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21st Century Mothers Share How They Handle Challenges



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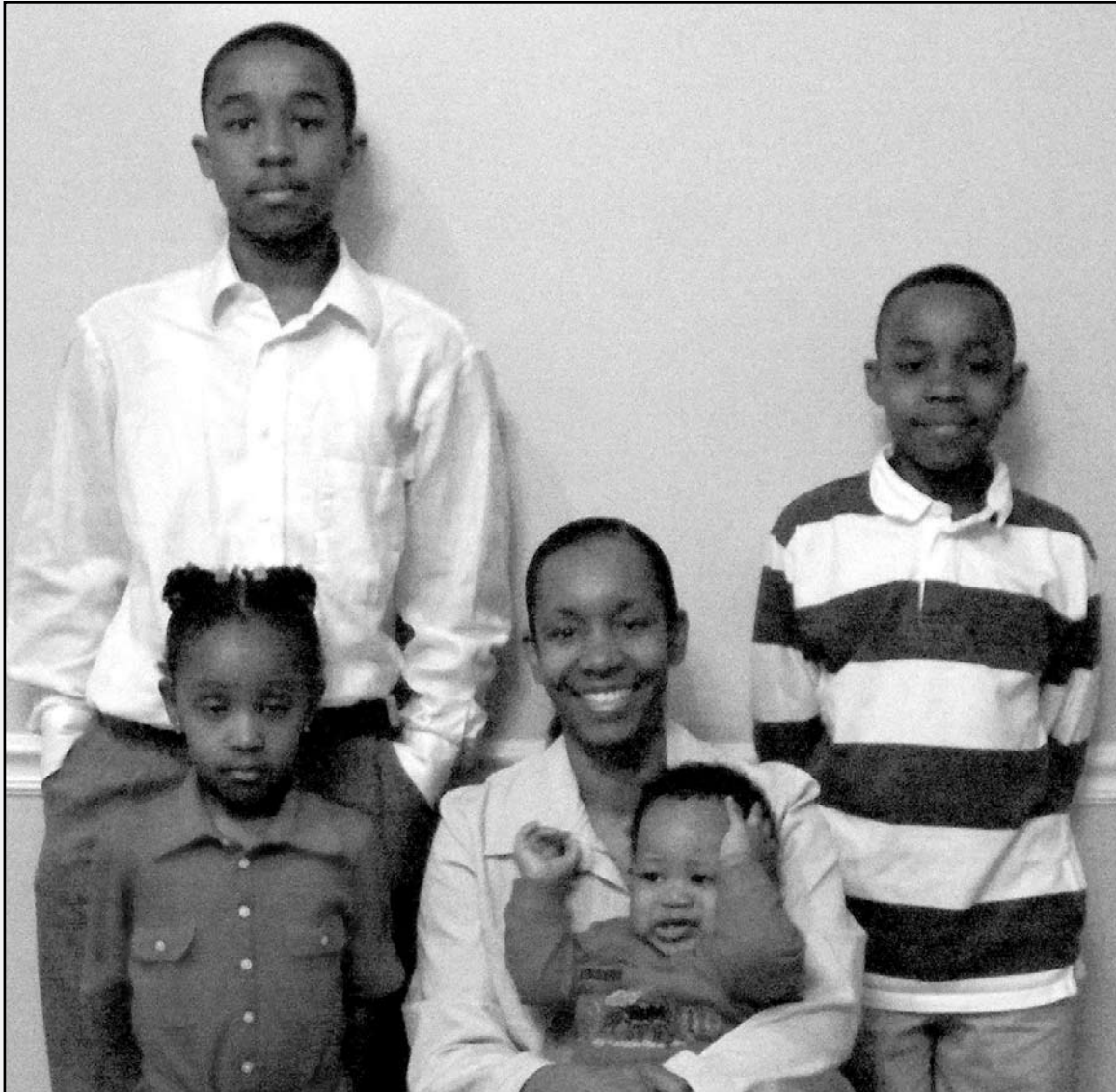
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Disney's First
Black Heroine
Stirs Controversy



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21st Century Mothers Tell How They Deal With Challenges



Angel Green and her children, Kevin II, 14; Carl, 12; Gabriel, 5, and Kenneth, 1. Credit: Iris Venable

Hazel Trice Edney
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Paula Bonds thinks of the kindergarten classes at her daughter's Upper Marlboro, Md. school and describes the scene:

"In that particular school, there are three kindergarten classes with at least 25 or 26 students

with no teachers' aides. It concerns me when I see that because there are kids in that class that I see getting left behind because the teacher just doesn't have time to take out with them like she should."

Bonds continues, "So, there are kids who are more at an advanced level. They are on their own. And the ones that need a little bit more help may not be getting as much as they should."

Bonds, who has pitched in as a classroom volunteer at the school, is the mother of 5-year-old Jasmine and 13-year-old Ashley. She is rearing the girls alongside her husband, Lee Bonds, in Prince George's County, Md., among the wealthiest Black suburbs in the nation.

Yet, on this Mother's Day Sunday, her story will be like those of 21st Century mother's across America. From education, to public safety to issues of civil rights and freedom of speech, mothers from Bonds' small congregation of Dominion Church of Washington, D.C. exemplify women who are dealing with a string of challenges that test their faith, their prayer lives and their relationships with their children.

"I pray for their safety, that's very important to me," says Monique Webber, who is raising Franklin, 11, and Alexandra, 6, alongside her husband, Stanley, in Washington, D.C.

While out shopping with her little girl last weekend, she saw an outbreak of violence in which a man was attacked and beaten unconscious.

"I fear for the young people coming up. I just fear for their safety - that they won't hang around the wrong people, foolish people, unwise people," she says. "That is what I fear most about the young people, that they will be able to make wise decisions that they will see leaders and emulate."

