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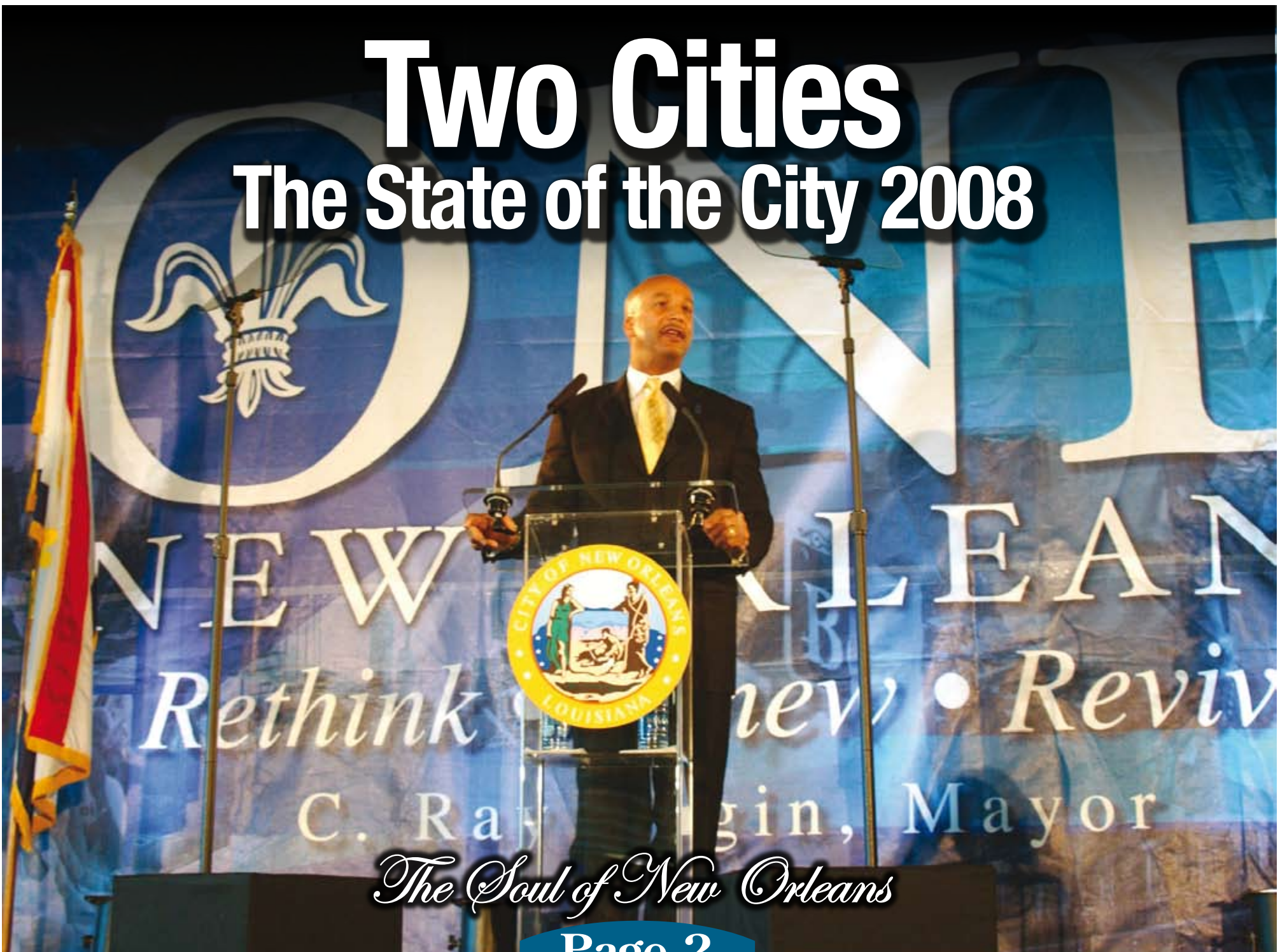
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**Data Around Town
with Urban League's
Page 8 Young Professionals**

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Two Cities

The State of the City 2008



The Soul of New Orleans

Page 2



Newsmaker
Deciding on a VP

Page 4

News
Cleaning Up the
Community



Page 6

One New Orleans: Two Cities



Mayor Ray Nagin addresses community before delivering his 2008 State of the City Address

By Edwin Buggage

What is the state of the city?

While the future fate of the city is still a question unanswered. And as we have entered another hurricane season, and later this summer we will commemorate the third year of the days that changed the lives for so many New Orleanians. The heartbeat of a city seemingly stopped going into cardiac arrest, in what

seemed a fatal deathblow as winds, rain and the breaching of the levees left the city drowning, suffocating for its very survival. After the water subsided the city was a battered and tattered carcass of a place where building lie abandoned, and the stench of death and destruction lined the streets for countless miles.

It was after that race and class collided and questions about who would come back and how would the city repopulate were essential questions

in the first year after Katrina. Media from around the globe converged on the crescent city as history was unfolding in what was one of the most tragic natural disasters to happen in America history.

In what now is almost three years later Mayor Ray Nagin gave his annual State of the City Address to a small yet captive audience with little fanfare or controversy. It was an upbeat speech that was full of optimism and hope. Nagin called for all people to unite

and be one New Orleans. He gave example after example making his case that New Orleans is well on its way to becoming a great city once again. He talked about it being new, renewed, revived, and alive. He stressed reinventing the city into the best of what it was, but also giving the audience a vision of what it can become.

Sadly, the next day the only daily newspaper in town felt that New Orleans Hornets coach Byron Scott signing

a contract extension warranted the front page vs. the speech of Mayor Nagin state of the city address. A smack in the face for what has been a long fought battle since Hurricane Katrina where Nagin has found himself the fall guy of everything that has gone wrong with the city.

One New Orleans; Two Cities

It is without a doubt that New Orleans is a long way

Continued next page.

INSIDE DATA

Cover Story	2	Love Dr..	10
Newsmaker	4	In The Spirit	10
State & Local.	5	@Issue	11
Data Zone	8	National News	14

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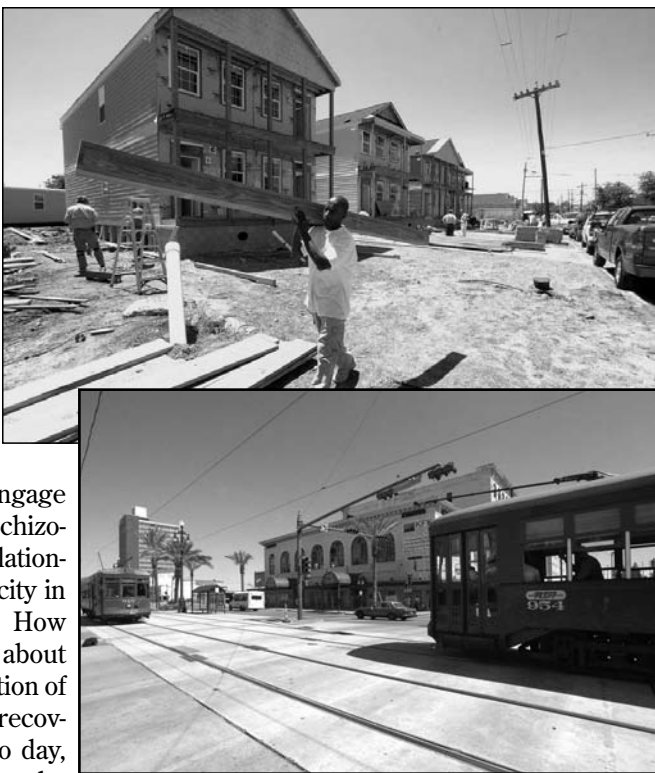
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from being the place it was prior to the storm. And the question is what is the state of the city today, not simply from the perception of our city's commander-in-chief, but people all across the city; and it seems that the opinions of the city and where it is going is varied as individuals engage in a sort of schizophrenic relationship with the city in its recovery. How people feel about the city execution of an effective recovery is a day to day, and situation by situation. Like fighting to get road home funds, or a school opening in a community, relatives finally coming home or a host of other things; these last couple of years for many has been an emotional roller-coaster.

