect then the viscous circle will never end. As a former teacher, the one thing I noticed with the discipline problems were neither child had respect for the other's feelings, which is also the problem with Harry Lee. We don't care that you don't care if you're called a bigot; we care about the nation not seeing us as narrow minded ignorant individuals, but as a community working together with basic respect. Being a person with authority, one would hope that Sheriff Lee could try to think before he speaks. I have said for years to control the problems we must change the mentality of our community to a more positive attitude. That goes for everyone!!! Positive reinforcement will get you so much farther, remember for every action there is a reaction and both men show that, only negatively. We've got to start acting positively, it's not that hard. As we tell the children, treat each other as you want to be treated. That's been the higher lesson of love since the beginning of time. It a lesson for a better life, now more than ever we MUST come together for ourselves and more importantly for our future.

Undoubtedly, the public must have given a lot of feedback to Channel 6, which prompted them to host a second forum between Dr. McKenna and Sheriff Lee. Both men seemed calmer and this time McKenna did bring up the much needed word respect several times. They did a survey, asking would this discussion have an impact on racial relationships in our community. Most people said no.

Our community is not as culturally diverse as most of American communities are and this pre-integration attitude is so sad especially considering Harry Lee is Asian-American. This superior attitude of his is mind boggling. We realize black on black crime is a huge problem throughout this country, but we have to figure out a way to build up our youth's self esteem. Each one teaches one has to become the law of the land. Sheriff Lee we ask you one thing, please consider the majority of the law abiding black citizens before you fly off the handle publicly. It's not just locals watching, the eyes of the nation are watching and it's embarrassing and unfortunate that racism IS alive in America. Go ahead and do your job, Sheriff Lee but learn self control of your mouth (not you're your big, fat mouth as you told Ms. Carter after her interview with Spike Lee).

As a second generation of a higher educated black person, we MUST educate our youth that violence and theft is not a viable solution to insure positive growth in our community. Positive unity in our community is the only way for survival and now more than ever it's a basic necessity of our rebuilding.

COMMENTARY

Message to Giuliani and Romney: Just Say No to Drive-By Politics



Marc Morial
President & CEO
National Urban League

Back in November, the National Urban League extended invitations of anyone considering a presidential run to speak at our annual conference this July in St. Louis, Mo. We figured they'd have no legitimate excuse not to come if we started our outreach two years before Election Day.

Well, we were wrong.

After two rounds of invitations, we've received two rejections - from former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. Giuliani has got some bigger fish to fry, apparently, and is so busy that he's got not just one but two scheduling conflicts that render him unable to grace our stage. I understand the 2008 presidential campaign is already underway - well before elections of the past - but it's not as if we're holding our convention in midst of the primary season.

Such is the life of a popular presidential contender such as Giuliani, who emerged as the GOP frontrunner in a recent Washington Post poll that gave him a 2-to-1 advantage over Arizona Sen. John McCain, more than triple his margin from last month. I understand our friend Rudy is being forced to make tough decisions and prioritize. But apparently, the National Urban League doesn't rank up there on his list. Romney barely registered a bleep - 4 percent - in the Post poll so it leads me to conclude that his campaign will be on life support or long gone by our conference in July anyway. But that is still no excuse.

As Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama start their jostling for the black vote, Giuliani and Romney appear to have written us off even through their party's sitting leader - President George W. Bush - saw fit to include us on his calendar - three times since he took office in 2001. Bush boycotted the NAACP in 2004, but not us. His latest visit in 2004 - featured a debate between him and Democratic presidential nominee Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry. In 2006, then-Republican National Committee chairman Ken Mehlman and Democratic National Committee head Howard Dean appeared. But in 2007, we know one thing is for sure: Giuliani and Romney won't be around.

Giuliani may have served as the top government official of the nation's largest and most diverse cities but that doesn't mean he's obliged to address the issues near and dear to his former constituents' hearts. It's so ironic that America's Mayor would turn down an invitation to speak in front of the nation's largest organization devoted to urban issues. But then again, he cannot possibly depend on us to pull him through to victory in the GOP primaries. He needs to do what every other red-blooded political candidate seems required to do - court white evangelicals, an increasingly influential and populous sector of the electorate. In 2006, they made up 24 percent of the electorate, up from 23 percent in 2004, according to exit polls.