Among the onslaught of growing issues and concerns, it's not always the obvious.

Minister Denise Strothers says among her greatest concern is her 12-year-old son's First Amendment right to freely express himself.

"To have a different opinion and even to voice it is considered wrong or politically incorrect," she said. She points out how people are often castigated for expressing Christian-based views pertaining to issues such as same-sex marriage. "They're berated as if they don't have a right to say it's wrong or 'I don't agree with it,'" she says.

But, the controversies and the realities of life present opportunities to teach children, says Strothers, whose husband, Elder Keith Strothers,

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616 Barrone Street, Suite 584, New Orleans, LA 70113

Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622

editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Terry B. Jones

CEO/Publisher

Glenn Jones

VP Advertising

& Marketing

Edwin Buggage

Editor-in-Chief

Shaniece Bickham

Managing Editor

June Hazeur

Accounting

Contributors

Dionne Character

Thais Mills

NNPA

Art Direction & Production

MainorMedia.com

Editorial Submissions

datanewseditor@bellsouth.net

Advertising Inquiries

datanewsad@bellsouth.net

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now leads the congregation.

"It's a part of society now so [the key is] instructing them on how to deal with people when they see it and they may not understand it," she said.

She recalled a recent situation in a restaurant in which the server was a man wearing make up, false eyelashes and feminine apparel.

"I took that as an opportunity to explain to him that there are men who really believe that they are women and men who really believe that they are men," said Strothers. "What I have been teaching him is not to hate them and not to ridicule them and that God still loves them," she said. "Don't mistreat them and unless they ask you, don't say anything..."

Because they have a right to choose that, that is their divine right."

But, if asked, she wants her children to be free to answer from their Christian-based beliefs instead of fearing castigation: "I don't want that for them."

Like Strothers and Webber, Angel Green, agrees that talking

frankly with and listening to children is a key that she and her husband, Kevin, often use to help their four children develop, regardless of what issue is at hand.

"I talk to them a lot, giving them examples of things going on in the world that aren't good," said the mother of three sons, ages 14, 12 and 1 and a daughter, 5. "I do this by showing them examples of people who have good characters, who are demonstrating good character, etc., and by bringing them to church," she said as she gently tackled her feisty 1-year-old after Sunday morning service.

Providing strong examples also works wonders, says Dana Buford of Laurel, Md.

Her daughter, Mandy, 5, has gained new self-esteem by watching an African-American family in the White House.

"I just like the positive image that the little Black girls are portraying as well as the African-American women. And it just gives her hope that she can be whatever she wants to be and that people are acknowledging that now," Buford says.

ford says.

But, it doesn't stop there, Buford says.

"I just pray for her safety because the morals in society have just gone away. You can do your best giving them the best opportunities. And someone without the same ideals can just take that away."

Though 21st Century mothers have special challenges, they can all be overcome by remembering that we were once children ourselves – and we overcame, says Webber. She speaks of her intimate chats with her 11-year-old son to and from school in the car.

"I help him to know that he's not better than anyone else. Just because people make bad decisions and they don't come from a particular household, he's no better than they are. But, we pray about it, we use the Word and just illustrations from my own life, from my own past. I talk to my children about that and the mistakes that I have made so they won't make the same mistakes."



Monique Webber, mother of two, with her husband, Stanley, and their children, Alexandra and Franklin. Credit: Iris Venable

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The Aubry Twin – Tyronne Aubert



Pictured left to right is Jerome Aubert and Tyronne Aubert – known as “The Aubry Twins.”



A teary eyed Jerome sings to his brother Tyronne at the Tribute and Fundraising Concert in October 2008

Tyronne Aubert, half of the legendary R&B Duo known as “The Aubry Twins” died on April 24, 2009 of Cancer at his home in New Orleans. He was 59 years old. The twins, Tyronne and Jerome Aubert, began their musical journey at the age of 8 years

old when they entered and won a talent competition at Lincoln Beach.

DJs and announcers always mispronounced and/or misspelled their last name of “Aubert”. They called them the Aubry Twins so they eventually adopted

the name. They also lived on the corner of Tonti and Aubry in the 7th Ward in New Orleans.

On Saturday, May 2, 2009, a Memorial Mass was held at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church. The Mass was beautiful and

memorable as his grandchildren all paid tribute to their grandfather, one by one. Their long time friend Stevie Wonder also attended and sang at the Mass and the re-past.

Tyronne’s obituary described him perfectly:

“He was an inspiration to all that knew him. His talent motivated and encouraged everyone that had the opportunity to know or hear him. He had an ability to make everyone he knew feel loved and special. His courage and determination were beyond measure. He persevered without limitations. He believed that with God, you could achieve anything.”

He will be missed, but never forgotten. Tyronne always smiled even when in pain, and he never let on to his suffering. That was Tyronne “Tiny” Aubert.

Jerome says, he will continue the legacy of the “Aubry Twins” in honor of his brother; he will perform as the “Aubry Twin”.

Landrieu Releases Consumer Help Guide On Chinese Drywall

WASHINGTON – United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., made public a one-page fact sheet and help guide for consumers with concerns about imported Chinese drywall. The document, which is available on Sen. Landrieu’s website (landrieu.senate.gov), answers frequently asked questions about the federal and state agencies involved and how they are working together to address the problem.

“My office continues to receive calls from consumers who are worried about the adverse effects of this imported Chinese drywall,” Sen. Landrieu said. “Many Louisianians are confused about which agencies to contact for help. This fact sheet provides contact information for a variety of state and federal entities that can assist consumers with their questions

as we try to learn more about this tainted drywall and its health impacts.”

