

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone Page 9

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August 18, 2007 41st Year Volume 37 www.ladatanews.com

Celebration 41

Data News Weekly Celebrates it's 41st Anniversary



Daimler Chrysler Award

Data News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Lighting the Road to Freedom

41st Anniversary

Award Winning Service

August 30th, 2007



Community Involvement



Distribution After the Storm

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Day of Presence August 29, 2007

www.ncbcp.org for more information

Newsmaker National Talent to Headline Anniversary Gala Event



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Data News Weekly Celebrates 41 Years of Truly Being The People's Paper

Honors Trailblazers and Bestows Scholarships at Upcoming Gala

By Renetta Burrell Perry

When Publisher Joseph "Scoop" Jones published the first edition of Data with the intention to provide a worthy forum for our culture to be exhibited, he may not have envisioned that 41 years later, it would become the most formidable and vital source of truth in our community. The Award Winning publication has tackled head-on the difficult issues that plague African-Americans in this the 21st century, while striving to be the most consistent voice of our community.

In the aftermath of the Katrina, Data shifted into high gear, probing our officials with the important questions, gaining the vital answers, and earning journalistic excellence. This year, we will honor our community's unsung heroes and our brightest future stars at the Annual Joseph "Scoop" Jones Scholarship Fund/Trailblazer Awards Gala on Thursday, August 30 2007 at Ray's on the River, in the International Trade Center. Entertainment will include: world renowned musicians and New



Melanie Campbell



Rev. Al Sharpton

Orleans' favorites; Kermit Ruffins, Michael Ward, Irvin Mayfield and Ed Perkins.

This colossal event will also honor Rev. Al Sharpton, President of the National Action Network, and Melanie Campbell, Executive Director of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation for their unending support for the citizens of New Orleans, and moving the dialogue forward and taking up the fight for our right to reclaim our homes.

Honoring Our Unsung Heroes

Each year Data recognizes New Orleans' unsung heroes with our Trailblazer Award. This year the extraordinary men and women honored present a courageous group of visionaries who are helping shape our community and are bringing forth

change in these challenging times. The following heroes will be honored:

Giselle Nakhid: Young/Gifted/Black These days the African Proverb "it takes a village to raise a child," is loosely thrown around but rarely acted upon. But for Artist/Educator Giselle Nakhid, it resonates as a sobering fact of life. Young,

petite, socially conscious and intensely passionate, Nakhid is reminiscent of an older, much wiser spirit as she intuitively and accurately assesses the problems that plague the at-risk youth she works with through Young Audiences, the non-profit organization which employs her as a dance instructor. From homework tutorial to teaching the structure of dance, Nakhid insists she's learning as much as she's teaching. It is through this much needed exchange that her corner of the village is changing for the better.

The Amedee Family: Success Runs in the Family The old adage, a family that prays together stays together has a living embodiment in the Amedee Family, a closely knit clan of brilliant entrepreneurs hailing from the seventh ward. Owners of the Wis-

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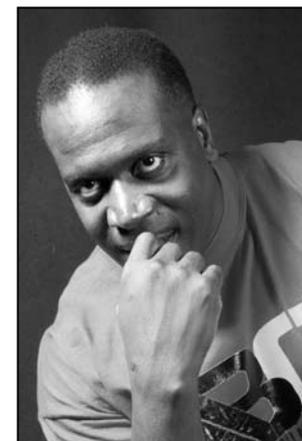
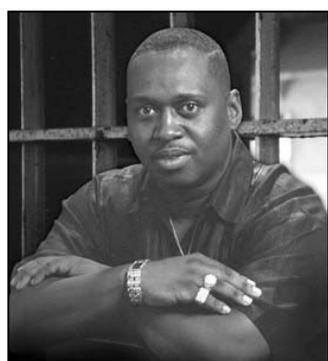
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dom Reception Center on St. Bernard Avenue, the Amedees have created an impeccable destination for receptions, parties and festivities of all kinds. They have done this all while initiating the comeback of a vulnerable neighborhood that was once a thriving part of our metropolis. Food and fun are served up in traditional New Orleans style in this atmosphere that is elegant and classic. The Amedees have faced obstacles large and small, but they've proven that together, no mountain nor storm could conquer the cumulative wisdom and determination of a family.

Keith Turner: Super Teacher Because of the excruciating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the 2006-2007 school year may have started out rocky for New Orleans native and veteran educator Keith Turner, but uncertainty quickly morphed into success as this super-teacher hit his stride and flexed his professional muscles, contributing an extraordinary performance as a 5th grade science teacher at Jerry R. Junkins Elementary School in Carrollton, Texas, just outside of Dallas. The stellar performance, against all odds, landed him the coveted title of Teacher of the Year, an accolade reserved for only the best and the brightest and a reward to Turner for persevering through the one of the roughest chapters in his life. A cut above the rest, Turner was previously named Teacher of the Year in New Orleans, but mimicking the title across the states all while shining a positive light on New Orleanians living in Texas has earned him our greatest R.E.S.P.E.C.T.!

Rev. John C. Raphael: Beacon of Hope The powerfully passionate Rev. John C. Raphael, Pastor of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church is the answer to the lingering question, where are our leaders? This modern day activist's tactics in the war against crime has put him at the helm of New Orleans' most desperate fight - the fight to bring value to and save African-American lives and diminish the wicked cycle of violence that paralyzes us. This fight, says Pastor Raphael, is going on in our community and will have to be won in our community by the people in our community. And though his work brings him out onto the dangerous streets of uptown New Orleans, he sees be-



2006-2007 Data News Weekly Trailblazers

ing a catalyst for change as an opportunity rather than an obstacle; a challenge rather than a chore.