While certain parts of the city have seen signs of renewal. For example, some streets in uptown New Orleans as well as the French Quarter are bustling with people, and to a casual observer they would assume the city is back to its former self, but New Orleans continues to be a tale of two cities. Louisiana State Representative Cedric Richmond who represents New Orleans East says he is pleased by the optimism in the speech of mayor Nagin. "I think there are some good things that have come out of the recovery such as a billion dollars worth of construction and people becoming entrepreneurs, and the city finally getting some of the monies to get some of these capital projects going." While Richmond is excited about signs of progress in some areas of the city, he feels his district has not been properly factored into the equation "From where I stand when I am in my district, I don't see enough being done in New Orleans East." "I don't understand how they want to spend 35 to 50 million dollars on green space when it may cost 40 million to close the deal for somebody to open up a hospital in New Orleans East and start to help the sick and also create jobs."

Shanell Shaw, a New Orleans East homeowner and small business owner agrees with Representative Richmond. "I see progress in other areas, but out here there

are problems with sewerage, lack of places to shop, and the quality of life is not what it should be given



en that we are homeowners and most of us are middle class to upper-middle class." "It seems a lot of the attention is being placed on the places where the tourist are, or they talk about public housing residents and the rights of the poor, but what about middle class people who own homes in New Orleans East, I feel our area hasn't gotten the attention it deserves."

Health and Wealth

Issues of healthcare and commerce were areas Mayor Nagin touched on where he forecasted that the city will have a more diverse economy in areas such as biotechnology. He mentioned the new VA Hospital and companies such as Nike making an investment as signs of a city that is on the way to a full recovery.

These words as he told people to imagine what the city would and could become is encouraging, but the stark reality is that Charity Hospital remains boarded up and inoperable, and in a city that has little limited space for physical expansion where will all this new development be located without possibly displacing the people who Mayor Nagin vowed would have the right to return?

Wilbert 'Chill' Wilson is a small business owner and child advocate who runs a barbershop and beauty salon who has been featured on CNN and several local news channels and will be featured in the July issue of Fortune Magazine focusing on small businesses and the recovery of New Orleans. Wilson has become a pillar in his community after Hurricane Katrina working with young people and the elderly. He

has used his business recently to hold a health fair where people

ple in the Diaspora who are still displaced and have lost hope, but



could come in and get health screenings. "I commend Nagin and how he has worked to try to attract large business and trying to continue to attract tourist into the city." "I admire his plans to do some of the things he is talking about with downtown, but he hasn't done enough to form alliances with small business owners to address our needs in a changing city," says Wilson. "And he hasn't communicated enough with peo-

I feel it is not only on the government's responsibility to make the city better it is up to us as citizens to get involved."

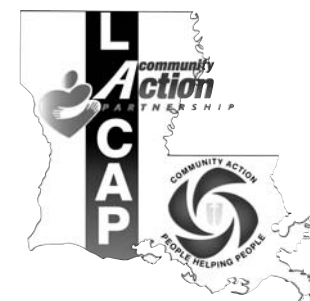
Public Safety; Dedication to Education

In his speech Mayor Nagin gave a glowing report on the number of 701 releases and how the number has been reduced from 1500 to zero this year under the new district attorney Keva Landrum-

Johnson who he feels has a better working relationship with police superintendent Warren Riley than her predecessor Eddie Jordan who resigned under a cloud of suspicion and scrutiny.

For these staggering numbers crime is still an issue in New Orleans where the city even with a smaller population continues to be near the top of the most dangerous cities in America. Last year a march was staged calling for the senseless violence to stop. But in 2008 many of the problems that cause young people to turn to a life of crime and vice are still present. Jerome 'DJ Jubilee' Temple is a well known recording artist and teacher at West Jefferson High School who says, "Education is key, but there are problems in the educational system where kids are getting what they need." "Also our communities need to put young people first, and that hasn't happened, high stakes testing like the LEAP has made it where some of our kids aren't getting diplomas and it's setting our African-Amer-

Continued on page 15.



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As Presumptive Nominee, Obama Prepares to Choose Running Mate

By Zenitha Prince

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - On June 3, Sen. Barack Obama defied history, becoming the first African-American candidate to head a major party ticket and having a viable chance of taking the helm of the White House.

"America, this is our moment. This is our time. Our time to turn the page on the policies of the past. Our time to bring new energy and new ideas to the challenges we face. Our time to offer a new direction for the country that we love," said Obama from a stage in St. Paul, Minn.

"The journey will be difficult," he added. "The road will be long."

After ending the 5-month primary season Tuesday the way he began—with a victory in Montana—and accumulating enough delegates to clinch the Democratic nomination, Obama can now turn his attention to picking a vice presidential running mate.

"It's a simple and difficult thing at the same time," said David Bositis, senior analyst for the Joint Center on Political and Economic Studies, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank.

"The simple part is knowing what the calculations are that you're going to be looking for—the vice president has to be someone who is qualified to be president if something happens," he said. "But it's not like there's a checklist that you can go down and check off."

Especially since the rubric used to guide the choice of running mates seemed to have changed given the almost universal disenchantment caused by the two-term Bush administration; the war on terrorism; the historical overtones of a race in which a woman and an African-American both stood good chances of piercing the ultimate glass ceiling but mostly, analysts say, because of shifting population and, therefore, voter demographics.

For Obama, the stakes will be especially high. Still seen by voters as an enigmatic candidate with limited Washington experience, the senator's choice of a running mate will be used to gauge his decision-making process and partly define his candidacy.

"[That choice] tells us a great deal about the candidate—his judgment and what values are important to him," said Larry Sabato, director of the University of



Sen. Obama's most important decision in the near future will be choosing a Vice Presidential Nominee from a crowded short list.

Virginia's Center for Politics.

Obama's signature message of change and a post-partisanship White House will be best served by picking someone such as Republican Sen. Chuck Hagel, said political analyst Ronald Walters.

"He's a moderate Republican senator who is leaving and who has been at odds with his party for most of the time that he's been in Congress," Walters explained. "He's likely to bring along some Republicans and independents and would strengthen Obama's point about being bi-partisan."

But before Obama makes nice across the aisle, he'll have to consider how to bring unity back to a party that has been divided by his sometimes acrimonious contest with Sen. Hillary Clinton.

According to one participant in a Tuesday afternoon conference call among Clinton and members of the New York congressional delegation, she was asked whether she would become Obama's running mate and Clinton reportedly replied, "I am open to it." Clinton has announced she would suspend her campaign and endorse her erstwhile rival on Saturday.

Democratic leaders, pundits and voters have long advocated a shared ticket as a sure-to-win combination that will repair a breach formed between women, White working-class and older voters, who support Clinton and the African-Americans, college graduates and young voters who side with Obama.

"If it works out that Sen. Obama is the nominee, the strongest ticket would be Sen. Clinton as vice president. No question in my mind, because the constituencies in the votes are different," California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Clin-

ton supporter, told the New York Post. "The weight of the states he carried versus the states she carried it's different. And, therefore, if you combine them both, you've got the best electoral path."

Not everyone agrees. Detractors say Clinton would bring more liabilities to Obama's campaign than assets. Not only would she not fit into Obama's theme of change, there would also be the political baggage of Bill.

"I'm not crazy about an Obama-Clinton ticket because it brings with it the past president of the



Former New Mexico Governor and Democratic Presidential Candidate Bill Richardson could be the nation's first Latino Vice Presidential nominee

United States and that's a problem for Obama," Walters said. "The question will be, 'Whose administration is it? Is it Obama's or is it Bill Clinton's third administration?'"

Walters noted, "We've seen what he can do in this campaign. He has a lot of bodies buried in Washington and around the world. He can pick up the telephone and interfere in a way that would muddy the water about who's in control."

Generally, the president and his VP should have good chem-

istry. However, too much ill will may have developed between the two candidates, some say.

"I don't see it. They have too much anger between them, particularly from Clinton to Obama. And I can't see her wanting to be submissive to anyone; I wouldn't trust her under me," said Jonathan Johnson, 43, an occupational, physical and speech therapist from Baltimore and an unaffiliated voter, who plans to vote for Obama in the fall. "I can understand the theory of it; and they will do it just to make it work. You see it in real relationships—'You're pregnant; let's get married'—but I don't think it [will be] a good marriage."

Besides, analysts said, an African-American and a woman on the same ticket may be asking for too much sudden change.

"It has to be a White man," Bositis said. "Barack Obama is the first African-American who can



Popular Virginia Governor Tim Kane

potentially break the mold. But, I don't think [the party will] take the radical step to have no White man on the ticket. The question is which White man?"

Sabato said Obama has to pick someone who complements him in geography, age and experience.

