

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

**Christmas in
the Marginy**

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HANO Plans Demolition



Story and Photos by Kerry Leigh

The architectural and social landscape of New Orleans is scheduled to change again with demolition set for five public housing complexes containing thousands of apartments that have sat predominantly vacant, and some argue, habitable, since Hurricane Katrina.

In June of 2006, the Housing Authority of New Orleans announced plans to raze the ‘Big Four’ complexes of C.J. Peete, B.W. Cooper, Lafitte and St. Bernard. The remaining low-rise buildings across the river at Fischer are due to be demolished as well. The dense and isolated low-income

housing complexes where criminal activity festered amongst endemic poverty is giving way to much lower density ‘mixed income’ housing exemplified by the River Garden community and the homes that replaced the Fischer high-rise on the west bank.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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At a HANO meeting on Thursday, commissioners approved demolition awards of almost \$31 million to various contractors, with the first phase of destruction to begin December 15th. The two phases of demolition are intended to prevent total displacement of the residents who have been living in some of the habitable units.

The plans for redevelopment are being designed by an elaborate collaboration of local community development organizations and housing developers who have experience in the development of mixed income neighborhoods. The master plans, schedules and budgets for reconstruction are due within a few weeks for HANO's review and approval.

A \$6 million contract has been approved to take down the 65 buildings at B.W. Cooper that the development team of Keith B.

Redevelopment, LLC has been awarded \$9 million to raze the 132 buildings of the St. Bernard complex in Gentilly and replace them with 465 rental units plus commercial development. Another \$645,000 was approved for predevelopment expenses. St Bernard Redevelopment is the same collaborative of charitable organizations and businesses that are involved in the Fore!Kids Foundation and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (an affiliate of which, Commercial Properties Development Corp., will manage the commercial components of the redevelopment). The development of the apartment buildings will be managed by Columbia Residential, a business based in Atlanta.

D.H. Griffin of Texas Inc will receive \$2.5 million to take down 70 vacant buildings at Lafitte.



Key Enterprises and B.W. Cooper Resident Management Corporation plan to replace with 410 rental units. An additional \$955,000 was also awarded for unspecified predevelopment expenses.

Durr Heavy Construction also got an updated contract for their deal to demolish 14 buildings at B.W. Cooper. In August of 2005 they were awarded \$640,250 for the deal but after Hurricane Katrina's impact, an additional \$254,634 is needed for the project.

Central City Partners, an alliance of Peete Redevelopment LLC (a partnership of McCormack Baron Salazar and KAI Design & Build) and the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative (a coalition of public, private and nonprofit community based organizations) will receive \$5.8 million to demolish 55 vacant buildings at C.J. Peete and form a redevelopment plan.

The developer St. Bernard

BOH Brothers Construction will use \$6.3 million to replace the utility infrastructure at Fischer in preparation for new home construction.

Despite HANO's commitment to moving forward on the demolitions, deep concern in the community remains over the quandary of displaced New Orleanians with no affordable shelter to return to. "The absence of New Orleans' black children is a great spiritual loss. There is something devous and criminal about this act," Jerome Smith, a local activist, says about the city leaderships' disregard for the communities of people who called these housing development home. When asked about his lack of optimism regarding the redevelopment plans, he counters, "Where are the ones they took out of the St. Thomas community? Where are the people who were displaced? What small percentages of them are served by the new housing?"

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Data News Weekly Exclusive:

State Senator Ann Duplessis

By Edwin Buggage

As the devastated Lower Ninth Ward grabbed headlines all over the world, and became the face of the catastrophe that was Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, there has been one person of the many who has been in the center of it all since the beginning. Ann Duplessis is a woman of short stature but looms large as an advocate for the recovery as a Louisiana Senator of District 2.

The Fight to Remain in Baton Rouge

After a heated primary election and run-off against an opponent who previously been a fixture in the state capitol Jon Johnson, who Duplessis defeated him in an election where mud-slinging and personal attacks in some instances grabbed more front page copy than the issues of concern of the constituents District 2 that houses the devastated Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans East. Duplessis says of her re-election, "I think the people have spoken and there were tired of the politics of old, of lies, distortion and corruption." "I am a fresh voice who has brought new leadership to District 2 and I am glad that the voters saw through all that and placed me back in office." Continuing her thought she says, "I feel that my re-election is a testament that I am doing a good job and that the people approve of my performance."

Progress Report: The Recovery Ninth Ward and New Orleans East

While the world watched in disbelief as the city drowned sinking into the abyss amidst a sea of abandonment, leaving parts of the city today two years later a resembling ghost towns; as the graveyards of where people once resided and where the cultural blood which ran through the veins of New Orleans giving it life are vastly different today. Duplessis talks about the Lower Nine saying, "It suffered the most damage and it was an entire community destroyed and nothing was spared." But she says that a revival of the area is on the horizon although it will take time, she talks specifically about lack of infrastructure which is something that it drastically needed, "We need schools and hospitals in the area." She says that because of the urgency of these needs she has went back to Baton Rouge and continues to

fight for the resources the city needs, "I have begun to re-ignite a project that I had to bring a state of the art health clinic to service the community."

Duplessis, a businesswoman understands that government is not solely responsible for re-igniting the engine that is a community and that today partnerships between government, and private industry is necessary for a city not only to survive but prosper. "Like for instance Brad Pitt the actor is re-doing 150 homes, so we are now starting to see public and private investors working together, and that is what you are going to see; investment back into the community." "Presently, I am working on bringing banking institutions as well as canvassing business and offering tax incentives to come into my district and be part of its rebuilding and renaissance." She sees brighter days ahead for her community but she is distressed by the number of residents who chose to sell their homes through the Louisiana Road Home Pro-



State Senator Ann Duplessis

The story of New Orleans East is very different according to Duplessis, "Many people have chosen to return to New Orleans East, we have record numbers of people who have returned, we have upwards to 55 to 60 thousand people who have returned and pre -Katrina we had about

of affordable housing being at the forefront of many discussions regarding the city Sen. Duplessis feels that the question of what is affordable and what is not has been framed in a way that does not look at who are we really talking about when the question of affordable housing is addressed. "I think it has become a sort of cliché to talk about affordable housing and concentrating specifically on those who are receiving federal assistance, but the fact is that there are enough units for those who qualify for assistance under those guidelines in fact there is a surplus." "There are homes that have been certified as Section 8 available though HUD and we couldn't get them leased, but then there are people who are the working and lower middle-class who don't qualify for federal programs." "I think that is where the real shortfall is a far as affordable housing and where those efforts should be concentrated but for those who are on the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder there

space for families and children to have a better quality of life. "I think when we concentrate poverty without the resources and the infrastructure such as proper bus service, hospitals schools in walking distance, and if these things are not in place then you are doing a disservice to the residents of those communities to not only survive but to thrive as the city rebuilds."

Reflections and the Future

Duplessis has been involved in public service in various capacities while recently become a member of the State Senate she has helped those less fortunate than herself as an advocate throughout her life. Reflecting on her years of public service she says her greatest accomplishments have been in the areas of reform government and says that the time has come for the city to rid itself of a culture of inept management of resources. "For many years we have not managed our resources in the most efficient manner." "The things we have done since I have been in office in changing the way things have been done I am very proud of, in the areas of education reform, legislation in the area of quality day care for our young, also in the area of attracting businesses to the city, and having a hand in consolidating the assessors so that it could run more efficiently, and that is what we need to do in Government in New Orleans and in the state if we are going to compete in the 21st century run our city government and a more efficient manner and that is what I have continued to try to accomplish while I have been in elected office."

The Senator has an optimistic outlook for the city in the future although she has concerns about the leadership of the present administration and their ability to move the city forward. "We are poised to have a great city in the future, but its not going to be an easy route, and I think once we get new leadership at the city leveling two years that we are going to have opportunities to really make this city better than it was pre-Katrina." "We are not there yet, I think we just need to go through the next two years and identify people who can be positioned to lead this city where it needs to be but I am encouraged about where the city is going."



