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New Orleans

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Way Back to
Her Roots**

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U.S. Presidential Candidates Wrap Up Party Conventions as Election Day Looms Ahead



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Presidential Nominees Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. John McCain Wrap Up Party Conventions as Election Day Looms Ahead



Sen. Barack Obama along with his family and VP running mate Sen. Joe Biden and his family. Photo: Democratic National Committee

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.

With both the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention over, Senators Barack Obama and John McCain are geared up for an intense two months of campaigning before Americans cast their votes for the next United States President on Nov. 4.

The conventions were used as platforms by the nominees to showcase their supporters, families, issues, and running mates for Vice President. The Democratic National Convention took place in Denver, Colo. Aug. 25 through Aug. 28, and the Republican National Convention was held Sept. 1 through Sept. 4 in St. Paul

and Minneapolis, Minn. Highlights from both campaigns included the acceptance speeches from the Presidential nominees, and speeches from the candidates' spouses and vice presidential nominees.

The conventions were historic for both political parties. Obama became the first African-American presidential nominee representing the Democrats, and McCain's selection of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his running mate marked only the second time a female has been chosen as a Vice-Presidential nominee.

Democratic National Convention
Convention attendees and television viewers

were given a glimpse into Obama's personal and family life Tuesday, Aug. 26 when his wife Michelle delivered a heartfelt speech touching on how she and Obama met, and their personal and professional journeys together. Mrs. Obama also talked about her upbringing and her father's role in molding her into the person she is today.

"I come here tonight as a sister blessed with a brother who is my mentor, my protector and my lifelong friend. I come here as a wife who loves my husband and believes he will be an extraordinary president," said Mrs. Obama. "I come here as a mom whose girls are the heart of my heart and the center of my world. They're

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Sen. Obama accepts the Democratic Presidential Nomination. Photo: Democratic National Committee

the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning and the last thing I think about when I go to bed at night. Their future and all our children's future is my stake in this election."

Wednesday night belonged to Biden as he addressed the audience as the Democratic Vice Presidential nominee. Biden discussed the economic woes of the country, and also took advantage of the opportunity to link McCain to President George Bush.

"I've never seen a time when Washington has watched so many people get knocked down without doing anything to help them get back up," said Biden. "Almost every night, I take the train home to Wilmington, sometimes very late. As I look out the window at the homes we pass, I can almost hear what they're talking about at the kitchen table after they put the kids to bed."

Biden also used his speech to communicate his support and belief in the Obama campaign.

"Barack Obama gets it. Like many of us, Barack worked his way up. His is a great American story," said Biden. "You know, I believe the measure of a man isn't just the road he's traveled; it's the choices he's made along the way."

Thursday night, Obama accepted the Democratic nomination for President in front of a crowd of thousands at the IN-VECO Field at Mile High, home to the Denver Broncos. Obama's acceptance speech of the Democratic Presidential nomination was symbolic because Aug. 28,

2008 marked the 45th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream speech.

"Four years ago, I stood before you and told you my story - of the brief union between a young man from Kenya and a young woman from Kansas who weren't well-off or well-known, but shared a belief that in America, their son could achieve whatever he put his mind to," said Obama in his acceptance speech.

"America, we cannot turn back. Not with so much work to be done. Not with so many children to educate, and so many veterans to care for. Not with an economy to fix and cities to rebuild and farms to save," said Obama as he brought his speech



Senator Hillary Clinton. Photo: Democratic National Committee

to a close.

"Not with so many families to protect and so many lives to mend. America, we cannot turn

back. We cannot walk alone. At this moment, in this election, we must pledge once more to march into the future. Let us keep that promise - that American promise - and in the words of Scripture hold firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess."

Other notable speakers for the Democratic National Convention include but are not limited to Sen. Hillary Clinton, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Ted Kennedy, and President Bill Clinton.

with speeches and activities originally planned for the opening day of the convention, the Republicans chose to tone down the festivities.

McCain's wife, Cindy, along with First Lady Laura Bush, did address the convention crowd to discuss the importance of working together and supporting the needs of Americans during such a trying time.

"I would ask that each one of us commit to join together to aid those in need as quickly as possible. As John has been saying for

might add that in small towns, we don't quite know what to make of a candidate who lavishes praise on working people when they are listening, and then talks about how bitterly they cling to their religion and guns when those people aren't listening."

The Republican National Convention culminated with McCain's acceptance speech Thursday, Sept. 4. McCain placed emphasis on his experience, his views of the country as it is, and his commitment to change.

"We need to change the way



Michelle Obama, wife of Sen. Barack Obama, offers a look into their personal life in her speech. Photo: Democratic National Committee

Republican National Convention

The Republican National Convention began on a solemn note Monday, Sept. 1 as a show of soli-

the last several days, this is a time when we take off our Republican hats and put on our American hats," said Mrs. McCain.

Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin delivered her speech on Wednesday, Sept. 3. Palin expressed the type of leader she would be as Vice President, and also discussed her family and life in Alaska. Palin also took a jab at the media and their coverage of her and the presidential campaigns.

"But here's a little news flash for all those reporters and commentators: I'm not going to Washington to seek their good opinion - I'm going to Washington to serve the people of this country. Americans expect us to go to Washington for the right reasons, and not just to mingle with the right people," Palin said.

She also used her speech as an opportunity to poke fun of Obama's credentials.

"I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a 'community organizer,' except that you have actual responsibilities," said Palin. "I

government does almost everything: from the way we protect our security to the way we compete in the world economy; from the way we respond to disasters to the way we fuel our transportation network; from the way we train our workers to the way we educate our children," said McCain. "All these functions of government were designed before the rise of the global economy, the information technology revolution and the end of the Cold War. We have to catch up to history, and we have to change the way we do business in Washington."

The Republican National Convention also featured speeches from former Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former Gov. Mitt Romney, former Sen. Fred Thompson, Sen. Joe Lieberman, and former Gov. Tom Ridge. President George W. Bush addressed the convention via a live video feed from the White House.

Three Years Later: New Orleanians Relieved Gustav Not Another Katrina, But Still Want Levees Fixed

Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Rachel Jordan, a violin instructor at Jackson State University, has been living in her newly renovated New Orleans home for only a month now. She moved back in after extensive renovations over the past three years after storm damage by Hurricane Katrina.

Her sister, Stephanie Jordan, a jazz singer, is in the process of rebuilding her home - post Katrina - and is two months away from moving back in.

But, the sisters' lives were suddenly placed on hold again this week as on the third anniversary of Hurricane Katrina that destroyed their homes in 2005, nearly two million New Orleans residents went under a mandatory evacuation order, awaiting the outcome of Hurricane Gustav that barreled its way through the state of Louisiana this week leaving a half million homes without electricity.

"It's sort of resolute, I guess," said a somber Rachel Jordan in a telephone interview from an apartment she rents in Jackson, Miss. "I mean I just finished fixing up my house and with what's happening right now the only thing that becomes quite apparent is that if they don't have the levees that can sustain a category five hurricane then it's going to be kind of futile to try to continue to rebuild or encourage people to rebuild in the city of New Orleans."

That's the last thing that political and tourism leaders want to hear as Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin have worked hard to draw people back to the city. But, although Gustav has proven to be no Katrina in its lower level of damage, Rachel Jordan is not alone in her sentiments that completely repairing aged levees to hold back flood waters will help quell fears and perhaps limit evacuations.

