


Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



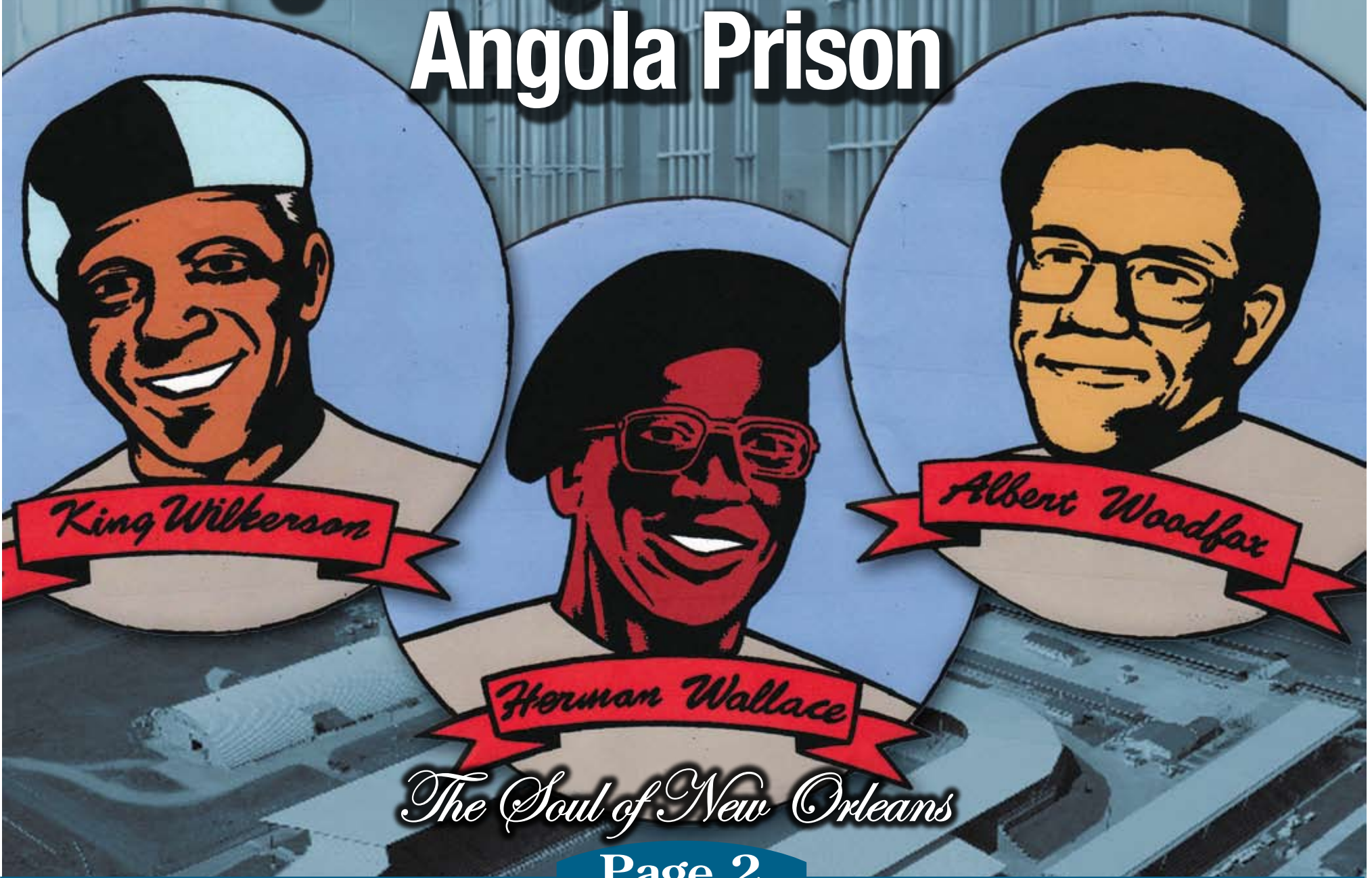
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Organizing for Freedom in Angola Prison



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Herman Wallace

Albert Woodfox

The Soul of New Orleans

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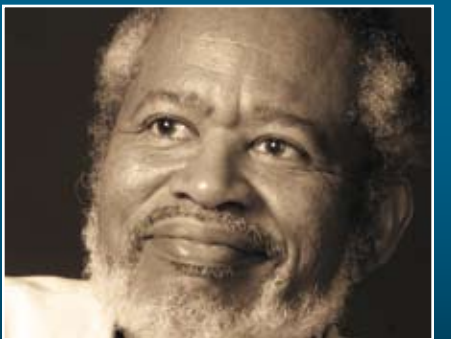
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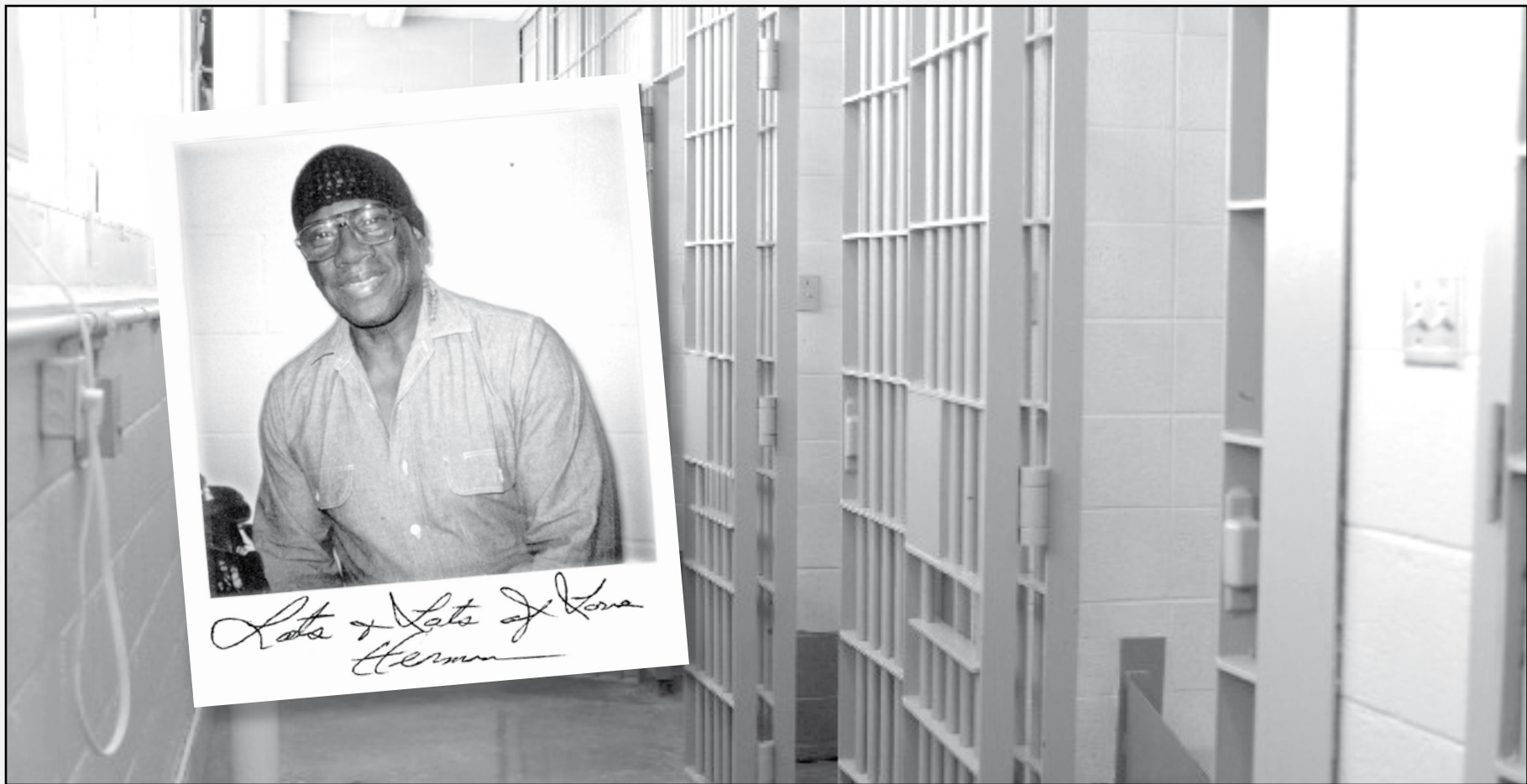
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of the Month**

Harold X. Evans



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Organizing for Freedom in Angola Prison



By Jordan Flaherty

At the heart of Louisiana's prison system sits the Louisiana State Prison at Angola, a former slave plantation where by some accounts little has changed in the last several hundred years. Angola has been made notorious from books and films such as *Dead Man Walking* and *The Farm: Life at Angola*, as well as its legendary bi-annual prison rodeo, and *The Angolite*, a prisoner-written magazine published within its walls. Visitors are often overwhelmed by its size – 18,000 acres that in-

clude a golf course (for use by prison staff and some guests), a radio station, and a massive farming operation that ranges from staples like soybeans and wheat to traditional southern plantation crops of cotton and sugarcane.