Sen. Ann Duplessis with students from the Fashion Lab

gram that she deems as a dismal failure, but understand that residents must go on with their lives. "These are private decisions and us who are elected officials cannot do anything about a choice someone make which they see best for them and their family's welfare, but we must continue moving forward and fight for the monies we need in Baton Rouge and make sure that when it gets to the local level that the leaders are held accountable for how those resources are allocated."

ninety thousand residents so this is something I am excited about, and also with the prices of housing going up in many other parts of the city New Orleans East has become a new option for those who want to purchase a home in the city."

Affordable Housing Crunch: Myth or Reality

With the recent approval of the demolition of many of units in several of the large public housing developments, and the issue

are homes available but many of those who were in the program which is a federally funded program have chosen to use them in other states." Adding "I think that is the thing that has been missing from the discussion about people returning and what is considered affordable, I think we need what I call cafeteria style availability of housing options."

As public housing faces inevitable changes Duplessis thinks it is important that public housing is less dense and has more green



Data News Weekly

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holiday season!*

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Brad Pitt plans to rebuild Lower Ninth Ward

ACTOR Brad Pitt has launched his rebuilding project for the Lower Ninth Ward, Monday by unveiling designs flood-proof homes.

Pitt through his Make It Right Foundation, commissioned 13 architectural firms to produce houses that would incorporate solar power and other environmentally sound designs.

The Project, has placed 150 huge pink Monopoly-shaped tents through the Lower Ninth with its goal being to replace them with

houses. The pink oddly shaped blocks, which Pitt describes as a work of art, are to be taken on a five-week tour throughout the area, and are decorated with 1000 solar powered light bulbs.

The actor, putting up \$5.7 million of his own money is asking corporations, church groups and others for assistance in raising an additional \$150,000 for his adopt-a-house project, as well as smaller public donations. For their part in the new homes, former residents

of the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans will be expected to contribute part of the cost of the new houses, with Make It Right providing the rest of the funding for the homes which are estimated to cost about \$150,000 each to complete.

Pitt announced his plan for 150 new houses which are expected to be completed by next year by saying there is no reason why it could not expand to 10,000 or even 100,000 homes in the future.



Actor Brad Pitt points to the pink tents where he plans to build homes for displaced residents of New Orleans. Photo: AP



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Is Mitt Romney a Racist? Beyond the Rhetoric

By: Harry C. Alford
NNPA Columnist

That is a very important question to raise about someone who is seeking to become the President of the United States. This nation has a racist pedigree and it took a lot of bloodshed, holocaust and struggle to overcome it. If it is to survive in this ever changing and unpredictable world, it must never return to that flaw for it will, indeed, be fatal. So when I repeatedly hear about this issue of whether or not Mitt Romney is a racist I find it more than coincidental. Things keep popping up on this matter with the greasy haired candidate. Ron Paul voted against giving Rosa Parks a Congressional Gold Medal. He was the only congressperson to do so. That sticks on him permanently but that is all I know about his racial demeanor. But with Romney there is always something new.

First of all, Mitt Romney has been raised a devout Mormon. He's a leader in the group. The founder, Joseph Smith, was actually an abolitionist who vehemently fought against the ills

of slavery and welcomed Blacks into his new religion replete with its own bible, The Book of Mormon, was written by members of this group. Smith's successor was Brigham Young, who indeed was a racist, and who introduced the doctrine that Blacks were descendants of Cain, the bad son of Adam and Eve. Thus, they were cursed with the mark of Cain (their Blackness) and are forbidden entry into heaven and prohibited from the priesthood of the Mormon Church. This started as Jim Crow laws were being written throughout the nation during the late 1800's and post Reconstruction.

It wasn't until 1978 that the Mormon Church felt encouragement to change this policy. In the meantime the Romney families were thriving under it. A member of the Carter Administration's Justice Department decided that if the Mormon Church wants to embrace a racist doctrine they should no longer be given 501c3 tax exemption status. As the federal government was about to make its move, the Church proclaimed that God visited their president and twelve apostles and proclaimed the curse lifted. Blacks from here on have a chance beyond Hell. How convenient.

Romney as an elected official has been known to make racial slurs. He has recently referred to a construction boondoggle,

Continued on page 10.

Entergy New Orleans Customers to See Electric Bills Drop in December

New Orleans, La. – Entergy New Orleans' customers have something to look forward to as 2007 comes to a close – paying approximately 12 percent less on their Fuel Adjustment Clause in December.

On a typical bill, customers who use 1,000 kWh of electricity will see a \$7.64 decrease in the FAC, from \$63.02 to \$55.38, on

their December bills.

The lower rates are due to recent favorable power management activities by the company, including accessing lower-cost generation from Grand Gulf and purchased power agreements.

"We're always pleased when we can pass on savings to our customers," said Rod West, president and chief executive officer of Entergy New Orleans. "We work hard ev-

ery day to position the company to take advantage of cost saving opportunities. Lowering expenses through the timely utilization of economic purchased power agreements and our continued commitment to a diverse fuel mix are key factors in the company's overarching goal of providing reliable service at affordable costs."

Entergy does not profit on the fuel it purchases to generate

electricity. The FAC reflects the amount ENO pays for fuel and is driven by market prices and customer usage. When fuel costs go down, the savings are passed directly to the customer.

Fuel often accounts for more than half of a customer's electricity bill, and Entergy's energy management staff monitors markets closely to ensure they are getting the best price.

Customers can make the biggest impact on their bills by managing the amount of electricity and gas they use. Air conditioning and heating can account for more than half of customers' bills. Energy conservation tips, such as setting your thermostat to 68 degrees in the winter to reduce your bill, can be found at www.energy-neworleans.com.

Dillard University presents its 71st annual Holiday Concert

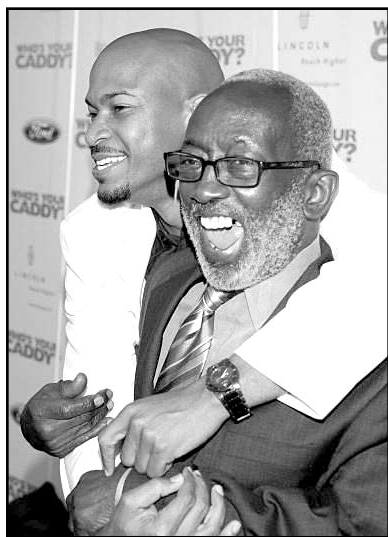
Featuring special guests Ellis Marsalis, Lecresia Campbell and Garrett Morris

(November 28, 2007) – It's been a tradition in Gentilly for 71 years: the annual Holiday Concert showcasing the stellar talent of Dillard University's renowned Concert Choir. The concert – featuring Christmas carols, traditional hymns, gospel classics, and jazzy holiday music – will be held on Sunday, December 9 at 7:30 p.m. in Dillard's Lawless Chapel and Assembly Hall, 2601 Gentilly Blvd. The event is free and open to the public; doors open at 6:45 p.m. Guests are encouraged to arrive early to secure seating.

The Holiday Concert will showcase The University Choir, directed by S. Carver Davenport, and will feature special guests Lecresia Campbell, The Ellis Marsalis Quartet, and Garrett Morris. The concert will be narrated by Rev. Gail Bowman, university chaplain. Immediately following the concert, the audience is invited to Kearny Terrace on campus for the lighting of the University Christmas Tree by Dillard President Dr. Marvalene Hughes.