Ronnie Burns, a New Orleans business and community leader, praised city, state and federal government leaders for smooth evacuation efforts this time, unlike the disastrous circumstances of three years ago when thousands stood on rooftops awaiting rescue.

But, Burns says something has got to change.



Arriving Mississippi Gulf Coast evacuees waiting to be registered with the American Red Cross at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson, Ms.

"One thing they can do is make sure that the levees are up to par. Another thing the government can do is just invest the necessary money in the city and the gulf coast region to be sure that the levees are fully checked; just to really make sure that it's tested, that it works. You would think three years later, we would know that, but we don't," said Burns, who owns the largest courier service in Louisiana and a string of parking companies that serve airports, including New Orleans International.

"What really concerns me from a business standpoint, is that it just seems like it's going to be more difficult for businesses to commit to staying in New Orleans. I mean you've got to relocate your employees and all of that. You've got to factor all of that stuff in."

The Army Corp of Engineers, responsible for rebuilding the levees, has been working to upgrade them since Katrina, but the job has not been finished. Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honore said in a CNN interview Monday that though the levees will help quell flooding, they will never be the total answer.

"You've got about 300 miles of levees. The effort after Katrina was to fix those levees that had broken," he said. "I think in many cases you'll see a bunch of improvement, but there's much left to be done. What you see is the result of a deterioration of those

levees that started 20-30 years ago. And now Katrina unfolded the vulnerabilities...But, you will never have enough levees to protect you from a category five or four hurricane. So, flooding is an obvious that will happen if you get a hurricane the size of Katrina or Gustav, you're going to get some flooding whether you have a levee or not."

By late Monday, Gustav - originally a category three hurricane - had diminished to category one, but winds had knocked over electric poles and caused other structure damage. The apparently smooth evacuation indicated that both residents and officials learned clear lessons from Katrina, which killed more than 1,400 people and wiped out thousands of homes.

Over the weekend, buses and planes transported thousands to various destinations to await what the National Weather Service predicted would be tumultuous wind and rain that could flood the below sea level city of New Orleans all over again.

Some went to shelters, including more than 42 facilities that opened doors throughout the state of Mississippi with the ability to accommodate 192,000 people, according to the Red Cross. Others crowded family, loved ones and friends into second homes or apartments on higher ground.

Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson said to his knowledge,

there has been only one glitch in the evacuation. That was when a fleet of private buses failed to show up and transportation organizers had to use public school buses as a backup to take people to shelters.

"People were far more cautious and a lot less reluctant to stay," Thompson said. He said FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) will be responsible for returning people to their homes.

"It's the burden of FEMA to make that return subject to whatever those conditions are," he said. "At some point if it's declared safe, then it's now the government's responsibility to work out a coordinated travel back home."

Burns and his wife evacuated their New Orleans home by automobile and moved into a second home in Gonzales that he had built especially for refuge from hurricanes. They are not in the home alone.

"My mother and father, my mother-in-law, my brother-in-law who showed up this morning, and my son Jason and then we have this guy [an employee] who has his wife and three children, a sister and a nephew," Burns listed. "So, you know you have a lot of people in close quarters. So you better hope that the plumbing doesn't go out and that kind of stuff."

Burns points out that regardless of the level of home damage, there are unseen and unforeseen stresses of being away from home amidst weather emergencies that also majorly impact lives.

"What people see is the devastation of people's homes. But there's a whole other scenario that goes on. You've still got to pay your bills and if you're not home, you've got the change mailing addresses. And a lot of people like school teachers, they didn't have jobs...It can be difficult to just get their lives back again, I mean to jumpstart their lives again. People are tired, they're upset about what happened the last time. A lot of people just finished their homes. So, there's a lot of things to factor in."

The pain of family separations is another unseen hurt experienced during disasters.

Vincent Sylvain is widely

known for his voter activism in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. But, he is also a single father whose daughter lives with him and turns 13 this week. He will not likely be with her on her birthday. As he went to rent a hotel room in Jackson, he put his daughter on a plane to Memphis with her mother.

"She said, 'Daddy will they have a hurricane every time my birthday comes up?'" he recalls.

Cliff Robinson, president of an internet marketing and website design company waited out the hurricane in Baton Rouge outside of New Orleans. But he sent his wife and two daughters to stay with friends in Atlanta. "My daughter is pregnant so we had to get her to an area that would not have power outages," he said.

The fact that the evacuation was more organized this time is not enough to calm fears of losing everything, in part, because of unfinished levee repairs, Robinson says.

"Ninety percent of the people would say, 'I can't believe this is happening again'. I think that would be the sentiment of most people. 'I can't believe that this is happening again,'" Robinson said. "Nobody expected to go through this - the evacuation side, much less severe damage. Nobody really expected to go through this this soon."

Meanwhile, Stephanie Jordan, who sang the national anthem at the NBA All Stars game in February, waited out the storm with a resolve that no matter what happens, she and her 11-year-old son will start over. They have moved in with her sister, Rachel, with a select few items that she could grab in the rush to evacuate.

"I took the dress that I wore to the NBA Hall, the dress and the shoes...I took a photograph of me singing there too. That was one of the memories that I took."

But, the anxiety lingers.

"With Katrina, I had eight feet of water in my house. If it floods, I'm going to go back. It's my home. I'm not going to give up, but I hate to see that kind of devastation come through so soon. We were beginning to be happy again."

Louisiana Lifts Deadlines for Most Road Home Applicants

State extends time for homeowners to make their Benefit Option Selection

BATON ROUGE, La.-The state of Louisiana is lifting deadlines for the 12,000 Road Home applicants who were facing a series of rolling cut off dates to move forward in the program and extending the timeframe for homeowners to make their final benefit option selections.

This change affects more than 7,000 Road Home applicants who previously had been facing deadlines to return documents, prove occupancy and ownership or resolve title and financial issues. The state is also rescinding deadlines for 5,400 applicants who sold their homes prior to the program's launch.

"After meeting with homeown-

ers and community leaders, it became clear that many applicants affected by the deadlines were elderly and low income Louisianians who would be unable to comply with the program deadlines," said Paul Rainwater, Executive Director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. "I judge this program not by the number we have served, but by the homeowners we haven't yet been able help."

Applicants who have not returned their Benefit Selection Forms now will have until November 1, 2008, to choose their Road Home option. More than 2,615 applicants are affected by this deadline.

"We will focus these next

months on working with individual homeowners to resolve their outstanding issues and to help them get the rebuilding dollars they desperately need," Rainwater said.

By extending timeframes for applicants to resolve their long-standing issues, the state is providing additional time for applicants to receive legal advice and complete complicated title work.

Homeowners who are affected by normal program deadlines, including timeframes related to the appeals process, must still comply with program rules and timelines.

"We had hoped that by offering case-by-case extensions, we

could help individual applicants in the program. Because of the extremely difficult issues facing our homeowners and because these extensions were not always provided on a consistent basis, we determined that the fairest action to take was to give everyone affected more time," Rainwater said.

Affected Homeowners

The following groups of homeowners do not currently face deadlines:

- 1,200 who have yet to provide documents proving they occupied their homes at the time of the storms;

- 2,700 who have yet to provide ownership documents;
- 900 whose files are missing other documents, such as social security cards;
- 2,800 with legal, title, financial and power of attorney issues;
- 5,400 who sold their homes prior to the program's launch and now want funding from the Road Home.

The only homeowners facing a deadline of November 1, 2008, are 2,615 homeowners who have not yet returned their benefit selection forms. All deadlines relating to the appeals process remain the same.