Recent congressional attention has again brought Angola into the media limelight. The focus this time is on the prison's practice of keeping some inmates in solitary confinement for decades, especially two of Angola's most well-known residents – Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox. Woodfox and Wallace are the

remaining members of the Angola Three, political activists widely seen as having been interned in solitary as punishment for their political activism.

A Modern Plantation

Norris Henderson, co-director of Safe Streets Strong Communities, a grassroots criminal justice organization in New Orleans, spent twenty years at Angola – a relatively short time in a prison where 85% of its 5,100 prisoners are expected to die behind its walls. "Six hundred folks been there over 25 years," he explains. "Lots

of these guys been there over 35 years. Think about that: a population that's been there since the 70s. Once you're in this place, it's almost like you ain't going nowhere, that barring some miracle, you're going to die there."

Prisoners at Angola still do the same work that enslaved Africans did there when it was a slave plantation. "Angola is a plantation," Henderson explains. "Eighteen thousand acres of choice farmland. Even to this day, you could have machinery that can do all that work, but you still have prisoners doing it instead." Not only

do prisoners at Angola toil at the same work as enslaved Africans did hundreds of years ago, many of the white guards come from families that have lived on the grounds since the plantation days.

Nathaniel Anderson, a current inmate at Angola who has served nearly thirty years of a lifetime sentence, agrees, "People on the outside should know that Angola is still a plantation with every type and kind of slave conceivable."

Prison Organizing

In 1971, the Black Panther Party was seen as a threat to

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Aerial views of Angola show a vast spread likened to a modern day plantation. To the right is the arena where the Angola Prison Rodeo takes place.

this country's power structure - not only in the inner cities, but even in the prisons. At Orleans Parish Prison, the New Orleans city jail, the entire jail population refused to cooperate for one day, in solidarity with New Orleans Panthers who were on trial. "I was in the jail at the time of their trial," Henderson tells me. "The power that came from those guys in the jail, the camaraderie... Word went out through the jail, because no one thought the Panthers were going to get a fair trial. We decided to do something. We said, 'the least we can do is to say the day they are going to court, no one is going to court.'"

The action was successful, and inspired prisoners to do more. "People saw what happened and said, 'we shut down the whole system that day.' That taught the guys that if we stick together we can accomplish a whole lot of things."

Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox were members of the Black Panther Party, and as prison activists, they were seen as threats to the established order of the prison. From their first day, they were organizing among the other prisoners, conducting political education and mobilizing for civil disobedience to improve conditions.

Robert King Wilkerson, like many inmates, joined the Black Panther Party while already imprisoned at Orleans Parish Prison. He was transferred to Angola, and immediately placed into solitary confinement (known at Angola as Closed Cell Restriction or CCR) - confined alone in his cell with no human contact for 23 hours a day. He later found out he had been transferred to solitary because he was accused of an attack he could not have committed - it had happened at Angola before he had

been moved there.

In March of 1972, not long after they began organizing for reform from within Angola, Wallace and Woodfox were accused of killing a correctional officer. They were then moved to solitary, where they remained for nearly 36 years, until March of this year, when they were moved out four days after a congressional delegation arranged a visit to the prison. Legal experts have said this is the longest time anyone in the US has spent in solitary. Amnesty International recently said, "the prisoners' prolonged isolation breached international treaties which the USA has ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture."

Wilkerson, Wallace and Woodfox became known internationally as the Angola Three - Black Panthers held in solitary confinement because of their political activism. King remained in solitary for nearly 29 years, until he was exonerated and released from prison in 2001. Since his release, King has been a tireless advocate for his friends still incarcerated. "I'm free of Angola," he often says, "But Angola will never be free of me."

This history of struggle and resistance brings a special urgency to the case of the Angola Three. Kgalema Motlante, a leader of the African National Congress, said in 2003 that the case of the Angola Three, "has the potential of laying bare, exposing the shortcomings, in the entire US system."

Swimming Against The Current

Wallace and Woodfox have the facts on their side. Bloody fingerprints at the scene of the crime do not match their prints. Witnesses against them have recanted, while witnesses with nothing to

gain have testified that they were nowhere near the crime. There is evidence of prosecutorial misconduct, such as purchasing inmate testimony and not disclosing it to the defense. Even the widow of the slain guard has spoken out on their behalf. Most recently, their case has received attention from John Conyers, head of the House Judiciary Committee, and Cedric Richmond, his parallel in Louisiana, who has scheduled hearings on the issue to begin this month.

But this is more than the story of innocent men railroaded by a system. The story of the Panthers at Angola is both inspiring and shocking. It is a struggle for justice while in the hardest of situations.

"They swam against the current in Blood Alley," says Nathaniel Anderson, a current inmate at Angola who has been inspired by Wallace and Woodfox's legacy. "For men to actually have the audacity to organize for the protection of young brothers who were being victimized ruthlessly was an extreme act of rebellion."

Like many prisoners during that time, Norris Henderson was introduced to organizing by Black Panthers in prison, and later became a leader of prison activism during his time at Angola. The efforts of King, Woodfox, Wallace, and other Panthers in prison were vital to bringing improvements in conditions, stopping sexual assault, and building alliances among different groups of prisoners. "They were part of the panther movement," Henderson tells me. "This was at the height of the black power movement, we were understanding that we all got each other. In the nighttime there would be open talk, guys in the jail talking, giving history lessons, discussing why we find ourselves in the situation we find

ourselves. They started educating folks around how we could treat each other. The Nation of Islam was growing in the prison at the same time. You had these different folk bringing knowledge. You had folks who were hustlers that then were listening and learning. Everybody was coming into consciousness."

Solidarity behind bars

The US has the largest incarcerated population in the world - Twenty five percent of the world's prisoners are here. If Louisiana, which has the largest percentage imprisoned of any US state, were a country, it would have by far the world's largest percentage of its population locked up, at well over 1 out of every 100 people. Nationwide, more than seven million people are in US jails, on probation, or on parole, and African Americans are incarcerated at nearly ten times the rate of whites. Our criminal justice system has become an insatiable machine - even when crime rates go down, the prison population keeps rising.

The efforts of the Angola Three and other politically conscious prisoners represented a fundamental challenge to this system. The organizing of Wallace, Woodfox and Wilkerson, though cut short by their move to solitary, had an effect that continues to this day.

Prison activism, and outside support for activists behind bars, can be tremendously powerful, says Henderson. "In the early 70s people started realizing we're all in this situation together. First, at Angola, we pushed for a reform to get a law library. That was one of the first conditions to change. Then, we got the library; guys became aware of what their rights were. We started to push to im-

prove the quality of food, and to get better medical care. Once they started pushing the envelope, a whole bunch of things started to change. Angola was real violent then, you had inmate violence and rape. The people running the prison system benefit from people being ignorant. But we educated ourselves. Eventually, you had guys in prison proposing legislation."

This was a time of reforms and grassroots struggles happening in prisons across the US. Uprisings such as the famous Attica rebellion were resulting in real change. Today, many of those victories have been overturned, and prisoners have even less recourse to change than ever before. "Another major difference," Henderson explains, "you had federal oversight over the prisons at that time, someone you could complain to, and say my rights are being violated. Today, we've lost that right."

Working for criminal justice is work that benefits us all, says Henderson. "Most folks in prison are going to come out of prison," he states. "We should invest in the quality of that person. We should start investing in the redemption of people."

After decades of efforts by their lawyers and by activists, Wallace and Woodfox have been released from solitary, but the struggle continues. "This is encouraging," agrees Henderson. But Wallace and Woodfox remain behind bars, punished for standing up against a system that has grown even larger and more deadly. And the abuse does not end there. "There are hundreds more guys who have been in (solitary) a long time too," Henderson adds. "This is like the first step in a thousand mile journey."

Lt. Gov. Landrieu Unveils "MY LOUISIANA" Advertising Campaign

Well-Known Louisiana Residents Give Travelers "Inside Scoop" On What They Recommend When Visiting Louisiana.

(New Orleans, LA) Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu unveiled a brand new Louisiana tourism ad campaign, featuring well-known Louisiana chefs, musicians, actresses and NBA players who offer their tips on what visitors should see and do while in Louisiana.

"We are blessed with unbelievably talented and fun people in Louisiana who all have their own favorite places to eat, dance, listen to music, fish and hunt here in their home state," said Lt. Governor Landrieu. "When Chef John Besh tells you Louisiana has perfect gumbo, you want to try the gumbo. And when NBA greats Willis Reed and Karl 'the Mailman' Malone say there's nothing like 'kicking back with a big, fat Louisiana Bass' or 'camping in the great outdoors of Louisiana,' you want to fish and camp where they do. This is 'insider information' and we're sharing it with the world."

The current insiders in the campaign are Chef John Besh, actress Faith Ford, Chef John Folse, musician Amanda Shaw, Grammy award winner Terrence Simien, and NBA greats Karl 'the Mailman' Malone, Willis Reed and Chris Paul. The multimedia campaign includes television, print ads and interactive. Eventually the campaign will feature new insiders offering their personal tips on their favorite things to see and

do around the state.