"For Obama, that is someone with gray hair and someone who understands Washington, especially military strategy and foreign policy because that's going to be what McCain uses against him," he said.

Some foreign policy experts bandied about as potential candidates are former Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd and Delaware Sen. Joe Biden. Obama could also consider prominent supporters such as 2004 vice presidential nominee John Edwards and former Sen. Tom Daschle of South Dakota. And for geography, Obama could turn to governors, including Arizona's Janet Napolitano, New Mexico's Bill Richardson, Tim Kaine of Virginia and Kansas' Kathleen Sebelius.

Bositis does not buy into the gray hair qualification.

"[Obama] represents a new generation," Bositis said. "He's not going to pick someone who's a hundred years old," Bositis said. "Picking some old guy is not going to contribute to the future of the Democratic Party."

Virginia Sen. Jim Webb, a Republican-turned Democrat, gets Bositis' vote.

"He has a distinguished military career; he has executive experience, which Obama lacks, since he was President [Ronald] Reagan's secretary of the Navy. He is very intellectual, he will help Obama win Virginia, which Democrats have not won since Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and he will strongly appeal to White working-class voters," Bositis explained.

This week the senator appointed a three-person team to help in his search for a running mate, a team that includes former first daughter Caroline Kennedy, former Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder and former Fannie Mae CEO and Washington bigwig Jim Johnson, who performed the same duty for Democratic nominees Walter Mondale in 1984 and John Kerry in 2004.

Republican candidate John McCain has a leg up on his Democratic rival, having launched his efforts since the GOP primary ended in early March. He, too, is said to be looking at governors:

Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, and Charlie Crist of Florida.

More than in the past, selecting a running mate could be Obama's defining moment. Bositis said,

"If he picks the right vice president, Obama is very well positioned to win this election."

Youth Change Campaign Culminates With Food, Fun and Philanthropy

New Orleans, LA—The atmosphere was electric; akin to a modern-day presidential rally. This event, however, was focused on “change” in the New Orleans community, not America’s political scene. And the stars were middle

the national anthem, providing musical and theatrical entertainment, and capturing the event in photos.

Members of the GYAF’s Youth Advisory Board also added to the \$10,000 in funding they have

Campaign serves as a great support in replenishing our Fund and helping us to create “change” in our community,” said 15-year-old Bryanna Cooper, a Gulf South Youth Action Fund Youth Advisory

Board member.

The Youth Change Campaign is comprised of a Coin Collection Drive and an Awards Dinner. The Coin Collection Drive kicked off March 31 and ran through Satur-

day, May 31. Area schools, community organizations and businesses alike pledged to fill coin bags to support this worthwhile endeavor.



Dr. Kyshun Webster, founder of the Gulf South Youth Action Fund and CEO of Operation REACH, Inc. presents Kayla Allain with a check for \$2,000 as Lolita Burrell, founder of Kids for Community, Inc. looks on. Kayla was selected as the “Change Maker of the Year” during the Youth Change Campaign Awards Dinner on Saturday, May 31 at Xavier University. The donation will be made to Kids for Community in her name. Photo courtesy of Madania Graves.

and high school age youth from different cultural, religious, racial and socio-economic backgrounds, not presidential hopefuls. The one commonality the national and local events share, however, is “change.” The young leaders and philanthropists gathered on Saturday, May 31 at Xavier University of Louisiana for the Youth Change Campaign Awards Dinner to proclaim to all that would listen that youth can “change” the world. The Gulf South Youth Action Fund’s (GYAF) Youth Advisory Board hosted the inaugural Youth Change Campaign Awards Dinner honoring outstanding middle and high school students and featured the “Change Maker Awards,” which highlighted individual youth who have shown exemplary leadership in projects related to the recovery of this region.

“I believe the Youth Change Campaign serves as a great support in replenishing our Fund,” said 15-year-old Bryanna Cooper, a Gulf South Youth Action Fund Youth Advisory Board member.

Area youth actively participated in all aspects of the energetic evening, serving as event hosts, offering the invocation, singing

already awarded to area youth-led organizations—including Youth Rebuilding New Orleans, the Warren Easton Fundamental Senior High School’s Interact Club and the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association—by giving away an additional \$2,500 during the event.

Kayla Allain was selected as the “Change Maker of the Year”; she will receive \$2,000 to be awarded to Kids for Community. The runner-up, Patrick Dale, will receive \$500 to be awarded to Youth Rebuilding New Orleans. Multi-millionaire and author Ephren W. Taylor II served as the guest speaker for the event. At the age of 12, Taylor started his first business venture by making and selling video games to classmates. At 16, he launched GoFerretGo.com, a multi-million dollar internet based business that linked high school and college students to prospective employers. As CEO of City Capital Corporation, he is the youngest African-American CEO of any publicly traded company. He is also a successful author, inspirational speaker, radio show host and socially conscious financial entrepreneur.

“I believe the Youth Change

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Councilman's James Carter Brings Together Community, Civic And Corporate Leaders For Community Cleanup

By Edwin Buggage

In the recovery of the city of New Orleans community groups from around the country have come to take part in several community service projects and have been the engines that has kept the city moving where sometimes government led initiatives because of bureaucracy and miscommunication have failed to deliver. But on Saturday May 31, New Orleans City Councilman James Carter did something that hopefully can reverse that trend.

In conjunction with the Algiers Economic Development Foundation, Coca Cola, Rainey's Restaurant and Catering, S. Ross Foundation, Tunisburg Homeowners Association, O. Perry Walker Senior High School, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc Sigma Lambda Chapter, New Orleans Black Film Festival, Urban League of Greater New Orleans Young Professionals, and Red and Blue Consulting, LLC held a community clean-up in the Algiers neighborhood of Tunisburg. "This event can perhaps be the beginning of creating strategic partnerships to



Volunteers from various civic organizations, fraternities, sororities and community groups joined in the clean-up effort.



Cleaning up after the clean-up made the day a success, and volunteers proud of a job well done.


help communities and foster relationships where people working together for the greater good of the city as the struggles to recover and where the sharing of resources planting the seeds of cooperation where the city can eventually recover and prosper," says Telly Madina, the event organizer.

Madina says that the partnership began when he reached out to Councilman Carter who was already in the process of looking to do a public service project, so Madina volunteered to work with the councilman on this project. Coordinating the clean-up together they both pooled their resources bringing together diverse groups of people to get this project off the ground. He feels it is essential that people get involved in helping rebuild communities, and hope in the city.



Clean-up volunteers pause a moment to be photographed with Councilman James Carter (far right)

Madina who has also worked in government and in the private sector feels that this type of partnerships, between corporate, community and elected leaders is what will move the city forward. "I think sometimes citizens spend a lot of times bashing politicians about what's not being done, but I think we need to sometimes reach out them and say let's work together and get something done, and that what we've done with this project and we hope to continue to do so in the near future."




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Playground Booster Clubs Receive Donations

NEW ORLEANS – Three District 2 Booster Clubs recently received generous donations that will help them maintain youth programs. The Sam Bonart, Goretti and Kenilworth Booster Clubs have received donations of more than \$70,000, which included equipment and uniforms, as well as funds to make renovations and replace damaged concession stands.

Senator Ann Duplessis and the District 2 Community Enhancement Corporation presented donations on April 19, 2008, during two events.

The first event was an open house for the newly renovated, fully furnished concession area at the Goretti Playground, 7760 Benson St.

The second one was a ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening of the concession area at the Kenilworth Playground, 6800 Curran Road.

“One of the best things we can do is offer the community a place for children to participate in educational and recreational activities,” said Tiffany Crawford, president of the District 2 Community Enhancement Corporation.

“Providing for wholesome extra-curricular activities for our children exemplifies the community’s commitment to a positive future for our youth,” Senator Duplessis said.

The grand opening for Sam Bonart’s concession stand and storage facility will be held in the near future.

Cedric Richmond Announces Candidacy for Congress



State Representative Cedric Richmond (D) New Orleans, speaks at a recent press conference. Richmond will announce his candidacy for US House of Representatives.

State Representative Cedric Richmond is scheduled to announce his Democratic candidacy for US Representative for the 2nd Congressional District in this fall’s election. In a statement Richmond said, “Nearly 33 months ago President Bush stood in Jackson Square and promised that this country would do whatever necessary to re-build our great city and provide flood protection for the region. Today, that promise remains unfulfilled. Whether it is a president distracted by the war or partisan politics in Congress, Washington has not fulfilled its obligation to the citizens of our region. So, after much deliberation and prayer, I have decided to run for the United States House of Representatives in Louisiana’s 2nd Congressional District.”