In the height of the 2006 mid-term elections, the media surmised that the Republican Party was losing its grip over white evangelicals. Their predictions, to a large extent, didn't quite live up to expectations: 71 percent of white evangelicals surveyed in exit polls supported the GOP, down from 78 percent in 2004. For just a quarter of the voting population, they surely have a big voice. It seems that both parties are bending over backwards way too much to appease this sector of the electorate. Arizona Sen. John McCain knows a few things about inflaming the ire of evangelicals when he took them to task in the 2000 Virginia GOP primary, where they proved to be the nail in the coffin of his presidential run. The irony is that a higher percentage of blacks compared to whites attend church at least once a week or more - 37 percent versus 25 percent, according to a 2004 National Opinion Research Center poll. So, we're not talking about two groups that have absolutely nothing in common.

And let me also add that Clinton, Obama, McCain and the rest are hardly off the hook. We haven't heard from them, either. But at least, they haven't written us off. The titular head of the Republican Party - George W. Bush - find time to come - why not Giuliani or Romney?

The National Urban League promotes issues that are just as important to middle-class Republican NASCAR dads as it is to single African American mothers struggling to make ends meet. All Americans want to get better jobs, own their own homes, send their children to college and prepare for their own retirement. Our message of economic empowerment is universal: it cuts across all lines. Everyone has a desire to make their lives better for themselves and future generations.

That is why I'm urging our presidential contenders to cease and desist with the practice of drive-by politicking. They must that to be an effective president of this nation in the 21st Century they'll need to reach out to all groups equally.

They cannot just drive by and wave.

Obama Begins to Move



Ron Walters
Data Columnist

I have been saying for some time now that the original polls that showed Hilary Clinton leading Barack Obama would change.

Whereas the first polls showed Hilary Clinton at 42% and Obama at 17% among black voters, the latest Washington Post polls shows him beginning to move at 44% to 33%. A key issue is what factors are going to be responsible for that continuing that change such that he begins to run away with the black vote.

Need I say again that the black vote is crucial, in Southern states where it constitutes as much as half of the Democratic primary, but it also is critical in states where the whites vote will be closely split. For example, in the 2006 mid-term election, the national picture showed that whites voted slightly in the majority (52%) for Republicans, but blacks voted 82% for Democrats.

Guess won the House and Senate, and the victories were not all coming from the South. Yes, Democrats won Senate close statewide elections in places like Maryland and Virginia, Southern States, but also in Pennsylvania, Missouri, New Jersey and elsewhere.

My guess is that Obama is beginning to campaign in black communities much harder and black folks - perhaps spurred on by the media - are beginning to clue-in to the discussion. Their concern about black views of his Blackness was key. The media raised questions about this, essentially because the notion has historically threatened them. Malcolm was too black, Stokeley was too black, so was H. Rap Brown, now Rev. Al Sharpton and anyone else who has strongly espoused black liberation.

But blacks began to listen to the dialogue and also hear that Obama has done a number of Black things that, while they may not put him in the tradition of a nationalist, surely

makes him more palatable than the others running for president. And that is the dirty little secret. Barack Obama does not have to be a Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., he can be more liberal than the others - in other words, as close to black as he can be - and still show up better. For example, everybody is discussing the relative position of the candidates on the war, but I have not seen Hilary disavow her connection with the Democratic Leadership Council - the right wing of the Democratic party - yet.

On that score, the only person now in the race who could possibly keep up with Obama in terms of an agenda is John Edwards, but John still has a downside. Even if he can row even with Obama on issues, the emotional tug of the fact that his skin is not black still puts him at a disadvantage.

So I predict that Barack's favorable ratings will continue to climb in the black community and as a consequence, those blacks who have jumped aboard Hilary Clinton's ship will become smaller and smaller. She understand this and this why she wants to go toe-to-toe with Obama, deciding to buggify on down to the annual Edmund Pettus Bridge crossing in Selma, Alabama and speak at another church at a competing time that Obama speaks at Brown Chapel.

At the base of the movement in Barack Obama's numbers is the growing comfort level felt by many blacks with the nature of his campaign. And even though he has not put forth a barrage of race-specific legislative proposals, people seem to be getting it, as he shows up and makes the pitches in terms of many things they generally want such as education, health care and the like. We'll get more specific about this as time goes on.

But for now, it seems that the only way that Hilary or Edwards can trump him is to begin to make specific race-oriented issue appeals. In other words, begin to compete for the black vote in the strongest terms that leave the universal level and go directly to the heart of black interests.