Charles Belonge' Voice of Consciousness The music world of New Orleans is crowded with names, but few possess the versatility, skill and candor of legendary radio personality Charles "Bam Bam" Belonge'. From A Touch of Class, Brass Bull and New York, New York, to Foxy's, Nexxus, Secrets and Amnesia, Belonge' laced tracks and packed dance floors at the hottest spots. Then his fans followed him from the clubs to their radios when he became a local household name with a bigger than life personality in his spot at WYLD. Joking that iconic local radio personalities from A.D. Berry and Greg Vigne (Papa Smurf) to LeBron Joseph (LBJ) and Captain Charles are all friendly rivalries, Belonge' says

they agree that he's the best mixologist. But for Belonge' mixing tracks and being adored by fans represents only one part of him. He has always used his position to bring consciousness to our community. Through his unselfish work with children he is using it to influence a new generation.

David DaJon Visionary Entrepreneur Whomever said it's lonely at the top should have adopted the philosophy of New Orleans native David DaJon, Sr., President and CEO of DaJon's Construction & Environmental, Inc. Committed to changing the landscape of rebuilding in New Orleans making it inclusive of African-American and other minority contractors, while most licensed and non-licensed contractors were focusing on the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow after Katrina, DaJon turned his attention to others. Observ-

ing that many minorities operated without licenses and noting that the state licensing process seemed overwhelming to many, he was doggedly determined to provide insider information on the proper avenues to travel when navigating the complicated road to becoming a state licensed contractor. He then took action offering volunteer training classes free of charge to the public, eventually coaching over 150 non-licensed contractors over the period of five months. His goal, he says, is to help minority contractors position themselves to be a viable part to the rebuilding of our community and to give them the tools necessary to become a part of this unique economic opportunity.

Jamie Jones Souls in Formation If art is an expression of one's soul, then the soul of artist/teacher Jamie Jones is rare and pure.

His unusual, yet poignant piece "Formation" which he created using 2,436 dog tags, is a labor of love, a tribute to fallen soldiers who gave their lives for our freedom while serving in Iraq. Jones, a graduate student seeking a M.A. in arts education, also serves in our military and teaches art to students through Young Audiences. Through the arts, which he says provide the ultimate gift of expression, he is determined to instill in our youth a love for creativity and more importantly, for serving humanity.

Phill Batiste The Power of Change When author Phill Batiste left Angola and went on to live life as a free man he may not have known that he'd soon be returning - but not as an inmate. Through a life changing encounter with Household of Faith Church, he found spirituality and the desire to enlightening others. Through his Pen Pals Prisoners he returned to prison ministering and educating. His book, What Do You Give a Man Who Has Everything?, is a testament to Batiste's will and determination. In it, he gives voice to reason while encouraging us to defy those who tell us what we cannot do.

Anthony Bean Actor/Playwright/Activist Extraordinaire Creativity at its best can inspire a community. This is the philosophy of the extraordinary actor/writer/director/playwright/community activist that is Anthony Bean. For over three decades, Bean has educated, entertained and inspired us. The child advocate and humanitarian has been the creative force behind some of the most provocative and poignant stage works seen. His fascinating execution of the art of acting and stage production transforms the mind, body and spirit. Through the Anthony Bean Community Theater, he has sculpted careers and touched lives. And through his philanthropic work, he has blazed the trail for the generation of young geniuses that follow his worthy direction.

Aaron Harold Taking It To The Streets

Ministering to his congregation in the confines of a cozy church setting is not the norm for Pastor Aaron Harold, of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries. Instead, he brings the Word onto the streets where he inspires our youth through non-traditional

World Renowned Talent Adds Jazz Flavor to Data Anniversary Gala Event

Celebrating 41 years of publishing "The People's Paper" Data News Weekly is hosting

By Cheryl Mainor

Celebration 41 on Thursday, August 30th at the Ray's on the River. Expecting one of the largest attendances to date, Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones stated, "This year's Gala Event, is our

most exciting we have had the honor to host. We are proud and honored to have had the ability to

continue to serve our community especially now, throughout the ongoing rebuilding process, and to bring information to our people."

Citing the recent accomplishments this year by the paper, Jones says he is proud to be a part of New Orleans history, and



Kermit Ruffins

to have been awarded two prestigious national awards this year for the newspapers efforts, and is looking forward to more years in the City's future. "Whatever the

future holds, said Jones, Data will be there, telling the stories of our community.

Entertainment for the Gala Event, is sure to bring you to your feet, if you are a true lover of JAZZ, this event has something for everyone. Headlining the event are; New Orleans Jazz violinist Michael Ward, world renowned Jazz musicians Kermit Ruffins and Irvin Mayfield, and rounding out the performances is a New Orleans favorite veteran vocalist Ed Perkins.

Tickets for this event are only \$35 and can be purchased at the door, with the Gala Event beginning at 7:00 p.m. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Joseph M. Jones (JMJ) Continuing Education Fund, which for 11 years has been assisting New Orleans'

deserving African- American college students with the cost of their education at local New Orleans colleges and universities.

Irvin Mayfield

New Orleans native Irvin Mayfield, has established himself as the next musician to embody and represent the great New Orleans jazz trumpeter legacy. Mr. Mayfield has become a fast-paced pioneer in several endeavors. Beginning with his New Orleans-styled version of a Latin jazz band, Los Hombres Calientes, which he co-founded with Bill Summers. He also leads his own band, the Irvin Mayfield Quintet. In addition to his numerous recordings, he recently founded the Institute of Jazz Culture at Dillard University

and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, a non-profit institution geared toward jazz performances, education and interpretation.

Irvin Mayfield was unanimously appointed in September 2003 to the post of cultural ambassador for the City of New Orleans by the United States Senate, the United State House of Representatives, the Governor's Office of the State of Louisiana, the Louisiana State Representatives, the Louisiana State Senate, the City of New Orleans, the New Orleans Aviation Board, establishing himself as a musician who embodies and represents the great New Orleans jazz legacy, as well as becoming an international jazz and cultural spokesperson. If all this wasn't enough, Mayfield is also

Continued on page 6.

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CELEBRATION

41

Data News Weekly

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Continued from page 4.

the Artistic Director for Arizona's Chandler Jazz Festival, in which he plays a significant role in assisting the development of jazz audiences.