"I was pleased to be asked to represent the state in the 'My Louisiana' Campaign as I was able to tell a story about Louisiana that would draw visitors to 'My Louisiana' – a place that truly no other state in this country can claim," said Chef John Besh. "I was born and reared east of New Orleans in Slidell in a family with several siblings and relatives. I've been able to explore beyond the Crescent City due to my visits to see family and friends. It has brought me to learn about the culture and people within this great region. We each have an Iconic Louisiana as we all love it for different reasons. It could be the accents of the ladies behind a Po-boy counter in the Irish Channel, or the smell of a crawfish boil on the river's edge in Plaquemine parish or a father and son fishing on the banks of Grand Isle. It's all good and it's all My Louisiana," Besh added.

(more)

"I travel all over the world and besides asking me what my favorite dish to cook is, people ask me all about Louisiana. I tell them there is no place like it on earth. You've gotta come to a festival-Zwolle Tamale Festival in Zwolle or Strawberry Festival in Ponchatoula. It's how we celebrate our food. Come and visit my Bittersweet Restaurant or eat somewhere my friends and I eat like - Poche's Market and Restaurant



Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu and New Orleans Hornets mascot Hugo.

in Breaux Bridge. You just need to come see My Louisiana," said Chef John Folse.

The Office of the Lt. Governor and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism tested various marketing concepts to arrive at the "Celebrity Insider" campaign concept. Research re-

vealed that potential visitors to Louisiana wanted more information about what there was to see and do in the state and they especially wanted to know what Louisiana locals do for fun. This campaign answers those questions by letting well-known faces from Louisiana share personal travel

tips on the areas where they have lived and know best. No matter where you travel, no tip is more valuable than the insider's.

The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism has budgeted approximately \$6 million in domestic consumer media promoting the "My Louisiana" campaign this fiscal year. The campaign will run in national print magazines, national cable networks and high target television markets.

The state is also encouraging visitors to seek out their own favorite things to see and do during their visit, write about it and submit it as part of a worldwide contest. The top 10 winners will receive two tickets to the 2009 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and two nights' stay in Harrah's Hotel or one of their fine partners. The subject of the entry must be: "Your Louisiana," describing the places and things you enjoy about Louisiana and can be no more than 500 words. A booth at this year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival invited festival participants to create their own "My Louisiana" ad by posing with various props associated with the ad campaign. The photos were then emailed to the participants who were encouraged to submit their "My Louisiana" story worldwide contest for a chance to win and also be featured on www.LouisianaTravel.com.

www.ladatanews.com



Local Teen Named Louisiana Youth Of The Year By Boys & Girls Clubs Of America



The Hammond Boys & Girls Club members. BGC Louisiana Youth Member of the Year Aaron Brown is standing to the right of NBA Star LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Aaron Brown, a four-year member of Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeast Louisiana's Hammond Unit has been named the Youth of the Year for the state of Louisiana by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). In addition to winning this prestigious title, Brown will also receive a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reader's Digest Founda-

tion and \$1,000 from the Louisiana Area Council of Boys & Girls Clubs. He is among hundreds of Youth of the Year winners across the country recognized by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) for his sound character, leadership skills and willingness to give back to the community.

Being named Youth of the Year

is the highest honor a Boys & Girls Club member can receive. The title recognizes outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and Boys & Girls Club, as well as personal challenges and obstacles overcome. This program was founded over 60 years ago through the generosity of the Reader's Digest Foundation.

"The Reader's Digest Foundation has been the proud sponsor of the Youth of the Year program since 1947," said Susan Fraysse Russ, executive director, Reader's Digest Foundation. "For over 60 years, we have had the great honor of saluting amazing teens, like Aaron Brown, for their dedication to their families, Club, community, and their academic and career goals."

Brown is a senior at Hammond High School, where he serves as the manager for both the basketball and football teams. He is also a member of the Key Club and volunteers to work the concession stand for school sporting events. Brown's natural ability to lead has earned him great respect among peers and teachers, alike.

"Aaron and all Youth of the Year nominees are living proof that Boys & Girls Clubs across the country are fulfilling their mission of inspiring and enabling young people," said Roxanne Spillett, president, BGCA. "We are most appreciative to the Reader's Digest Foundation for their long-time support of our Youth of the Year program and for helping Club members attain their goals."

This summer, Brown will com-

pete against other youth from states located in BGCA's Southeast Region. If named regional winner, he will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship and advance to the national competition in Washington. The National Youth of the Year receives an additional \$15,000 college scholarship and will be installed by President George W. Bush during a ceremony in the Oval Office.

As the founding sponsor of the Youth of the Year program, the Reader's Digest Foundation has given nearly \$8 million towards BGCA, and 61 teens have been selected as the National Youth of the Year. For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.bgca.org/yoy.

Tulane University Legislative Academic Scholarship Available to Orleans Parish Residents

NEW ORLEANS – If you are a graduate of or a graduating senior from a high school located in New Orleans, a resident of Louisiana and legally domiciled in Louisiana and been accepted to Tulane University you may be eligible to receive a legislative scholarship.

Interested students should be ranked in the top 25 percent of the graduating class in high school and have a minimum SAT score of 1830 or minimum ACT score of 27, or if the student is currently enrolled at Tulane students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.30 during all periods of enrollment.

All interested applicants should contact the office of St. Representative Cedric Richmond at, 504-242-4198 to inquire.

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Justin Nicholas,
General Science,
SGA President



Rainbow Push Holds Summit in New Orleans



Rev. Jackson in Women's Breakfast (Tight)

The National Rainbow Coalition recently held its 2nd Annual Gulf Coast Economic Summit in New Orleans, Rev. Jesse Jackson and a host of civic, religious and business leaders from around the country came together to discuss a variety of topics. Many of the topics covered during the two day affair included: from the state of the recovery of New Orleans, to how churches can play a more vital role in shaping and empowering communities for the challenges of the 21st century. There were also panel discussions on economic issues, women's empowerment, and how to secure the future for the next generation.

Rainbow Coalition



New Orleans City Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis at OTCC Luncheon



Jim Barr at Procurement Session, Contracting Division for the New Orleans District of the Army Corp of Engineers

J-Core Helping Ex-Offenders Find Employment

BATON ROUGE — Ex-offenders face many challenges after their release from prison. Finding a job can be one of the toughest.

Nearly 2,000 ex-offenders have been referred to employment opportunities through a process called J-CORE.

J-CORE (Judicial-Core Opportunity Referral to Employment) was initiated in July 2007 by the Louisiana Department of Labor, in collaboration with its local partners in the Workforce Investment Areas, the Louisiana Department of Corrections and the Office of Youth Development. Its purpose is to provide career counseling and job placement services to ex-offenders, to help them secure employment as soon as possible after release.

The application process can begin while the individual is still incarcerated or after release. The ex-offender will be referred by a probation or parole office to a Department of Labor Business and Career Solutions Center where a case manager will explore individual skills, abilities and work preferences and initiate a job search.



"J-CORE provides our business community with an underused, work-ready supply of labor," said Louisiana Department of Labor Secretary Tim Barfield pictured above.

The center informs the ex-offender's parole officer, supervisor or case manager that the ex-offender is active in the system and which services are being provided.

Businesses that hire ex-offenders have opportunities for special incentives, such as federal bonding, a federal tax credit through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Incumbent Worker Training Program.

"J-CORE provides our business community with an underused, work-ready supply of labor," said Louisiana Department of Labor Secretary Tim Barfield. "In order to fill the nearly 100,000 job openings in our state we must open our eyes to all options, and businesses that are having trouble filling their vacancies should explore this program."

According to Whalen Gibbs, assistant secretary of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, about 15,000 inmates are released to Louisiana communities each year.

"Through the J-CORE partnership, ex-offenders have been placed in jobs and training programs, which improves the likelihood of successful re-entry," he said. "Meaningful and gainful employment that pays a livable wage is a key component in curtailing the revolving door of recidivism."

For more information about J-CORE, contact Girard Melancon, special assistant for the Office of Workforce Development with the Louisiana Department of Labor at 225-219-9638, or go to www.LAWORKS.net for a listing of all Business and Career Solutions Centers.

Speed Networking Breakfast

Madison Media Group will host the next Speed Networking Breakfast on Thursday, May 29, 2008 at Gallier Hall, 545 St. Charles Ave.

Complimentary Full Breakfast from 8:00am until 10:00am.

The Speed Networking Breakfast (SNB) is a series of events to bring together members of New Orleans business community. This is an invigorating session geared towards connecting local Business Leaders.

Please visit <http://www.madisonmediag.com/> to RSVP reply with your business name and contact information. Sponsored in part by the City of New Orleans and Louisiana Technical College

Blue Cross Announces Management Appointments



Angie Tramonte, ASA, MAAA

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana has promoted Angie Tramonte to Director of Actuarial Services and hired Gina Smith as Data Center Manager for Information Technology.

Angie Tramonte, ASA, MAAA, joined Blue Cross in 1998. She previously served as Associate Actuary over Group Actuarial, where she managed the small group block of business. In her new role, she will assume responsibility for group, individual and valuation actuarial activities.