The fact sheet released by Sen. Landrieu is the first document to combine information and contact numbers from federal and state agencies. The fact sheet provides contact information for the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the agency in charge of safety and efficacy testing, as well as the Louisiana Office of Public Health, the entity Louisianians should contact if they suspect Chinese drywall is affecting their health. Previously, consumers were forced to piece together details about federal and state offices that offer help with tainted drywall problems. Sen. Landrieu’s office will update this document and provide additional information as it becomes available from

the relevant agencies.

The help guide responds to concerns about the potential problems with imported drywall used in Florida and Louisiana homes. Reports indicate that this sulfur-emitting drywall smells of rotten eggs, destroys residential wiring and appliances, and poses potential health risks.

The scope of the problem is huge. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the devastating levee breaks that followed damaged more than 1.2 million housing units, with more than 309,000 of those units sustaining major or severe damage. While Florida has received 60 percent of imported Chinese drywall since 2006, Louisiana is the second highest recipient. Louisiana has received 60.2 million pounds of imported Chinese drywall, and it may have been used

in an estimated 7,000 Louisiana homes.

All told, it is believed that between 60,000 and 100,000 homes nationwide may contain potentially defective drywall. Besides Florida and Louisiana, problems also have been reported in the press in Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi and California.

Senators Landrieu, and Bill Nelson, D-Fla., filed legislation in March aimed at initiating a recall and imposing an immediate ban on defective building products from China. The centerpiece of their legislation is a resolution pressing the CPSC to recall Chinese-made drywall, based in part on findings by a Florida homebuilder and state officials who have confirmed the presence of sulfide gases in homes built with the drywall.

Sens. Nelson and Landrieu said

they are pressing the CPSC for a recall in hopes of jump-starting a process for helping affected homeowners with the costs of repairs or replacement, which under their legislation would be the responsibility of the Chinese manufacturers. Such a process would also provide clarity to businesses in the construction and homebuilding sectors, key industries along the Gulf Coast.

The Nelson-Landrieu legislation also asks the CPSC to work with federal testing labs and the Environmental Protection Agency to determine the level of hazard posed by certain chemicals in the drywall. In addition, the legislation calls on the commission to issue an interim ban on imports until it can review federal drywall safety standards to ensure that consumers are protected.

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Governor Bobby Jindal and Tom Benson Announce Saints Lease Extension Deal at Louisiana Superdome

Deal Includes the Creation of Sports Development District



Gov. Bobby Jindal, Saints Owner Tom Benson, and Mayor Ray Nagin discuss the new deal with the media. Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com

New Orleans Saints Owner Tom Benson and Governor Bobby Jindal announced a new partnership on April 30 that will continue the club's commitment to the state through 2025 and also create a new Sports Development District that includes the Benson family purchasing and redeveloping the New Orleans Centre and Dominion Tower. The two properties have sat largely dormant and in disrepair since Hurricane Katrina, and this agreement will revitalize the area around the stadium.

Governor Jindal said that compared to the current agreement with the Saints, the terms of the new deal will save the state more than \$280 million over the next 17 years – and no new taxes will be required to fund any aspect of the new agreement. Additionally, according to a recent UNO study, the Saints generate \$22.1 million annually in direct state revenue, which would add up to nearly \$400 million over the life of this extension.

Governor Jindal said, "This is a great day for Saints fans and the whole state of Louisiana. Throughout this process, I said we would make sure that this deal makes sense for Louisiana taxpayers – and by executing this agreement we will save the state hundreds of millions of dollars,

while making what will be an incredibly successful investment for our state.

"This new partnership results in a long-term lease agreement with the Saints – plus an innovative investment that will dramatically revitalize the Superdome area. By modernizing the Superdome, we will enable the site to be more competitive with venues around the country. At the same time, we have the opportunity to revitalize an area of downtown New Orleans that has remained dormant for four years – and generate further economic development in the region."

Tom Benson said, "It's a bold project in an area in need of investment and renewal, and this partnership will take a part of our city that has not bounced back and make it a place the residents of New Orleans and all of Louisiana can be proud of again. The Superdome is a world-class facility, and it's going to be enhanced. We are very happy with everything planned, and we want the buildings that surround the stadium to be on the same level."

Subject to legislative approval, the new lease is effective August 1, 2009. Inducements will be reduced in the Fiscal Year 2010 and 2011 based on the state's participation in the Sports Development District – a far-reaching, innova-

tive project that will include rejuvenating the downtown district around the Louisiana Superdome. Current inducements will remain in place over the next two seasons, but are reduced by state and LSED lease rentals. The state's fixed inducement payments to the Saints will be eliminated after 2011 and the team will be eligible to receive up to \$6 million a year, based upon their financial performance.

As part of the agreement, the Benson family will purchase the Dominion Tower and enter into a 20-year commercial office lease agreement with the state. The Saints and the Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District (LSED) will join into a co-development agreement to redevelop the New Orleans Centre Mall, which has been empty and in poor condition since 2005. The two entities will create a Sports Development District, which will feature an interactive entertainment venue, commercial office space, entertainment and parking.

Additionally, as part of the deal, a 70,000 square foot festival plaza outside the mall will be available to 2.3 million annual visitors at the Superdome on game day, which will help generate further sales for local businesses and revenues for state and local government. The economic impact of the LSED is projected to reach over \$1.5 billion, with \$71.6 million generated in state revenue.

The Superdome will be modernized, and state agencies will be consolidated at the Dominion Tower into a Class A building – 320,000 square feet for official use – at a lesser cost than new construction.

Additionally, Governor Jindal said he will work with the legislature to use \$85 million in 2007-2008 fiscal year surplus dollars to dramatically upgrade the Louisiana Superdome during the 2010 and 2011 off-seasons. The upgrades will not cause any interruptions to the football schedule. The Superdome enhancements will include a legion of amenities all aimed at improving the fan experience, including wider plaza level concourses, additional concession stands, additional restrooms, improved ADA seating, new premium club lounges

and 3,100 new plaza level seats. On the 300-level, 16 new luxury boxes will also be built.