His various collaborative ventures have made Mr. Mayfield a popular composer for special events, such as the New Orleans Museum of Art's (NOMA) commissioned musical tribute to the renowned African American artist, Gordon Parks. The result was a collaborative effort between Mr. Mayfield and Mr. Parks, entitled the Half Past Autumn Suite, which premiered (and later recorded with Mr. Parks, Wynton Marsalis and the Irvin Mayfield Quintet and released by Basin Street Records) in a live performance by the Irvin Mayfield Quintet during a retrospective exhibit of Mr. Parks' work, and which was organized by the Corcoran Gallery and presented at NOMA.

In October of 2003 Mayfield kicked off Dillard University Institute of Jazz Culture's 2003-2004 season with the world premier of his newly commissioned composition, Strange Fruit, featuring

The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and The Dillard University Concert Choir. Irvin Mayfield & The Orleans Jazz Orchestra's first CD release in 2005 was the album Strange Fruit.

Mr. Mayfield also serves as Artistic Director for the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, which he founded in December 2002 and which has already established as the most significant jazz institution in New Orleans. Recognizing the City of New Orleans' claim as the birthplace of jazz, he sought to develop a professional organization capable of performing, interpreting preserving, and educating the public about this uniquely American art form.

Establishing himself as an educator, performer, composer and arranger, is only half of his various accomplishments. In addition, Mr. Mayfield's various recordings with Los Hombres Calientes and with the Irvin Mayfield Quintet have made him one of the most recorded young jazz artists of his generation. As a Basin Street Records artist, he's released nine albums, and has ap-

peared on or produced dozens of other albums.

Committed to strengthening the economic and cultural vitality of the City of New Orleans, Mr. Mayfield also sits on the board of directors of both the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and the Champions Group of the New Orleans Museum of Art.

Michael Ward

Ralph Records recording artist Michael Ward is a longtime favorite in New Orleans. Influenced by the music of Noel Pointer and Jean Luc Ponte while a student at Southern, Michael began his journey as a Jazz Violinist, and has never looked back.

After leaving his first group the 4am Band, Michael formed his own band and began working in New Orleans. The fans who followed him for years found him working at Pampy's neighborhood bar where his

band performed every Sunday, backing jazz singer Ed Perkins.

He always felt as if the entire city of New Orleans was there. Michael has toured many foreign

countries and all over the U.S. He has worked with many well-known musicians and played many of the world's finest venues. His music has touched the hearts of many and has gained him the respect of his peers around the world. His fans grow in numbers after each of his performances, as does his love for his Violin and music, and his gratitude for the gifts that life has brought him.

Kermit Ruffins

New Orleans-based trumpeter, bandleader, singer and songwriter Kermit Ruffins is an ever-inventive

musician who projects a warmth from the stage and has become a favorite son of his native city.

Fortunately for fans of contemporary New Orleans music and the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Ruffins, a mainstay of both arenas, has been picked up and marketed and distributed in recent years by the Crescent City-based Basin Street Records. He formed the Barbecue Swingers in 1992. Basin Street has issued a steady stream of very well-recorded albums by Ruffins and his Barbecue Swingers

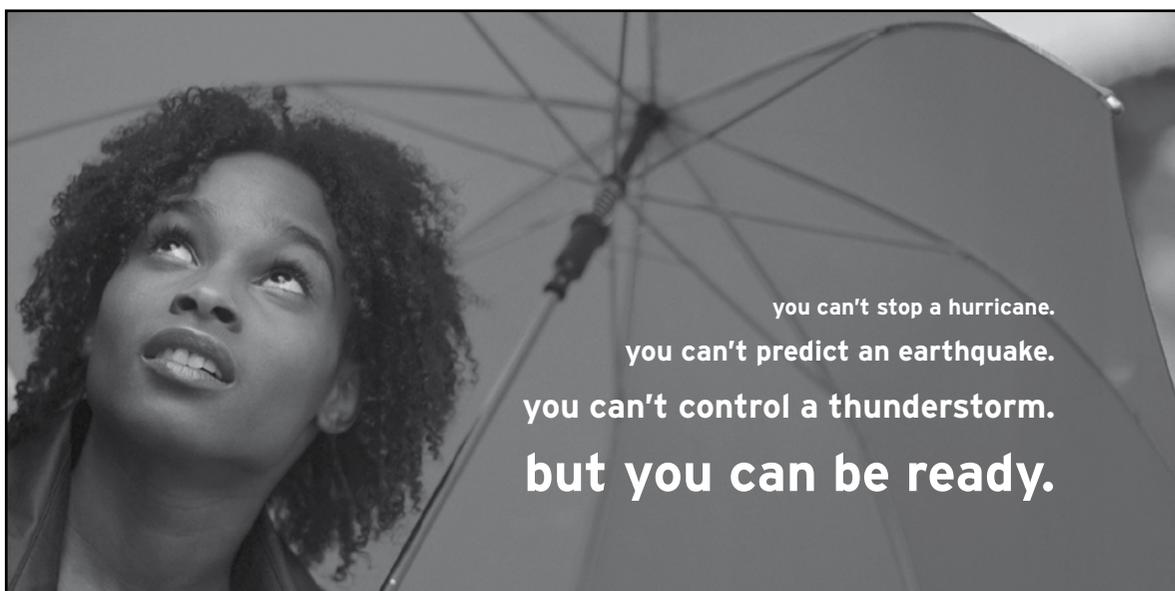
throughout the 1990's.

He began playing trumpet as a young teenager, but didn't discover the possibilities of jazz and blues until he first heard Louis Armstrong when he was 19. He began playing songs by Armstrong and other classic

jazz figures associated with New Orleans, for tips with a friend in Jackson Square.

Ruffins is famous at home in New Orleans for his frequent barbecue bashes at the bars he and his band perform in. In recent years, Ruffins and his band have been able to take their act out on the road on summer weekends, playing at festivals across the country, introducing new fans to his unique jazz stylings which are so distinctly New Orleans. Kermit is a return performer for this year's Gala and promises another exciting and unforgettable performance.

For more information on the Data News Weekly 41st Anniversary Gala Event, call (504) 284-3840. Mark your calendars and make plans to attend. You won't want to miss it.