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New Orleans Health Department Offers Coping Strategies to Help Adults and Children With Stress After Hurricane Gustav

Kevin U. Stephens, Sr., MD, JD
Director, New Orleans Health Department

The City of New Orleans Health Department is concerned with the potential mental health and emotional status of our residents from the evacuation and re-entry back to New Orleans. These are tips which could be used by citizens to address preparedness, enhance resilience, and strengthen coping strategies in communities, families and children in the face of stress from the evacuation and re-entry.

Following the evacuation from Hurricane Gustav, many adults and children in our country will report significant fears and anxiety. Today these figures are likely to be even higher in light of the

trauma from Hurricane Katrina. Almost all of us are experiencing worries and stress following the evacuation and subsequent re-entry. In the event of another storm or hurricane, these reactions may be heightened. However, under such difficult circumstances, these symptoms are normal and expectable and most people will cope well.

The New Orleans Department of Health is working actively with police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and other traditional and nontraditional responders as well as state and federal agencies to protect your safety. Responders can provide valuable information and instruction. Parents and responders can also do a great deal to ensure safety in their homes and strengthen

the sense of well-being and security for children and families.

Normal reactions to traumatic events vary at different ages

- Young children under five years of age may show
- Fears of being separated from their parents and clinging behaviors
- More aggressive behaviors, more crying or withdrawal
- Difficulties falling asleep, bed-wetting, thumb sucking, fear of the dark or nightmares
- Reenactment of traumatic scenes in games
- More physical complaints such as stomach aches or headaches

Children 6-11 years of age may show

- Whining, clinging, or acting like a younger child
- Increase in competitive or aggressive behaviors
- Decline in school performance or school avoidance
- Sleep problems, nightmares, and physical complaints like stomach pain, headaches, asthma
- Worries about criminals, safety, death or guilt

Adolescents 12-18 years of age may show

- Risk taking behaviors, agitation or apathy
- Nightmares, difficulties sleeping, nausea, headaches, diarrhea, or worsening of prior illnesses
- Angry outbursts, sadness, depression, mood swings or problems with concentration
- Increase in conflicts with the family, at school or delinquent behavior
- Decline in school performance

Adults may experience

- Hypervigilance, excessive activity level, shock, disorientation or numbing
- Sadness, depression, angry outbursts, irritability and increase in problems at home or at work
- Nightmares, difficulties sleeping, nausea, headaches, diarrhea, or worsening of prior illnesses
- Anxiety, mood swings, difficulty concentrating or overprotecting others

Older Adults may experience

- Withdrawal, isolation, pushing people away or difficulties with problem solving
- Obsessive worries about trivial things or health symptoms, apathy, suspicion, agitation, or anger
- Worries about death and of being a burden
- Confusion, disorientation, physical complaints or worsening of prior illnesses

Here are some age-specific tips for coping with the stress from evacuation

Children under five years of age

- Reassure children that they will be safe & that you and other people will protect them
- Be a good listener -too often we are impatient, interrupt and try to soothe children
- Try to maintain usual routines for eating, sleep, play
- Follow the child's lead: if the child wants to be picked up, do so
- Encourage your child to play or talk about their feelings
- Give simple answers to questions
- Be flexible, change your behaviors temporarily to accommodate the child's needs
- If the child is clingy, be patient
- Help children identify and name their feelings
- Provide age appropriate activities

Children 6-11 years of age

- Be patient, give additional attention and consideration
- Clarify the child's distortions and misconceptions
- Give simple and realistic answers to their questions
- Be supportive and reassuring about any symptoms experienced
- Set gentle but firm limits for acting out behavior
- Provide age appropriate activities, physical activities, as well as structured and non-demanding tasks at home

Adolescents (12-18 years of age)

- Encourage discussion of events, behaviors or trauma with peers

and adults

- Give factual answers to questions
- Help link behaviors to feelings and events
- Encourage resumption of physical activities, community activities, and school events
- Encourage volunteering and involvement
- Set clear limits; address reckless and aggressive behaviors
- Involve the adolescent in emergency planning

Adults

- Return to routines and the usual structure of your days as soon as possible
- Take care of yourself; be aware of your feelings and find healthy ways of expressing them with friends and family without children present
- Spend time with others, seek support, volunteer
- Distract yourself, try to rest, eat healthy regular meals and sleep
- Give yourself permission to feel moody, nervous or blue
- Try not to make any major life changes during a stressful time

Older Adults

- Assure that physical and medical needs are met (water, food, cooling, warmth, medications)
- Provide frequent, simple and clear orienting information
- Assist in connecting with family and support systems
- Engage providers for transportation, chores, meals, home health and visits as needed
- Encourage discussion of events and feelings

Additional Tips for Parents and Providers

- Reassure children that they are loved and that they will be safe
- Assure them that if there is a problem and police, firefighters, emergency medical technicians or other responders arrive on the scene, they are friends and are here to help
- Children should be limited in watching media coverage on TV, radio or the internet. If at all possible, it is better for you to watch media coverage with them and be able to answer

Continued next page.

A mind is responsible

for the traffic light, the blood bank, ice cream, peanut butter, the doorknob, the microphone, the elevator, clothes dryer, lawn mower, pacemaker, the typewriter, guided missile, mailbox, the air conditioner, automatic transmission, curtain rod, baby carriage, lawn sprinkler, fountain pen, dust pan, the hand stamp, first open-heart surgery, cataract laser, fire extinguisher, doorstop, home security camera, the golf tee, fire escape, potato chip, food preservation, synthesized cortisone, the guitar, railroad telegraphy, envelope seal, printing press, bicycle frame, rocket catapult, insect destroyer gun, ice cream scoop, window cleaner, laser fuels, folding chair, gas mask, mop, refrigerator, pressing comb, urinalysis machine, door lock, electric cutoff switch, telephone transmitter, stair-climbing wheel-chair, hairbrush, egg beater, eye protector, electric lamp bulb, biscuit cutter, chamber commode, almanac, horse shoe, lunch pail, motor, lantern, key chain, furniture caster, ironing board, sugar-refining system, lemon squeezer, portable weighing scales, wrench, airplane propeller, ore bucket, steam boiler, portable x-ray machine, cotton chopper fertilizer, street sweeper, cattle-roping apparatus, spark plug, galoshes, casket-lowering device, clothes wringer, disrail car coupling, riding saddles, and so on and so on. The list is endless. Indeed, it's time to stop and celebrate the fact that each and every one of the wonderful innovations mentioned here came from the mind. The mind of an African American. By supporting minority education, you keep open the possibility of tomorrow's great ideas.

Because of all the things that the human mind has created, perhaps the most amazing is the one that has yet to be created. And that possibility is

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- questions and correct misconceptions after viewing
- Reassure children that most people throughout the world support our country. Promote tolerance and avoid negative, ethnic or religious generalization. Correct misconceptions
 - Develop a safety plan with your

family in case of an emergency. You and your family will feel better and will feel in control

- If possible, try to keep your family together or with a designated caregiver (you may include relatives, friends or neighbors)
- As part of the safety plan, in-

clude your children by assigning to them simple and concrete tasks

- Have a system for how your children and family can contact you during the day if you are not at home or work; have an alternate person/phone number for the children and

family to contact

- You and your children should know the school's emergency plans. Your children should know who to go to while at school if something happens. Discuss with the school plans for picking up your children during an emergency

- Volunteer with your community, religious institution and/or schools for emergency preparedness/response

Information provided by Kevin U. Stephens, Sr., MD, JD, Director, New Orleans Health Department



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Recording Artist Ledisi Offers Timeless Music While Finding Her Way Back to Her Roots

Ledisi is True Cinderella Diva with New Orleans Heritage

Edwin Buggage

Her life reads like a fairy tale. It is a modern day Cinderella story of perseverance; it is of a singer who has toiled away for years working to make her dream of becoming a successful recording artist a reality. Today, Ledisi has garnered critical acclaim earning two Grammy nominations. Ledisi has the stuff that legends are made of with a soulful, scintillating sound that solidifies in grooves like "In the Morning" and "Joy."