Lecresia Campbell is best known for her Gospel hit, Magnify, from the Gospel Heritage Praise and Worship project. Campbell earned a Stellar Award nomination for Best Female Vocalist (traditional) for her debut solo project, Even Me. She also has been a regular on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). Campbell has also performed in

two of David Talbert's hit stage productions, Mr. Right Now and His Woman, His Wife. Both shows toured the country performing to sold-out audiences. Campbell has also performed as a

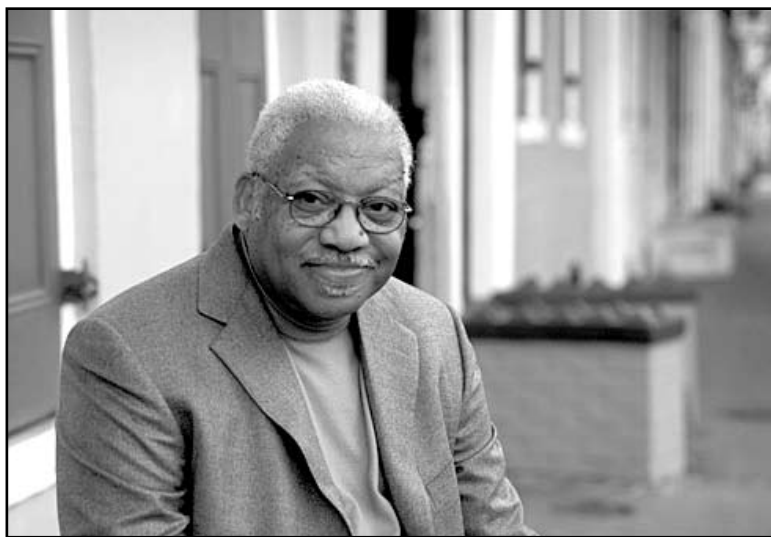


Garrett Morris

background vocalist for Vanessa Bell Armstrong, and has shared the stage with such artists as Larnelle Harris, Donnie McClurkin, Mary Mary, Gerald Levert, Stephanie Mills, and others. She is a graduate of Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi, with a B.A. in Applied Voice.

Ellis Marsalis is regarded in many artistic circles as one of the nation's premier modern jazz pianists. A highly respected music educator, Marsalis taught for 12 years at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) as an instrumental music teacher

with a Jazz Studies emphasis. In 1986, Marsalis was named Commonwealth Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. He would spend two years as coordinator of



Ellis Marsalis

the Jazz Studies program before returning to New Orleans and the University of New Orleans to become the first director of the Coca-Cola endowed chair of Jazz Studies. Marsalis officially retired from the University of New Orleans in 2001 after 12 years on the faculty.

He continues to be active as a pianist leading his own group and has several recordings on the CBS-SONY label. He is currently developing his own recording label, ELM Records. Marsalis graduated from Dillard in 1955 with a B.A. in Music Education, and

earned a Master's degree from Loyola University. Marsalis has been the recipient of Honorary Doctorate degrees from his alma mater Dillard University (1989), and Ball State University in Mun-

cie, Indiana (1997). He is the father of renowned jazz musicians, Branford, Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason, and two other sons Ellis III and Miboya, with his beloved wife, Delores.

Garrett Morris is a singer and actor that began his performing career as a singer-arranger with the Harry Belafonte Singers. A graduate of Dillard University (1958), he continued his vocal training with Bernard U. Taylor of Juilliard, and also studied composition with the great Hall Johnson.

Morris's television credits include roles on General Hospital, The Jeffersons, Hunter, Roc, Martin and The Jamie Foxx Show. He was a member of the original troupe of actors – the Not Ready for Prime Time Players – on the long-running NBC-TV show Saturday Night Live, which debuted in 1975. Mr. Morris was the lone Black writer/actor on the show for many years. Mr. Morris has written two plays, Stagger Lee (which was commissioned by the Arts Department of New York) and The Secret Place (which was directed by Bill Duke and performed by repertory groups in both New York and Los Angeles).

Morris acted in over 40 Broadway and off-Broadway plays, including Slave Ship by Le Roi Jones (Imamu Amiri Baraka), Ododo by Joseph Walker, In New England Winter by Ed Bullins, Street Scene by Ed Bullins, Dream On Monkey Mountain by Derek Wolcott, Gershwin's Porgy And Bess, Hallelujah Baby by Jules Styne, and Ain't Supposed To Die A Natural Death by Melvin van Peebles, among others. He also had roles in over 60 movies, including The Anderson Tapes, Cooley High, Car Wash, Twin Falls, and Who's Your Caddy, among others. He was nominated for an independent film award for his role in Jackpot.

Morris lives in Los Angeles and owns the Downtown Comedy Club.

New Orleans Celebrates Christmas in the Marigny

Marigny residents and businesses invite locals and tourists alike to celebrate the holiday season



About the FMIA

The colorful and little-known history of the Faubourg Marigny began in March 1805 when the 20-year-old minor, Bernard Xavier Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville, petitioned the Conseil de Ville (City Council) to allow the subdivision of his plantation located below the Vieux Carré. The request was granted April 19, 1805, and Bernard began selling property in what would become known as a Creole French speaking suburb. The Faubourg Marigny Haitian refugees would later populate the area and it would flourish as a center for local commerce.

Today, the unique character of the neighborhood instilled by Bernard Marigny at its founding remains intact in this thriving cultural hot spot for locals from throughout New Orleans as well as visitors who want to take in the sights, sounds and flavors of the neighborhood and its residents—such as those along famous Frenchman and Franklin streets.

Visit www.faubourgmarigny.org for additional information about Caroling, FMIA and the historic Marigny.

WHAT:

To celebrate the holiday season, the Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association (FMIA) welcomes New Orleansians to celebrate Christmas in the Marigny this Sunday, December 9th. An expansion from years past, this year's Christmas in the Marigny includes an art market, tree lighting and music on Frenchmen featuring local musicians Benny Grunch and the Bunch. Children can also get their pictures taken with the original Creole Santa, Papa Noel, at the art market starting at Noon.

Dedicated to preserving and protecting the Faubourg Marigny, the FMIA hosts caroling each year as one of the premier events they offer members, residents and the community as a whole to spread holiday cheer. Come toast a glass of warm cider, munch on a Hubig's Pie and enjoy an evening of holiday caroling, New Orleans style.

WHO:

Papa Noel, the Original Creole Santa
Leaders from the Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association (FMIA), www.faubourgmarigny.org
Caroling led by New Orleans Pfister Sisters

WHEN:

Sunday, December 9th
11:00 a.m. – 8 p.m.

WHERE:

Art Market with Papa Noel: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Washington Square Park (700 Elysian Fields)

Artist's Open Studio: Noon – 5pm, visit
www.openstudioartists.org for map

Benny Grunch and the Bunch: 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Café Brazil (2100 Chartres Street)

23rd Annual Christmas Caroling: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Washington Square Park (700 Elysian Fields)

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Klezmer Holiday 6 – 8pm

Friday, December 14
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NOTES FROM NEW ORLEANS: BOOK REVIEW

by Tre Connerly

A new book about our city has hit the shelves called 'NOTES FROM NEW ORLEANS: Spicy, colorful tales of the politics, people, food, drink, men, music and life in 'Post-Breaches New Orleans'. Deborah Cotton, a local journalist who moved to New Orleans just three months before the storm, is the self-published author of this entertaining and well-written post-storm ode to New Orleans.

'Notes From New Orleans' was originally published as an online column on EURweb.com, a black entertainment industry news wire. The articles span the course of two years, beginning in September '05 as Cotton



recounts the tale of having to evacuate to Houston in a taxicab and ending August '07 during the second anniversary of Katrina.

Although new to the area, Cotton's accounts of life in New Orleans hits all the marks of a native with intimate understanding of 'home' yet with the fresh eyes of a new-comer who's fallen for the lady New Orleans. Her walk through our painful memory

lane is actually a joy to take. She writes like your auntie or next door neighbor talks, sarcastic, fast, full of comedy, and gossip anchored in the truth.

Cotton profiles several local residents including Chef Austin Leslie of Chez Helene and Pampy's fame who passed away after Katrina; Councilwoman Cynthia Willard Lewis who gives a rare and revealing interview recounting her personal challenges during the first year after the storm; and a 70 year-old Ninth Ward woman named Miss Mary Dell Van Buren who rode the storm out in her attic as it floated away with her in it and lived to laugh about it.