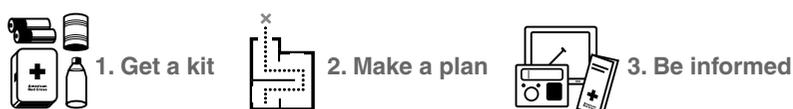


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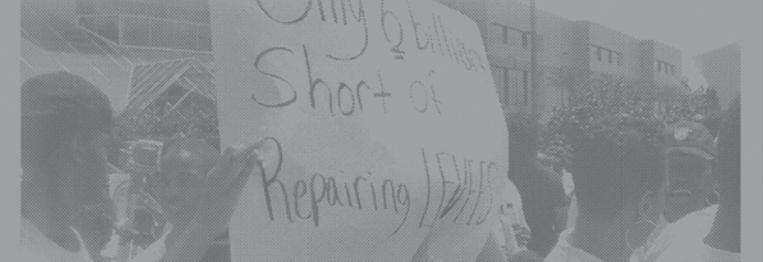
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August 28th, 7am - 5pm

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A Day of Service is being organized by the Louisiana Unity Coalition, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, National Urban League, Mount Zion United Methodist Church, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, AALP, The Advancement Project, The Praxis Project, Millions More Movement, Urban League of Greater New Orleans and Rainbow PUSH New Orleans.

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JMJ Foundation TRAILBLAZERS

'Wild' Wayne Benjamin: A Leader for the New School

By Edwin Buggage

During the evening hours on WQUE 93FM radio the sounds of hip-hop and R&B blares through the speakers throughout the city's vast sonic landscape brought to you by none other than Ya Boy Wild Wayne. Over the years he has become a staple over the airwaves becoming one of the most recognizable radio personalities in the crescent city. But what many do not know is that behind the exciting and frenetic Wild Wayne, conversely his more staid alter ego Wayne Benjamin is an earnest, caring individual who has over the years given back to the youth and the community of New Orleans.

For the past five years pre Hurricane Katrina Wayne has given back to the youth of New Orleans by giving local youths the opportunity to move beyond the confines of their neighborhoods and provide hope and guidance to them with the Wild Wayne Experience. Talking about his camp he says, "Some of the things that the kids encounter are things that are intertwined with things that are going on in my life, for example I went to Xavier University and was in a pre-med program, so I thought it was important for kids to get introduced to doctors." "I also had them meet with lawyers and other professionals; I even brought in my accountant to teach them different values about saving and investing." "We also took them to museums, the zoo, they came to the radio station to see what I do, they got a chance to meet with professional athletes, and they also had several fun activities." "The whole goal of the camp is to inspire kids to be inspired and not be afraid to dream because sometimes our kids put limitations on themselves."

Through his foundation he has been able to reach out to young people and make a difference; he says of how he came up with the idea and purpose of

the Benjamin Foundation, "I thought it was important to do something for young people, and I felt a lot of camps were just babysitting the kids and not engaging them." "I wanted to do something that was eye opening for the kids, and all my staff are educators who also have a passion for making our young people and our community better." "I thought I would make my camp different than just a sports camp, because some of the more wealthy folks in our city get to experience things like some of the things I have in my camp so I thought it would be beneficial to have our children exposed to some of those things as well."

This summer Benjamin gave fifty scholarships to young people at the Anthony Bean Community Theater in addition to acting in a production of a play that centered around youth overcoming obstacles entitled Soulville. "This summer my foundation sponsored the kids to get involved in acting and we footed the bill." Speaking of his foray into acting he says, "I was approached about performing in this play and I enjoyed doing it but it was not just interesting but the content of what the play was about, it is kind of like what I do on a show a now have called Real Talk where I talk about different issues important to our community whether it be the recovery effort, politics, education, and crime." "But for the play it was named Teen Talk and it was about issues that effects our kids, and what really was the most amazing thing to me was the talent of the kids that were there, and I found myself inspired by their talent."

Like many New Orleanians Wayne is putting the pieces of his life back together and sometimes finds himself frustrated by the slow pace of the recovery, but he remains optimistic, "It's slow and painful effort to get people back in the city, and I feel bad when you look at some of these areas two years later and you still



see devastation like it happened yesterday." "It looks like a third world country; it still looks like a bomb dropped on these neighborhoods." "I know a lot of people that are not going to come back whether they want to come back, or don't want to come back; it's a lot of folks who are not going to filter back, and magnetic as New Orleans is and people want to come back there are still a lot of problems that haven't been dealt with like when you don't have housing, the education system is not up to par, issues surrounding healthcare, and prices of everything going up from insurance down to high rents, and taxes, it almost seems like they don't want people to come back, and I'm not saying just Blacks but period like they're just trying to filter brand new people into the city." While he is frustrated by the slow pace of the recovery he still feels his role in the city's effort to gain its footing is vital, "I feel I need to continue to be part of the solution because I have become an integral part of

this city, not just with the stuff I do on the radio, but as a part of my work in the community to inspire and touch a lot of people."

As he marches, on this drum major of good deeds recently partnered with Boost Mobile to help clean up and paint schools and also took part in a rally with the United Teachers of New Orleans. "I feel like it is important that I continue to be part of or make sure that I can make people aware of some of the things that are going on in our community whether it's over the radio or in any other way I want to do whatever I can to make this city a better place." After two years many crescent city residents still long to once again savor the flavor of a city unlike any other and find their way home to those Wayne says, "Keep your head

up, because a lot of people are down and out about not being able to come back to their city but even more importantly not being able to reunite with their families, and I think the city is going to rebound and there may be opportunities to return to what is hopefully a better city." And he stresses the importance for the citizens who are back in the city to take control of their own destiny, "Do for self and not wait on government, I think they have failed the public miserably, and that's everyone black, white, downtown, uptown, Chalmette wherever you are that's been affected." "It's time for people to unite and fight for themselves, and do what our grandparents did when Hurricane Betsy and Camille came; they found a way to rebuild the city and rebuild their lives and that's what we need to do today so future generations can see a brighter day."