Richmond will officially launch his candidacy on June 11th.

Presidential Award winner to hold math and science camp for elementary school students

students

NEW ORLEANS, LA – Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) professor, Dr. Joe Omojola will launch his Mathematics and Science Kamp for Beginners on June 23rd. It will be held until July 11th on the SUNO Lake Campus at 6801 Press Drive. The camp is free to students from 3rd, 4th and 5th.

The Kamp is a hands-on math and science program. Dr. Omojola, a recipient of the 2006 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM), included the idea of the camp as a part of his proposal for the award. PAESMEM is awarded by the National Science Foundation. The program aims to increase the interest of urban elementary school students in science and math. Kamp hours are 9:30 am to 1:00 pm daily. Students would be engaged in hands-on science and math activities throughout the day with a 30 minute lunch break at the end of each day’s activities. All materials and lunch will be provided and each student will be given a

free T-Shirt.

Parents may pick up applications materials from the SUNO Lake Campus in building 40. The deadline to receive applications is by 5 p.m. on June 10th and space is limited! Completed applications are to be faxed to (504) 284-5475.

For more information call (504) 286-5096 or e-mail jomojola@suno.edu.



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Data Around Town

The Greater New Orleans Urban League Young Professionals recently held a social networking mixer at the Ashe Cultural Center. It was a night that featured, food, art, music and a wine tasting give by sommelier Brian Perkins.



Danielle Garret YP Social & Cultural Committee Chair



Councilman James Carter at Urban League Young Professionals Event



YP members Danielle Wright & Kasley Hampton observing Art on Display at Ashe Cultural Center



YP Members enjoying wine tasting



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The Audacity of Hope

Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream

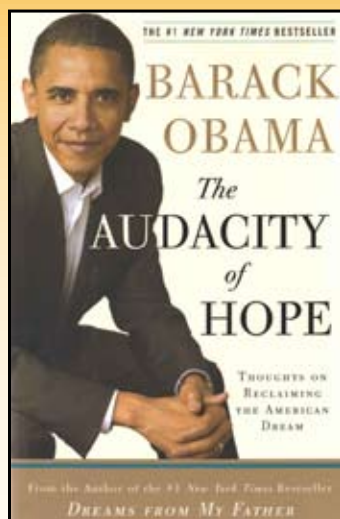
by Barack Obama

By Cheryl Mainor

Barack Obama, the junior senator from Illinois and the Democratic Party's Nominee for President, is that rare politician who can actually write — and write movingly and genuinely about himself.

And though the nation has watched the primary which extended for 16 long months, the majority of Americans have not taken the time to read this excellent book, which gives candid and in depth insight into the mind of the man who would be President. An opportunity to do so, exists, in this his second book "The Audacity of Hope"

His 1995 memoir, "Dreams From My Father," written before he entered politics, provided a



revealing, introspective account of his efforts to trace his family's tangled roots and his attempts to come to terms with his absent father, who left home when he was still a toddler. That book did an evocative job of conjuring the author's multicultural childhood: his father was from Kenya, his mother was from Kansas, with Barack growing up in Hawaii and Indonesia.

And it was equally candid about his youthful struggles: pot, booze and "maybe a little blow," he wrote, could "push questions of who I was out of my mind," flatten "out the landscape of my heart, blur the edges of my memory." Most memorably, the book gave the reader a heartfelt sense of what it was like to grow up in the 1960's and 70's, straddling America's color lines: the sense of knowing two worlds and belonging to neither, the sense of having to forge an identity of his own.

Sen. Obama's second book, "The Audacity of Hope" — the phrase comes from his 2004 Democratic Convention keynote address, which made him the party's rising young hope — is much more of a political document. Portions of the volume read like outtakes from a stump speech, and the bulk of it is devoted to laying out Mr. Obama's policy positions on a host of issues, from education to health

care to the war in Iraq.

Reporters and politicians continually use the word authenticity to describe Mr. Obama, pointing to his ability to come across to voters as a regular person, not a prepackaged pol. And in these pages he often speaks to the reader as if he were an old friend from back in the day, salting policy recommendations with colorful asides about the absurdities of political life.

He recalls a meet-and-greet encounter at the White House with George W. Bush, who warmly shook his hand, then "turned to an aide nearby, who squirted a big dollop of hand sanitizer in the president's hand." ("Good stuff," he quotes the president as saying, as he offered his guest some. "Keeps you from getting colds.") And he recounts a trip he took through Illinois with an aide, who scolded him for asking for Dijon mustard at a T.G.I. Friday's, worried the senator would come across

as an elitist; the confused waitress, he adds, simply said: "We got Dijon if you want it."

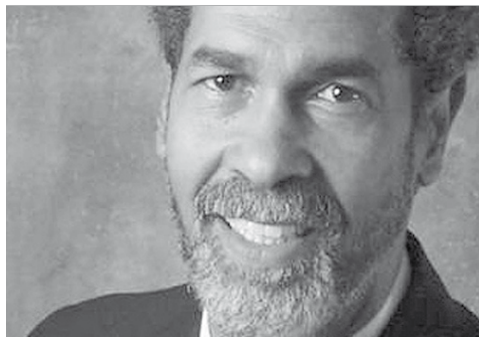
In his 2004 keynote address then State Senator Obama spoke of the common ground Americans share: "There is not a Black America and White America and Latino America and Asian America — there's the United States of America." And the same message — rooted in his own youthful efforts to grapple with racial stereotypes, racial loyalty and class resentments — threads its way through the pages of this book. Despite the red state-blue state divide, despite racial, religious and economic divisions, Obama writes, "we are becoming more, not less, alike" beneath the surface: "Most Republican strongholds are 40 percent Democrat, and vice versa. The political labels of liberal and conservative rarely track people's personal attributes."

This volume does not possess the searching candor of the au-

Continued page 14.

Opinion

The Silverbacks – Today I felt Love



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

Today I felt love, multiplied by the number of our Silverbacks in training and returned with a previously undemonstrated humility and sincerity and control. Today was perhaps our last Silverback session of this school year but I'm still looking forward to awards day at Murray Henderson when our boys get to shout their pledge in public, before teachers, family and younger students for the first time. But on today they spontaneously demonstrated the sum of the positive behaviors and attitudes we strove to inspire in them.

I was alone today because Pastor Wardsworth is seriously ill, so I ask for all of you to pray for my partner in this first Silverback effort at Murray Henderson Elementary. We have high hopes for this young pastor's leadership in both the pulpit and the community at large, so we pray for his speedy and complete recovery. We so enjoy laboring in the vineyard with this brother.

The boys, prompted by a couple of lady teachers, presented Pastor, myself and Jimmy Woods of Metro Disposal with letters of gratitude signed by all our boys, Pastor and I for our training and mentorship, and Jimmy Woods for agreeing to pay half the cost of their Eight Grade Boy's Trip to Atlanta (they raised the other half). Jimmy is a funny kind of guy. I'm begging him to come and take a picture making his donation so I can acknowledge his company on our web site, www.silverbacksociety.com, but I can't get him to commit to come by the school for the photo op. But then, when I approached Jimmy about the contribution, I was committed to picking up a part of the request myself, but he insisted on supplying the entire amount, stating that since Pastor and I were doing the hands on work, he wanted to provide the funding.

Jimmy's enthusiastic support and other experiences of this first year of the Silverback Society have helped us realize that there are four main opportunities for participation in the movement.

The first category will be the Site Mentors, two men per site who dedicate themselves to working with the eight grade boys at a specific school. These must be men who can commit to and show up for an hour or so, once each week, week after week. Pastor and I did a pretty good job of making sure at least one of us showed up to be with the boys during "Silverback Time". We really believe that keeping this ongoing commitment was essential to the boys trusting us, our message and our intentions. We as Silverbacks can never let our boys down. The Site Mentor role is the most challenging, but so is it the most rewarding.

The next category will be Role Models, men who have achieved and who are proud of what they can do for their families. These men will be scheduled to rotate through the different Silverback sites, bringing their success stories and their enjoyment of successful living to inspire and educate the boys about their own possibilities. We will provide training and guidelines for their presentations so no need to worry about figuring what you need to do as a Role Model.