Tramonte is a graduate of Loyola University in New Orleans and earned her Actuarial Associate designation in 2003.

Gina Smith previously worked at IBM Global Services in Boulder, Colo., for more than 18 years — reaching the position of Production Support Analyst Manager. At Blue Cross, Smith will oversee the IT Operations Center.



Gina Smith

Advertise
in Data News Weekly



Harold X. Evans

Art from the Heart

By Edwin Buggage

Good art can inspire. It can inspire people to dream, it can provide a mirror for us to view the ugliness and beauty that is in all of us. Good art can make us face ourselves and inspire us to be better human beings.

For almost three decades Harold X. Evans has been the personification of good art, as he has played a variety of roles as an actor, activist, mentor/teacher and mental health professional helping to uplift the spirits of those he has touched throughout his life. "Giving back is important, and some think it is all about things that are financial, but through art I have been able to give a piece of my soul and people have received it and it has inspired people and that is a good feeling," says Evans.

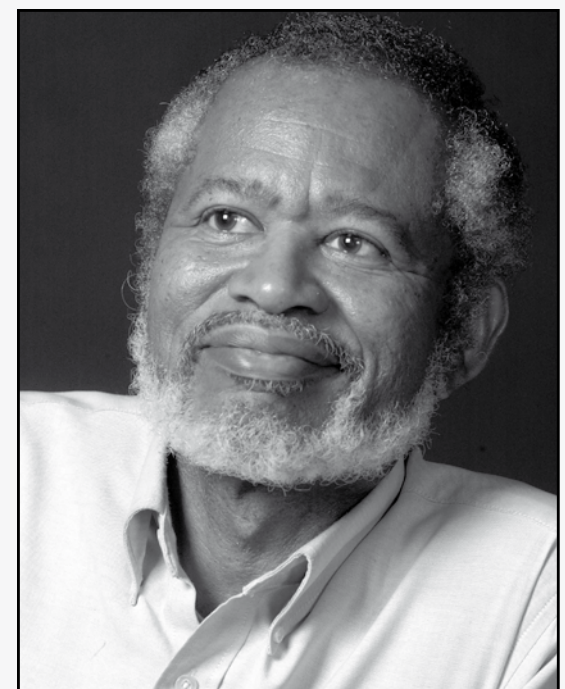
He has tackled all kinds of roles throughout his storied career onstage and on film, including a role as Denzel's Washington's attorney in *The Great Debaters*. But the present project he is involved in called *Story Circle* deals with an issue that has been at the forefront lately, racism. This is a topic he feels is very important, and is connected to the reason he continues to choose to quality roles as an African-American actor that challenges him as an actor and his audience about how they perceive African-Americans and for that matter the world, "I feel part of what the artist should do is to improve and enlighten the community which they live to make it a better place," says Evans. "So I always keep that in mind that someone could get something useful or learn something from or make society better and portray us in a way that we can be proud of."

Evans has done plays and workshops with children throughout the city in addition to working with the Louisiana State Museum in a program called Professor Harold's Black History Quiz teaching children about the accomplishments of African-

Americans. "I feel that a lot of our children don't know enough about the greatness of our people and the sacrifices that were made for them to be in the positions that they are in" says Evans. "I am sometimes troubled when I see what is going on with some of our young people, but I am encouraged when I go to schools and I see that there are a great deal of kids who are focused and preparing themselves for leadership in the future, it makes me feel good that some of the things that great and ordinary people did to secure these opportunities are not completely taken for granted."

On stage his influence is widely known, but what many may not know is that for three decades Evans has worked as a mental healthcare professional helping people cope with a variety of mental health issues. He feels that this is an area that not enough emphasis has been placed on after Hurricane Katrina. "I have done this type of work for a long time, and I have never seen anything like this before, so many people suffering and not nearly enough is being done about it," says Evans. "We can rebuild housing and other things, but how do you rebuild someone who has been broken down mentally?" "How do you make them whole again when they have lost so much?"

While some of the things that are going on in the city looks bleak, Evans feels that New Orleans will have a resurgence but he has mixed emotions about what the city may become, "I know the city will recover eventually, from what it seems some things will have to change for us to move forward, I don't if it will be good or bad for some people in the city, I guess only time will tell." He tells those who are here, "If you are here make the best of the situation that you can, be and stay committed to rebuilding your community and your life." And he says to those who are still have not returned, "If you have



found opportunities that are better than the ones you had before Katrina it would be best to stay put where you are for now, and if you desire to return the city will be here when you get ready and hopefully it will be a better city for all of its citizens."

Evans remains steadfast in his commitment to the city and his mission to inspire. Through his art he has been able uplift a community. And in this time of need for the city he has been a valuable cultural asset, in a city where the culture; its art and artist is the blood that flows through the veins giving it vibrancy and life. So as Evans and other artist continue to return and continue to produce works of quality, those who are touched by what they produce will continue as the city moves out of the darkness into the light, led by our artist such as Harold X. Evans, a man, artist, activist, teacher, mentor, and Data News Weekly's Trailblazer.

JMJ
Joseph M. Jones
Continuing Education Fund



at&t

Weiss Awards Honors Local Heroes

photos by Glenn Summers

Recently several New Orleanians received the prestigious Weiss Award. It is an honor bestowed upon those who have provided leadership through their commitment to serve the community. A who's who of city leader's from various sectors came together for this event and New Orleans Data News Weekly was there.



New Orleans head of Intergovernmental Affairs Keyna Smith presenting an award.



Valerie Sholes with husband Judge Ron Sholes and New Orleans Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman.



Entergy New Orleans CEO Rod West was the co-host of the event.



James Callier President of the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation and business leader and former Gubernatorial Candidate John Georges.



caption 2: Weiss Award Honoree Actor Wendell Pierce and New Orleans Data News Weekly Editor-in-Chief Edwin Buggage.



Businessman Ronnie Burns and wife Sheila Burns.



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G A M B L I N G P R O B L E M ? C A L L 1 - 8 0 0 - 5 2 2 - 4 7 0 0

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation present Jazz meets Classical

Under the direction of violinist Rachel Jordan, the Music Alive Ensemble, a unique ensemble of Classical and Jazz musicians will perform in New Orleans for the first time in since hurricane Katrina. The concert takes place on Sunday, May 25, 2008 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center Recital Hall (Lakefront Campus). Principally sponsored by the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, admission is free but RSVP is suggested. Jordan said, "The selected tunes are my love notes to New Orleans."

This unique ensemble has put together a dynamic program of classical music influence by Jazz and Jazz music with roots that lead back to Classical. Mike Esnault has written a piece, "Creole Dance" specifically for Music Alive. This work features Congas and String Quartet, something quite unique and so New Or-

leans. Other works are to include Stephanie Jordan singing the Chick Corea's jazz piece "Spain," and the hymn "Going Home", set to the music of Antonin Dvorák's 9th Sym-



phony. Dvorák was interested in the Native American music African-

American spirituals heard in America. Upon his arrival in America, he stated: "I am convinced that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies. These can be the foundation of a serious and original school of composition, to be developed in the United States. These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them."

The dynamic list of performers include; Jonathan Bloom, percussion; Mike Esneault; Peter Harris, bass; John Jones, drums; Alvin Fielders, piano; Suzanne Lefevre, viola; Kent Jordan, flute; Kidd Jordan, saxophone; Marlon Jordan, trumpet; Rachel Jordan, violin; Stephanie Jordan, vocals; Ivana Radakovich, cello; and Amy Thiaville, violin. Like New



Violinist Rachel Jordan

Continued page 15.

98.5 WYLD

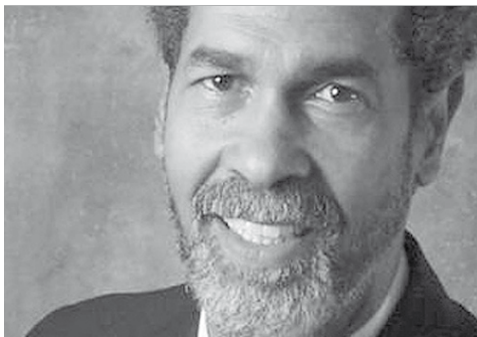
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Opinion

A Message For Young Fathers



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

The Love Dr.

I just returned from Norfolk Virginia, where the family celebrated both my youngest son's graduation (Magna Cum Laude) from Norfolk State University and his marriage to a beautiful young woman in his class who graduated with the same honors. I feel so validated as a man. This journey began with me as a twenty year old groom with my eighteen year old wife, neither with a college degree, but both determined to "beat the odds" which the naysayers were all too willing to remind us of ever chance they got.

I thank the Almighty that between and among those naysayers there were wise adults who were willing to teach us how to succeed rather than write off our young love as some sort of aberration that should be denied and crushed like undesirable vermin. We were wise enough as youngsters to take the advice of these elders, most of whom had started their families in the last generation at our ages. They respected our right to be in love and helped arm us to succeed "against the odds".