Cotton doesn't hold back in her analysis of local politics which is at once biting, humorous, and smart. She shares tales of her quest for love to be found in what she describes as "a big black southern man" that's "12:45am black with a big belly and a James Evans from 'Good Times' presence and authority." Her journey through post traumatic depression are captured in funny accounts such as her experience at Ochsner which she renamed "Soul Hospital" after having to share her hospital room with

patients whose wild family members do everything from dancing to BET videos to playing the fart game.

That Cotton loves New Orleans and her people is clear. She pays close attention to what makes our culture unique and is able to translate this to her audience in colorful and entertaining detail. Her stories are a one-woman campaign to let the world know in great, intimate detail why saving New Orleans is a mission worth undertaking. For anyone who loves this city, from the fourth generation native to the most recent transplant, this book is a must-read.

Deborah Cotton will be reading from and signing her book NOTES FROM NEW ORLEANS on Saturday, December 8th from 11am-1pm at Community Book Center, 2523 Bayou Road at Broad. The book is available in local stores and online. More information can be found by going to www.deborahcotton.com.

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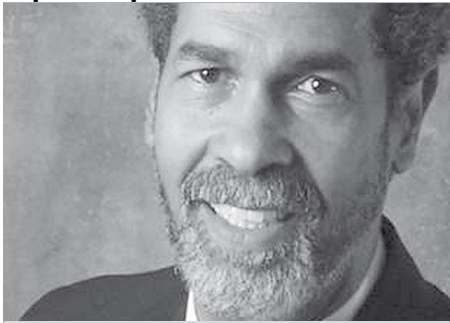
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Xmas Gifts of Cash



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

They may call me “Love Doctor”, but that doesn’t mean that I’m sentimental, and anyone who doesn’t understand that Xmas shopping is the biggest retail hustle in America is either in shopping denial, was just born, or is brain damaged or extremely stupid.

Like cattle driven to slaughter, each year we are driven by guilt, misplaced love, habit or compulsion to spend our hard earned dollars or over extended credit on stuff that may or may not be appreciated by those for whom we bought it. If the gifts I have received over the years are an indicator of the usefulness of Xmas gifts, I would have to estimate that roughly half of the money spent on Xmas gifts is wasted, because the gifts are never used or returned. We’ll get

back to that “returned” thing later.

No I’m not a “Scrooge”, but it really is about money, so I prefer to and we have a family culture of giving cash to young people on Christmas Day, and I’ll get back to that timing later. We spend money like it is undesirable, and it is completely understandable, because most of us are convinced that self esteem and happiness can be bought because those are the constant messages we receive as we spend hours each day exposing ourselves to television commercials designed by experts to influence us in ways that make us feel like we “need” and will be more respected, desirable, and happier if we buy what advertisers are selling.

The truth be told, nothing provides self esteem, peace and happiness like money in the bank, but that is something many Americans will never experienced because we believe that happiness comes from converting money into stuff that has less or no value once we buy it, and all the messages we receive in the media from Big Business contain the lie, “that to buy is to be happy”, whereas the truth is “to buy turns your wealth into ours and that is why we spend billions to pay for TV shows that keep you connected to our commercials, that keep you believing that your life will be better once you buy what we sell”.

As black Americans we are as caught up or worse. Because so many of us suffer

from low self esteem (no daddy love) we yearn even more for respectability and desperately spend or sometimes meager funds on the most expensive stuff available. Its often said that when America catches a cold we get pneumonia. If the rest of America overextends for Xmas shopping, sometimes we act like there is no tomorrow, and that brings me back to timing.

Giving cash at Xmas time gets more “gift value” for the dollar than buying stuff for other people. First, a cash gift will get 100% use rather than the 50% of bought gifts that were never wanted and never used, so giving cash ensures that you don’t waste your hard earned dollars on stuff that will just collect dust or get given to the mission in a few years. Secondly giving cash on Christmas day means that the recipients get to buy what they want at after Xmas, sale prices, rather than full retail, sometimes they can get twice as much of exactly what they like or want and it always fits.

I minimize my exposure to commercial television and have come to assume that when it is on or when I pick up a magazine or catalogue (or web page) that everything I am looking at is designed to make me feel like converting my wealth into their wealth will somehow improve my life.

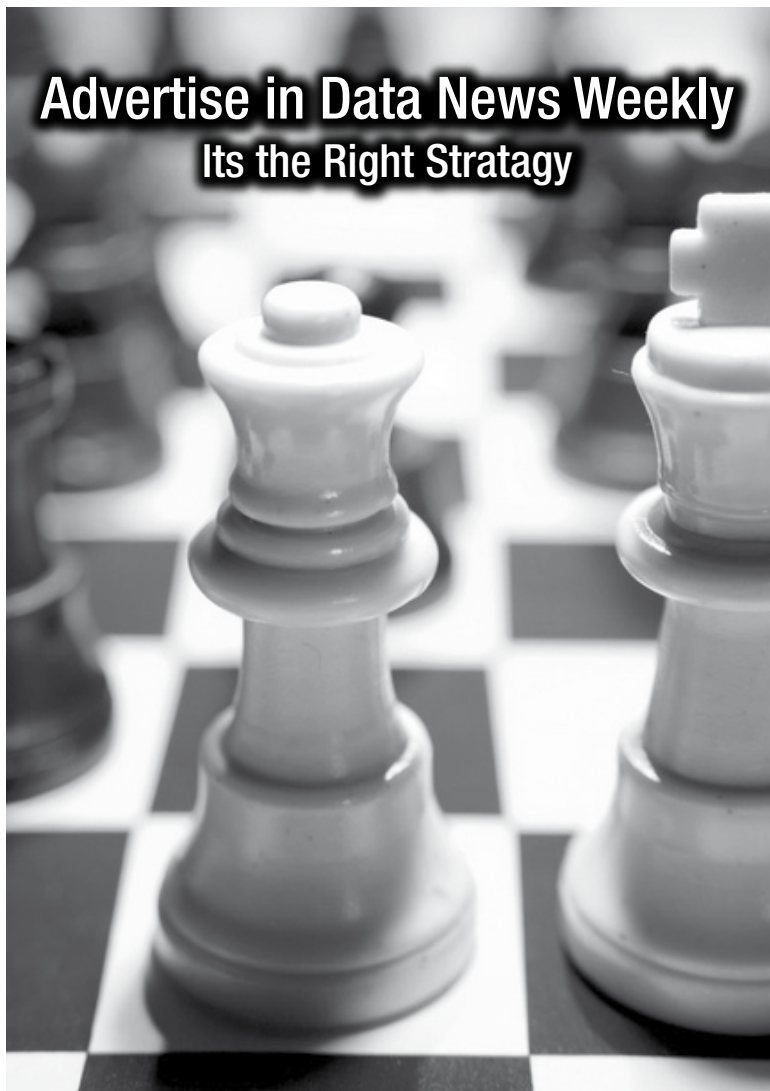
I’ve also learned that the greatest misery and stress in life comes from wanting stuff you don’t have instead of appreciating what you do, and that everyone I know who is

happy with life is happy with themselves, their relationships, what they do and how well they do it.

I really must be more careful because Big Business is watching, and if too many of you begin to think about the things I’ve put here, you might ruin this shopping season by giving cash instead of buying unused gifts and then having the recipients pay after Xmas prices instead of retail. And if you impact the Xmas season, I’m sure homeland security will have to look into it as a threat to our economy (national security), and how teaching people to think and save money is “thought crime”.

Actually, I’m going to admit that as a family we agreed to stop swapping gifts among siblings and spouses, and we all give cash to the kids, so now I know the “thought police” are coming! Be even more subversive, become a revolutionary by starting a savings account and keeping some of your wealth for yourself, and vow to never pay full retail price again. Remember, in a capitalistic world there is nothing worse than being broke. Broke people can’t get sick, talk back to their boss, pass up overtime, deal with emergencies or enjoy five days of Jazz Fest and still pay the house note on time. Life is doing stuff, not having stuff.