These upgrades will allow the Superdome to remain competitive with the new multi-use stadiums that have been built throughout the country, and benefit all events at the Superdome – including the Sugar Bowl, the BCS Championship and The Essence Festival.

Modernizing the stadium will also be key in attracting signature events such as future Super Bowls and NCAA Final Fours. These enhancements were a key factor in the 2013 Super Bowl bid. The Saints will assume a greater responsibility for producing incremental stadium revenues with the enhancements made to the Superdome.

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Clear Skies Made Way for a Near-Perfect Jazz Festival



All photos: cityofno.com

For the 40th Anniversary of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, the Fair Grounds was packed with crowds of fest-goers armed with the usual chairs, blankets, umbrellas, and shades. This year, the festival was spared from rain showers for both weekends, until the closing hours of the fest on Sunday, May 3. The festival's music highlights included several big names and local favorites such as Wynton Marsalis, Joe Cocker, Irma Thomas, James Taylor, Rebirth Brass Band with guest Ker-

mit Ruffins, the Dave Matthews Band, Earth, Wind & Fire, Maze, Erykah Badu, and Musiq Soulchild, to name a few. Equally important to the music line-up for some, the culinary spread offered a large variety of local favorites, from Crawfish Monica to a duck po-boy. Several local artists also had their works on display during the two-weekend festivities.

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Hollywood Comes to NOLA Thanks to the Office of Film and Video's Efforts



Jennifer Day, director of the City of New Orleans' Office of Film and Video.
Credit: www.cityofno.com

Jennifer Day is convinced that 2009 will be a great year for film in New Orleans.

She should know. Day, Director of the City of New Orleans' Office of Film and Video, has been leader of the department as it has seen exponential growth in the number and value of films and TV programs filmed in New Orleans. And with the release of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, New Orleans has once again solidified itself as a brand of choice when it comes attracting filmmakers to the South.

"New Orleans has positioned itself favorably," says Day. "Not many places can match what we have to offer."

Critics across the country are falling in love with New Orleans and its "special mystique," which Day describes as a key reason the film industry has taken flight in recent years.

Day came to work for the City of New Orleans in 2006 as it was beginning the biggest recovery in our country's history. As important as the infrastructure priorities are, Day still felt there was room to focus on the city's blossoming film industry. With the support of Mayor C. Ray Nagin, patience and a hefty amount of state incentives, the Office of Film and Video has met and exceeded the pre-Katrina level of local spending by film companies

by about 38 percent every year since Day's arrival. Despite the recent downturn in the economy, that figure only looks to grow in 2009.

The New Orleans film industry has become a star of this recovery. From music videos to large scale blockbusters such as *"Déjà vu"* and *"Ray,"* New Orleans has the infrastructure to handle even the most diverse production. Looking forward, Day is helping craft a legacy for New Orleans that will live on in the silver screen and even longer in the minds and hearts of people all over the planet.

Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office Opens GED Testing Center

Sheriff Marlin N. Gusman and the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office are pleased to announce the opening of the OPCS General Education Development (GED) Testing Center. The facility hosted its inaugural GED tests on May 1 and 2.

The GED Testing Center is located at the OPCS American Textile Building and will serve all members of the community who require GED test taking services, as well as the literacy programs of New Orleans. Testing is administered by the State of Louisiana Department of Education certified testing coordinators.

Sheriff Gusman noted that the lack of GED testing centers was hampering the recovery of Orleans Parish. "We are happy to perform this service for the community," Sheriff Gusman said. "Post-Katrina, Orleans Parish lost all GED testing centers, creating a lack of opportunity for citizens who wished to complete their education. There is a long waiting list of students who are ready to take the GRE, but have been unable to do so due to the lack of testing

centers throughout Orleans Parish. Without an education, it is difficult to find employment and to move ahead."

The GED Testing Center will also serve OPCS inmate students, who will be tested under security. GED and Adult Education classes are offered at the OPCS through a partnership with Delgado Community College's Adult Education Department.

"Our partnership with Delgado Adult Education has been very rewarding and successful, and I would like to thank them for their efforts with our inmate students," said Sheriff Gusman. "It's important to me and to the community that inmates in my care are offered the opportunity to further their education. Without an education, inmates are more likely to become repeat offenders. We are doing our part to ensure that all students in Orleans Parish have the opportunity to continue their education and better their lives."

The opening of the OPCS GED Testing Center brings the number of testing centers in Orleans Parish up to three.



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Justin Nicholas,
General Science,
SGA President

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

This issue's Shoot Ya Best Shot! features photos from several events that have taken place over recent weeks in New Orleans.

Terry & Bernardo's Jazz Fest Party at the Top of the Ritz Carlton



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2009 Zoo To Do

Attendees of the 2009 Zoo to Do held at the Audubon Zoo enjoyed great food and entertainment on Friday May 1. The Zoo to Do is a New Orleans premiere benefit event.



About Town at LeRoux and The Perfect Fit



Michael Ward's Party at Sweet Lorraine's on May 1



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2009 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

The 40th Annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival was a huge success with star-studded appearances and performances. Data News Weekly was there to capture the highlights.