A third category that Jimmie has inspired will be Angels, men or women who's schedules are extremely challenging but because the rewards are great they are willing to subsidize a Silverback site or several sites to the tune of two or three thousand dollars a year, as Jimmy Woods did to help the eight grade boys have a chaperoned journey to Atlanta. The trip is not a "Silverback" trip, but the Silverbacks helped make something good happen for the boys by collaborating with and supporting the teachers and administrators in their efforts for the boys, the village in action.

A fourth and important group of Silverbacks will be Advocates, men or women of influence who will lend that influence to helping a deserving Silverback in training get some help when he needs it, a break. Perhaps it is speaking up for a kid to get a job, or working with authorities to make sure a mistake or misunderstanding doesn't become a pathway to a life of incarceration or crime, or perhaps being willing to introduce a Silverback in training to an opportunity that only comes when "you know somebody".

The Silverback Society will be based on honor and honesty and common cause, and will be carried by the willingness of adults of capacity and means to see their self interest in influencing boys to take themselves and the looming challenge of high school seriously as their bridge between childhood and adult responsibility. We know that doing well in high school will open their eyes to even more opportu-

Continued page 14

In The Spirit

"No More Drama"



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Relationships

Folks, you need to get rid of all that drama. Yes I said it, so many of you have so much drama in your relationship that you can win an Academy Award. So many of you are acting out your feelings instead of talking about it; you are at war with one another and living in the same house. Some of you have started World War III right amongst yourselves. Come on people; get rid of all that drama.

Many of you that are in relationships, have so much drama going on, you can start your own soap opera. For instance, here we go again, "The Young and the Screaming," or "The Bold and the get out of my Face." Come on, let me ask you this question, and be honest with yourself; aren't you tired of all that craziness in your relationships. Look folks, life is too beautiful and wonderful to be always miserable.

Ask yourself this, "Can the drama stop in my relationship?" Let me encourage you, it can stop if you want it to stop. Folks, do you remember the song that Mary J. Blige wrote; "No more drama?" However, she was really referring to her personal life. She had failed relationships that made her life miserable. Mary J. Said that she had gotten to a point in her life that she didn't like herself. You would have thought that the queen of Hip-Hop had it going on.

Mary was successful with hit records, good living, but yet she was still unhappy in her relationship. Mary made a decision to get out of her abusive relationship. Mary recorded a hit record called "No more

Drama," that was very popular. It had an important message to people young and not so young to get out of an abusive relationship. There may be some of you that are in an abusive relationship, and its draining you emotionally and spiritually. Maybe some of you may be in an abusive relationship, where there's too much drama and you are screaming at each other instead of talking to one another. If you're not screaming, then give the other person time to hear you out, instead of getting angry at what they are saying and running out of the house or the apartment with an attitude.

Come on folks, you know I'm right. That's drama, I mean big time drama. What about when one person says that they are going out tonight, and the other person asks you let's go out together and you say no, but you come back into the house almost the next morning. Hey family, you know that's not right. There's a quote in the Bible that says "To do unto others, as you would like for them to do unto you." There must be a level of respect in a relationship to survive and be healthy.

For some of you, who like to fight and hurt one another, guess what; it doesn't solve anything. It only makes matters worse. Anyway, if you love that person, you won't give that person a black eye, or a broken nose, or send them to the hospital or worse. Everyone gets angry from time to time, but you have to restrain yourself. Look folks, some of you may have to make a decision to end your relationships with one another, but its something that may have to be done.

It won't be the end of the world, because you can find happiness again if you have faith in God. On the other hand, those relationships that are not to far gone can be salvaged and saved if you get rid of the drama, and work together on fixing your love life. Try talking more, because when you talk more you can learn to understand one another better. So remember folks, get rid of all that drama. God Bless you.

For questions or comments Dr. Harold can be reached at 504.813.5767 or rharold1@cox.net



Barack Obama's Historical Moment



Edwin Buggage
Data Editor

As Barack Obama took the stage as the nominee of the Democratic Party many hearts raced with anticipation of what was in deed an historical moment. It was a day of resolve as this country which has long

wrestled with the thorny issue of race nominated an African-American for the nation's highest elected office.

Someone who when the founding fathers of this nation came together debated the humanity of people of African descent eventually coming up with the 3/5's compromise today have chosen an African-American. A man whose parents upon getting married and giving birth to him were breaking the law in many southern states; and today the product of that union stands as a symbol for what a nation can become if can look past one's race and where individual initiative can trump social and economic obstacles.

Today those who struggled for the rights for people to live with human dignity must be smiling as the historical clock has turned a few degrees away from the tumultuous days where racial strife threatened to tear the country apart. Today is a day where we

have turned the page on a sad racial history and a new chapter may begin in the story of race relations in America. Today Barack Obama stands as the fulfillment of the proposition Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. posed on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and stands a heartbeat away from the highest seat in the land.

In accomplishing this it is more is than just a racial hurdle that has been overcome, but it is also a David vs. Goliath moment where Obama triumphed over what would easily be called the most dynamic Democratic dynasty since J.F.K excited the electorate in 1960 in Hillary and former President Bill Clinton. Obama in his victory pulled a rope-a-dope in the biggest fight of his political life and in the words of Muhammad Ali when he beat Sonny Liston; Obama shocked the world.

As supporters roared with approval in

this historical moment Obama whose oratory gifts are unmatched gave a gracious acceptance speech, but given the magnitude of the occasion Obama missed a golden opportunity in maximizing the moment by mainly staying on script and sticking to his talking points. For this was a snapshot of an amazing time in American history, but his words that should have cut to soul of a nation redefining itself lacked the intensity and urgency of our zeitgeist.

His victory is symbolic of what American can become if it can cast itself in a new role and put its past behind. One in which America can become a place where people can be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. For today it seems America is getting closer to that day, for today is not just a proud day for the Obama campaign, but for those who truly believe in the American Dream.

Ooops!

Even with our best efforts, at times, we get it wrong. Our apologies go out to our photo subjects when we inadvertently make a mistake in a caption, and we will attempt to right the mistake by re-running the corrected photo.

Again, our apologies and thanks to our readers who take the time out to let us know! It keeps us on our toes and makes us better for it.

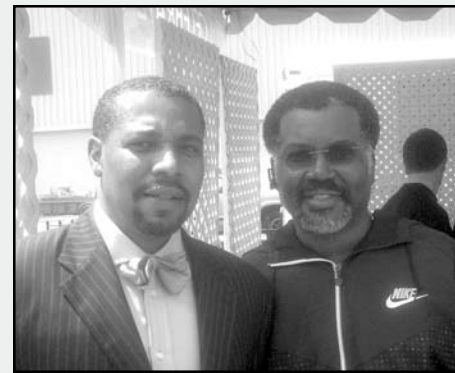
— Data News Editorial Dept.



Entergy New Orleans CEO Rod West was co-host of the prestigious Weiss Award. The caption incorrectly ran in the May 24, 2008 issue of Data News Weekly. Our apologies go to Mr. West.



New Orleans head of Intergovernmental Affairs Kenya Smith presents an award at the Weiss Awards. The photo ran with an incorrect caption in the May 24, 2008 issue. Our apologies go to Mr. Smith.



Orson C. Porter, Nike's Deputy Director of Government Affairs and Glalen Banks. This photo ran in the May 3, 2008 issue's story on Nike's Store's Grand Opening. Mr. Bank's name was spelled incorrectly. Our apologies to Mr. Banks.

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MAAFA:
The Road and Beyond: The Struggle and Healing

All Democrats Have "Lots of Work To Do"



Ron Walters
Data Columnist

Now that Barack Obama has cinched the Democratic nomination, the pundits seem determined to make it difficult for him by showing how impossible the odds are that he can be elected President of the United States.

Their favorite line that Obama has "lots of work to do" is generally designed to point out problems he has had in the primary election season with certain states such as Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia and others, or certain parts of the Democratic electorate like White women, Hispanics, the elderly or blue collar Whites.

But the fact is just as true, that if all Democrats truly want change, they also have "a

lot of work to do" in accepting the fact that Obama is now the nominee of their party and work hard to elect him. No doubt, Obama has a heavy task of campaigning to win the Presidency, but to make that task outlandishly difficult by serving up myth is ridiculous.

One such myth is that a sizeable portion of those voters won by Hillary Clinton who are disaffected that she did not win will go toward John McCain.

However, history has shown that most voters usually coalesce behind the party candidate, except where the alienation was as deep as it was with George Wallace in 1968 or Ross Perot in 1992.