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Mitt Romney, continued from page 6.

The Big Dig, as a “Tar Baby” he needs to avoid. Tar Baby - That’s an old school racial slur. It’s not something we want a presidential candidate to say and have such a thought process about.

Romney’s successor as Governor of Massachusetts is the Honorable Deval Patrick, a Black who served as chief of the Civil Rights Office of the Clinton Administration’s Justice Department. That is the same office that went after the Mormon Church’s racist policies in the late seventies. There seems to be some serious “bad blood” caused by that. It is a long tradition that when inaugurating a new Governor in Massachusetts they have a ceremonial passing of the gavel. The outgoing Governor stands and hands over the gavel to the new Governor and exits the building as the new Governors stands to the podium and delivers his inauguration address. For the first time in history and

without comment Mitt Romney refused to participate in the ceremony and recognize the new Black Governor. That sounds like the old George Wallace or Strom Thurmond type of stuff. The people of Massachusetts were outright embarrassed.

Very recently, well known Black Republican J.C. Watts publicly complained that the Romney presidential campaign was absolutely void of Blacks, Hispanics or any other ethnicity other than white. It was lily white and this needed to be corrected proclaimed the former Black congressman from Oklahoma. When approached about J.C.’s comments on CNN News, Mitt Romney retorted, “What’s the charge? Is there something wrong with that?”

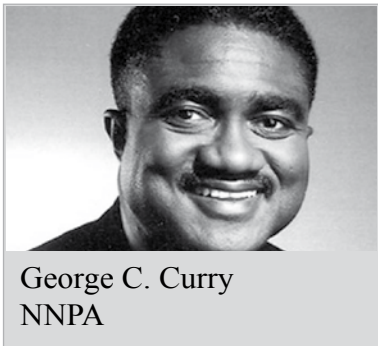
He then explained that he hired only the best workers and if that means an all white staff – so be it. This, my brother and sisters, is

“bigot code”. It is the same thing they would say to keep us out of the military, college and professional sports, the better public institutions and corporate offices. It wasn’t because of racism but that we just weren’t good enough and that’s how God made it. It falls right along with the “Cain Curse Doctrine”. Slick haired Romney is starting to appear to be very arrogant for all the wrong reasons. It is an aura about him that smells anti-American and anti-Christian. He appears to be a blast from the past and that is not good for us as a whole and harmonious society.

Is Mitt Romney a racist? Racial slurs, racist upbringing, racist slights, racist hiring and racist excuses – seems like an easy question.

Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce. Website: www.nationalbcc.org.

The Drug War on African-Americans



George C. Curry
NNPA

By George E Curry
NNPA Columnist

As one who has written extensively on disparities in the criminal justice system, I am familiar with assorted statistics associated with selective prosecution. On Tuesday, the Justice Policy Institute released a comprehensive study on the issues of race, poverty, unemployment and selective prosecution within the context of the so-called war on drugs.

The report's conclusion was blunt: "The drug war is primarily being waged against African American citizens of our local jurisdictions, despite solid evidence that they are no more likely than their white counterparts to be engaged in drug use or drug delivery behaviors."

The study is titled, "The Vortex: The Concentrated Racial Impact of Drug Imprisonment and the Characteristics of Punitive Counties." It examined detailed data from 198 large counties (with a population of more than 250,000) that contains 51.2 percent of the U.S. population.

"In 2002, African Americans were admitted to prison for drug offenses at 10 times the rate of whites in the 198 largest population counties in the country," the study found. "Ninety-seven percent (193 out of 198) of the large-population counties have racial disparities in drug admission rates."

If African-Americans used and sold drugs at higher rates than Whites, that might be understandable. But, as this and other studies have also found, that's not the case.

Citing one federal survey, the report noted, "In 2002, there were approximately 14 million white Americans who had used drugs in the previous month, compared to about 2.6 million African Americans who had done so. In other words, there were five times as many whites using drugs as African Americans. However, our analyses indicate African Americans were admitted to prison for drug offenses at nearly 10 times the rate of whites."

Black youth are also selectively prosecuted.

"According to the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, African American adolescents have slightly lower illicit drug use than their white counterparts – whether for illicit drug use generally or for use of a wide variety of specific drugs, including crack cocaine... However, in 2003, African Americans youth were arrested for drug abuse violations at nearly twice the rate of whites."

All of these factors contribute to the fact that the U.S. imprisons more of its citizens than any other country in the world.

For the first 70 years of the 20th century, the U.S. incarceration rate remained stable at roughly 100 per 100,000 persons. Since 1970, the rate has risen to 491 per 100,000, almost five times the previous level.

Fueled by mandatory sentencing and get-tough drug laws, the rate at which people have been incarcerated has also soared. Between 1995 and 2003, the number of people in state and federal pris-

ons on drugs offenses increased by 21 percent, from 280,182 to 337,872. However, from 1996 to 2002, the number of those imprisoned for drug increases jumped by 47 percent, from 111,545 to 164,372.

A report from the Justice Policy Institute in 2000 showed that Whites admitted to prison for drug offenses increased by 115 percent between 1986 and 1996. Over that same period, the rate for Blacks increased by 465 percent.

Increased imprisonment has been accompanied by increased prison expenditures. According to the American Association of Correctional Association, the cost of housing drug offenders in state and federal prisons totals \$8 billion a year.

Counties with the highest drug admission rates were, in order: Kern, Calif.; Atlantic, N.J.; Orleans, La.; St. Louis City, Mo.;

Camden, N.J.; Cuyahoga, Ohio; Jefferson, La.; San Bernardino, Calif.; Cook, Illinois and Alameda, Calif.

Counties with the lowest rates were: Washington, Ore.; Cumberland, Maine; Fairfax, Va.; Wake, N.C.; Rockingham, N.H.; Bucks, Pa.; Howard, Md.; Montgomery, Md.; Guilford, N.C. and Mecklenburg, N.C.

"On average, counties with higher unemployment rates, higher poverty rate, and larger percentages of African American citizens tend to have higher rates of admission to prison for drug offenses," the report stated.

Phillip Beatty, coauthor of the study, said, "Laws – like drug laws – that are violated by a large percentage of the population are particularly prone to selective enforcement. The reason African Americans are so disproportionately impacted may, in part, be re-

lated to social policy, the amount spent on law enforcement and judiciary systems, and local drug enforcement practices."

To reduce the drug incarceration rate, emphasis needs to be placed on other factors that contribute to the likelihood of one becoming involved in drugs and going to prison, experts say.

Jason Ziedenberg, executive director of the Justice Policy Institute, observed: "Rather than focus law enforcement efforts on drug-involved people who bear little threat to public safety, we should free up local resources to fund treatment, job training, supportive housing, and other effective public safety strategies."

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of *Emerge* magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach.

USING A BIT OF MAGIC AND A DASH OF HOLIDAY CHEER QUEEN LATIFAH PRODUCES "THE PERFECT HOLIDAY" COMING SOON TO THEATRES

By R. Lane

New York - (November 26, 2007) Sometimes, it's hard to have yourself a merry little Christmas when relationships fail, families feud and job prospects seem as cold as The North Pole. Thankfully, a new film "The Perfect Holiday," in theatres everywhere December 12th, successfully navigates this treacherous terrain, bringing joy to the world through laughs, lessons, holiday cheer and a whole lot of love. Producer and Academy Award® nominated actress Queen Latifah leads an all star cast with Morris Chestnut, Gabrielle Union, Academy Award® nominated actor Terrence Howard, Jill Marie Jones and comedians Charlie Murphy, Katt Williams and Faizon Love along for the sleigh ride.