Her most recent project (Lost & Found, 2007) has been highly praised, as this rising Neo-Soul diva on her third album engages listeners with her unique brand of soul. Ledisi has a sound all her own that's unique, special and captivating, which comes along rarely in modern mainstream music where the image many times is more important than musical ability. Ledisi has overcome that by staying true to herself and her music, a sacrifice that has come to bear fruit with a major recording contract from Verve Records, the legendary label that once served as home to Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday.

Ledisi spent the first decade of her life in America's most fascinating city, New Orleans, the place that nurtured her soul and introduced her to the world of sound. She laughs joyously as she recounts this special time in her life.

"We lived in the Hollygrove neighborhood, and I remember my family owning several properties, said Ledisi as she reminisced about New Orleans. "Also, music was a big part of my memories of New Orleans and there was a sense of community and kinship that bonded people together that I'll always remember."

Ledisi, from a Yoruba word that means "to bring forth," is something she has surely done, bringing forth her gift of song; inserting her brand of

soul joining the cast of R&B legends that have come before her.

"My sound is influenced by many of the legends of music from a variety of genres, and I put it all together into something that I feel is refreshing and original," said Ledisi.

This soul singer is no stranger to the Music Industry, from her first performances with the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra at the age of 8 until the present day she has dreamt of a life on the big stage.

"While growing up, I was surrounded by music. It was all over my home, and I knew so many creative people that music and singing to me was as natural to me as breathing," she said.

With a jazz-influenced voice that's flexible, and wide-ranging, and in an age where the shelf life and fame of many artists with limited and questionable talent is short lived, Ledisi's music, which seems to transcend genres and musical trends, is something that is refreshing. With vocals that range from the scat of Ella Fitzgerald, to the bluesy soulfulness of Etta James and the perfect pitch of Edith Piaf, Ledisi is becoming a force to be reckoned with in the recording industry. Her live shows are a showcase in vocal virtuosity, as witnessed at a stellar performance given at the Essence Music Festival.

"I have always enjoyed performing live. I feel you can give yourself, and the immediate feedback you get—the rush received—is exhilarating," said Ledisi.

After leaving New Orleans, her family settled in Oakland, California. During that time, Ledisi blossomed as a musical force to be reckoned with. She attended the prestigious University of California—Berkeley studying Opera and Piano where she excelled displaying her talents that led to her being nominated in 1990 for a Shellie Award for her performance in a production of The Wiz.

But don't be fooled by her glowing exterior – her presence is a dominating strength, and her story is a testimony that perseverance and fortitude can pay off. In spite of early setbacks in her career, she

slipper," the heartfelt "Lost and Found" was realized. Her recent success have helped make those days part of a distant memory.

She came back to New Orleans during Essence Festival

born there."

Throughout her journey in the music business her talents have afforded her to work with a vast array of greats in the music industry including : Sergio Mendez, Pancho Sanchez, Ra-



Ledisi, during a recent performance.

kept pushing through while continuously writing songs before her claim to fame. Ledisi has had her fair share of deals fall through as she continued to perform and work at her craft while moving from sunny California where she owned a house and a car to sleeping in a sleeping bag on a floor of friends and walking the mean streets of New York attempting to make her dream come true. It wasn't until the magical moment of being discovered by Verve Records that her "glass

in a packed house triumphant and happy to be back in the city, but feels distressed about what has happened to the city of her birth the suffered the ravages of Hurricane Katrina and the failing levees. "It hurts me to think about all the things I remember about the city many of those things are gone." "But in spite of what has happened the people of the city are still resilient and upbeat, that is an amazing thing about the people from the city and it makes me proud to have been

phael Saadiq, Stevie Wonder, Omar Sosa and Gordon Chambers – she truly has emerged into the an artist that has the ability to be a legend. Ledisi, true to her name, has brought forth her amazing aura, with grace, sass, and pizzazz. She is a gift to the music industry and the product of the wonderful splendor of New Orleans. Ledisi showcases the best the city has to offer and is New Orleans' Cinderella Diva.

Trin-i-tee 5:7 to Release Deluxe Version of "T57"

CD Features Four New Songs Including First Single "Get Away" Produced by Rodney Jerkins



Trin-i-tee 5:7

Contemporary gospel trio Trin-i-tee 5:7 are gearing up to re-release T57 DELUXE EDITION, an enhanced CD version of their Dove Award and GRAMMY® nominated T57, which will include four new songs and two videos. The new CD will be in stores Sep. 30.

T57, the first studio album in over five years from Trin-i-tee 5:7, garnered two Dove

Awards, a 2008 GRAMMY® nomination, and a 2008 BET nomination. The deluxe version of the release will feature a combination of A-list producers from both gospel and pop/R&B genres. New songs include "Get Away" produced by multiple GRAMMY® winner and hit maker Rodney Jerkins, "You're Holy" produced by Music World's own The Bamaz

and "It Wasn't Me" produced by GRAMMY® nominated Armando Colon who has also worked with Lil' Kim and Busta Rhymes. The eclectic mix of top talent that has come together for T57 DELUXE is sure to bring a surprising sound to the new release. Musically, the project speaks to the flavor, style, and musical edginess that has always made Trin-i-tee 5:7 a top-selling group.

The two videos included on the CD- "Listen and 'I Will Lift'" have received steady rotation on BET, BET J and the Gospel Music Channel, and will showcase Trin-i-tee 5:7's charismatic performance and visual appeal and remind us why they are the best-selling female trio in gospel music.

It is with complete fearlessness that Trin-i-tee 5:7 approached the new recording to be included in T57 DELUXE. Having sold more than 2 million units with their previous releases, the group isn't awe-struck by material successes. Their goal is to continue to inspire and spread God's love through exemplary musical testimony. They continuously give back to their community and are passionate humanitarians sowing seeds of hope through The Am-

bassadors of Hope & Triumph Campaign dedicated to rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

Trin-i-tee 5:7 knows about facing the storms of life. The group, comprised of Chanelle Haynes, Angel Taylor and Adrian Anderson, had to hold on to their faith as two of the girls' native New Orleans (original members Angel and Chanelle) was submerged in 2005 due to the ravaging effects of Hurricane Katrina. With brighter days ahead, the group released T57, their platinum-selling debut project under the management of Mathew Knowles' Music World Entertainment and its gospel division Spirit Rising Music and has since gone on to become the best-selling female trio in contemporary gospel. Their musical successes have garnered the ladies attention

not only in the field of music, but also from the worlds of beauty (spokesgroup for major Revlon promotion-Gospel Diva Search), fashion (performers during prestigious New York Fashion Week) and film (featured on The Prince of Egypt Inspirational soundtrack with GRAMMY® Award winners Boyz II Men and Brian McKnight).