Aaron Neville



Erykah Badu



Kaylin Orleans Ruffin



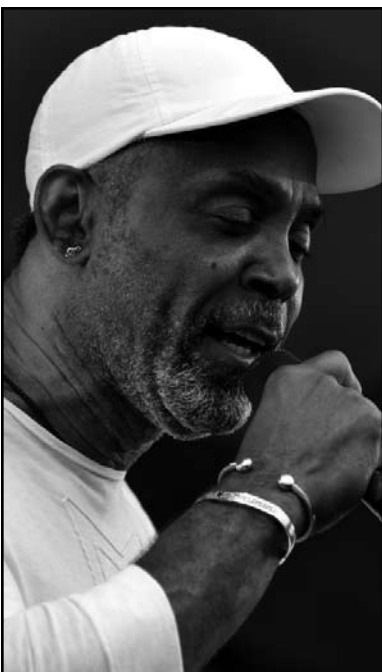
Deacon John



Elysian Fieldz



Julie and Wayne Lee



Frankie Beverly



Wanda Rouzan



Kaylin Orleans Ruffin and Kermit Ruffin



Earth, Wind & Fire



Young Guardians of Flame

W. Anthony Patton Agency & 1st Fridays: 80s Explosion



Dionne Character
Data News Weekly Columnist

If you ever wanted to relive years gone by, you had a chance at the 1st Fridays 80s Explosion, which was held at one of the newest venues in the city, The Westin Hotel. The hotel, which was previously the Wyndham, is located at 100 Rue Iberville Street, atop the boss shops of 1 Canal Place.

Promenading the hallways were celebrities, lace, colored shades, converse, leggings, leather jackets, big hair, and gold chains. The entire 12th floor was standing room only, with approximately 2400 people in attendance, some wearing 80s fashions of icons such as Run DMC, Salt n'Pepper

and Michael Jackson.

It was a night to remember. The crowd jammed all night long, listening to Captain Charles, DJ Raj Smooth, and DJ Afodesiak, who took us all back down memory lane. Spinning some of the "dopest" tunes of the 80s, Hip-Hop and R&B. The show was hosted by Big Herc, who celebrated his birthday and Hollywood, who hyped up the runway for the 80s fashion show, which featured some of the hottest fashions by various designers of New Orleans. I had the pleasure of hosting the Red Carpet, scouting out all the VIPs and party goers in the house.

First Fridays has become the spot for the Grown n' Sexy to network, party and mingle with people their own age. You can expect food, vendors, VIP, and even a Life-styles Lounge where you can get a haircut, massage, pedicure, make-up, and much more before entering the party.

With a full staff of movers and shakers, the W. Anthony Patton Agency has masterminded the art of throwing one of the largest parties in the City of New Orleans consistently, every month for at least nine years, thus far.

There ain't no party like a 1st Fridays party, which begins promptly at 8 pm and



Big Herc and the Ladies of B.I.M. Fitness. Photo Credit: Peter Forest

glides through the early morning until 4 am. If you are about business, possess any talents, and would like to be part of this growing networking industry, then 1st Fridays is the venue for you. For more infor-

mation visit: www.neworleansblack.com.

If you have any comments or would like to subscribe to my mailing list, visit www.dionnecharacter.com.



Thais Mills
Data News Columnist

If you have considered the price of a face mask to go to the club in the last month, you already know what I'm talking about. The Swine Flu is in FULL effect and if the global news spread doesn't scare you, I'm sure an unfamiliar cough will. I sneezed yesterday and spent all afternoon looking up "Swine Flu" symptoms online. It's a crazy thing to jump off once you jump on the Flu train.

Last year it was Bird Flu now, it is pigs. It makes me wonder...

What really pisses you off about getting sick?

I took to the streets of people still rocking out like its Jazz Fest. Armed with hand sanitizer, I asked anyone who'd listen to my silly smart question:

Pissed Off Weekly

What pisses you off about getting sick?

"What pisses me off about getting sick is having NO INSURANCE and paying hospital bills for something I can't control."

- Angie B., New Orleans, La.

"I hate being in bed all day while people stand around you like you can't hear them talking about you!"

- Frankie L., Lake Charles, La.

"My wife makes me feel like I'm 3 years old. I'm 36!!!"

- Gregory H., New Orleans, La.

"Missing work with NO SICK TIME. Everyone should get a few sick days."

- James B., New Orleans, La.

Well guys, I hope that INK made you smile in knowing you are NOT alone. In times like this we should find humor instead of heartache. Wash your hands more often and don't stop enjoying what makes your life worth living... Say it with me.. "A fly that's SWINE ain't a flu OF MINE!!!"

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click here to buy art by Thais Mills.



Urban Drop-Out Rates At Catastrophic Levels



Marc Morial
NNPA Columnist

To Be Equal

"Every child in America deserves a quality education that will prepare them to compete in an increasingly global marketplace."
- The National Urban League Opportunity Compact

There is an economic tsunami rumbling through urban America, more destructive than anything we have seen on Wall Street.

A new report commissioned by the America's Promise Alliance, headed by Colin and Alma Powell, shows that while the national graduation rate has climbed to a still less than acceptable 71 percent, the average high school graduation rate in the nation's 50 largest cities stands at a devastatingly low 53 percent – an 18 percent gap. In some cities, including Indianapolis, Cleveland and Detroit, graduation rates are less than 40 percent.

Doubly disturbing is the fact that there is an even wider gap between urban and suburban graduation rates. In the metropolitan areas of Baltimore, Cleveland, Columbus, Ohio, and Milwaukee, for example, urban students have graduation rates at least 35 percentage points lower than their suburban neighbors.

As with too many other measures of opportunity in America, this new report shows that high school graduation rates are a "Tale of Two Cities."

In largely suburban and white areas,

earning a high school diploma is the expected norm; in mostly urban, black and brown communities, it is not.

These inequities and disparities are putting at risk the futures of millions of young people, as well as the economic future of our nation. We know that education is the number one predictor of future success, with earnings rising at each level of educational attainment, beginning with a high school diploma.

Conversely, we know that high-school drop-outs are more likely to end up unemployed, in jail and living in poverty. And at a time when we are facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, along with increased competition in the global economy, it is more important than ever that we produce the most prepared and best educated workforce in the world. Every child counts and every child deserves a chance to succeed.