Directed and co-written by Lance Rivera, "The Perfect Holiday" follows the romantic foibles of Nancy (Gabrielle Union) a divorced mom who falls for part-time mall Santa and aspiring songwriter Benjamin (Morris Chestnut). Her kids are torn; the two little ones love Benjamin. The eldest prefers their absent, self-absorbed rapper dad J-Jizzy (Charlie Murphy). The drama, and the fun, escalates when the kids try to play matchmaker and Benjamin must first pass the test but ultimately choose between Nancy and the kids and his career.

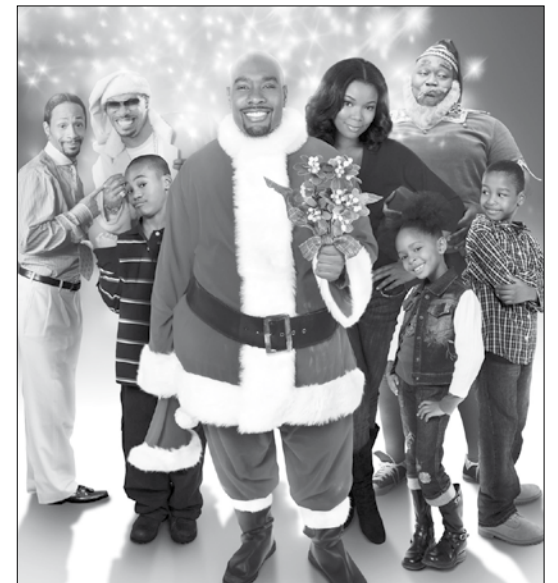
"We're always looking for ways to introduce lighthearted stories that are true reflections of the African American family experience," says Queen Latifah. "This movie has a message of love. How important love is from parents to children, from woman to man, as well as loving your dreams and going for them. There is also a message of hope. These three kids maintain the hopefulness and idealism that we as grownups can sometimes forget."

"The Perfect Holiday" explores these issues and more with a lot of humor... and heart. This deft combination helps highlight the struggles adults find themselves in, and possible ways to ease them and find strength in family, friends and partners. At the center of the story is Nancy, who runs a single parent home efficiently but it leaves little time for her.

Fed up with her loneliness, Nancy tries to make a life for herself and pursues Benjamin, the mysterious handsome man who pays her a compliment in a store. But Benjamin has his own concerns, working a part-time job while waiting for his break as a musician. Embarrassed of who he is, he leads Nancy to believe he's someone else.

Wrangling with self-esteem in romantic relationships is just a piece of "The Perfect Holiday's" pie. Family ties get even knottier with the complexity of a single parent household and all of the emotional needs that must be met. The kids want a father to be present, but the question is who that man should be. Their biological father J-Jizzy puts his career before family. Doting dude Benjamin is attentive but a stranger to them.

It may be easy to vilify J-Jizzy for his overwhelming self-absorption, but the flip side to his work-oriented ways is evident. Most adults can relate to clocking their hours to get paid at the end of the day. "I was able to



relate to the whole emotional thing of the son being exposed to this new man," says Murphy. "As a kid I went through that. I was raised by a step parent so I went through the whole adjustment of a new man. I also have a stepson that I raised. I identify totally with the son rejecting the new guy and the bonding process that has to take place between them. Acceptance is the biggest problem. That's real. Very real."

And that doesn't just mean accepting a new face in the family. There is also the simple acceptance of the parents children know growing apart. "Some kids handle it okay and some take it very personally," says Latifah. "Most kids want their parents to get back together just like I wanted my parents to get back together. I had to deal with the reality that they had both moved on but they still loved us."

Ultimately, finding and accepting love in whatever form you can is the message of the "The Perfect Holiday." "At the end of the day," says Latifah. "This is about keeping that little bit of Christmas cheer and magic that in this cynical, dangerous world we can sometimes forget."

"The Perfect Holiday" opens in theatres everywhere December 12, 2007.



Hornets Hoop for Homes

By Glenn Jones

On November 27, 2007 a well deserving New Orleanian, a pillar of our community received needed stability to continue their invaluable work in the community. Its no one you've probably heard of. A teacher has received funding to complete the rebuilding of her home. As we all know teachers are among the most unsung heroes of our society. A host of part-

ners are joining in this effort to provide funding for teachers to rebuild their homes, including, The New Orleans Hornets (Hoops for Homes), Tyson Chandler (R2R), Neighborhood Housing Services, Neighborworks America, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, and the Salvation Army. Together they provide financial support in what is being called the Gap funding program which

is available for teachers in public and private schools throughout Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, St John the Baptist and St. Tammany Parishes.

Molly McKinney is one of the proudest recipients in this program. "It's a blessing; With going to work early in the morning and having to stay late to get classrooms and lesson plans together then coming home to grade pa-



left to rt: Ashley Shelton from La. Disaster Recovery Foundation, Don R. Phoenix From Neighborworks(r) America, Hugh Weber team President and COO, Lauren Anderson C.E.O. of Neighborhood Housing Services, Maj. Mike Hawley of Salvation Army, Educator and recipient Molly McKinney, Center for New Orleans Hornets Tyson Chandler and Councilwoman Willard.

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pers, leaves little time to apply for funding and deal with contractors," she expressed. Ms. McKinney also has two daughters in school. This is a daunting task which many of our teachers are facing.

Tyson Chandler understands teachers' uphill battle and their impact on the community. When speaking about their impact he noted, "There are a number of teachers that have had a lasting impact on my life, and giving back to the teachers of the community is one way I can honor their role in my life and help to rebuild New Orleans at the same time." Lauren Anderson C.E.O. of Neighborhood Housing Services told us that "A lot of programs come out and sound good but this is real. We are so excited that an NBA team stepped up and is doing something that is so tangible and very practical." Tyson Chandler's Rebound to Rebound (R2R) program provides \$100 for every rebound made through the 07-08 NBA season. Chandler is asking corporations and community leaders to step up to the plate by matching his contribution. "My hat goes off to Tyson Chandler for showing tremendous leadership providing us with a real win-win," said Anderson.

Though the Hornets and Neighborworks have invested heavily in this program, they are still looking for more contributors to extend the programs reach. When asked how much the federally funded Neighborworks was investing in this program Don R. Phoenix of Neighborworks replied "to date about \$270,000 along with building materials and supplies." Michael Thompson of the Hornets said this community involvement is a cue from the top, Hornets' Owner George Shinn's commitment in turn the Hornets commitment to return to the city and to help rebuild the city brick by brick, house by house."

The Hornets will not build the practice facility in New Orleans East which was once slated under an agreement with the City Council and other organizations. The first phase of this program will be homes in the Gentilly and Eastern New Orleans areas. The practice facility will be adjacent to the New Orleans Arena. The Hornets are still committed to New Orleans East. "Our commitment to New Orleans East is still strong, George Shinn feels that New Orleans gave him a second chance before the storm and he wants to do that for New Orleans after the storm," says Thompson.

Blacks Favor Clinton Over Obama, at Least for Now

By. James Wright
Special to the NNPA

BALTIMORE (NNPA) - If Illinois Sen. Barack Obama and his leading cheerleader, TV mogul and talk show star Oprah Winfrey, were counting on the Black vote to help him win the Demo-

their views on who would be the candidate they would most likely support in the presidential race, important national problems and issues in the campaign. The survey was conducted between Oct. 5 and Nov. 2.

Republican candidates for the presidency did not do well among

"When we are talking about Black voters today, we are really talking about Black women," he said. "Sixty percent of the Black voters are women. In a way, we found many Black women are torn, should they support a Black man or a woman. This is further complicated by the issues that affect Blacks and women, they are very different."

That schism is expected to play itself out most dramatically during the South Carolina primary, where Black women make up the biggest Democratic voting block.

Bositis points out that there was a slight gender gap in the race between Obama and Clinton, with Clinton posting an 86 percent favorable rating among Black women, while 78 percent of Black men rated her favorably. Black men and Black women rated Obama favorably at the same rate.