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Aisha Tyler: The Definition of A Renaissance Woman

By Edwin Buggage



She is statuesque, seductive, sexy, and talented. She is an actress, author, occasional movie critic and a humanitarian. She is the template for the woman of the third millennium. She is the epitome of beauty external and internal; she is the thinking man's crumpet. Over the years Aisha Tyler has broken down barriers, as an African-American woman. In the cut throat world that is Tinseltown she has defied stereotypes, and continues to have a successful career on her own terms.

Her most current project is a movie entitled *Death Sentence* where she co-stars with Kevin Bacon, she says of her role, "I play a homicide detective who tries to help Kevin Bacon's character find the killer of his son, who has taken the law into his own hands. But she finds out he may be breaking the law and she is torn between her compassion for his situation because he's lost a family member and her obligation to uphold the law."

Aisha, who was educated in the ivy-league decided to forego the conventional route and took control of her destiny and pursued her passion. After graduating from Dartmouth she began working in corporate America with intentions on pursuing a law degree. But as time went on she kept getting bit by the acting bug that had been a constant source of pleasure for her since high school something she could no ignore, "I graduated from college and was working in an office and I soon realized my passion was in the performing arts and I was going to go to law school, but that was not where my heart was so that's when I got back into performing and started doing stand up comedy, and I felt I have my college degree so if I need to go back to the office I could always do that."

Throughout her career she has taken calculated risks which has had her wearing many hats over the years, she was the host of *Talk Soup*, also she appeared in the NBC hit television series *Friends*, she also has performed in the play *Moose Mating*, which earned her an NAACP Image Award. This 'Jill of All Trades' is also an occasional contributor to *Glamour Magazine*, as well as an author who published a book entitled *Swerve: Reckless Observations of A Post Modern Girl*, in addition to her work on the CBS hit television series *Ghost Whisperer*. Her career has been about breaking down barriers and having no limitations because of her race and gender, "When I decided to work in the entertainment industry, I wanted to choose roles that were outside of the box, I didn't want to do what was expected of me and have limitations placed on me as an African-American woman." "I wanted to break those barriers down; I want to represent a really strong intelligent African-American female which is

something that sometimes is not seen in the media."

Aisha recently left New Orleans after working a film that is to be released later this year called *Black Water Transit* starring Laurence Fishburne. She says the experience of seeing the city in the condition that it is in two years after Hurricane Katrina is disheartening, "I was down in New Orleans working on a film, and one of the assistants that worked on the film is from in the Lower Ninth Ward, so we went back to his old neighborhood where he grew up, and we talked to some of the neighbors, finding out who was rebuilding and it's interesting to me looking around the city and seeing how some neighborhoods are coming back, and some look like they've been abandoned for a lot longer than two years."

Throughout her illustrious career Aisha has been to New Orleans many times and loves what it represents and continues to have hope that it will come back to its interesting, antiquated, splendor. "I love New Orleans, I think it is a beautiful city, and it is heartbreaking to see the devastation, it's good to see people rebuilding, but there's obviously so much that needs to be done, and it's a shame people haven't gotten the money that was promised to them." Saying of the unbreakable bond that the people of New Orleans have, "I feel the people who are from here love this city, and people want to come back and rebuild, and it is encouraging to me to see people with their own hands doing whatever they can to make their lives whole again, and I have a lot of hope and I believe in the people of New Orleans and the passion that they have for the city because it is really a special place."

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Night Out



Juan LaFonta addresses the gatherers at the Night Out Against Crime Rally held last week in New Orleans.

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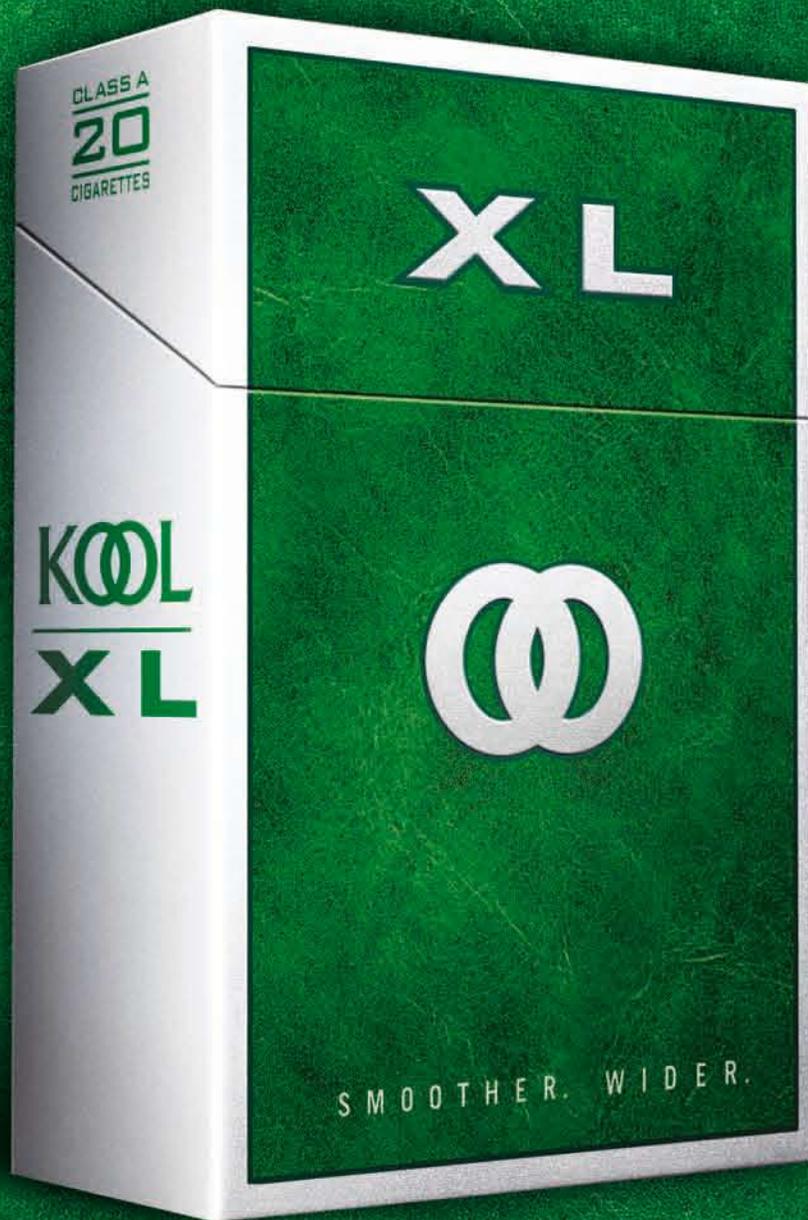
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Generation Time



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

Since I've concluded that the racism is a given, from now on you will excuse me if I get back to writing and talking about things we can actually control and influence.