That is why the "Opportunity to Thrive," with its focus on early childhood education

and making college more affordable, is one of the cornerstones of the National Urban League's Opportunity Compact.

And it is why I was proud to stand with Colin Powell when he launched his drop-out prevention campaign last year. As he said then, "When more than one million students a year drop out of high school, it's more than a problem, it's a catastrophe... we cannot afford to let nearly one-third of our kids fail." We agree.

We are encouraged by the Obama Administration's greater investments in early childhood education, as well as the President's call for higher standards and accountability for schools, teachers, students and parents. The drop-out crisis requires a relentless effort by all of us to turn the tide.

It has been said that "history is a race between education and catastrophe." This new report makes it clear that to avoid an irreversible catastrophe, American public education has a lot of catching up to do.

Nagin's Approval Rating Directly Reflects Citizens' Disappointment With Recovery



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

Troubling the Water:

Nearly four years after Hurricane Katrina, pockets of the city still resemble the tumultuous times with debris-filled structures standing alongside homes where residents are trying to rebuild their homes, neighborhoods and lives.

In this troubled time for New Orleans, one man, Mayor Ray Nagin, stands inside the crosshairs of a barrage of criticism that may have an impact on how the city recov-

ers and how it is being perceived by people across the globe. And the question is, who is doing more damage in the court of popular opinion? Is it what some would consider an overzealous mainstream media who seems obsessed with stories of scandal? Or is it a case in which the former poster child of reform, Ray Nagin, who was supposed to root out corruption has become someone who is as much a part of the problem?

After pulling off a political "rope-a-dope," defeating Mitch Landrieu, who is from a Louisiana political dynasty, his re-election tenure results have been mixed. Admittedly, there have been considerable progress, but it is a sad tale of two cities, where the lines between hope and despair are sometimes blurred depending upon one's perspective. Today, Nagin nears the end of his term with an approval rating that has plummeted, according to a University of New Orleans poll. The results show his approval rating is at an all time low of 24 percent, the lowest score since they began recording it in 1986.

Nagin in Black and White

According to this poll's findings, only five

percent of whites and 36 percent of blacks thought the mayor was doing an adequate job. While both numbers are dismally low, there is a great disparity between the races in the city. In these years after Hurricane Katrina, Mayor Nagin has been repositioned in the court of perception. Initially, he was thought by many segments inside the African-American community as the mayor of white elites and business interests who overwhelmingly voted him into office in a runoff against then Police Chief Richard Pennington who had the backing of New Orleans' outgoing Mayor Marc Morial and Former U.S Congressman William Jefferson.

What has happened to the guy who was supposed to clean up the mess left by a previous administration that was mired in scandal?

The city as well as the state continues to have a reputation as a place where the stench and scent of corruption are thoroughly ingrained into the political culture so much that citizens barely bat an eye at evidence of wrongdoing. But post-Katrina, it seems that citizens expect more from their elected leaders.

Which for the renewal of confidence in the city is a good thing, but where some of the concern is that there is a racial disparity in terms of who it is that is being targeted by law enforcement as well as the mainstream media. This is the case in print as well as broadcast outlets seem to take a more heavy handed approach to the portrayal of African-American leadership vs. Whites.

This has become a political shell game in the racial reshuffling of the deck in terms of leadership. And where will it be and in whose hand will it lie in the future is the question? Have we entered a Reconstruction like moment in our city's history where power both economically and politically will re-enter into the hands of a few and additionally the carpetbaggers who come to the city to find a place with unlimited possibilities? And is it was as it was during those troubled times in our history that today we will witness mainstream media outlets be the voice that demonize African-Americans as incompetent and unfit to take a leading role in the recovery and the rebuilding of New Orleans?

Escalated Swine Flu Outbreak Sparks Pandemic Preparation

Sandra Jordan

(NNPA) - As the number of swine flu cases continue to grow in the U.S. and internationally, Dr. Richard Besser, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, said now is the time for businesses, communities, faith-based organizations and families to think about how they would function in the event of a pandemic outbreak of swine flu.

"There's been tremendous planning that's been going on around the country over the past number of years," Besser said.

"Hopefully this outbreak would not progress, but leaning forward and thinking about what you would do is one of the most important things individuals and communities can undertake right now."

Pandemic preparation previously centered on the threat from an avian flu virus (H5N1) jumping from infecting birds to infecting humans.

Now joint international efforts are underway to prevent H1N1 influenza A, the new strain of the swine flu, from reaching pandemic proportions.

This new strain is considered unique due to genetic origins from both pigs and birds,

and it can be transmitted readily from human to human.

Mexico appears to be the epicenter for this outbreak, where more than 1,600 people have been affected, resulting in at least 19 deaths. The U.S. has issued a travel advisory, recommending all non-essential travel to Mexico be avoided.

The World Health Organization reports swine flu cases in New Zealand, Canada, Spain, Israel and the United Kingdom. WHO raised the pandemic alert level to Phase 4, which means there are confirmed person-to-person spread of a new influenza virus which is able to cause "community-level" outbreaks.

The U.S. has had at least 226 confirmed cases of swine flu. The government released a quarter of the nation's antiviral stockpiles to treat potential new cases - 11 million treatment courses are going to known affected states New York, California, Texas, Ohio and Kansas as well as other states. Recent reports say most states have now encountered at least one case of the virus.

The CDC has declared a Public Health Emergency to act aggressively against the swine flu outbreak. Besser said the declaration is not cause for alarm. It gives the government additional authority to operate

faster.

"It allows us to move products and dispense drugs in a way we couldn't before and streamlined the process by which the government works and so it's primarily a reflection of that," Besser said.

"It's something that we do whenever we feel that we want to have the ability to move quickly and swiftly."

The Defense Dept. has stockpiles of Relenza and Tamiflu available to protect the military population, along with contingency plans in the event of a greater health crisis.