Obama is also fighting an uphill battle over the issue of race, even

among Black voters, Bositis said.

"Many of those surveyed in the South doubt that America is ready to elect a Black president," he said. "They base that on their own experiences, because it is difficult for a Black to win a statewide office in the South. So they figure, if it is tough in the South, it must be tough for a Black man nationally."

One plus for Obama is African-American's preference for change, 60 percent, to experience, 30 percent. Obama has consistently maintained that he is the candidate for change, while Clinton points out her years of work on a wide range of issues.

Bositis said that the key to the Clinton-Obama contest could be the Iowa caucuses.

"If Clinton wins big time, it is over," he said. "If Obama wins, that will change a lot of things in terms of whether he can win. After Iowa, you have New Hamp-

shire and then South Carolina, where nearly half of the primary voters, 48 percent, will be Black and the majority of those will be women."

Other results of the survey:

*The top three issues for Blacks were the war in Iraq, 28 percent; health care, 20 percent; and the economy/jobs, 15 percent.

*Eighty-one percent think that the political process in Washington has broken down;

*Blacks think that the character of the next president is more important than the issues.

*President Bush has a negative rating of 87 percent while the Democratic Congress is seen unfavorably by 29 percent of those polled.

*While 43 percent indicated that their financial status was unchanged from 2006, more said that they were doing worse (32) than better (24).



Senators Obama -D(II) and Clinton -D(NY) lead the other candidates in the race for the Democratic nominee for President with polls shifting back and forth daily for the front-runner position in the primaries.

cratic presidential nomination, the announcement came as a rude awakening.

Black voters are likely to support New York Sen. Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama in their contest over who gets the 2008 Democratic Party nomination for president, according to a study of African-American voters.

"Clinton has been known longer to African-Americans than Obama."

The study by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based think tank, found that Black voters view Clinton more favorably than they do Obama.

In the national survey of 750 Black voters, Clinton, received the highest favorable rating of any presidential candidate with 83 percent and only 9.7 unfavorable.

Obama, who is in his first term in the Senate, followed closely with 74 percent favorable to 10 unfavorable. Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, who ran in 2004 for the vice presidency with presidential candidate John Kerry, had favorable ratings from 45 percent of the respondents.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson was the only Democrat that had a higher negative rating than a positive, 27.2 percent to 17.4.

The respondents were asked

Black voters, said David Bositis, senior policy analyst for the Joint Center, who supervised the survey.

Former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani led among the small number of Black Republicans surveyed, but overall he was viewed as favorable by 27.1 percent of the people surveyed and unfavorably by 43 percent of those polled.

The rest of the Republican candidates were viewed unfavorably.

Clinton, the wife of former President Bill Clinton, has several advantages over Obama among Black voters, Bositis said.

"Clinton has been known longer to African Americans than Obama," he said. "They met her in 1992 when she became first lady and now they know her as the senator from New York. On the other hand, they got to know Obama in 2004, and he is just three years into his term as a senator."

"Plus, Black voters have a very positive view of the Clinton years. Studies have shown that in the second Clinton term, Black household income rose faster than White household income. Blacks view the Clintons favorably."

Clinton's popularity among Black women in particular works in her favor, Bositis said.

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Sharpton Maintains Heightened Security as Threats Increase

Hazel Trice Edney
NNPA Editor-in-chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – The Rev. Al Sharpton, looking back on a year of volatile civil rights and race cases, says despite the false alarm when a prisoner sent a harmless substance to his New York headquarters last month, he is still constantly concerned for his life.

“We’re getting all kinds of threatening calls. This is just one that hit the papers,” says Sharpton in an interview. “Especially since Jena and then around the time of the Washington trip. Every time we’re involved, we get threatening phone calls... It’s a recurring problem because that’s part of the down side of leadership that people don’t see. People only see you out there on TV. But they don’t understand that also makes you a target for every nut and bigot in the country.”

Sharpton boosted his already escalated security protection after the FBI warned him and his staff on Nov. 21 that a New York state inmate had confessed to sending a powdery substance to him and at least six other civil rights orga-



At the recent march on the Justice Department, the SCLC's Rev. Charles Steele lauds the Rev. Al Sharpton for his leadership on this year's civil rights issues. Sharpton says his high profile is increasing threats.

nizations and news agencies. The FBI successfully traced the substance in the mail less than a week after Sharpton led the U. S. Justice Department against hate crimes. The white substance turned out to be only talcum powder, Sharpton confirmed.

But, he says the high profile media coverage on the incidents has raised prospects for real threats.

“It works up kooks and copy cats. Whereas this cat may not have been real, he could have woke us up because now, somebody might think that’s a good idea. So it causes a lot of concern.”

Among his 33 National Action Network sites around the country, Sharpton says he has especially upscaled security in New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Detroit,

Chicago and Miami because of the level of activism at those sites and some targeted threats.

“We’ve increased those who travel with us and we’ve increased those at our headquarters,” he says. Reportedly, the FBI has also warned his staff to not open mail from certain addresses and police squad cars have been sometimes strategically parked outside of NAN headquarters.

Security has especially been boosted since the Sept. 20 march in Jena, La. In that march, tens of thousands of people pushed for justice in the case of the Jena Six, Black high school students charged in the beating of a White school mate during racial tensions after three nooses were hung in a so-called White tree then in the school yard.

The security concerns also come in a year in which the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center has reported a 40 percent increase in hate groups since 2000. The FBI last month also reported an 8 percent rise in reports of hate crimes last year, from 7,116 in 2005 to 7,722 last year. Most were racial attacks.

Sharpton is quick to recall one

of the key reasons that he takes the new threats seriously.

“You must remember I was stabbed once leading a march.”

On January 12, 1991, he was protesting the killing of a Black teenager in the predominately White Bensonhurst neighborhood in Brooklyn, N.Y. when he was attacked and stabbed in chest by Michael Riccardi, an Italian-American wielding a five-inch knife.

Riccardi, who was convicted of first degree assault and served eight of a 15-year sentence, said he had attempted to kill Sharpton because he thought it would make him a hero in his community. It was Sharpton’s security detail who stopped that attack, apprehended Riccardi and turned him over to police.

“Of course we’ve got to pay more people, pay more for them to travel and all of that,” says Sharpton. “But, we take these things seriously cause I know what they can be ‘cause I almost got killed.”

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At Sean Taylor Funeral: Jackson Calls for Mourners, Team to Join Push for Gun Control