This fall, the trio will promote the new release and connect with fans in markets across the county through the "Midday Get Away Tour." The tour will include a midday two-song performance for radio audiences and an evening church concert. Additional midday performances will take place in malls in conjunction with giveaways and a food sponsor.



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RIGHTEOUS KILL

A JON AVNET FILM

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Relationships

"What Real Men Want and Need in Their Relationship"

Dr. Aaron E. Harold

Hi, just for a little while I want to talk mainly to all of the beautiful ladies out there that are in a relationship, or getting ready to en-

ter into a new relationship. Look ladies, if you want to keep your relationship happy and long lasting, you need to know how to keep your husbands, or the man that you are dating satisfied. Listen la-

dies, if you take this to heart and use this helpful advice, I promise that you will have a much better and prosperous relationship. Are you ready; here it comes. A real man needs a real woman to be

sensitive to his needs. Just like you want us to be sensitive to your needs, it goes both ways.

Ladies, you just can't have it your way all the time, like Burger King. Surprise him by telling him

all the good things that he does for you and the children. One of the biggest mistakes that women do in their relationship is always making the mistake by telling him of his shortcomings or flaws. However, let me remind you ladies that there is no perfect man or woman, but God. If you have someone in your life that loves and respects you, then you need to realize that you are blessed. There was a song that Marvin Gaye made years ago called "Distant Lover."

In this song, Marvin said, "think about me sometimes." Ladies, why do so many of you make your husbands or the one that you have been dating feel that even though he's with you, he feels like he's not? A real man needs to know that you care and love him by taking the time out and effort to really show him. I'm talking about the real men that pay the bills, buy you nice things, and do not go out all night to the clubs. Ladies, I know that

many of you know how to keep the house clean, cook a delicious meal that will melt in your mouth, and take care of the kids well- but what about your man? What about what you said to the preacher and God, I do? What about the real man who has proven himself over and over again by stepping up to the plate to show you that he loves and cares for you?

Look ladies, a real man needs a real woman to look him in the face and tell him how much you appreciate him. This means so much to your man, and when you learn to do that often enough, that could go a long way in your relationship. Learn how to make your man feel like he's superman even though he's not. By encouraging him often, you will be surprised how you can get more out of him. Words are powerful when you learn what to say and how to say them to the man in your life.

Remember those cartoon characters we wanted when we were growing up? I'm talking about Popeye and Olive Oil. Olive Oil knew what to say to Popeye to make him feel bigger in his mind, and his thinking. Women, what I'm saying is learn to build your man up, because a real man will turn around and build you up. One more thing ladies, a real man wants and needs more loving and not more sex. Women, don't get caught up in this old myth that if you give your man plenty sex, you will keep him happy and satisfied. That is so far from the truth. If you give him more loving and tender loving care, then and only then will you keep him happy and satisfied.

Love you and God Bless.

For comments or questions you can contact Dr. Aaron Harold at rharold1@cox.net



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Barack Obama: Change and Expectations



julianne's title?

Julianne Malveaux
Data Columnist

Julianne Malveaux

Senator Barack Obama had an impossible task ahead of him as he accepted the Democratic Party's nomination for President. He had to define himself, said some. Outline his differences with Senator John McCain, said others. Pick up the baton being passed from civil rights leaders on the historic 45th anniversary of the March on Washington, still others said. Outline a policy agenda. Inspire. Pay tribute and offer respect to the Clintons. Mobilize Democrats who were not that sure of him. Get a post-convention bounce and get back to leading in the polls.

For all his rhetorical brilliance, there were high expectations and too many tasks for one human being to accomplish in a mere 45 minutes.

I listened intently checklist in hand, hoping that Senator Obama could meet expectations. In some ways, he did. He laid out a policy agenda. He talked about ways he differed from his Republican opponent, John McCain. He contrasted the world as it might be with the way this world is. He showed extraordinary acumen for lifting up working Americans – nurses and janitors and mid-level managers like his grandmother. There was much to praise in the Obama speech. But it didn't grab me.

At a convention where people were begging to be wowed, he offered prose, not poetry. At a convention where tears flowed freely from the weight of history, Obama neglected to invoke the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King by name. To be sure, Dr. King was invoked by his son, Martin III and his daughter, Bernice. And many other platform speakers. And Obama should not be forced to mention King as if participating in a litany.

But if Hillary Rodham Clinton could emotionally and authentically mention Harriet Tubman, couldn't the man who has implied that he is the inheritor of the dream bother to mention Dr. Martin Luther King more explicitly than as "a preacher from Georgia".

Some folk say that Obama didn't have to invoke King, and that he, indeed, should not have. Some said that in order to reassure majority America, any explicit men-

tion of race, and of Dr. Martin Luther King, should be avoided. But Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is an American hero, not an African-American hero. Dr. King is celebrated, not only in the African American community, but also in our nation. King's dream was not a dream for African-American people; it was a dream for a more inclusive America. While Obama's speech was not required to be a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it should have acknowledged him.

Perhaps the acknowledgement was implicit. Barack Obama's tribute to working class people is, in many ways, a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. King stood for people at the bottom, not at the top.

He talked about the uncashed check, the broken promised and crippled dreams. In speaking of living wages, of workers who would cut their own hours so that friends could work, of people like his mother who struggled for health insurance, Barack Obama embraced King's people if he didn't explicitly acknowledge the dreamer himself.

He has to win, a colleague said, as we watched the speech and took frantic notes. My colleague, a successful politician who has represented a broad cross section of people, says he does not require racial acknowledgements or affirmations. He requires winning and the possibility of change.

The nation requires the possibility of change. As every speaker reminded Democrats, we are moving in the wrong direction as a nation. We are divesting, not investing, in our country, in our people. The middle class is disappearing because of the failed policies of the Bush Administration.

The wars we fight are breaking us, and Barack Obama frontally attacked John McCain on his war policies.

Still, Barack Obama's speech didn't sing, nor did it exceed expectations. Given the multiple hurdles he faced, he could not possibly clear all of them. But Obama was strong, forceful, focused, policy-oriented, and an agent

of change.

He fumbled on the baton being passed from the leaders of the civil rights movement, he fully embraced the mantle of change, of social and economic justice. In the next nine weeks, he will have opportu-

nities to steady the fumble while wrapping himself in the mantle, to meet enough expectations to not only achieve an electoral victory, but also to be the leader of an America that may finally keep its promises to all of the people.



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Republican Convention Gets Turbulent Start Due to Hurricane Gustav

Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – The Republican National Convention – set to make the second nomination of a woman as vice president of the United States this week – was back on schedule Tuesday after a lull early this week due to Hurricane Gustav in the Gulf Coast.

President Bush was set to speak Tuesday night after Presidential nominee John McCain temporarily called for a scaled back convention while waiting to determine the damages of Hurricane Gustav. McCain was set to make his acceptance speech on Thursday.

Although the damage and affects of the hurricane were unpredictable at that time, Republican spokesman Sean Conner said McCain called for sensitivity over politics.

“We are being sensitive to states that are being evacuated. And this is not the time for politics. This is a time for us to be in service to our country and in service to people who have been affected,” Conner said.

Conner said an “Affected States Working Group” was formed at the convention to brief delegates from the main four affected states – Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi,



caption

and Alabama – on updates. He also said a jet was chartered to take those delegates home who are concerned about their own personal affairs or the affairs of the affected states.

First Lady Laura Bush and prospective First Lady Cindy McCain spoke Monday night on hurricane-related issues.