But when Hillary finally ceded the nomination, in truth, she could not cede the constituencies that she won to anyone because she does not own them. They are free agents to decide what choices to make between Obama and John McCain and even though there is some disaffection among 10-20% of her female base, time usually heals the strength of their initial opposition.

There is the myth that states won by certain eventual nominees in the primary election bear a direct relationship to what may happen in the general election.

In truth, Obama like any Democrat would probably win New York or California, and Michigan and Pennsylvania have gone

Democrat the last four elections. Even New Mexico has voted for Democrats three of the last four elections and yes, Obama has his "work to do" in reaching out more forcefully to Hispanics in states such as Nevada and New Mexico, but he also has powerful surrogates in Governor Bill Richardson and the Los Angeles Mayor, Tony Vilargosa, who has recently endorsed him, and other prominent Hispanic leaders.

Another myth is that the head-to-head polls taken in the primary season hold up in the General election. This was true of few of the candidates in the last 40 years because candidates who affect the polls drop of the race – like Hillary Clinton – and things happen in the General election that affect the standing between the candidates. In 1992, even Bill Clinton was seldom in the radar screen to win during the primary, because the General election has its own political culture.

The big problem is that those who do not now or will not eventually accept Barack Obama as their nominee seem to be privileging opposition to his race, his gender, or his untraditional credentials, over their own self interests. I would argue that on the face of it, they would seem to have a much greater interest in supporting a candidate who can lead America, with the dexterity and intelligence that Obama has illustrated in this election, to address the

monumental problems facing this country.

The danger is that their opposition may cause the country to miss this moment to invest in Barack Obama the authority to pursue the tremendous opportunity at hand: to pass the baton of leadership to a new generation, to finally fix health care and make achieve universal coverage, to wind down an illegal war costing precious final and human resources in the midst of an economy in full tailspin, to get a handle on why resources are not flowing to fix the Katrina hurricane disaster and to stop the banks from taking people's homes. This should make many of the objections to his presence appear small in comparison. So, voters have "lots of work to do" in changing their perceptions.

Already the news of Barack Obama's nomination victory has excited global interests and begun to change the perception of many abroad that perhaps the negative slide in America's image is over. Is this something Americans want to stop? I think not, but if not, then all Americans have a "lot of work to do."

Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the Africa 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 of Michigan Press).

Secret Spiritual Police Should Protect Obama from Offending Preachers

By. Dr. Barbara Reynolds

From now on in his campaign or if he wins the White House, Senator Barack Obama should not set foot in a Black church, except those anointed by the prelates and potentates of CNN or Fox News.

Finally the dangerous media magpies have written the final script for the senator to dislodge himself from Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, whose former pastor Jeremiah Wright has performed his wedding, baptized his children and provided the inspiration for his best-selling book, *The Audacity of Hope*.

The media have given their approval to the Pastor Joel Osteen kind of cotton-candy religion and the mega-church "claim it and grab it" crowd. But those disciplines or denominations that preach truth to power and crusade against oppression and corporate evil are denounced or set

up for divide-and-conquer tactics.

And the tragedy of it all is that church leaders who are saying nothing as this demonic act plays out will not be protected by their silence or reluctance to get involved. Sooner or later the censorship will touch them too.

First, corporate media crucified Wright through selective out-of-context video snippets that initiated the first breach between Wright and Obama. And now media fits over the controversial priest Rev. Michael L. Pfleger's rant against White privilege and mocking Sen. Hillary Clinton from Trinity's pulpit provided the final act for Obama to exit his church of 20 years.

Never have I seen such violation of the First Amendment doctrine of separation of church and state, which until now media establishments held sacred.

Presently things have deteriorated to a point— unless church leaders stand up to this outrage—

that the only way for Obama to avoid future scandal is for his advance people to get letters of acceptable churches from the media papacy.

In a similar fashion of how Secret Service police sweep the church to protect candidates from harm, Secret Spiritual police should sweep the church for any harmful, provocative, controversial literature, including Biblical references and interview pastors to ensure no sermons, remarks, prayers, hymns that could be disrespectful to the ruling elites would be uttered in their hallowed sanctuaries.

Furthermore—and it will surely come to pass—Obama's advance people should also get a list of those black groups that are uncontrollable and therefore unacceptable to mainstream media— besides the Nation of Islam, so Obama can avoid them too.

I have been a reporter, editor and executive in mainstream

newsrooms for more than 30 years and I well understand their core values are the protection of white power, property and privilege. Anyone who poses a threat to those values is in grave danger of character assassination at the very least.

In 1967 after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out against the View War and addressed the evils of American imperialism, militarism, and capitalism the media and their cohorts savaged him. He was banned from Lyndon Johnson's White House. The New York Times condemned his speech and U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater condemned King as treasonous.

Today, "divide and conquer" tactics are winning in the trumped up separation of Obama from Wright. It is a warning that Obama had better run from any association with progressive ideals that may harm white core values and that Obama must always

prove he is white enough if he wants to gain the presidency and stay there.

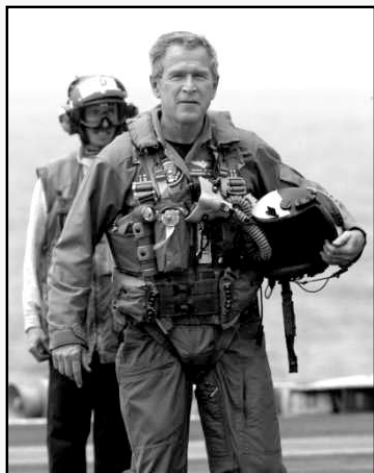
In my association with Wright, both in public and in private, I have never heard Wright say anything negative about Sen. Obama. In fact I first met the Senator through Wright's group, the Samuel Proctor Conference, a network for social justice, which Wright organized.

I am disgusted by the mis-characterization of members of Trinity as some crazy cult, when they are dedicated churchgoers who work tirelessly to help Katrina victims and to give help and hope in their communities and the nation.

Now because of negative press, Wright and Trinity Church are receiving bomb threats and Trinity churchgoers are being harassed. Why isn't the press investigating who or what is behind the threats and attempted silencing of Wright,

Continued page 14

Notable Quotables

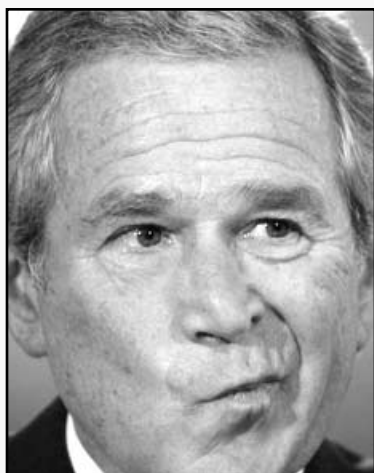


“As you know, my position is clear – I’m the Commander Guy.”

– **George W. Bush**, the president formerly known as “The Decider”

“The federal government and the state government must not fear programs who change lives, but must welcome those faith-based programs for the embetterment of mankind.”

– **George W. Bush**,
Stockton, Calif., Aug. 23, 2002

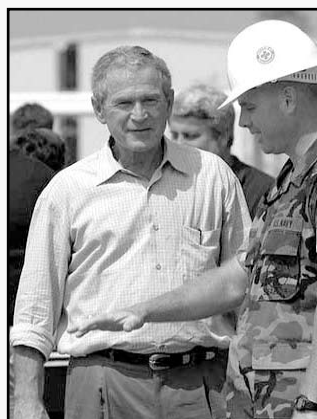


“As yesterday’s positive report card shows, childrens do learn when standards are high and results are measured.”