In a recent interview with National Public Radio, Obama admitted that because of his background he is more likely to speak in universal terms when addressing issues. That could work to his disadvantage, if his opponents get religion and come after him on the race-specific level. We will get an answer this question at Selma and beyond. Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Institute and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. His latest books are: *White Nationalism, Black Interests* (Wayne State U. Press); and *Freedom Is Not Enough* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers).



HEALTH

The Medicare Prescription Drug Program: Working for Seniors



Larry Lucas
Data Columnist

The Medicare Prescription Drug Program, known as Part D, is helping seniors and disabled Americans get the prescription medications they need to live healthier, longer lives.

While Part D has been in effect for just over one year, already 90 percent of America's seniors are benefiting from comprehensive prescription drug coverage, according to government reports. This is nearly twice as many Americans as were covered just a few short years ago.

Beneficiaries also have experienced significant savings on their prescription medicines. On average, seniors are saving \$1,200 a year, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Last year, the average monthly premium was \$23 – and it is expected to be \$22 in 2007 – about one third less than the \$37 that was originally projected, CMS reports.

What's more, seniors enrolled in a Medicare drug plan can decide – in consultation with their doctors – which medicines are best for them. Medicare does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all plan, but instead allows beneficiaries to pick the plan that best meets their individual needs and health conditions.

Part D has brought comprehensive prescription drug coverage and peace of mind to millions of America's seniors and disabled. However, there are millions more who can benefit from the program – and many are eligible for “extra help” from the government.

Low-income subsidies are available to those who cannot afford a Medicare

Part D plan, making it possible for all seniors to receive the medicines they need. Beneficiaries who meet the income and assets requirements can receive additional help from the government to pay monthly premiums and annual deductibles as well as little to no co-payments. In addition, these “extra help” recipients do not face a coverage gap (or “doughnut hole”) in their prescription drug plan, meaning their medication will be covered all year without interruption.

While the general open-enrollment period for 2007 coverage ended on December 31, seniors who meet the low-income subsidy requirements can sign up at any time this year with no penalty.

Last year, government health officials estimated that just over three million Americans were eligible for the low-income subsidy, but had yet to apply. If you have not signed up for a Medicare drug plan because of financial concerns, I urge you to look into possible help through the subsidy program. Seniors and disabled Americans can learn more by visiting their local Social Security office or calling 1-800-772-1213.

Medicare Part D also has brought the Medicare program into the 21st Century by focusing on prevention. With prescription medications now covered under Medicare, the emphasis has shifted from treating patients once they are sick to helping patients keep healthy. This preventive model is part of modern medicine's comprehensive approach to health care, which often includes prescription medications, particularly for seniors.

This is especially important for those with chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension – which, if managed with medication and appropriate lifestyle modifications, can be controlled. Without treatment, such illnesses can lead to heart disease, stroke, even death.

In addition to comprehensive prescription drug coverage, Medicare Part D provides an array of screening services aimed at disease prevention. Seniors enrolled in a Part D plan are eligible to receive a “Welcome to Medicare” physical exam, as well as periodic screening tests for cardiovascular conditions, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, pap tests, mammograms and more. Part D also covers bone mass measurements for people at risk for osteoporosis, glaucoma tests and flu shots.

What's more, Medicare drug plans also are required to provide beneficiaries with chronic conditions additional assistance in managing their prescription drugs. Medication therapy management programs differ by plan, but can include counseling to discuss complex treatment regimens, help with medication compliance and other patient education services.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of Medicare Part D for all seniors, especially those in the African-American community, who suffer disproportionately from certain chronic conditions like hypertension and diabetes.

For help, contact a Medicare counselor at 1-800-MEDICARE, or visit www.medicare.gov. They can help find the best plan for you and determine whether you qualify for a low-income subsidy.

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

IN THE SPIRIT

You Can Get Back Up Again

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

again. And soon we will be celebrating the Easter Holiday Season, where we observe the supernatural event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who died for every man, woman, and child (John 3:16). He suffered one of the cruelest deaths that the world could ever imagine, but he chose to endure this hideous death, because of the love he had for the world.

While he was in the grave, Jesus defeated the enemy Satan then rose after three days, early on a Sunday morning, with all power in his hands (Matthew 28:18). My brothers and sisters, Jesus set the example and created a blueprint for us to follow down the righteous path of life. The resurrection of Christ proved to the world that no matter how many times you have fallen in life, you can get back up again and live a victorious life. We study and we learned about great men and women in history who fought many battles and were victorious. We study people such as Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, Aga Khan, the leader of the Ismaili sect, Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, and Achilles, the Great Greek warrior. All of these great men and women died and were not resurrected. On the other hand, Christ rose from death and the grave so that we can rise up from heartache and pain, sickness and all diseases, low self-esteem, poverty, prejudice and hatred; so my brothers and sisters, if Christ was resurrected and overcame all of those demons; what about you and me?