Afro-American Newspapers, NNPA and Wire Reports

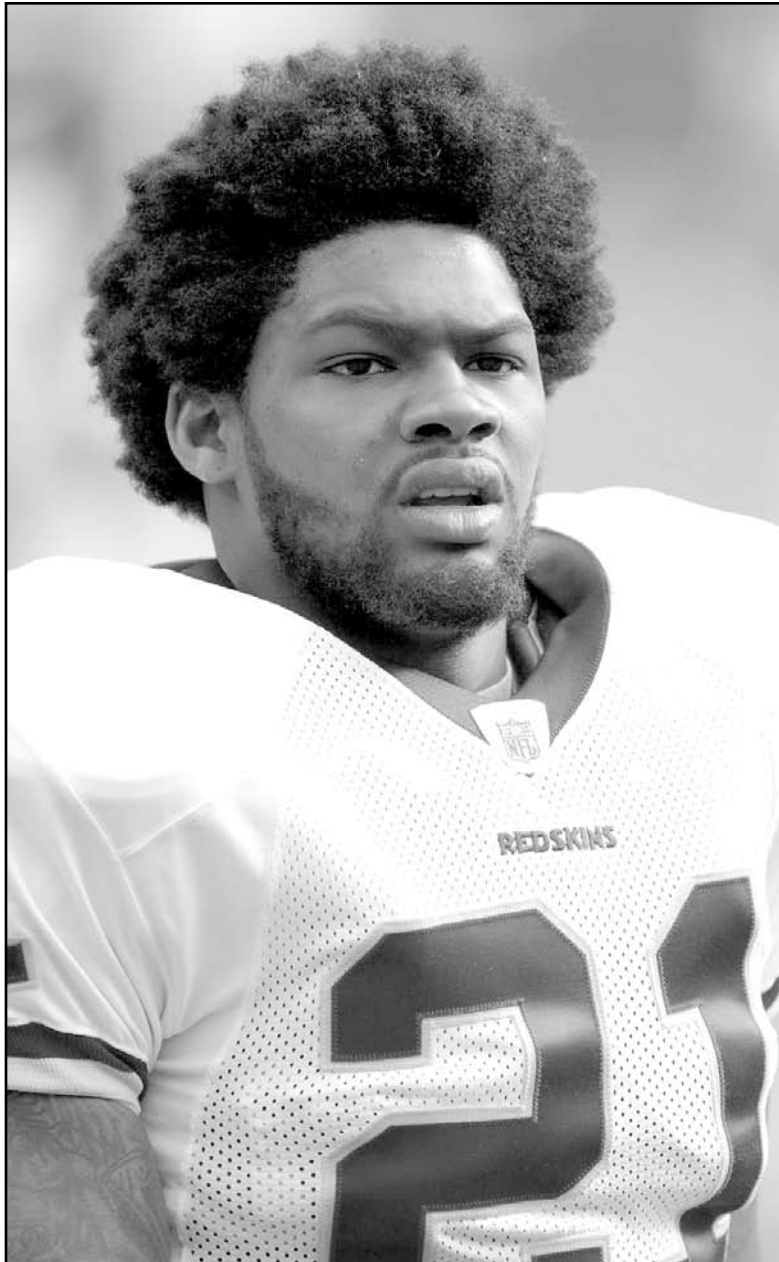
WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Thousands filed into the Florida International University Arena Monday to mourn the tragic death of Washington Redskins star safety Sean Taylor.

He died in a Florida hospital after he was shot in the leg during a break-in at his Miami home Nov. 28. Four men are charged with his killing.

"Even champions live in danger. Not all of us are safe in our own house," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson, among the speakers at the funeral. "Our American house is on fire. We've accepted violence as the norm. It must be rejected."

Jackson has fought for stricter gun laws over the past year. He has called for the renewal of the Brady bill which would ban assault weapons and place restrictions on the sale of other firearms.

"One day it's Columbine. One day it's Virginia Tech," Jackson said. "Now it's Sean Taylor. We're slow learners. We're in a hole looking for a shovel when we need a rope. We need a new game plan. We need a stronger defense...We're all the safety now. NFL players, you must play the safety between your community and violence now. If we learn from his death we've saved many a touchdown. In your living and dying you still inspire us to win the big game."



Sean Taylor



The casket of Sean Taylor is wheeled into the Pharmed Arena at Florida International University before the funeral ceremony.

Meanwhile, over the weekend, Jason Mitchell, Venjah Hunte, Charles Wardlow and Eric Rivera Jr. were charged with felony murder, home invasion and armed robbery. They are being held without bond. According to reports, police say they have more than one confession in the killing

that snuffed out the vibrant young life.

"God, take care of Sean until we get home," said Redskins coach Joe Gibbs. "He had an excitement for life that is going to live forever."

According to police, Taylor, 24, and his fiancé, Jackie, were

sleeping with their 18-month-old daughter when they heard a noise in the house, located in the upscale Palmetto Bay suburb. Taylor grabbed a machete or knife that he kept by the bed, his fiancé said, and locked the bedroom door.

But the intruder kicked the door in and fired twice, striking Taylor in his leg in the femoral artery, a major blood vessel. The fiancé and the child were uninjured as Taylor bled to death.

Taylor's fiancé told police she tried to call 911 from the house line, but it had been cut, said Vinny Cerrato, Redskins vice president of football operations. She used her cellular phone to call for emergency assistance, which delayed the response time. By time medics arrived, Taylor, the Redskins' top draft choice in 2004, had lost a massive amount of blood.

The shooting occurred just eight days after Taylor reported another break-in to his home.

Someone pried open a front window and went through drawers and a safe, Taylor reported. The intruder left a knife on a bed, according to a Nov. 18 police report.

Consequently, some have questioned the nature of the last attack.

Cerrato of the Redskins had already made up his mind.

"This was a deliberate attack" he said.

Redskins teammates and officials expressed their dismay following his death.

For all of us here, we're obviously in shock," a shaken Coach Joe Gibbs told reporters. "I know I can't put it into words."

Redskins owner Daniel Snyder voiced similar sentiments.

"This is the worst imaginable

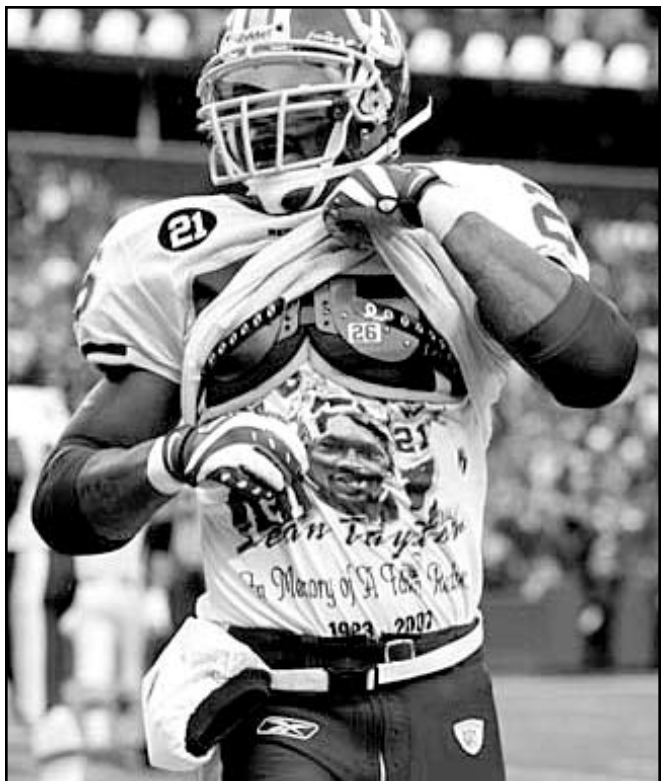
ing a knee injury on Nov. 11 that forced him to miss the past two games.

Taylor has had several brushes with the law and National Football League rules since joining the Redskins.

In his first year, Gibbs suspended him for a game after he was arrested for driving under the influence. The charges were later dropped.

A year later, he pleaded guilty after being charged with felony of aggravated assault with a firearm for allegedly brandishing a gun in a Miami neighborhood. To avoid jail time, he reached a plea agreement. He was fined \$71,764 by the NFL for violating the personal conduct clause of his contract.

The NFL also has fined Taylor for illegal hits, uniform viola-



Washington Redskin running back Clinton Portis, reveals a t-shirt under his game jersey paying tribute to slain teammate Sean Taylor during the Sunday game versus the Buffalo Bills in Landover, MD

tragedy," he said on the team's Web site. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Sean's family."

D.C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton also expressed her condolences.

"The Taylor family has my deepest sympathy," she said. "May the tragic loss of another young man who was on his way up personally and professionally alert his young fans to the life he was building and the necessity to control guns in our city and in the nation."

Taylor, who was selected to the Pro Bowl for the first time last year, was having his best season as a professional before suffer-

ing a knee injury on Nov. 11 that forced him to miss the past two games.

In the past two years, however, Taylor has earned praise from coaches and teammates for maturing and better work habits. Redskins running back Clin-

ton Portis, a former University of Miami teammate, said Taylor had grown up considerably since the birth of his daughter in May 2006.

Those who came to the funeral and the millions who watched it on television, reflected sadly on his youth and what he might have become.

"Professional athletes have never known this level of endangerment," Jackson said in a statement. "This is the struggle of this generation. We will be praying for new laws that will protect lives and the well-being of all."

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