That is why I write and speak about love and marriage and raising children, because I know how powerful it is when those who have succeeded take the time to instruct and inspire rather than judge or condemn.

I would like to share two things with young fathers:

One is that being a young father is not easy, and two is that whatever it takes it sure is worth it.

My life is testimony. I now find myself so respected and revered by those who depended on me for support and leadership that my sense of myself, my self esteem is beyond whatever I had imagined it could be. To now have full grown children choosing to follow our example and seeing them prosper in the process could cause a man to lose his humility, but alas, I constantly remind myself that it was my acceptance

of the wisdom of my elders that led to whatever goodness I share with my children and now their children.

I have a grandfather who was the most loved man I ever knew. I don't know if he had any personal ambitions, other than the ability to communicate. Papa could write a magnificent letter, but he lived for his children and grandchildren and anyone else he could help.

I love to share with young men how I feel about this very humble man who created a beautiful life and legacy for us all. How a man who was a janitor set the wheels in motion for generations that would have us understand that our manhood was based on our ability and willingness to do for, train and be there for children, some your own and others, like the boys we mentor as Silverbacks in training.

I like to warn young men about the dangers of self gratification, about the danger of getting caught up in believing that their clothes or car or other toys will bring them joy. Instead I like to teach them to invest in camping gear, backyard pools, getting a home of your own: those things that allow the children to be included in the fun, and us as men to be included in their fondest memories.

Young fathers need for someone to make them know that their struggles will pay off for them as men. That they will feel like giants and that those they have loved and supported and been there for, will respect and remember how and why their lives were so good.

I would also like to teach them that none of this happens if you spoil your children or confuse them with materialism, so I'd like to tell young fathers that they don't have to pay for expensive clothes or toys as these things tend to teach false values. I am proof of this reality because even as I am getting all this love and respect from children and grandchildren, my children will tell anyone that I refused to buy brand name labels or tags. I never paid for designer stuff. Doing so would have created financial stress and perhaps destroyed our ability to take the kids camping, or on road trips, or pay for the above the ground pool that made them think that we were "rich", even though we clipped coupons and shopped sales and accepted hand me down clothing from relatives and friends.

They also need to know that any man who is willing to work to earn a living has a right to say no, or even I can't afford to do that, and that creating stability is more important than trying to create excitement by buying stuff. I'm here to tell them that being in the audience at kindergarten graduation is a greater gift than anything a father could buy, and that having a celebration pizza with dad is just as memorable as

Continued page 13

In The Spirit

Relationships

"The Do's and the Don'ts that will make your relationship work better in a short time"



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Folks, relationships are what really is important in life. Let's talk about relationships between a husband and a wife or a man and a woman. For those that are married, and those that are dating and in a relationship, you may have asked a question over and over again; "Why is my relationship not working?" Some of you have never taken the time out to put the effort into the relationship and yet you are still having unnecessary problems. Folks, you heard me say that there is no perfect relationship on the planet; no where in the world.

We all will have some kind of problems, even in the best of relationships. Family I've talked to married couples who have been together for twenty-five years and fifty years, and have celebrated golden anniversaries and they said that they too have their own share of problems. However, some of you are having problems that are making you unhappy in that relationship. At this time, I'm going to talk to you about the do's and don'ts that will help you to have a much better and healthier relationship in a short time. Would you like that? Of course you would.

Don't strife in your relationship. You will not always agree with each other on every issue. Do learn how to be patient, and do respect each others opinion about things. You will discover that taking the time out to listen to each other is not all that bad like you thought. Don't always be offended by what the other person said, because when you do that it shows a sign of immaturity. Family, learn to overlook some things, especially when it is small stuff.

Don't demand that the other person be perfect, but do give that person time to correct some things when trying to do better. Do learn to be forgiving towards each other knowing that mistakes will be made in relationships, no matter how much you love that person. Don't remind each other about mistakes that they have made in the past, because you will only be hurting the relationship more than what it already is. Like the old saying goes, "don't add more coals to the fire folks."

Ladies stop picking on your husband or boyfriend about what he should be doing. For instance ladies, your man just came in from a hard days work, and as soon as he comes in the door you are screaming in his face, pointing your finger at him, and twisting your neck. However, do learn how to be a peacemaker and talk to him in a more calm approach. Folks, that's called Communication. Communication in a relationship will go a long way. Also, fellas it goes both ways.

Do learn how to appreciate your wife or girlfriend when they have taken the time out to fix you a home cooked meal. It may have not tasted like your momma's, but she took the time out and effort to show you how much she cares, so thank her for it. Family, one of the biggest mistakes that some people make while in relationships is trying to change the other person. You cannot change them if they do not want to be changed. You will only make the relationship worse than what it already is.

Don't talk down to each other, but instead do try your best to encourage and lift each other up. Sooner or later this will rejuvenate and revive your relationship in ways that you thought will never be possible. Family, don't let silly arguments cause you to separate because you wanted to have it your way. Relationships are not like Burger King; "My way and my way only." Do learn how to meet each other half way. Now family, this was some of the do's and the don'ts in a relationship. Do try them, because if you don't, there's so much you can lose. God Bless You.

For questions or comments you can contact Dr. Aaron E. Harold at 504(813-5767) or rharold1@cox.net



U. S. Supreme Court Decision Sanctions “Modern Poll Tax”



Marc Morial
President & CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

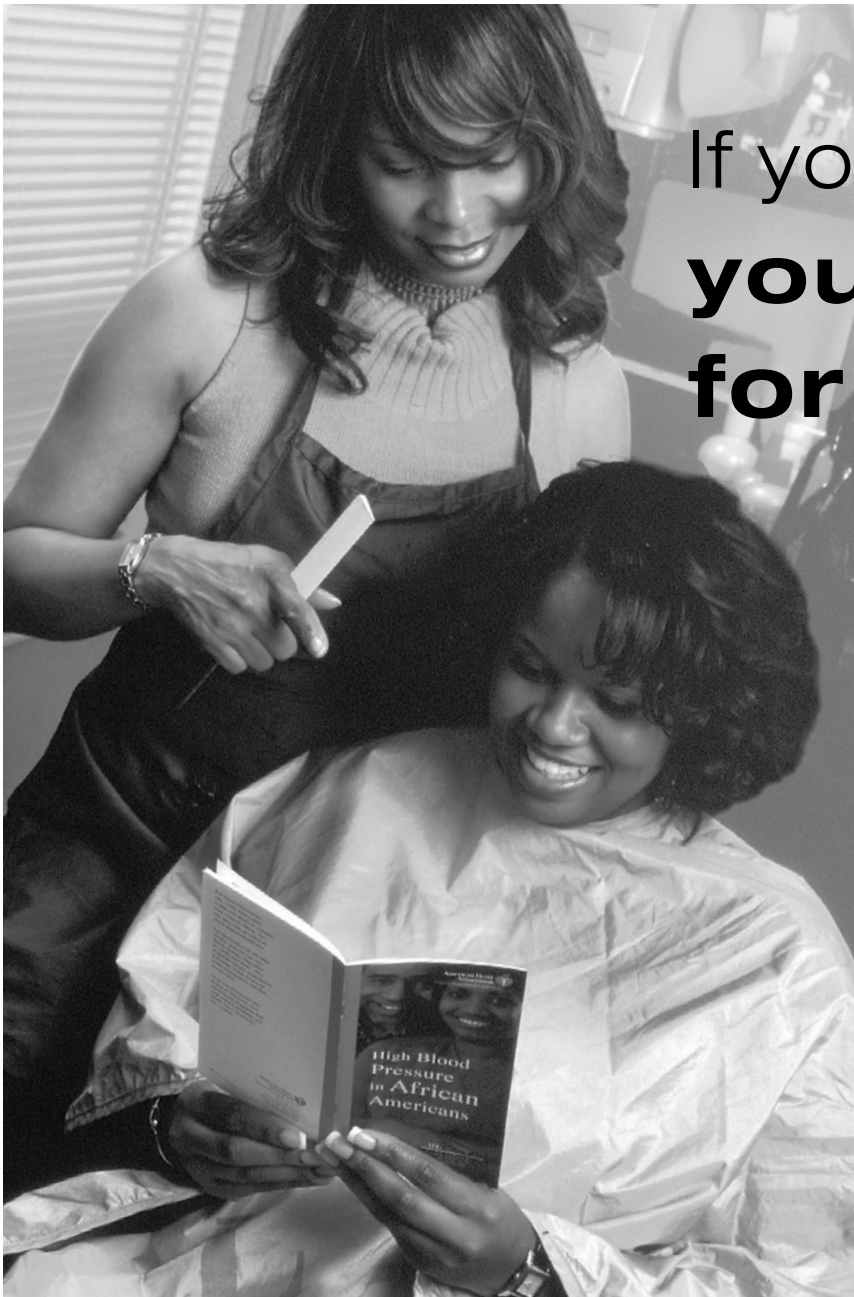
This election season has been full of stories about bowling scores, bar-room boilermakers and pick-up basketball. But, last week a little-noticed U.S. Supreme Court ruling may have jeopardized Americans' precious right to vote. In *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, the Supreme Court ruled to uphold the most restrictive voter identification law in the country and failed, I think, in its duty to protect the voting rights of all Americans. In its 6-3 decision, the Court sanctioned the practice of requiring Indiana voters to present government-issued photo identification in order to vote.