You must remember no matter what you and I may have been through before Katrina or after, we can also be resurrected in any area of our lives. We can also be able to live again and be happy. My brothers and sisters, realize that we are here with another chance to enjoy life. Jesus himself said in John 10:10, “I come so that you may have life, and that you may have it more abundantly.” So in the spirit of the resurrection we must live to love, and live to give of our hearts, mind, and soul, to love each other, as some of us are battered and bruised but we can get up for we shall rise again, and until we meet again may God bless you always.

Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries. To contact him with your comments or suggested topics he can be reached at rharcold@cox.net or (504) 813-5767

Hi, this is Dr. Aaron Harold coming at you with a word of encouragement. Since Katrina, many of us are trying to put our lives back together again. Laughter and the spirit of joy is finally exploding on the inside of some of us as many of us are now beginning to enjoy our family and friends again; regaining some sense of normalcy, and that's a good thing. Some of us are excited about the future, and we should be because of what we have been through. And through it all with God's love and strength guiding us we have endured and are rebuilding our physical lives, but more importantly we should be working on our psychological and spiritual self; repairing the breach in our spiritual life, reconnecting and bonding even more so in these crucial times for our city and the world with our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. However, over a year and a half after Katrina washed away the lives of many in our beloved city there are those that are suffering from post-traumatic stress and other issues. Some of which they have the power to do something about and control while others they cannot. For those problems that are within one's control they should take up the battle and bear their cross and fight to slay whatever it is they are trying to overcome, but choosing one's battles wisely is important; for some things we worry and fret over are out of our hands no matter how vigilant we may be in trying to solve them.

The word of God teaches us in the Bible not to worry, because worrying doesn't make anything better. In John Chapter 14 Verse 1, Jesus is speaking to his chosen disciples. He says to them, “Let not your heart or your mind be troubled.” In these his divinely inspired word Jesus was speaking about the troubles that all of us experience in life. Some of us are still down in our mind, and down in our spirit. The dreams that many of you once had and the things you pursued and loved seems as if like they have died.

The plans that you had for the future, for your family and for yourself, also seem that they have died. On the other hand, there is good news. You can get back up

SPORTS

Sports Talk

Should entertainers have a role in influencing politics

By Chris Fontenot
Data Columnist

Over the years, the entertainment industry has become more involved in government through its many actors and athletes who have transitioned into politics. These entertainers are so popular and have gained so much recognition and fame that they can appeal to voters for political positions in which they have no prior experience to be employed! More recently, entertainers such as President Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sonny Bono, Shirley Temple, Clint Eastwood, Lynn Swann, Jesse Ventura to name a few, have been successful at transitioning into politics from the entertainment business. These individuals received votes for various reasons, but, mainly, because of the notoriety received through the entertainment industry.

The entertainment industry has been a way to obtain riches for many financially deprived people, actors and singers alike, with stars such as:

- Britney Spears
- Denzel Washington
- Spike Lee
- Micheal Jackson
- And the list goes on and on . . .

Singing songs such as: "Dancing, Dancing, Dancing machine . . ." and acting in movies portraying super smooth pimps and prostitutes while raking in the dough. Although there are many good uplifting movies and songs, there is more than a fair share of bad ones.

The major athletic events hypothetically go something like this:

Four seconds left in a championship basketball game, Team A is down by three and the best player for A shoots a three pointer, makes it and gets fouled. He makes the free throw and wins the game.

Three months later in a championship football game, Team B is down by three points with one minute left in the game. Team B is to receive a punt, its fielded by Team B's best running back who runs the punt return in for a 70 yard touchdown – Wow!

That summer in a professional baseball championship game, Team C's best baseball player wins the game in the bottom of

the ninth inning by hitting a home run with the bases loaded, giving his team a one point win.

Very exciting – huh?

They all provide plenty excitement and money for many, however, it places a strain financially and socially on some struggling families.

The exciting moments in the above noted events mirror most of the best in entertainment.

These events are of the greatest interest and provide the most excitement for the spectators who, 90% or more are likely upper-to-upper middle class people.