I'm beginning to realize that we really do waste a lot of time and effort "sharing our pain", not that we don't have a lot of legitimate pain to share. We do, but sharing it all the time does nothing to make the future better, quite to the contrary, all too often when we come together to meet about an issue, we spend so much time describing injustices that at the end of the meeting all we have done is "share our pain" and have planned nothing to improve conditions and opportunities for anyone.

This morning I met with M'tumishi St. Julien who convinced me to add a subtitle to my "Love Doctor" moniker to refocus myself and those who read, listen to or watch me as to what I am really trying to accomplish. As a result of that meeting of the minds, from now on I'm rolling as "Love Doctor: Sharing the prestige, power and pleasure of being the alpha male of a family." That is what I do. That is the main thing.

As such an alpha male, however, I also feel the necessity to help equip males with the priorities, habits and attitudes that will help males succeed at becoming the men that our women and children need. Added to that necessity is also the necessity to teach females about the needs and feelings of men who have accepted the responsibility of being what our families need. At other times my writing and speaking is about the environment in which alpha males and their families have to function, the insanity of materialism, the injustice of racist institutions and the seduction of the street.

Refocusing now is helping me to prepare for another opportunity that seems to have come my way. WBOK, the old gospel station lately, is being reborn. Danny Bakewell, St Aug alumni and the owner of the L.A. Sentinel newspaper, fellow NNPN member with Data News, has purchased WBOK and has made contact with both yours truly and Paul Beaulieu, my co-host on Between The Lines. There is a good possibility that when the New WBOK comes on line, Paul and the "Love Doctor" will be in the line up, because brother Bakewell is talking black talk radio all day every day, and that is sooooo exciting.

I'm really glad I dropped in on M'tumishi this morning and that he had a few minutes to help me refocus on why I became the Love Doctor.

I like to think that I teach, not preach. I will, however share how good life is when a man holds his family together, and sometimes my exuberance about family life has such passion, that to some it feels like preaching. The bible clearly instructs those who have a light, to show it on a hill and not hide it. Those of us men who know the prestige and pleasure of having succeeded with raising children are required to let those who don't know experience our glow.

Before young men will follow our ways they have to believe that our ways are the best ways for them to feel as good as we do. The poor things have nothing in modern media that communicates the crowning glories of being a successful father and grandfather. Men, if you have reached the point of enjoying your children and their children, you have a responsibility to share how you feel and what you've learned with young men, but usually only one on one.

Maybe every man can't be "the Love Doctor", but all can be a love doctor of sorts, in the lives of young people who know and respect them. I accept this public role, because it seems that God gave me a powerful gift for communicating, and something worth communicating, the blessings of manhood, and I know for certain that if black men would hear, see and learn how beautiful life can be when a male accepts

manhood and the responsibility and challenge of family, life in our communities would transform at the same time.

So I'm proposing a radio show for the new WBOK called "Generation Time", a new kind of talk show where the wise and the young come together and pass on successful ways, and figure

out how to apply the old truths to new situations. No, It's not about just men, but about everybody succeeding in all facets of life. Sure I'm going to bring that alpha male attitude and a lot of insights and experience about how to make things better, but I'm always ready to learn something new.

Let me leave you with this: "Some of the most miserable time a man spends on this earth is the time he spends thinking about himself. The most pleasant times a man will spend will be the times he spends thinking about what he has been for others."

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Health

Working to Address Health Disparities



Larry Lucas
Data Columnist

As school children, we are often told that America is the land of opportunity, a place where anything is possible if you work hard enough. However, for thousands of Americans, the "land of opportunity" is a merely a mirage. According to the latest data from the Kaiser Family Foundation, over half of all African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians are living at or near poverty.

Poverty often leads to shorter lives, higher cancer rates, more birth defects and a higher incidence of chronic diseases like asthma and diabetes, according to the National Institutes of Health. Nothing affects a person's quality of life more dramatically than one's health – and according to the Centers for Disease Control, for many health conditions, African-Americans bear a disproportionate burden of disease, injury, death, and disability.

- According to the CDC, African Americans account for 40 percent of the AIDS cases diagnosed since the epidemic began; they also die sooner from the disease.

- The American Cancer Society finds that though African-American women are less likely to get breast cancer, they are 28 percent more likely to die from it than white women.

- Death rates for prostate cancer are nearly two-and-a-half times higher in African-American men than white men, according to the American Cancer Society, making this disease the most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in black men.

- More than 40 percent of African Americans have high blood pressure or hypertension – one of the most critical indicators of cardiovascular health – making this rate one of the highest in the world.

Why is this? One reason is access to quality health care: statistics show that far too many African Americans simply

do not have health insurance and the lack of health insurance can result in disturbing health outcomes. Consider, for instance, that Columbia University Medical Center researchers recently found that African-American women with early stage breast cancer are less likely to finish chemotherapy treatment, further contributing to lower survivor rates.

Even if you do have health insurance, you still might not be receiving quality care. A report by the Institute of Medicine points out alarming trends: In some cases, patients cannot obtain a referral for their conditions; in others, patients might be passed up for a transplant or an operation like coronary bypass surgery.