Poll taxes, which were used to disenfranchise Southern Black voters by requiring them to pay a tax in order to vote, were struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1966. This current ID requirement appears to be nothing more than a thinly disguised modern-day poll tax that places a burden upon many citizens – especially minorities, low-income, the elderly and people with disabilities – seeking to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

As Melanie Campbell writes in the National Urban League's *State of Black America 2008*, “Today there are still over 54 million eligible unregistered voters, including over 30 percent of African-Americans and over 40 percent of Latino-Americans who are unregistered. Yet there are those who consistently advocate for policies that discourage eligible citizens from becoming active participants in our representative democracy...” Indiana is one of a growing number of states that have passed or are considering similar restrictive voter ID measures. It's one thing to have the right to vote and quite another to have unfettered freedom to exercise that right.

Despite my disappointment with the Court's ruling, I am encouraged that the Justices have left open the possibility that such laws could be challenged in the future with proof that the laws prevented eligible voters from exercising their right to vote.

As the historic presidential election of 2008 draws near, we should be making it easier – not more difficult – for eligible voters to participate.




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What Does Hillary Want?



Ron Walters
Data Columnist

I remember that question, "What does Jesse Want?" asked of Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr. by the media when he had been defeated badly in the New York Primary in his 1984 campaign for the Democratic nomination for president. We had to sit down one day and decide that the nomination was out of hand, but it wasn't about the traditional meaning of winning, we had an opportunity to further empower our community, as I have previously suggested here.

Although Hillary Clinton cannot win given the current statistics which have Barack Obama leading by 700,000 popular votes, over 160 pledged delegates and now

tied with Super delegates, which gives him the overall delegate lead. She is playing for time to get the best conditions under which to leave the race and a big question however, is, Under what conditions will she leave?

I think the debt issue is off the table. She does not need to negotiate for Obama to pay her campaign debt, since Bill has way more than enough money to do that. But, Democratic party leaders are hoping that she will get out of the race soon under conditions that favor the party winning in the fall campaign, which means that she does not beat up the presumptive nominee so badly that he limps into the election.

Yet, many people think that the "damaged goods" scenario which causes Obama to loose in the fall is what she wants because it would allow Hillary to campaign again for president in 2012.

But there is a giant wrinkle in this strategy. That is, if she damages the party candidate in an election that by every measure is poised to take the White House and expand its lead in the House and Senate, it will not endear the new party leaders to her 2012 candidacy.

Also, it will most certainly not endear Barack Obama to support her then and he will be a major party leader as a result of his run in 2008. Then, it will not endear many blacks to support her if she causes their historic hope of gaining the first black president of the United States to become another dream deferred.

I think her sights are still tied to winning in 2008. A hint of this may be the that she is running hard in West Virginia and Kentucky where she will most probably win, to send a message to the hold-out Super delegates that Barack Obama cannot win white working class votes.

In a recent interview with USA Today Clinton said that she had a much broader base and that, "Senator Obama's support among working, hard working Americans, white Americans, is weakening again, and whites in both (North Carolina and Indiana) are supporting me." This reference to "hard-working white people," was created by conservatives in the 1980s as a euphe-

mism for Whites, a term which conveyed that they were not lazy, welfare cheating Blacks. This was another racial jibe used by the candidate which raised eyebrows because of the attempt to further blacken Obama.

Frustrated at losing, all the Clinton campaign has left is the argument she and her surrogates are making that the Democratic party needs blue-collar whites, the so-called "Reagan Democrats." Furthermore they are touting polls which say that if she doesn't win, Whites, especially White females will stay home.

Well, a recent Gallup poll, found that John Kerry's numbers are the same as Obama's with working class voters and he came within 3 percentage points of winning the 2004 election. The study goes on to say that Obama will win the same states as Kerry and that his appeal to Red state voters may be the difference in attracting a few more states.

In fact, in this context where working class voters are the most devastated segment of the electorate, they are unlikely to go as a group to John McCain, but are instead likely to split. Some will indeed go to McCain, some will hold their nose and support Obama and others will stay home. Those who don't support Obama, however, should be made up by the huge numbers of new voters that his campaign is attracting. They cite voter registration results of: 200,000 new Democrats in Pennsylvania, 165,000 in North Carolina, and 150,000 in Indiana.

Barack Obama's dazzling performance shows that in order to win you have to know something about the political culture. At this moment in history, his attraction to the electorate may overcome race and working class anxiety.

Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. His latest book is: *The Price of Racial Reconciliation* (University Michigan Press).



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Black Workers Need Strong Unions

By. Bill Fletcher Jr.

The growing economic crisis has pointed to significant flaws in the theory and functioning of the US economy. After years of an ideological barrage from the political Right insisting that there is no need for social safety nets to protect those at the bottom, we are discovering that those at the bottom are increasing in number and that there is nothing 'trickling down' from on high to save them. We are watching increasing numbers of people lose their health insurance, if they ever had it, and increasing numbers of people relying on insufficient food stamps in order to eat.

A significant section of the population of the USA bought into compelling myths about an economy benefitting us all. And while these myths were being propagated, our living standards were dropping. Yet not everyone's living standard has been dropping; only the bottom 80% of the population.

To put it in stark terms, unless you are a millionaire or approaching millionaire status, your income and 'wealth' have been either stagnating or dropping. Since the mid 1970s wealth and income in the USA have been polarizing very dramatically. Stark figures, such as the top 1 percent of the population controlling 35 percent of the wealth, are no longer viewed, even in the mainstream media, as doubtful. The entire notion of a fair distribution of society's wealth has been challenged by years of Reagan, Bush, Clinton (yes, even Clinton!!), and the younger Bush. And while this has been happening, misery has spread, and along with that a significant amount of despair.

There are two points about this that need to be made. The first, which is not the main subject of this commentary, is that Senator Obama was correct when he spoke about encountering bitterness among much of the White working class. This is so obvious that it was shocking that it could

be seen as controversial. This anger has been growing among White workers and White farmers going back to the mid 1980s, a point that Rev. Jesse Jackson observed and spoke to in both his '84 and '88 campaigns.

What has not been said is that Black workers have been bitter for a lot longer. The replacement of Black workers by more and more sophisticated technology, as well as the relocation of jobs from the major cities into more distant suburbs (and in some cases rural areas), has made the possibility of making a decent living less possible.

The other point that arises when looking at the evolution of the wealth and income disparity between the lower 80% and the upper 20% is that as organizations of working class people weaken—including but not limited to labor unions—it has become much more difficult to fight for wealth and income fairness. It is actually very straight forward. The upper 20 percent want to ensure

that they not only control the process of work, but that they secure the lion's share of the wealth produced by those who work.

Black workers have, particularly since the 1930s, been especially loyal to and involved with labor unions. We recognized during the Great Depression that unions were the most successful means of demanding that wealth and income be divided on a fair basis. As a result Black workers have played a key role in building and sustaining unions through the years. When the economy started to shift, however, many of the key industries where there were significant numbers of unionized Black workers (e.g., auto, steel) vanished or relocated. While a considerable number of Black workers remain unionized (approximately 16%) the disappearance of these unionized jobs has contributed to a hollowing of our communities.

If we are going to challenge income and wealth inequality we must join and build unions where

Black workers can play an influential, if not leading, role.

The Service Employees International Union, for instance, has played an important role in a major organizing effort targeted at security guards, a sector that has a very large Black component. While this is important, we will need to go further. Retail, warehouses, not to mention public sector jobs in the South, are all places where Black workers can be found in large numbers, and the union movement needs to move on them, and in doing so must have our support.

Those in the upper 20% have, by and large, little interest in sharing the wealth. So be it. Now the time has arrived for us to stop blaming ourselves and demand redistribution. Labor unions can be part of the answer, particularly if Black workers have a major stake in leading them.

*Love Doctor,
Continued from page 10.*

eating at Commander's Palace.

One fathers' day, when my kids began to grow up I started to apologize for all the things I didn't buy, for all the times we couldn't afford to buy or do things for which they expressed desire, for making them do without as we struggled to create our business. It was my now electrical engineer / and physics degree / master of education daughter who said "Daddy, what are you talking about? We thought we were rich. You and momma fed the whole neighborhood (hot dogs) and we had our own swimming pool and we were always going (camping) someplace."

So, I must teach and I appreciate any opportunity to do so, because as a man my sense of myself grows every time I help someone else succeed. For a man there is nothing like feeling as though you have made your mark on the world, and sometimes all we have to do to feel such fulfillment is to support and nurture our children who then will blame us for their success, instead of their drama.

LD

*DataZone,
Continued from page 9.*

Orleans these Great Musics and Musicians meet again at common ground in this beloved City.

For more information, contact artistic director Rachel Jordan at either (504) 915-9374 or via email at RachelJordanla@earthlink.net.