But what about the poor children and families who are struggling financially and trying to keep up with the Jones' because of what they see in the movies or hear in a song? What real benefit do they derive from wasting money and time that they do not have?

Entertainers, because they make so much money and have such strong leadership qualities may use their status and abilities to apply more pressure and form strong alliances with groups of similar interest to guide and influence legislation.

Some entertainers with multi-million dollar salaries and a child-like focus about life blindly entertain the elite of our society wasting their talents and full ability to influence and mold our world. They are mentally conditioned to believe in their prospective fields as their major contribution to life and to only excel in that area of entertainment.

The acting, athletic, and other entertainment success of entertainers provides little immediate or real tangible benefits to support growth in neighborhoods where there is much more needed than the minor donations coming from their charities. There is a need for these highly paid professionals to educate themselves on the issues and problems affecting the general public; to become active in the government, its laws, the environment, education, and other areas affecting human survival in the future.

Many entertainers are simply pigeon holing their lives to their profession in a tunnel vision mentality advanced by traditionalists. It's time that these

quiet giants live up to the status bestowed upon them because of their wealth and fame. They must stop perpetuating the stigma attached to the entertainment profession and its members. This pro-active stance would add a new dimension to the role played by entertainers in our society.

With the fame obtained by many of these entertainers comes the added responsibility to others not as fortunate, and to whom in some ways the entertainment industry is doing some disservice. These entertainers are responsible to tell the masses truths and to fight to make their lives better.

Just think of the weight that an entertainment lobby group would have to influence Congress, just as Corporate American lobbyists have for centuries. There is so much money in the entertainment industry; the entertainment lobby group would without a doubt be a power to contend with. Based on the diverse backgrounds of entertainers, the lobby group would obviously have creative new ideas to consider and would likely be very bi-partisan. With all of the great entertainers combining creative focus absent the big business influence, and a stunning presence, members of Congress and the local government would be compelled to take notice.

The entertainment lobby group should not represent the interest of big business. The group should strive to influence the laws applied and affecting the general public. They could get the various concerns to legislators of influence and make sure that the ideas presented by the people are placed on the platform for a vote.

As mentioned above, since many entertainers are products of diverse backgrounds, they will likely advance many issues of concern to the general public; unlike corporate and other lobby groups who generally advance mainstream values, morals, and concerns.

With minorities and other groups having a need to remember slavery and other wrongs, it is important that the entertainment lobby impresses upon this country those desires. Entertainment lobbyist can be very influential in making special events such as Kwanza and the anniversary to the abolition

of slavery annual holidays of remembrance. The 150-year anniversary to the abolition of slavery will be approaching in about eight (8) to nine (9) years. We should begin to plan and celebrate that great event in American history. There are other groups and holidays that should be likewise acknowledged and with the diversity of nationalities in the entertainment industry, there will surely be representation for all.

Don't misunderstand, entertainment is utilized and enjoyed at all levels of life, however, it should be understood

that for some it adds stresses and distracts them from thoughts of their successes and true happiness. Because of this, as was noted earlier, it is the responsibility of those who recognize the connection to help those less fortunate people to have a true opportunity for unfounded possibilities and a chance to reach their full potential. Again, the biggest contribution that can be made by entertainers would be to form an independent lobby group to influence the government to change laws and the annual budget, among other things, to account for the general public.

LEGAL NOTICE

If you were arrested for only a minor offense and strip-searched in the Orleans Parish jail from April 25, 1999 through May 31, 2003, before your first court appearance, you could get a payment from a class action settlement.

WHAT IS THIS NOTICE ABOUT?

A proposed settlement has been reached in a class action lawsuit (Greta Cazenave, et al v Sheriff Charles C. Foti, Jr., et al, No. 00-1246, U.S.D.C., E.D.La.) against the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office (OPCSO) alleging illegal strip and visual body cavity searches of people arrested for minor offenses **only**, not involving weapons or drugs, who **before** their first court appearance or release were transferred from the OPCSO Intake and Processing Center (IPC) to its general population. These searches were conducted between April 25, 1999 and May 31, 2003, under blanket policies at the jail that were stopped by court orders as a result of this lawsuit. The only remaining part of this lawsuit is the claim for monetary relief. The defendants deny that they did anything wrong. All of the acts complained of occurred during the administration of former Criminal Sheriff Charles C. Foti, Jr. All parties have agreed that the case should be settled. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana will hold a hearing to decide whether to approve the settlement, so that payments can be made.