McCain’s response to Hurri-

cane Gustav contrasts him with the Bush Administration, which was strongly criticized three years ago for its slow response to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

In remarks released on Monday, President Bush said, “The coordination on this storm is a lot better than...during Katrina. A lot of it had to do with the governors. Yesterday I was on the video

conference with the Governors of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. There was clearly a spirit of sharing assets, of listening to somebody’s problems and saying, how can we best address them? The federal government is very much involved in helping the states. Our job is to assist.”

The scaled back convention is also a stark contrast to the high-

profile celebration held by the Democrats in Denver last week as they nominated Sen. Barack Obama for president.

The day after Obama’s acceptance speech at Invesco Field, McCain held a press conference introducing Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his vice presidential pick, seen as a move that could help McCain win over women who would have supported Sen. Hillary Clinton. Palin was set to speak to the convention on Wednesday.

A first-term governor of two years, Palin is also a former mayor and at 44 is the youngest person ever elected governor of Alaska. She is the first female vice presidential nominee since the unsuccessful campaign of Democrat Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 as the running mate of Walter Mondale.

McCain and Obama are still running neck-in-neck in the polls, with Obama slightly ahead. Conner said politics notwithstanding, the Republicans would act on the side of discretion this week.

“I don’t know what kind of affect it will have on the campaign, but that’s not our priority at the moment,” Conner said. “It’s about making sure we’re taking care of the affected folks.”

Forty Years After Olympic Protest: Athletes Without Activism

Charlene Muhammad

LOS ANGELES (NNPA) – As world class athletes competed in the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China, displays of strength, agility and fruit of hard work and sacrifice were apparent, but some American athletes showed their activism with protests against China’s treatment of Tibetans, the Sudanese military conflict in Darfur and calls for an end to cruel practices against animals.

Many compared their acts to the electrifying moment when Tommie Smith and John Carlos protested racial injustice in America by bowing their heads and giving a gloved Black Power salute while on the Olympic medal stand

after winning the 200-meter dash in Mexico City in 1968.

In the years leading up to the Mexico City demonstration, the struggle for freedom shifted from a civil rights and integration focus to Black Power, self-determination and revolution.

As young athletes, Smith and Carlos used the Olympics as their vehicle to put justice issues and the Black revolutionary movement in the international spotlight.

In 2008, there’s a deafening silence when it comes to U.S. athletes speaking out against institutionalized racism, discrimination, racial profiling, health care disparities, mass incarceration,

police brutality, poverty and the Iraq War.

“In the era when Black people in this country were simply struggling for access, Jesse Owens, Joe Louis and Jackson Robinson emerged. They kept their mouths shut, didn’t raise any issues, didn’t gloat in any victories, didn’t seem too sad in public about their defeats, even when it was pretty clear that they were ripped off in terms of judges or decisions, and they had to do that in order to gain access,” said Dr. Harry Edwards, a professor of sociology at the University of California, and a sports consultant.

Edwards mentored sprinters Smith and Carlos and other ath-

letes in the 1960s under the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which encouraged Black athletes to speak against injustice.

During the civil rights and Black Power era, activists and athletes fought against legal segregation and for equal rights in education, employment, health care and other facets of American life and protested U.S. imperialism and war-mongering. The turbulent time saw the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers of the NAACP, Fred Hampton and Bobby Hutton of the Black Panther Party and the murders of others involved in the struggle.

According to Edwards, everybody was looking for the next Jackie Robinson but the generation that came afterwards produced something very different. Smith and Carlos were prototypes of Black athletes who had historically used their talents and athletic voices to make political stands for their people, he said.

They also paid a heavy price. The men, who set a world record, were stripped of their gold and silver medals, shunned by the International Olympic Committee and largely shunned by American society. Carlos’ wife eventually committed suicide and Mr. Smith was forced to work at a car wash for a time.

Continued next page.

New Orleans Native Elected as National President of Delta Sigma Theta

Washington, D.C.—Cynthia M. A. Butler-McIntyre was elected by a unanimous vote of over 800 voting delegates as the National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. at the organization's 49th National Convention in Orlando, Fla. Butler-McIntyre has been a member of the Sorority for 35 years, and has held several local, regional and national offices.

A native of New Orleans, Butler-McIntyre was greatly impacted by Hurricane Katrina, but never stopped serving the Sorority. Butler-McIntyre is a self-proclaimed servant leader and says she serves her sisterhood,



Cynthia M. A. Butler-McIntyre

“because it is in my heart.” Butler-McIntyre was installed into office by civil rights leader Dr. Dorothy I. Height. During her acceptance speech she gave credit to Jesus Christ, the leader of her life, and was unapologetic about the role God has played and will continue to play in her life.

Butler-McIntyre received her Bachelor of Arts degree in early childhood education and is a 1976 graduate from Dillard University in New Orleans. She earned a Master of Education degree from the University of New Orleans at the age of 20. Butler-McIntyre also holds an Honorary Doctor-

ate of Divinity degree from the Christian Bible College of Louisiana. Presently she is employed as a personnel administrator for all classified employment for the Jefferson Parish Public School System.

Other officers elected during the weeklong convention were Dr. Paulette Walker of Tampa, Fla., as national first vice president; Mia Smith of Miami, Fla., as national second vice president; Beverly Smith of Marietta, Ga., as national secretary; and Carolyn Lewis of New Orleans, La., was re-elected as national treasurer.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded in 1913 on the campus of Howard University as an organization dedicated to scholarship, sisterhood and public service. Today it has over 200,000 members and over 900 chapters worldwide. The Sorority uses its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust of economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health, and political awareness and involvement to create its national programs.

Continued from previous page.

While Smith, who went on to earn a doctorate degree in educational administration, and Carlos protested at the Olympics, basketball legend Kareem Abdul Jabbar, who converted to Islam, changed his name from Lew Alcindor in 1971, and played for 20 years with the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers, abstained from even participating in the Olympic Trials because of America's racism against Blacks at home and the Vietnam War.

According to Abdul-Jabbar, not much has changed. “Here we are 40 years later and we are once again about to send our young athletes overseas to compete in games while we send our young soldiers overseas to fight in war,” he wrote in a recent blog post at kareemabduljabbar.com.

Around that same time, boxing legend Muhammad Ali was stripped of his heavyweight championship title for refusing to sign up for the Vietnam War draft because of religious and conscientious objections. During a 1969 interview on the program titled “The Black Athlete,” he acknowledged that many less famous people voiced objections before him.

“Black people really don't have nothing to fight for ... come back home and we fight for our own freedom and we get our heads beat up. I just don't think I should go 10,000 miles from here and shoot some Black people that never called me n—r, never lynched me, never put dogs on me, never raped my mama, enslaved me and deprived me of freedom, justice and equality, and he's Black too. I just can't shoot him,” Ali said.

His actions, like many in the Black Power movement, were influenced by the self-determination and self-help teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, often through Min. Malcolm X, which helped inspire groups like the Black Panther Party, the Us organization, the Black Congress and the Brotherhood Crusade, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which later merged with the Panther Party.

During an Urban Issues Breakfast Forum, which he attended in Los Angeles before heading to Beijing, Smith presented his new book, “Silent Gesture: The Autobiography of Tommie Smith” and he encouraged young athletes to address the issues in their communities and not simply when they arrive at the Games.

Failure to speak out will help keep people of color relegated to second-class citizenship, said Smith.

Young athletes have to be taught early by educators and school administrators through curriculum, and not just after they reach pro-status, he added.