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization was set up to be the nonprofit owner of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival - Jazz Fest (www.nojazzfest.com) - with a mission to sow the seeds of our unique culture for generations to come. Its goal is to make sure that the festival's proceeds would be redistributed into the local community. The Foundation's mission is "To promote, preserve, perpetuate and encourage the music, arts, culture and heritage of communities in Louisiana through festivals, programs and other cultural, educational, civic and economic activities." To that end, the Foundation has developed numerous programs and assets and is the prime sponsor of this event.

Notable Quotables

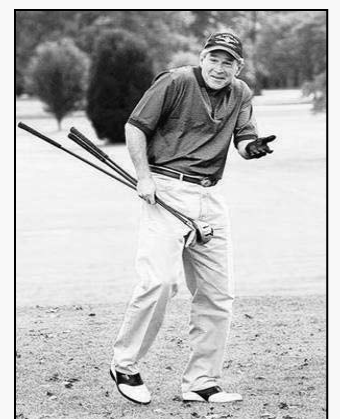


“ [Michelle] loves this country. For them to try to distort or to play snippets of her remarks in ways that are unflattering to her is, I think, low class. I think that most of the American people would think that as well.

– Sen. Barack Obama this week on Good Morning America ”

“ I don't want some mom whose son may have recently died to see the commander in chief playing golf. I feel I owe it to the families to be in solidarity as best as I can with them. And I think playing golf during a war just sends the wrong signal.

– George W. Bush



Voting Rights Advocates Say America is Unprepared for Massive Turnout Nov. 4

By. Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Record turnouts at polling places across the nation during the Barack Obama-Hillary Clinton battle for the Democratic nomination have revealed a continuation of serious flaws in America's electoral process that could cause a fiasco Nov. 4, according to a non-partisan report.

"The report demonstrates that most of the state and county and local election machinery was unprepared for a real heavy turnout," says Barbara Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, a primary partner in the Election Protection Coalition that has manned voter protection hotlines since January. "It really demonstrates that our democracy has deep fault lines and is not being administered well...We are not prepared. We actively count on a low voter turn out and count on voter apathy."

The 15-page, "Election Protection 2008 Primary Report", jointly compiled and distributed by the Lawyers Committee and the National Campaign for Fair Elections, says lawyers and other volunteers who manned voter question and complaint hotlines over the past five months fielded

more than 5,000 calls that include complaints and charges revealing everything from serious mechanical flaws to apparent intentional shenanigans and voter intimidation at the polls.

Few problems have occurred in affluent areas, but they are mainly happening in low income, Black and Hispanic

neighborhoods. Because Black voters typically cast 90 percent of their ballots for Democrats, mishaps at the polls could cause another Election 2000-styled fiasco in the event of a close race between the Democratic nominee and Republican John McCain.

"Unfortunately, the encouraging story of record turnout has been tempered by voters in each primary reporting they were underserved by the infrastructure that supports the election process," the report states. "While each state had a unique set of issues at the polls, there are some common obstacles that voters across the country faced."

Among the worst states was Pennsylvania, where more than 1,000 calls flooded the 1-866-Our-vote hotlines April 22.

Among the complaints:

- In Pennsylvania's Delaware County, one voter was told the voting machines at her precinct were set for Republicans only.

The voter was not able to cast a vote.

- Another Pennsylvania voter took her child with her, but a poll worker refused to allow the child into the voting area with her, claiming that her child "can read."
- Yet, another Pennsylvania caller said building materials were being thrown off the roof of the polling place to prevent voters from entering.
- Finally, in Pennsylvania, a caller reported a polling location with only three voting machines and no printers working. Voters were leaving without being offered emergency ballots.
- In the Georgia primary Feb. 5, a man allegedly from the secretary of state's office walked around in a uniform and a gun asking people if they belonged there. He left within 10 minutes after a call to the secretary of state's office, Arnwine says.
- In Denton County, Texas, March 4, disabled voters were directed to the back of the building where there was no assistance for them to go up the stairs to the voting area.
- Untrained poll workers, ballot shortages, registration roll problems and confusion over voter identification requirements. Also, some 57 percent of

Super Tuesday complaints had to do with equipment failures.

Arnwine credits the massive increase in voter turnout for revealing the flaws in the system.

"The irony is that pundits and columnists and people are constantly criticizing the American electorate for not engaging in the election process and not actually coming and casting their votes," she says. "Yet, when you get even a 40 percent turnout verses the historical 15 percent turnout, the electoral machinery just crashes, it just implodes, it can't take that amount of voting. What if 80 percent turned out?"

According to David Bositis, a senior analyst at the Joint Center for political and economic studies, voting in presidential primaries has been as low as 10 percent in past years, but has gone up and down, depending on the candidates, the issues and the excitement of the race.

"Twenty percent would be considered a really outstanding turnout," he says.

Arnwine says the hotlines will remain alive until the final primary June 3. Then they will reopen in August through Nov. 4 to advise people through the registration process as well as on general election day.

A team of lawyers and other

volunteers that make up Election Protection Legal Committees will be meeting with heads of electoral boards, secretaries of state as well as the U. S. Election Assistance Commission in order to report problems and work out solutions, she says.

Meanwhile, the report recommends: Improving poll worker training; ensuring proper protocols for dealing with election machinery breakdowns; guaranteeing that all eligible registrants make it on to the registration rolls; and widely publicizing correct requirements and restrictions about voter identification and other procedures.

"We're very, very on top of this," Arnwine says. She adds that they have not ruled out court action if necessary.

"If we can tell in advance that a jurisdiction is not properly prepared and has not set up the amount of voting sites that are needed, does not have or has not set up [appropriate] election equipment, or enough poll workers in advance, absolutely, we will take whatever action is necessary."

Mandela to Mark 90 Years at British Anti-AIDS Bash

Special to the NNPA from GIN

(GIN) – Elder statesman and former president Nelson Mandela will celebrate his 90th birthday and raise money for AIDS awareness at a benefit concert in London next month, organizers have announced.

Precisely 46,664 tickets will go on sale for the three-hour extravaganza on June 27, in support of the former president's 46664 campaign against HIV/AIDS. The campaign is named after Mandela's prison number during his 27-year incarceration.

Expected guests include Robert De Niro, Will Smith, Forest Whitaker and Oprah Winfrey. Meanwhile, members of Congress are vowing to remove Mandela's name from a terrorist watch list that dates back to his militant days in the ANC.

South Africa is one of the countries worst-hit by HIV, with 5.41-million people living with the illness. Mandela lost a son to AIDS in January 2005.

Thousands Sign Petition for Voice of the People Campaign

(NNPA) - Within the first two days, more than 23,000 people had latched onto a "Color of Change" online petition demanding that Democratic Party super-delegates adhere to the will of the public in the presidential competition.

Color of Change is a California-based organization created to increase Black America's political and economic voice.

"What we are trying to do here is give a voice to the people who are disturbed by what they see happening in the Democratic Party," Color of Change Executive Director James Rucker said in a recent interview. "We want to protect the voting rights of those millions of people who are voting in the primaries. We find it problematic that super-delegates and the party elites would decide on the nominee instead of the voters."

Color of Change also says the Democratic Party will make a terrible mistake if the nomination goes to Clinton. The petition says, "Heading down this path means disenfranchising millions of voters and legitimizing a campaign strategy that has displayed a clear pattern of race-baiting and divisive politics."

Representatives of Sen. Hillary Clinton's campaign disagree. Paul Elliot, a Clinton campaign official, says the camp follows the position of prominent Democrats who provide good judgment about the Democratic Party's future and the nation.

Former Black Press Executive Named NAACP President, Young Civil Rights Leader Called a 'Breath of Fresh Air'

By Hazel Trice Edney

BALTIMORE (NNPA) – Already mapping a strategy to maximize Black voter participation and issues in the general election Nov. 4, former Black Press executive Benjamin Todd Jealous has been named the new national president of the NAACP.

"My primary goals are to make sure that the Black surge that we saw in the primary is repeated in the general election and to make sure that we have both, an agenda for the transitioning government that will be happening in January as well as for this next century," said Jealous in an NNPA interview just moments after the official announcement of his appointment to lead the 99-year-old civil rights organization, the nation's oldest. "We have one heck of a batting average and we need to maintain it," he said of the record voter turnouts during the primary. "It's to make sure that we are as strong of a player in this century as well as the next. So, a lot of this is about raising money, it's about the use of technology, it's about rebuilding the staff."

Jealous, who will start the job Sept. 1, has an extensive resume, entrenched in civil rights. He is a former managing editor of Mississippi's historic Jackson Advocate. In 2000, he became executive director of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the Black Press of America. He left NNPA after three years to become director of Amnesty International's U. S. Human Rights Program. He comes to the NAACP from the San Francisco-based Rosenberg Foundation, where he has served as president since 2005.

A positive aura exuded from the horde of beaming civil rights leaders as Jealous stood outside of the organization's Baltimore headquarters alongside board chairman Julian Bond, Vice Chair Roslyn Brock and other supporters from the 64-member board that voted to hire him. However, no one denied the reality of the daunting challenge ahead given the major problems that have plagued the organization in recent years.