The Food and Drug Administration authorized emergency use of influenza medicines by public health and medical personnel and diagnostic and therapeutic tools to identify and respond to the swine flu virus.

The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture already monitors animal health and has a surveillance system to do so.

"It is important to remember that not only have there been no reports of this virus in swine, according to scientists at USDA, swine flu viruses are not transmitted by food so a person cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork products," said U.S. Secretary Of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

"In fact, cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills all viruses and other food-borne pathogens. Eating properly handled and cooked pork or pork products is safe."

Homeland Security is closely coordinating with the Department of Health and Human Services and with the CDC to monitor the situation.

The following are some swine flu facts:

- This new strain of swine influenza virus has genetic origins from both pigs and birds, and can be transmitted readily from human to human
- The strain has caused deaths/severe illnesses in Mexico
- Swine flu is contracted mainly through coughing and sneezing
- Swine flu cannot be contracted by eating pork
- The new strain is receptive to antiviral medicines oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza)
- Milder cases are reported in California, Mexico, Kansas, Ohio and New York based on testing and not new outbreaks, requiring one hospitalization. All have recovered.
- Outbreaks were first seen in late March and April

CHILDREN SHOULD NOT SMOKE

The FDA is Clearly Overwhelmed

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is supposed to approve new medicines, monitor the safety of those already on the market, and keep our food safe.

But, currently the FDA is not doing a good job. In early 2008, a blood thinner manufactured in China which the FDA let into the US was contaminated by a mysterious ingredient and caused 81 deaths.¹ Summer 2008 brought a salmonella outbreak, blamed first on tomatoes and later on hot peppers, that infected 1,442 people and resulted in at least 286 hospitalizations in 43 states.² Just this winter, salmonella in peanuts killed six people, made 486 people sick and led to the recall of more than 2,800 foods with peanut ingredients.³

It's clear that the FDA is already overwhelmed. Should they be given the authority to regulate the \$80 billion tobacco industry, too?

Congress Wants the FDA to Regulate Tobacco

Congress wants to add tobacco products to the FDA's list. We think that's just wrong. The majority of Americans are losing confidence in the FDA's ability to protect our nation's food and drug supply. Recently, a national survey revealed that 61 percent of U.S. adults feel the food recall process

is only fair or poor, while 73 percent of adults say they are just as concerned about food safety as they are about war on terror.⁴

It's clear that the FDA is already overwhelmed. Should they be given the authority to regulate the \$80 billion tobacco industry, too?

Before the latest FDA blunders, a poll was conducted which found that 82 percent of likely voters are concerned that a proposal in Congress to let FDA regulate tobacco would interfere with the agency's core mission of regulating the nation's food and drug supply.⁵ This is an issue which deserves to be fully debated, and right now, that isn't happening.

The FDA is Not the Place for it

Lorillard supports additional regulation of the tobacco industry. But the FDA

is not the place for it. Today's ineffective food and drug safety programs pose an immediate threat. Therefore, expanding FDA's current role would be a health hazard all its own.

¹Harris, Gardner. "Heparin Contamination May Have Been Deliberate, F.D.A. Says." New York Times. April 30, 2008.

²"Investigation of Outbreak of Infections Caused by Salmonella Saintpaul." Center for Disease Control and Prevention. August 28, 2008. URL: <http://cdc.gov/Salmonella/saintpaul/>

³"Is the FDA a broken agency?" The Associated Press. March 3, 2009.

⁴"Food Safety: Majority of Americans Feel Industry Doesn't Do Enough." American Society for Quality. March 11, 2009. URL: <http://www.asq.org/media-room/press-releases/2009/20090311-food-safety.html>

⁵"Zogby Poll: 82% Fear Tobacco Regulation Mandate Puts FDA Core Mission at Risk." Zogby International. February 26, 2008.

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Disney's First Black Heroine Stirs Controversy



Actress Anika Noni Rose Credit: Courtesy/Disney Consumer Products

Special to the NNPA from the Afro-American Newspapers

(NNPA) - After claims of racial insensitivity, Walt Disney has made several key changes to its newest princess - a brown-skinned, bright-eyed cartoon named Tiana.

Voiced by Anika Noni Rose, a leading cast member in {Dreamgirls,} Tiana is the star of an animated film, *The Princess and the Frog*, set for release this Christmas. Media mogul Oprah Winfrey will

play Tiana's mother, the Herald Sun reports.

Among the racially charged changes made to the film include a shift in Tiana's profession from a chambermaid to an aspiring restaurateur; the character's original name, Maddy, was changed because some critics argued it was too similar to "mammy," a disparaging term for Black women.

The controversy boiled over after it was revealed that Tiana would find love in an olive-skinned, almost-White prince.

"Perhaps Disney doesn't want the future mothers of dwindling White America being imprinted so early in their lives with the notion of a Black suitor," wrote blogger James Collier on ActingWhite.com, an anti-racism Web site.

Another blogger, Angela Helm, complained to aolblackvoices.com that even though a Black man holds the highest office in America, Disney seems to think a Black man is not "worthy of the title of prince."

According to Disney, the film follows Tiana as she is transformed into a frog and travels deep into the bayous of Louisiana to find a cure from a voodoo queen.

The Herald Sun quoted an unnamed Disney source, who blasted claims that voodoo references and New Orleans setting propagate Black stereotypes.

"New Orleans is an ideal setting for an American fairytale set in the jazz age - it's all part of the fabric of the story."

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Questioning History After the First 100 Days

Edwin Buggage

President Barack Obama who made history in November recently reached the 100 day mark in his administration. While there are arguments on both sides as to the success or lack thereof in his short tenure in office, one question remains for many Americans: How do any of the things being discussed affect them in their immediate future?