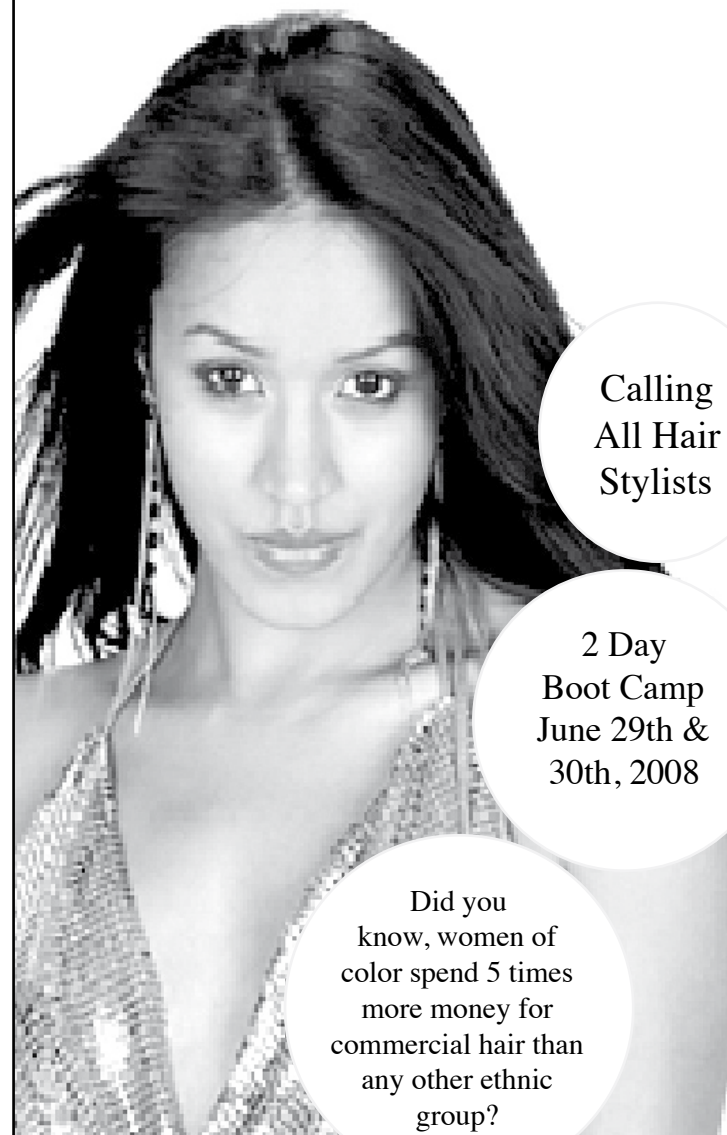
– **George W. Bush**,
on the No Child Left Behind Act,
Washington, D.C., Sept. 26, 2007

“I’m a strong proponent of the restoration of the wetlands, for a lot of reasons. There’s a practical reason, though, when it comes to hurricanes: The stronger the wetlands, the more likely the damage of the hurricane.”

– **George W. Bush**,
New Orleans, March 1, 2007



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Founding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities Celebrated

(NNPA) - The first digital collection of documents and materials chronicling the founding of America's historically Black colleges and universities is now available online at contentdm.auctr.edu.

"A Digital Collection Celebrating the Founding of the Historically Black College and University" includes more than 1,000 scanned photographs, manuscripts, letters and publications from 10 institutions designated as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

The project, which was funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, represents the first collab-



orative effort by HBCU libraries to make a historical collection digitally available. The online collection, which is hosted by the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center, is the product of a partnership between the HBCU Library Alli-

ance, HBCU institutions, the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET) and Cornell University.

The contents of the collection date back to the early 1800s and include campus charters, student yearbooks, early campus architectural drawings, and a rich assortment of

photographs featuring first presidents, graduating classes, famous alumni and churches, which often served as the first classrooms at several of these institutions.

"This is an excellent resource for scholars and others interested in understanding the importance

of institutions of higher learning founded by African-Americans. It offers direct access to original documents and images chronicling the story of these institutions, which are usually only available to researchers by travel to the institutions themselves," said Dorothy Autrey, chair of the history and political science department at Alabama State University.

"The HBCU digital library collection opens the door to an area of the African-American experience, which can now receive the study and attention it deserves — the amazing contributions of historically black colleges and universities in the general struggle of a

people for freedom and equality."

The online collection features materials from Alabama State University, Atlanta University Center, Bennett College for Women, Fisk University, Grambling State University, Hampton University, Southern University, Tuskegee University, Tennessee State University and Virginia State University.

To view materials from the collection, go to contentdm.auctr.edu. For more information about the partnership and the HBCU Library Alliance digital library initiative, visit www.hbculibraries.org/html/programs.html.

Commentary, Continued from page 12.

Trinity and their inspiring new leader, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, who are the most effective progressive wing of the Black church?

The media have ordained themselves a secular papacy that can dictate what is acceptable in Black churches. Getting your praise on, providing photo-ops for candidates to drive through before election, personal salvation, certain community building, fighting private sin, while ignoring public sins— they say are politically correct.

Wright hits the establishment for creating a pipeline from the cradle to the grave, where millions of blacks are being pushed into the prison industrial system and for ignoring the continued agony of those suffering from Katrina and for corporate greed. And the prelates in the secular pulpit scream, "crucify him."

So far, media elites have won the propaganda war of creating a breach between Wright and Obama, but we do not have to play their game and choose between the two leaders.

Courageous leaders like Wright helped push the doors open for the brilliant saga of Obama and it will come to pass that Obama—like LBJ needed Dr. King—will need people like Wright to say the things that he can not say.

Rev. Dr. Barbara A. Reynolds is an author of five books, a religion columnist for the National Newspapers Publishers Association and a lecturer at many colleges, including the Howard University School of Divinity.

*Data Zone,
Continued from page 9.*

thor's first book. But Sen. Obama strives in these pages to ground his policy thinking in simple common sense — be it "growing the size of our armed forces to maintain reasonable rotation schedules" or reining in spending and rethinking tax policy to bring down the nation's huge deficit — while articulating these ideas in level-headed, nonpartisan prose. That, in itself, is something unusual, not only in these venomous election days, but also in these increasingly polarized and polarizing times. Given that he has been making history, give yourself a treat, and get to know this man through his work.

*Love Dr.,
Continued from page 10.*

nity and give them the confidence to pursue it.

I don't know which or how many of these roles you want to take on, but please accept at least one and contact me at LD@LLOYDDENNIS.COM or go to www.silverbacksociety.com and click on the link to join the effort. Just as Jimmy didn't make us beg for our boys, I hope all of you will decide what you can do best for this movement. This year has convinced all of us at Murray Henderson that the boys need and benefit from the consistent attention from and the examples of men of capacity who come just because they care, and today I learned for certain that they have really learned to care about us.

I so look forward to seeing and hearing our boys on award day as, for the first time in public, they loudly declare to the world who they are and what they are about. I expect chills to run up my back and possibly a tear down my face. I'll then turn to the seventh graders and know that next year we'll do it all over again, but better because this year the eight grade boy's at Murray Henderson have really taught us how to make it work.

Its time now! We need you to signup now, so that over the Summer, we can prepare to provide Silverbacks for every Elementary school who will have us. Please, go to www.silverbacksociety.com and click on the link to join the effort and provide us with the contact info we need to keep you informed of our next steps. Please pray for Pastor Wardsworth's timely recovery. Disseminate this email as widely as you can.



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Photographed by Sean Kennedy Santos

Gas Taxes Set To Rise In Some States

By Shannon Mccaffrey

ATLANTA (AP) — All of the talk among political candidates about a federal gas tax holiday to offset soaring prices at the pump misses a critical fact: state taxes are, for the most part, even more costly for drivers.

And in some states, gas taxes are rising even higher, with a handful set to jump at the height of the summer driving season.

The average state sales tax on gasoline is 28.6 cents a gallon, according to the American Petroleum Institute. That's a dime more than the federal gasoline tax of 18.4 cents a gallon.

And while the federal rate hasn't increased since 1997, the amount drivers pay in state taxes can jump every year — or even every day — inching up as the price does.

The national average price rose Sunday to \$4 for a gallon, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service, though, drivers in many parts of the country have already been paying well above that price for some time. Gas prices are expected to keep climbing, putting greater pressure on consumers, businesses and state legislators.

Some lawmakers have talked about providing relief by suspending the gas tax, but few proposals

have gone anywhere. States rely on gas tax dollars to build and repair infrastructure. With many roads and bridges crumbling, elected officials are reluctant to give that money up.

Some warn that cutting the tax revenue — even temporarily — can deepen the woes.

"There's a need here and if we don't take care of it will only get worse," said Patrick Natale, executive director the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The roughly three dozen states that use only a flat tax on gas may face declining revenues as motorists pinched by high fuel prices try to drive less.

In the dozen or so states where the tax is tied, at least in part, to the price at the pump, the skyrocketing of gas prices has meant an unexpected windfall.

California, which has the highest gas tax in the nation according to a survey by the American Petroleum Institute, would rake in \$5 billion this year if the price at the pump remains at \$4 a gallon. That's more than double the \$2.1 billion the state took in gasoline tax revenue in 2003, state revenue officials said.

Presumptive Republican presidential nominee John McCain has said he supports a temporary halt of federal gasoline tax. His Demo-



cratic rival Barack Obama calls such a proposal a gimmick.