“Inundate them with opportunities, such as coming to events to talk about themselves. We need to get them involved, almost through threats, because otherwise they're not going to do it. They will sit behind what they have, which is money, but they're in a situation now where they are so lost,” Mr. Smith observed. Today's athletes don't have political and social mentors like Dr. Edwards and the Olympic Project

for Human Rights, he said.

Most Black athletes realize that there is a problem and see the need for their voices, but are afraid to lose financial and social gains attached to the dollar bill, Smith continued. “And athletes nowadays are not willing to make that sacrifice in order to be heard, so they're status quo and that's hurting their surroundings,” he said.

According to Dr. Edwards, issues facing Black athletes are more complex. During the 1960s America was engaged in a genocidal war in Vietnam, while fighting to maintain segregation, inequality and depriving its Black citizens of equal opportunity under the law. U.S. practices created an American-style apartheid. Athletes sometimes played in entirely segregated conferences and faced barriers to sports opportunities outside the locker room because they were Black, he said.

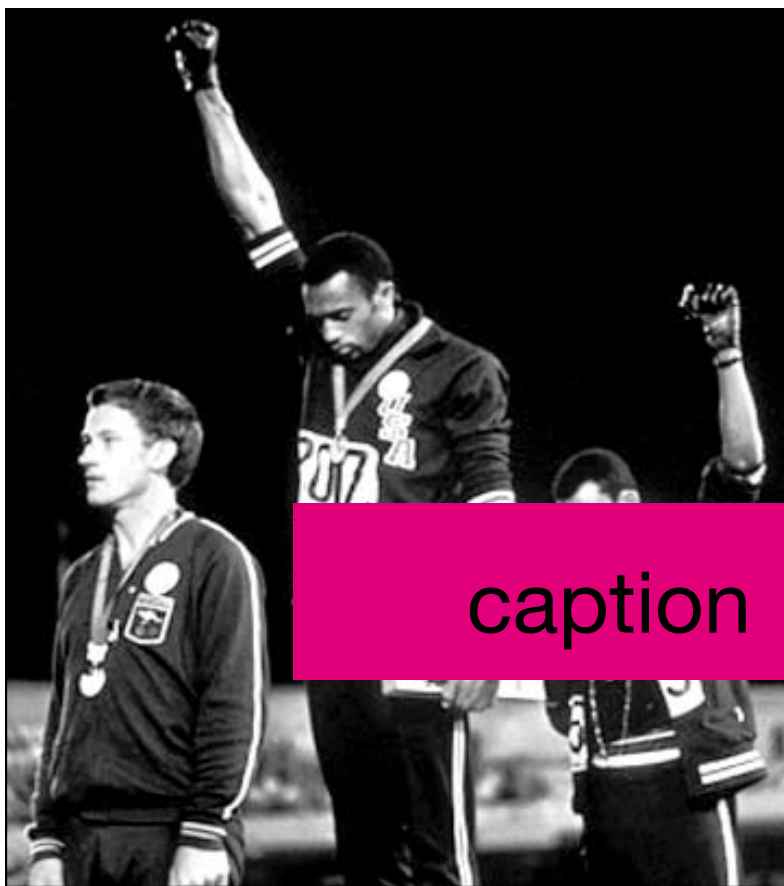
Edwards said, “It's no longer an issue of straightforward segregation, but it's an issue of a lack of emphasis and government intervention and so forth in communities which have in some instances substantially collapsed institutionally.”

The phenomenal opportunities athletes have today are the result of past struggles, so there is a great deal more at stake, said Edwards. “The money has become so big, the athlete today is literally a walking corporation, such as LeBron James, Tiger Woods, Carmello Anthony, Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson,” he said.

Despite the money, the Black athlete has an obligation to remain socially and politically aware, said Edwards. “Muhammad Ali had a heck of a lot at stake when he

spoken Black athlete will never be seen again.

He concluded, “Just as our generation was different than the generation of Joe Louis, Jesse



caption

took his stand, and without question, so did Bill Russell when he supported various organizations, civil rights activists and marches,” Edwards noted.

Edwards argued a lack of historical continuity with the methods, dispositions, orientations and attitudes of the previous generation does not mean the out-

Owens and Jackie Robinson, the next generation of athletes and leadership to emerge will be different than our generation. I just hope that we are smart enough not to fight them, and say ‘that's not the way it's done’ because they're going to do what they have to do within their generational context.”

The Time is Now



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

Election time is finally here and it has truly been an interesting turn of events in the city and the state post-Hurricane Katrina. It has been a rough time for many of us as we try to put the pieces of our lives back together. So many people are still scattered about the country trying to find their way home or just simply make sense of what has happened to the lives they once knew. The elections this year, as has many of the recent elections post Katrina, are about much more than previous ones. The decisions we make today and the people we choose to represent us will have a hand in shaping what our city and state will look like for years to come.

Today, we cannot afford to have the business as usual approach to government, so it is important for us as voters to think carefully this time about what is at stake. In many of these races there are a lot of the same faces that have dominated politics and public life for quite some time, and we must ask ourselves this question: In tough times, are they the right people to do the job? If you believe they are, then vote for them, but if you think that some of the newcomers can come in and make the changes necessary for the city to move forward, then by all means vote to put them in office. But regardless of who is placed in these elected offices it is time for us as citizens to recognize that the power does not reside solely with them, but with us. We are the ones who entrust them with our vote of support, so in these tumultuous times we must ask for accountability from our elected leaders.

We must hold our elected officials accountable and responsible for the decisions they make on our behalf. We need courageous, honest and compassionate leaders who are about doing the right thing. We need leaders who will put people before politics, and then put the progress of the city and the state ahead of hubris and personal ambition. This is the time for them to truly stand for something, so we need

special kinds of leaders, and it is up to us as voters to let this election make a statement that we will not continue to let just anyone represent us for they are a reflection of how we are perceived across the globe.

The time is now for the people of Louisiana to make a stand and truly make a statement that something new is on the horizon. A functioning working government that will work on behalf of the people and for the benefit of people for this is a new day. The waters after Hurricane Katrina crashed into the city of New Orleans, exposing the social breach that is inequality in this city. We need leadership that will bridge the gap between those who have and those who do not. We cannot continue to just stand idly by when the least of us continue to suffer. In this new city it is time for everybody to get their fair share of the pie, and not what previously was the case where it's pie a la mode for a few and barely crumbs left over for the rest.

The time is now that we must recognize that the waters that flooded the city did not discriminate and that all of us are suffering trying to put our lives back together. Let us get past false divisions so that we can work less like individual fingers pointing at the problems and become one fist united pummeling the things that keep us divided and together move our city and state forward.

Although we must realize that unity is not uniformity and know that we will not always agree but we must have from this moment on have a better way to solve our difference with discourse, courtesy, and respect.

Today we must realize that although we may have come here on different ships and even slept on separate decks, but we must realize right now we are in the same boat trying to save our city. So this Election Day we have a choice which path we can take using our votes as oars; we can choose to try to navigate our ship to a place where we all can work together to make this city and state a better place, or we can do nothing and continue to let chaos ensue moving us further away from the dream of bringing back our city.

And today we have a chance to truly make it a better place, and voting is only one of the many ways we can achieve that, for citizenship is about being involved; so get involved and do something that can make your neighborhood, city, schools, church, and family better. For the power to make the world a better place is in our hands and the time is now.