We all have a role to play in helping to eliminate health disparities and it can start with something as simple as donating blood. For example, did you know that while 37 percent of U.S. patients are African American, only nine percent of people who donate blood are African American? According to the Red Cross, one out of 12 African Americans is diagnosed with sickle cell anemia; patients who receive blood transfusions from donors with the same antigens, and similar race and ethnic groups have a better chance of survival.

There is good news to consider. Harvard researchers recently analyzed records from 1.5 million patients in 183 Medicare managed-care plans from 1997 to 2003. The study suggests that better medicine can close racial gaps, doctors said.

We know a pill helps no one if a patient cannot afford it, because of a lack of adequate health insurance. Fortunately, there is help available. The Partnership for Prescription Assistance (www.pparx.org or 1-888-4PPA-NOW) is a single point of access to more than 475 patient assistance programs that provide free or nearly free prescription medications. Sponsored by America's pharmaceutical research companies, which also sponsor nearly 200 of the assistance programs, the PPA has so far helped almost 4 million patients.

African Americans need better access to the same quality health care that other Americans already enjoy. Anything less is simply not acceptable. The key to this is better access to quality health insurance and prescription drug coverage. That also means referrals, screenings, operations – and medicines – for everyone who needs them.

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

In The Spirit

Moving Forward, But Not Forgetting the Loved Ones that We Lost



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

and gates of Jerusalem that was destroyed so that they could come back home from captivity. So, yes, many of us have made a decision to move forward with our lives again in spite of our lost of those that we loved. We can't forget them, and we will not forget them.

They were our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our brothers, our husbands, our wives, sons and daughters etc. It may have been someone that we have debated with on different issues of life, but admired them for being the person that they were. It may even have been someone who was a mentor to you, who encouraged you through life's difficulties and challenges. I believe that if they could speak to us from their place of rest they would say, stop crying and being sad over me. Life must still go on.

God, who is our creator and provider, wouldn't want us to forget those that we had loved and respect and cherished dearly. Let's remember them in our hearts and minds. Let's remember the good times, the laughter, and the jokes that we told them. Let's remember the church fellowships that we had. They wouldn't want us to cry over them, but instead remembering the memories of them. In the Bible, Deuteronomy chpt. 34 verse 5-8, God himself buried Moses in an unknown grave so that people wouldn't know where he was buried. If they would have known where he was buried they would have stayed at the grave site and wept. We won't forget those that we lost in Katrina, because they are part of us, and we must and will continue to move forward and live again. We can do it with the help of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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 rharold1@cox.net or (504) 813-5767



Racism and Resistance:

The Struggle to Free The Jena Six

By **Jordan Flaherty**

Photos courtesy of whileseated.org

Almost a year ago, in the small northern Louisiana town of Jena, a group of white students hung three nooses from a tree in front of Jena High School. This set into motion a season of racial tension and incidents that culminated in six Black youths facing a lifetime in jail for a schoolyard fight.

The story that has unfolded since then is one of racism and injustice, but also of resistance and solidarity, as people from around the world have joined together with the families of the accused, lending legal and financial support, adding political pressure, and joining demonstrations and marches.

The nooses were hung after a Black student asked permission to sit under a tree that had been reserved by tradition for white

students only. In response to the three nooses, nearly every Black student in the school stood under the tree in a spontaneous and powerful act of nonviolent protest. The town's district attorney quickly arrived, flanked by police officers, and told the Black students to stop making such a big deal over the nooses, which school officials termed to be a "harmless prank." The school assembly, like the schoolyard where all of this had begun, was divided by race, with the Black students on one side and the white students on the other. Directing his remarks to the Black students, District Attorney Reed Walters said, "I can make your lives disappear with a stroke of a pen."

The white students who confessed to hanging the nooses never received any meaningful punishment. Nor did the white students who months later beat

up a Black student at a school party, nor did the white former student who threatened two Black students with a shotgun. But, after these incidents, when Black students got into a fight with a white student, six Black youths were charged with attempted murder, and now face a lifetime in prison.

The Black students may not have been involved in the fight, but they were known to be organizers of the protest under the tree. The white student was briefly hospitalized, but had no major injuries and was socializing with friends at a school ring ceremony the evening of the fight.



Melissa Bell on Monday, June 25th, outside LaSalle Parish Courthouse. Her son, Mychal Bell, was convicted of 2nd degree aggravated battery and conspiracy to commit same today for his role in a fight at Jena High School.

The Black students were arrested immediately after the fight, in December of last year. School officials and police officials took statements from at least 44 witnesses to the fight. The statements do not paint a clear picture of who was involved. Statements from white students refer to "Black boys", but many testimo-

nies are unclear as to the identities of who was involved. Some of the arrested youths are not implicated in the fight by any of the witnesses.

Despite this, when Mychal Bell, the first youth to go to trial, refused to take a deal in exchange for testifying against his friends, he was quickly convicted by an all-white jury. Bell's public defender Blane Williams, visibly angry at Bell and his parents because the youth did not take the deal, called no witnesses and gave no meaningful defense. This attorney's behavior gives a vivid example of our nation's broken and underfunded public defender system. Some have called Jena a throwback to the past, but in fact Jena presents a clear vision of the current state of our criminal justice system.

In Paris Texas, a white teenager burns down her family's home and receives probation. A black

Continued on page 14.

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Democratic National Committee Announces Voting Rights Initiative

By Benjamin Bates

While the U.S. Presidential election is a year away, and as the nation has recently observed the 42nd Anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act that extended to the vote for all citizens. Recently, the Democratic National Committee in conjunction with the DNC Voting Rights Institute announced an initiative to track the rules and regulations regarding voting across the nation to safeguard against the fiasco that held the fate of the nation's highest office in limbo during the 2000 Presidential Election.

Democratic National Committee Chair Howard Dean says of the initiative, "Our goal at the DNC is to contact voting officials to find out voting procedures, for example how do they deal with absentee ballots, what type of voting machines do they use, issues regarding identification, as

well as a host of other things to make sure every citizen right to vote is protected."