Still, some states have considered rolling back their state gasoline tax.

So far, only Georgia has moved to provide relief. Gov. Sonny Perdue signed an executive order halting what would have been a state tax increase of 2.9 cents per gallon beginning in July, just as many families were hitting the road for summer vacation.

Perdue, who suspended the entire Georgia tax on gasoline for a month in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, said it's unfair for the state to reap a tax windfall on the back of cash-strapped residents.

"Frankly, I don't think we can

justify raising taxes on gasoline in a time of economic stress for many families," the Republican governor said.

But the largesse has a cost: he's forfeiting roughly \$80 million at a time when the state is facing a \$1 billion shortfall in transportation projects.

Officials in Florida, New York and Missouri also have proposed gas tax holidays but they have yet to gain traction, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Others are moving in the opposite direction.

Minnesota's needs for infrastructure repair were highlighted by a bridge collapse last year that

left 13 people dead. State lawmakers summoned enough votes to override a gubernatorial veto and boost the gasoline tax by 8 1/2 cents over five years.

In Connecticut, the gross receipts tax on gasoline entering the state will rise to 7.5 percent from 7 percent on July 1. That tax on wholesalers is expected to be passed along to consumers.

Florida, North Carolina and West Virginia, Kentucky and Maine are also seeing gas tax increases this year. Nebraska could see a gas tax hike as well, state officials there said.

In California, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, the amount drivers pay in sales tax has been rising with the overall price of gas.

Adding to the problem, critics say, are the complex tax formulas some states use that automatically adjust for things like the price of gas or the consumer price index.

States should increase taxes for gasoline through their legislatures, not complicated formulas, said Phil Kerpen, director of policy for the Washington-based anti-tax group Americans for Prosperity.

"When you set tax increase on autopilot it takes away all accountability," Kerpen said.

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

ican young people up to not be successful in life."

Temple see disparities in how things are sometimes done differently in other communities, "While our White brothers and sisters a lot of times go to schools that are private that don't have the same level of accountability so they can get around that, but in our community a lot of families doesn't have the resources to send their kids to those type of schools." He admits though some things in the community have broken down and have been that way for quite some time and needs to be addressed, "Yes we do have some problems and some of it is about values, and it is on us to instill some sense of pride and a work ethic in our youngsters where they can see legitimate ways to be a success, and not enough of that isn't happening right now for so many of

our young people who turn to crime as an alternative."

The Right to Return: Who will lead when many are gone?

The rebuilding of the city is about the future and making the city better for the young people to live and prosper. Mayor Nagin talked about a city where everyone can get a piece of the economic pie, and in the future New Orleans can be transformed into a city that is less of what it has been and that is a city of have and have-nots. Nagin spoke of moving away from a Third World economic structure that existed pre-Katrina, where the city can be re-invented and revitalized to reflect a first class twenty-first century city that is progressive and forward moving and on the cutting edge.

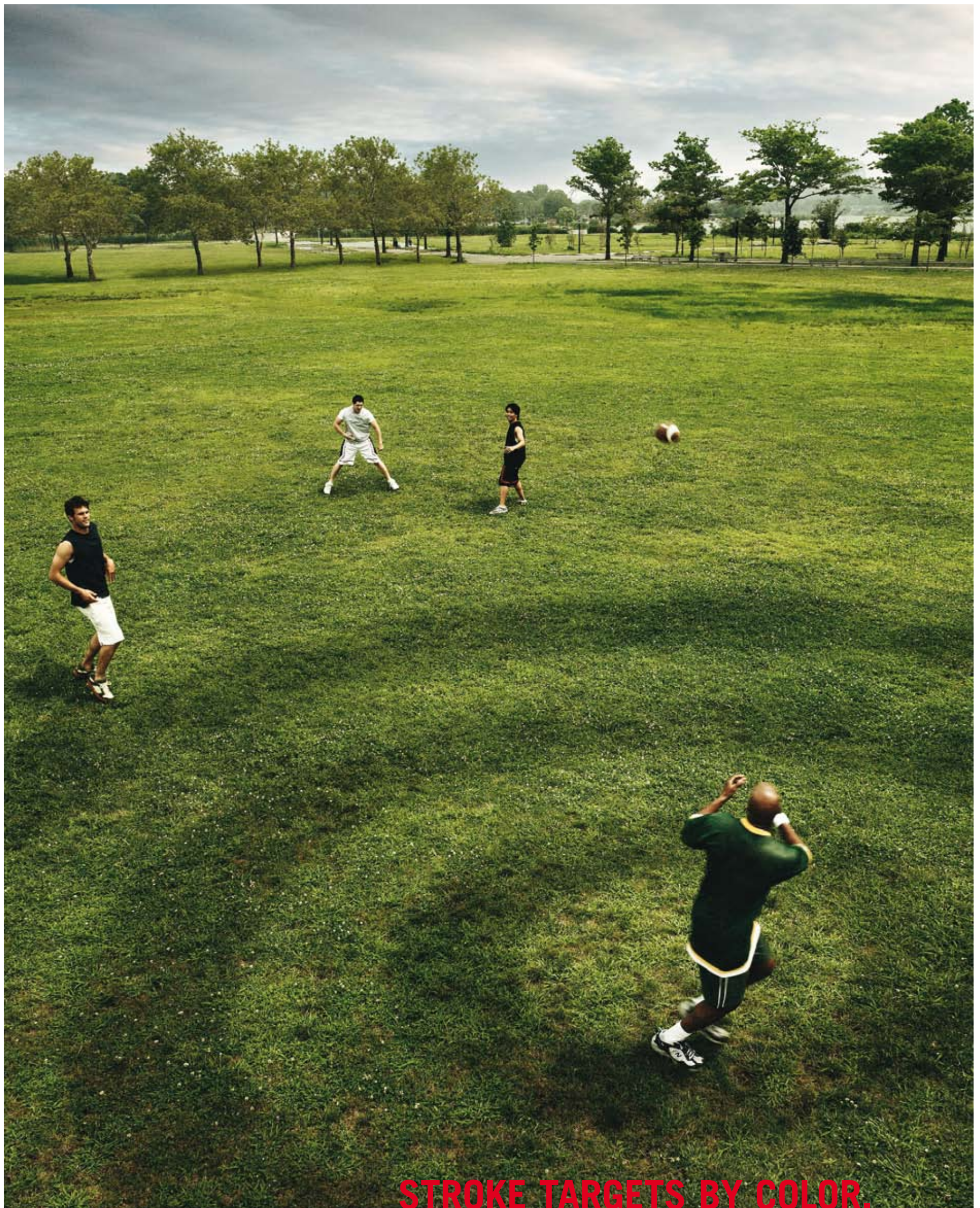
This is something that in the vision of the Mayor could be a reality as he told the audience to close their eyes and imagine what the city could possibly be. It is a grand vision, but where will those who still remain in other cities factor into this vision? Will it be just an illusion, an empty promise, or something substantive and real? This is a question asked by activist Jerome Smith, "So many of our Black children are gone, they are knocking down public housing, where will our next generation of leaders come from?" His voice rising passionately he says, "The city may come back better than what it was in some people's opinion, but what does better really mean when our black young people are gone and how do you measure it." "What would this city be without the communities where so many great people came from?"

One City... One People... One New Orleans...

Mayor Nagin's speech was filled with optimism, and hope. His words were what a city aspires to if it wants to be great. For some his words were inspirational, for some therapeutic, while for others although he talked about specific things they felt he did not speak to their hearts, wants, needs or desires. It has been nearly three years into the recovery the Mayor Nagin's who has worn a lot of hats and received a lot of battle scars during his tenure in public office, receiving his fair share of praise and criticism. In the past he has been derided as a polarizing figure by the mainstream media is now speaking of one New Orleans united moving ahead.

This is a laudable goal as we move into the future, but today the city by the mouth of the Mis-

issippi stands as a place that is two cities where poverty and prosperity continues to dance a strange tango or in this case a second line. But maybe tomorrow the city can be one New Orleans, where people from all walks of life can work together, and prosper. Where all that the things that divides citizens becomes barriers that no longer exists; where people can march away from the despair, deceit and depravity that have sometimes kept this city from being the type of city Mayor Nagin envisioned in his speech. It is today that the opportunity is there to make this a reality if it is done right. It is time to make this city a better place where citizens can get on the same page, march to the same drum and dance to the same beat and truly be one New Orleans.



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