Former Verizon executive Bruce Gordon, resigned abruptly in February last year after a 19-month presidency with the organization. He cited irreconcilable differences with the 64-member board.



Caption: Benjamin Jealous addresses board members and the press at the NAACP National Headquarters on Saturday

ber board.

Four months later Chairman Bond made a national appeal for board members and NAACP supporters to "show some love" to the NAACP by giving money.

Interim CEO Dennis Hayes, who stepped into leadership behind Gordon had announced staff cuts at the Baltimore headquarters from 119 to 70 people. He said the organization had used more than \$10 million in reserves to cover shortfalls following the presidency of former Congressman Kweisi Mfume.

Despite financial woes, which are intrinsic to most civil and human rights organizations, Bond has steadily pointed to the social ills of America and the necessity of voter registration as the greatest priority of the organization.

The selection of Jealous means going from Gordon, a corporate executive who had never participated in a civil rights march, to a young, but seasoned civil rights advocate with a background entrenched in the priority issues of the NAACP, including voter registration and education.

"Of the many people that we interviewed, he was head and shoulders above the others for this reason," says Bond. "He has spent his entire professional life working on the issues that the NAACP holds dear. He has spent his entire professional life raising money for organizations much like the NAACP. He is in sync with the NAACP to a high degree and we are very happy to have him with us... He's a perfect fit for us in every way."

Jealous' election was not with-

out the heated debate that has long been typical of the 64-member board, packed with civil rights warriors from communities and trenches across America. Board members said discussions that started Friday evening continued until the wee hours of Saturday morning.

"There was a great discussion, a great debate on the issues that are critically important to the NAACP," says labor leader Bill Lucy. "And I think those are the kinds of discussions that engender strong feelings. But, the fact that people debated it out into the wee hours of the morning was a good healthy discussion. The fact is that in the end, there was an agreement on his candidacy and that was a good thing."

Actually, sources said the debate was not all about the candidate. Much of it was about the process. Jealous had been selected unanimously by the organization's three-member executive committee after it had reviewed two other candidates. The three finalists had been presented to the executive committee by a search committee for the selection of one candidate to present to the board for an interview, which sources say has been the normal process for selecting NAACP presidents.

Acrimony had started at previous meetings when some board members pushed to change the procedure, arguing that the board should be allowed to interview all three finalists. Tension continued in last weekend's board meeting as some members said they had been disenfranchised by not having heard the other two candi-

dates, who were Rev. Frederick Haynes, a 47-year-old pastor from Dallas, and Alvin Brown, a former Clinton White House advisor.

The final vote for Jealous was 34-21, according to the Baltimore Afro-American.

Responding to a question about how he will deal with board factionalism that has frustrated other NAACP CEOs, Jealous synopsised his leadership style.

"I'm a team player. I believe that in order to lead in the game,

you've got to be completely in the game, that in order to have people to follow you, they need to know that you're willing to following them," he said. "This isn't a new industry to me if you will. This is the family, the movement that I was raised in. So, I expect to have nothing but success."

In random interviews with board members, they spoke glowingly of Jealous. Only one declined to speak on the record.

"A lot of folks made a big to do about age," said Lucy. "I think it's a good thing. The energy the dedication and commitment are those standards that this organization must stand by. From the trade union side, Ben's really strong belief in workers' rights, people to be treated fairly on the job, to receive adequate income and pay and to have a voice on the job, that's what we're all about."

Hazel Dukes, a former national president of the organization, said she met Jealous for the first time last week.

"I've checked with people that he went to school with...I started listening," she said when she heard he was a candidate. "And when he laid out the vision for us and to be his age and that he wants to come back and give back to the community with such passion and devotion, I'm just excited. As a mother, I'm just a proud African-American mom today that a young man who has accomplished so much has come back to work for the oldest civil rights organization with a passion, with love and support."

Maxine Smith, executive secre-

tary of the Memphis NAACP for more than 40 years, currently national education chair, called Jealous a "breath of fresh air."

She said, "He has obvious ability and inner feeling like those older civil rights leaders and those older NAACPers like us. It's like he's been on the warfield a long time."

The Rev. Michael Nelson of Detroit, says he believes Jealous' age will cause the organization to attract youthful civil rights advocates.

"We do think that with the youthful nature of the new CEO that he will bring the association along in that way and that he will also speak to the issues of youth and young adults," Nelson says. "We want to be sure that we will continue to build a base for the association. And that we're taking in consideration the concerns of young people. That's very important to us."

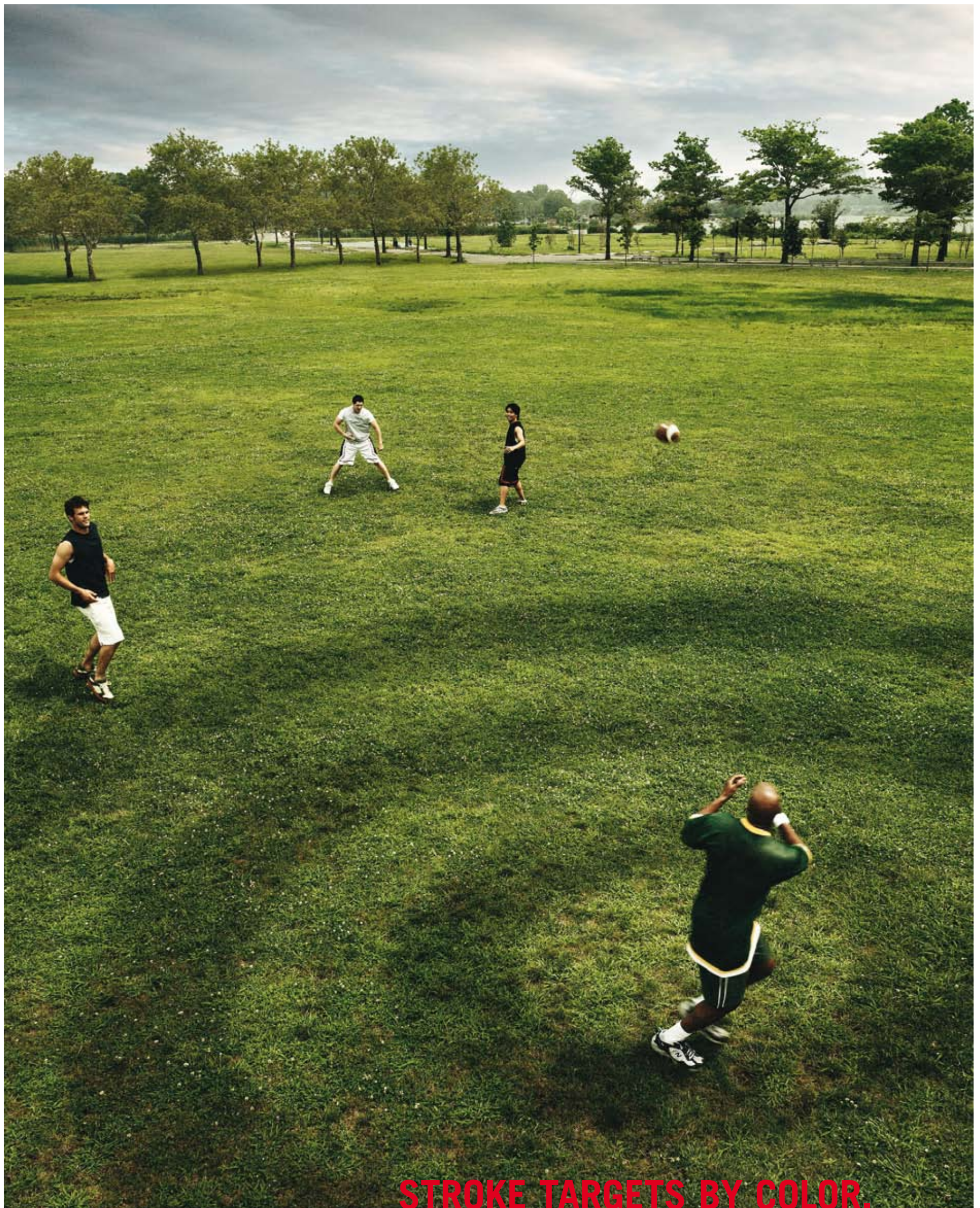
The Rev. Theresa Dear of Bartlett, Ill. agrees: "He represents taking the NAACP to the next level. He is extraordinarily brilliant. And he represents great promise and potential, not just for the organization, but for young people."

Jealous holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Columbia University and a master's in comparative social research from Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

By indications, this week, Jealous will also be welcomed back into the civil rights community of Washington, D.C.

Wade Henderson, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, said Jealous' selection was perfectly timed.

"Change is in the air. We're on the verge of very important change," Henderson said. He was referring to the election of either Sen. Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton or John McCain. "And I think Ben Jealous' appointment at the NAACP helps to further cement the transition of the important issues that are taking place in the country today...It heralds a new level of leadership for the organization and a new level of cooperation between the NAACP and the established non-governmental organization and civil rights movement."



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