In a time when citizens are witnessing the American Dream slipping through their fingers, our victory in November may have been great for the psychology of a nation, but what will it mean for the citizens of this country's quality of life moving forward?

Is it time for this nation to question whether a victory of symbolism can lead to something substantive in a nation that is on the decline as far as its influence globally.

We should also question whether an individual—regardless of their level of charisma, celebrity, or sincerity, can change the structure of a system that is ineffective in eliminating the problems that persists in this nation.

The world is a very different place in the 21st century and perhaps it is time for the country to figure out its place in a world that looks less to and for the U.S. to eradicate their problems. That might be a bitter pill to swallow for a nation that has had a mammoth-like influence during the last century.

Perhaps it is time to question whether the U.S. has the resources to continue to engage simultaneously in wars in foreign lands and work better to solve its domestic issues. Everything that citizens have worked for lies in the balance and the celebration that occurred in November and in January has given way to the reality that election that there is a vast gulf that divides the promises during an election and the realities of the lives of the immediate needs of many Americans.

Of course most Americans are not naïve enough to believe that the present administration would wave a magic wand and all the problems facing the nation would disappear. But it is time to reconsider our role in the world, and where we are in our history. We have to realize that the U.S. can

continue to be a great nation, and the fulfillment of the dream of an African-American becoming the U.S. President is an amazing feat for a nation that has been steeped in an unfortunate racial history.

But today in this sea of leadership change, the tide must turn and the rivers must flow in the direction of helping the people of this nation ride out the storm that is leaving many of their futures uncertain. So though we are still early in President Obama's administration, we as citizens must question how and when we will get to this storied place.

For we were the architects who helped shape history at the polls, so we must also question our leaders, and be the molders of social policy who demand that our elected officials advocate for more legislation that is beneficial to the citizens of the U.S.

After the first 100 days, the road to how the future will look remains a mystery, and where we will be in the next four years is still unknown. But we as citizens must remain steadfast in asking questions, for many times the answers lie in the hands of the people they will impact.

Sojourner Truth Becomes First Black Woman Memorialized at U.S. Capitol

Tiffany Browne
NNPA Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The decade-long quest to erect a memorial statue of Sojourner Truth in the U.S. Capitol has finally come to fruition. The bust was unveiled during a euphoria-filled ceremony April 28, honoring the abolitionist and heroic activist for women's rights who lived from 1797-1883.

The statue is the first to honor a Black woman in the nation's Capitol. It has been announced that her memorial will soon be joined by the bust of Rosa Parks.

"Now many young boys and girls like my own daughters will come to Emancipation Hall and see the face of a woman who looks like them," said First Lady Michelle Obama after unveiling the bronze figure of Truth. "I hope that Sojourner Truth would be proud to see me, a descendant of slaves, serving as the first lady of the United States of America."

It was the late Dr. C. DeLores Tucker, founder and a national chair of the NCBW, who led the charge to have Sojourner Truth memorialized within the Capitol. Tucker introduced Congress to a bill that called for Sojourner Truth's inclusion in the suffrage memorial that consists of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony. The bust unveiled last week, however, is a free-standing work of art in Emancipation Hall.

NCBW's current Chair Dr. E. Faye Williams worked tirelessly to bring the memorial to fruition.

U. S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), [then Senator] Hilary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) led the Congressional legislation for the memorial.

"She didn't want children to know an untruth. She wanted the truth to be told that African American women were involved in the suffrage movement," Lee told the crowd assembled for the unveiling.

The program participants included an all-star line up. Singers Yolanda Adams, Dorinda Clarke Cole and Lomax Spaulding opened the ceremony by paying musical tribute to Truth. Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie gave the official opening with a powerful blessing. Also, students from Atlanta's Ron Clark Academy gave a lively



Women of the National Congress of Black Women gather around the newly unveiled Sojourner Truth bust in the U. S. Capitol. NCBW President Dr. E. Faye Williams stands in center. Credit: The Washington Informer

musical tribute through song and dance. However, the high note was actress Cicely Tyson reading the famous "Ain't I a Woman" speech given by Sojourner Truth

during a women's convention in 1851.

The long-awaited historic moment drew a crowd to the Capitol for the unveiling.

"I'm so excited I let my hair down," joked Lee in reference to her latest hairstyle which strays away from her most notable style, a braided up do.

Born into slavery as Isabelle Baumfree in 1797, Sojourner Truth escaped to freedom after her owner broke a promise to emancipate her. In 1843, a then Baumfree, changed her name to Sojourner Truth, telling her friends and associates, "The truth calls me". She joined the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, a group founded by abolitionists that supported women's rights and religious tolerance. After the group disbanded, Truth remained a passionate and a devout supporter of abolition and women's rights.

Betty Long, a visitor from

Pennsylvania, wept during the unveiling.

Long said, "It shows that our strength [lies] in how we are able to press on and rely on our faith. It also shows that Blacks are a part of the forefront for issues affecting everyone."

The significance of Truth's contributions was exemplified at the event by the fact that the unveiling was led by three women in political leadership. They were Now Secretary of State Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, the first female speaker of the House and First Lady Obama.

Obama concluded, the "power behind the bust will not just be in the metal that delineates Sojourner Truth's face. It will be also in the message that defines her legacy."

"FOR TOO LONG OUR CULTURE HAS SAID, 'IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT.' NOW, WE WANT TO BE A NATION THAT SERVES GOALS LARGER THAN SELF. WE'VE BEEN OFFERED A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY, AND WE MUST NOT LET THIS MOMENT PASS. MY CALL IS FOR EVERY AMERICAN TO COMMIT TO THE SERVICE OF YOUR NEIGHBORS AND YOUR NATION. BY DOING THIS, WE SUSTAIN AND EXTEND THE BEST THAT HAS EMERGED IN AMERICA!"

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