That 'Great Cloud of Witnesses'



Rev. Barbara Reynolds
Data Columnist

Rev. Barbara Reynolds
Among the "great cloud of witnesses" that the Bible assures is always hovering over us, I hope Fannie Lou Hamer is among them, along with Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, as well. How proud they would be.

Those left out, under-valued, tormented Black women were validated and honored

by the symbolism of Michelle Obama speaking at the podium as the first African-American ever so close to becoming First Lady of the United States.

Who would have thought that this nation was capable of moving so far at last? Who would have thought that during the week of the 45th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s I Have a Dream speech and the 88th anniversary of women winning the right to vote, that a Black woman could symbolize what both movements fought for.

Fannie Lou Hamer was the youngest of 20 children born to sharecroppers in Ruleville MS. In the 60's when she and thousands of other blacks tried to vote in Mississippi their constitutional rights were violated. For her efforts Hamer was beaten unmercifully in a back room jail and thrown off the land where she lived.

Nevertheless, she helped to organize thousands of poor Blacks into the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party. In 1964 she was ejected from a hall very much like

that in Denver as she tried to have her delegation recognized and seated. She lost that fight but she continued to champion civil rights until her death in 1976.

When Michelle Obama took center stage she brought with her the spirit of Hamer and also that of Sojourner Truth. Somehow when mainstream America thinks of Blacks, generally they mean males, or if women, they mean Whites. That is why Sojourner Truth had to stand tall at an 1851 women's convention dominated by Whites and rhetorically ask them "Ain't I a Woman?"

Michelle Obama is a woman who successfully met the tough task of looking millions of TV viewers in the eye and declaring that she not only loves America, but she too American and for Democrats to "stop doubting and start dreaming."

Among those doubters were whites who in their hearts wondered how someone whose lineage in America that includes slavery, lynching, racial profiling, and overt discrimination could love America. Could

they?

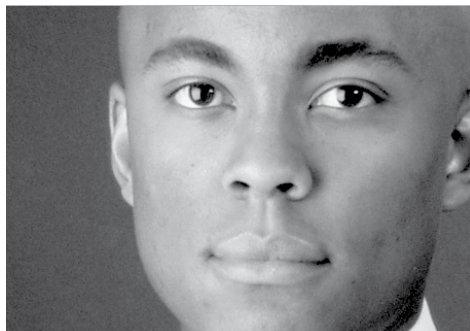
Yet, this child of working class parents from Chicago's Southside, who is married to a man, brought up, like the majority of blacks these days by a single mother, is creating a different model for the world to see. White is not always right, female is not always subservient and hard work is still a core issue among African-Americans, who as slaves worked to build this country as forced labor.

Another important slice of African-American history was brought into the convention through Senator Hillary Clinton's salute to ever-vigilant Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a former judge and Delta Sigma Theta Soror from Cleveland, whose recent sudden death has left a sad void in the Congressional Black Caucus.

In addition, U.S. Senator Clinton's magnetic speech quoted Harriet Tubman, who urged the slaves she was risking her life to set free "to keep going" despite all the obstacles. Keep going in this instance meant to vote for Obama and Clinton left no stone

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Be the Next You



Farrah Gray
NNPA Columnist

Ask a group of people why they aren't rich and chances are many will say something like, "Well, I'm not a movie star and I'm not in the NBA." Do only celebrities make money?

Why is the association of wealth so strongly tied to celebrity-dom? Because our culture—with its ubiquitous fascination for the glossy entertainment and pro sports world—perpetuates this fallacy on a daily basis. One doesn't have to go far to be hypnotized by this lie; celebrity news magazines, talkentertainment.com and other the media in general keeps "celebrity-dom" alive. The truth is that celebrities' bank accounts pale in comparison to the rich-

est people in the world. And I wouldn't call many celebrities "rich" if they are unhappy, unsatisfied, and constant tabloid gossip for their unscrupulous acts.

The number one reason most people don't get what they want is that they don't know what they want. At the same time, they don't know what they're passionate about. So they haven't a clue what they are supposed to be doing. Now is the time to really conquer this lie that runs too deep in our consciousness, and shoves us off course from the roads we should be taking.

Pop quiz: Who is Ingvar Kamprad? Who is Ursula Burns? Who was John H. Johnson?

Answers: Ingvar is the founder of Ikea and the fourth richest person in the world with a net worth of \$28 billion. He turned a love for peddling matches, fish, pens, Christmas cards and other items by bicycle as a teenager to an empire selling furniture and house hold goods.

At this writing, Ursula Burns is ranked as the 27th Most Powerful Woman on Fortune's renowned list. As a top executive at Xerox Corporation, she helps bring in billions of dollars in revenues a year for the company and is one of the most respected business women in America.

A member of the Xerox team for more

than 20 years, she calls the company her family and she wouldn't still be there if she didn't love what she does. By now she may even be sitting at the helm of the entire company.

The late John H. Johnson was born in Arkansas in 1918, the grandson of slaves. He went on to become one of the richest men in America as founder of the Johnson Publishing Company, an international=20media and cosmetics empire headquartered in Chicago.

Today it includes Ebony, and Jet magazines, Fashion Fair Cosmetics and EBONY Fashion Fair. Johnson was the first Black person to appear on the Forbes 400 Rich List, and had a fortune estimated at close to \$500 million when he passed away in 2005.

I'll give you one more example: Janice Bryant-Howroyd, the founder of Act-1 Group Staffing and Professional Services. She went out on a limb when she started the company in 1978 from a single office in California, and now it's a multi-million dollar business spanning the country with a network of more than 70 offices. In 2003, Black Enterprise magazine named the company the third largest African-American owned business in the U.S.

In 2006 it boasted \$718 million in sales revenues.

What do these four individuals have in

common? They are celebrities in their own right.

They are highly respected and admired. They set the bar for so many others in their industries and communities at large. But they aren't routine newsmakers in the entertainment reports; the paparazzi don't follow them and they don't always get to walk a red carpet.

In other words, they aren't "celebrities" in the usual sense of the word. They are men and women who are celebrated for what they have done—what they have shown up to accomplish. And that's the truth.

The Celebrity Truth - "A celebrity is someone who is celebrated—someone who shows up to do something well, which may have no relation to the entertainment or sports world."

Farrah Gray is the author of Get Real, Get Rich: Conquer the 7 Lies Blocking You from Success and the international best-seller Reallionaire: Nine Steps to Becoming Rich from the Inside Out. He is chairman of the Farrah Gray Foundation. Dr. Gray can be reached via email at fg@drfarrahgray.com or his web site at www.drfarrahgray.com

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untured in challenging her supporters to do so.

In fact, Clinton's magic moment in the spotlight was so electrifying that it saddened me to see that her expertise and 18 million voters were not rewarded with the door prize of Vice President. That position of Michelle Obama as First Lady and Hillary Clinton as first female vice president not only would have chipped away at the glass ceiling, it would have crashed it down.

If things go as they should and the election is not stolen from us for the third time, history will never be the same, not only as a tribute to all those who fought so hard and never lived to see this cataclysmic change, but also for our children.

An Obama White House may be the act that changes the perception of U.S. citizens as intolerant, bullying ugly Americans around the world. More than that, I hope that Obamas in the White House would send strong signals to the African-American gang-bangers, high school dropouts and drug addicts that the American Dream is not a myth and is still worth fighting for.

If people like Barack and Michelle Obama can make it to the White House, surely it is true that schools that teach, health care systems that heal and cities where blacks cease to be their own executioners are no longer an impossible dream as well.

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