Donna Brazile, a New Orleans native made history in the 2000 presidential election serving as Al Gore's campaign manager, a first for an African-American. She remembers the voting irregularities of that election, and one year later the DNC formed the Voting Rights Institute of which she is the chair. "This initiative is to ensure that everybody is part of the electoral process, because



Donna Brazile



Howard Dean

we learned from what happened in the year 2000 in Florida and Ohio, and we are trying to make sure that does not happen again and all who are eligible to vote will not be turned away at the polls."

sors at the state and local levels to find issues and identifying problems and pose solutions. Nearly two years after Hurricane Katrina voters from Louisiana continue to be displaced and scattered about

the country, and voting information for these residents are essential as election time approaches. Donna Brazile says the National Democratic Party is making a concerted effort to make sure voters of Louisiana have their voices heard at the ballot box. "We are working to identify the people of Louisiana where they are, and we are tracking them down and contacting them to make sure their rights are protected wherever they are in the country."

Although this initiative is a Democratic Party led effort DNC Chair Howard Dean who has been a critic of the Republican Party says that this is something that is not just good for their party but good for all citizens. "It is important not to suppress the rights of individuals and groups access to the polls, and this is not something that is just not just good for Democrats, but it is better for all Americans."

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Jena 6, Continued from page 13.

one shoves a hall monitor and gets 7 years in prison. Genarlow Wilson, in Atlanta, is sentenced to ten years in prison for participating in consensual oral sex with a 15 year old when he was 17. Like these and many other cases, the case in Jena is textbook proof that there are still two systems of justice functioning in this country, one for Black people, and one for white. No serious observer can doubt that the students of Jena would never have faced charges if a Black student had been beaten instead of a white student. The unpunished incidents in the days and months leading up to the fight clearly demonstrate this.

Local Resistance

Immediately after the arrests, parents of the accused began organizing. Their call, "Free the Jena Six," was initially heard by activists from other parts of Louisiana, such as the Lafayette public access TV show, "Community Defender," which was the first media from outside their immediate area to give coverage of the case. Non-corporate and grassroots media has been vital in spreading word of the case, beginning with blogs and YouTube videos, which then led to high profile stories on Democracy Now and in The Final Call.

Lasalle parish, where Jena is located, is 85% white. The town is still mostly segregated - from the white barber who refuses to cut Black hair to the white and Black parts of town, separated by an invisible line. Lasalle is also one of Louisiana's most wealthy parishes, with small oil rigs in many back yards contributing to area wealth. The parish is a major contributor to Republican politicians, and former klansman and Louisiana gubernatorial candidate David Duke received a solid majority of local votes. Jena was also the former site of a notoriously brutal youth prison, which was closed after years of lawsuits and negative media exposure. The prison is now scheduled to be reopened as a private prison for the growth business of immigrant detentions

Three hundred supporters, most from the immediate region, but some from as far away as California, Chicago and New York, descended on Jena on July 31 to protest District Attorney Reed Walters' conduct and call for dismissal of all charges. The largest groups included Mil-



Theodore Shaw's son has been in prison for the last six months awaiting trial because the District Attorney charged him with attempted murder for a schoolyard fight, and set bail so high that his father can't get him out. Theodore's son (Theo) will probably be the second member of the Jena Six to go on trial later this summer, unless some kind of deal is reached.

lions More Movement delegations from Houston, Monroe and Shreveport, nearly fifty members of Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children from Lake Charles and New Orleans. Other delegations from across Louisiana included members of INCITE Women of Color Against Violence, Critical Resistance, Common Ground and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. The demonstration marched through downtown Jena - reported to be the biggest civil rights march the town of 2,500 residents has ever seen - and delivered a petition with 43,000 signatures to the District Attorney's office.

In the two weeks since the demonstration, more major allies have begun to come on board. The Congressional Black Caucus, representing 43 members, including Senator Barack Obama,

issued a statement calling for charges to be dropped, while the city of Cambridge Massachusetts passed a resolution in support of the families of the Jena Six. Al Sharpton and other national leaders have visited Jena, while Jesse Jackson called members of the state legislative Black caucus on their behalf.

ColorOfChange.org, which has coordinated much of the outside support, has gathered 60,000 signatures on a petition to Louisiana Governor Blanco, calling for her to pardon the accused, and investigate District Attorney Reed Walters.

Blanco, a Democratic governor elected with the overwhelming support of Black residents of Louisiana, responded with a condescending statement, tersely informing petitioners, "The State Constitution provides for three branches of state government - Legislative, Executive, and Judicial - and the Constitution prohibits anyone in one branch from exercising the powers of anyone in another branch." This is the same governor who, as Katrina approached, urged gulf coast residents to "pray the hurricane down" to a level two. When New Orleans was flooded and people were trapped in the New Orleans Superdome and convention center, she informed the nation that she was sending in National Guard troops, and "They have M-

16s and they're locked and loaded. These troops know how to shoot and kill, and they are more than willing to do so, and I expect they will." More recently, Blanco created a program to bring federal money to homeowners rebuilding after Katrina? the "Road Home"? that has been a dismal failure on every level.

Mychal Bell's sentencing is currently scheduled for September 20. The families are planning another demonstration for that date, and also have assembled a legal team for Bell and the other youths. National allies such as Southern Poverty Law Center and NAACP joined initial supporters such as Friends of Justice (from Tulia, Texas) and ACLU of Louisiana. Legal expenses for the youths could be hundreds of thousands of dollars, and funding is still needed. Except for Mychal Bell, who has a bail hearing scheduled for September 4, all of the youths are out on bail.

The case of Jena Six has served as a wake-up call on the state of US justice. It shows vividly the racial bias still inherent to our system. But it has also shown something else. That this group of families refuses to be silent in the face of injustice, and that hundreds of thousands of other people around the world have chosen to stand with them, and say that we are drawing the line, here, in Jena Louisiana.

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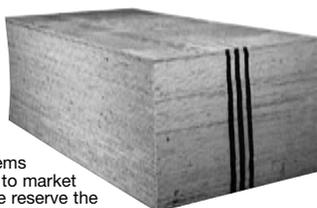
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