WHAT DOES THE SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?

A settlement fund of \$9,375,000, plus interest earned thereon since June 2, 2004, has been set up. After deducting expenses, costs of administering the settlement, fees for the attorneys appointed by the court to represent the class members, and awards to the class representatives, the remaining amount will be distributed to people who submit timely and valid claims.

WHO IS INCLUDED?

There are three sub-classes in the settlement. Sub-classes A and B include males and females who were arrested for minor offenses only, which did not involve weapons or drugs, who were transferred from IPC to general population of the jail from April 25, 1999 through May 31, 2002. Sub-Class C includes males arrested for minor offenses only, which did not involve weapons or drugs, who were transferred from IPC to Templeman III from June 1, 2002 through May 31, 2003. In all instances, the search must have occurred before the first court appearance or release, whichever came first. If you were arrested for a felony or for any charge involving weapons or drugs you are not included in the settlement.

WHAT MUST YOU DO TO GET A PAYMENT?

If you believe you are a member of a sub-class, you must submit a valid Proof of Claim and Release to the OPCSO Strip Search Claims Administrator ("Claims Administrator") so that it is received on or before August 2, 2007. To obtain this form, see "How Do I Get More Information," below.

HOW MUCH WILL THE PAYMENT BE?

The amount you get cannot be determined at this time because it depends on which sub-class you are in, and how many valid claims are submitted for each sub-class.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

If you want to be left out of the settlement, you have the right to do so. To be excluded, you must submit a valid written request for exclusion to the Claims Administrator so that it is received on or before July 2, 2007. Otherwise, you will be bound by the settlement whether you want to participate or not, even if you don't submit a Proof of Claim and Release. If you exclude yourself, you will not get any money from the settlement.

YOUR OTHER RIGHTS

The Court will hold a hearing in this case on September 13, 2007 at 9:00 a.m., to consider whether to approve the settlement and the fees and expenses. The Court is located at 500 Poydras St., New Orleans, LA. You may object to any part of the settlement by July 2, 2007. You may also ask, by July 2, 2007, to appear at the hearing, with or without your own lawyer, at your own cost, but you don't have to.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

To obtain claim forms or more information about the settlement, your rights and how to exercise them, call toll free 1-866-308-7613, go to www.nolastripsearch.com, or write to OPCSO Strip Search Claims Administrator, P.O. Box 2007, Chanhassen, MN 55317-2007.

DO NOT CALL THE COURT

NEWS

City Files Claim For \$77 Billion Against Army Corps Of Engineers

NEW ORLEANS, LA (March 1, 2007) - The City of New Orleans has filed form SF-95, claiming \$77 billion in damages as a result of a break in the levees following Hurricane Katrina. The City filed this claim to preserve its right to claim up to \$77 billion in damages from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers for all City owned infrastructure. That property includes but is not limited to public green spaces, streets, traffic signals, street signs, storm drains, catch basins, underground infrastructure and approximately 400 City buildings damaged by flooding that inundated the City for 21 days.

The City has estimated an approximate total of \$1 billion in infrastructure damages. Along with the estimated damage to critical infrastructure, the City Attorney's Office also considered decreases in the City's image,

tourist industry activity and potential business industry, losses in the tax base and generated revenue, and a decrease in the City's overall population.

SF-95 is a claim; not a formal law suit. The form is required to seek reimbursement from the federal government for personal injury or property damage. The City Attorney's Office filed the claim on Wednesday afternoon.

"Given the uncertainty with respect to which federal statute the court would find applicable, it was prudent at this stage to file the SF-95 with the Corps to preserve the City's claim," said City Attorney Penya Moses-Fields. March 1st was the deadline for citizens to file claims. Claims must have included the date and location at which the alleged negligent act or damage occurred and a specific estimate of damages.

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Monday, March 12

5:30 ~ Mari Watanabe
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Tuesday, March 13

5:30 ~ Arnett Hayes
8:00 ~ Betty Shirley

Wednesday, March 14

5:30 ~ Richard Knox
8:00 ~ John Boutte

Thursday, March 15

5:30 ~ John Royen
8:00 ~ George French

Friday, March 16

7:00 ~ Arnett Hayes
9:30 ~ Anais St. John

Saturday, March 17

7:00 ~ Tom McDermott
9:30 ~ Elva Devaca

Sunday, March 18

5:30 ~ Walter Cunningham
8:00 ~ The Pfister Sisters

Entertainment subject to change.