

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

# Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

**OOOoOOP!**  
**New Orleans**  
**Hosts DST**

**Page 6**  
**DataZone**

FREE  
COPY

August 7 - August 13, 2010 45th Year Volume 11 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

**Data Exclusive**

## Local BP Exec Balances Job and Love for the Community

*The Soul of New Orleans*

Page 2



### State & Local

Congressional  
Race Heats Up!

Page 9

### Newsmaker

Jerome Smith  
Feeding Dreams



Page 4



# Still in Touch



New Orleans native and BP Executive Darryl Willis

*New Orleans Native  
Darryl Willis balances love for  
his company and his community  
from front lines of BP oil spill*

**By Gary Estwick**

Darryl Willis pauses to ponder a question, his eyes surveying the patio at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in search of his answer.

Willis is concerned about the estimated 50,000 people who started claims with British Petroleum because of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico then failed to submit documentation - tax returns, pay stubs, W2s - all of which can substantiate losses and allow them to receive financial assistance.

"Why did they call?" Willis asks, thinking about his own question. "Why haven't they followed-up?"

He is worried about businesses whose revenues are attached to contamination-free waters and beachfront get-aways. He set a goal to make sure no person affected by the April 20 accident misses a boat payment, a house or car note or is unable to put food on their family's table; yet he knows some businesses will be forced to close, including some in his hometown.

These issues perplex Willis, a New Orleans native and 1987 graduate of McDonough 35 High School. As the man in charge of conversing with everyone from out-of-work oyster fishermen to members of Congress; Willis has also taken a hands-on role in the claims process. Every day, a crabber, a waitress, the owner of vacant vacation condos, a scuba diver somewhere between Texas and Florida rely on him to make sure they get a check; it's the right amount and the process is hassle-free.

This is why Willis, 41, says the responsibilities he ac-

*Continued next page.*

## INSIDE DATA

Cover Story . . . . .	2	Commentary. . . . .	8
Newsmaker . . . . .	4	State & Local. . . . .	9
Data Zone . . . . .	5	National News . . . . .	10

## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

P.O. Box 57347, New Orleans, LA 70157-7347  
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**  
Cheryl Mainor  
**Managing Editor**  
Edwin Buggage  
**Editor**  
Dionne Character  
**Arts & Entertainment Editor**  
Melanie Mainor  
**Copy Editor Intern**  
June Hazeur  
**Accounting**

**Contributors**  
Tobi Blanchard  
Edwin Buggage  
Dionne Character  
Gary Estwick  
Jordan Flaherty  
June Hazeur  
Allan Katz  
Glenn Summers

**Art Direction & Production**  
MainorMedia.com  
**Editorial Submissions**  
datanewseditor@bellsouth.net  
**Advertising Inquiries**  
datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Please call (504) 309-9913 for subscription information. Dated material two weeks in advance.  
Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

cepted in a shift of roles amid the more than 200 million gallons of crude oil leaking into the Gulf is much harder, more stressful than his normal post.

"It's affecting their lives," says Willis, a scientist. "It's infected their lives. That's a big responsibility to carry."

The task has dominated his life since early May, taking him away from his wife and two children in Houston. Placed him in New Orleans one night, in Gulf Shores, AL, the next, and in Pensacola, FL, the following day. It has put him in front of the House Judiciary Committee.

Cast him in a nationally-advertised commercial, far from his normal job as a scientist sitting behind a desk. Far from his formal training as a chemist, mathematician, geologist and geophysicist.

But it has allowed him to put his own spin on a recovery process he dared not shy away from.

#### HERO OR PARIAH

In late April, Willis received a call from Andy Inglis, a BP executive. He asked Willis to assist with the recovery efforts, unsure where he was needed at, Willis accepted. The following morning he boarded a flight to Monroe.

Since then, Willis has received both praise and criticism.

Nationally syndicated radio host Tom Joyner questioned on air if Willis worked for BP. Is he an actor? Even a Congressman recently asked Willis if he was a lawyer; perhaps a public relations expert he hadn't met or heard of.

"No, I'm a scientist," Willis responded.

Some applaud him for stepping into the oily fray. They thank him for doing the commercials; thank him for what he's trying to do to help BP make it through the process. After all, he could have stayed behind his desk as vice president of the company's engineering and geoscience in North America and followed coverage on network and cable television. Then they give him their claim number and ask for personal help with their claim.

Others laud him and BP, questioning the reason behind his presence - a Black man facing blame for a corporation's mishap, and attempting to fix the mess. Still others meet him in the field and remind him - as if he didn't remember - that in the commercial he said he would "do whatever it takes to make this right." They tell him everything isn't right and that he needs to get it resolved. Then they give him their claim number.

Willis said BP spent much of the first 30 days of the spill attempting to convince people that they were not going to try and hide behind the \$75 million cap associated with damages caused by spills as it was defined in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Then when the oil was capped, suspicion arose that the financial assistance would dry up.

"That's been the challenge," he said. "To get people comfortable with the fact that we're going to actually do what we're supposed to do."

He is now less than a month away from turning over everything to Kenneth Feinberg, who was named by President Obama to independently manage the \$20 billion Gulf disaster compensation fund.

#### PERSONAL TOUCH

Willis wears a sky blue dress shirt, pinstriped slacks, dark shoes and cuff links given to him by Eric Ochmanek, the BP public relations representative who travels with him. His job has been to help Willis craft his message and make sure his thoughts are clear and for meetings, town hall gatherings and teleconferences with reporters. Willis' head is shaved bald. His facial hair is growing back slightly now that it is past 4 p.m. on a Tuesday afternoon in Downtown New Orleans. Thin glasses sit on his nose.

It's a different look for Willis, who was introduced to America in the orange collared shirt and denim jeans he wore in the BP commercials.

On a conference call Tuesday with reporters, Willis, a self-inflicted perfectionist, is asked about problems in the claims process. As of Monday night, BP has paid nearly \$300 million of claims.

"If you took one question and asked it in all 14 (claims) centers (in Louisiana), you might get seven different answers," Willis admits, "because we haven't had the time to get everyone on the same page. But Feinberg is going to get that fixed."

"We've been worrying about cutting checks quickly."

He answers questions carefully, but with a frankness not associated with corporate spokesmen. Perhaps it is his slight New Orleans accent which has hung around despite stints in Moscow, Vietnam and San Francisco with BP.

Before answering each question in the 30-minute teleconference, Willis thanks the reporter for asking the question, then takes his time answering, making sure not to stop once he reaches the 12-second television sound bite. His voice is firm yet understanding. Yes, he's a native, but he's not going out of his

way to utilize it.

Later, he credits his William and Cora Willis, now deceased, and family members for preparing him for the job. His father used to tell him all the time, "It's important to walk with kings, but not lose the common touch."

Willis would give his father the preverbal, 'Yeah, yeah, I got it,' not really understanding the lesson. It's something he now understands.

"This whole response is personal for me," he said. "I want people to know that I'm listening to them, I know what they're saying. Sometimes I'll have an answer they like, sometimes I won't have an answer they like, but I hope to give them an answer, and that's not always easy."

#### AWAY FROM HOME

He realizes that he wouldn't be able to complete this task without his wife, Dawnia, who works as a pharmacist and is handling the role

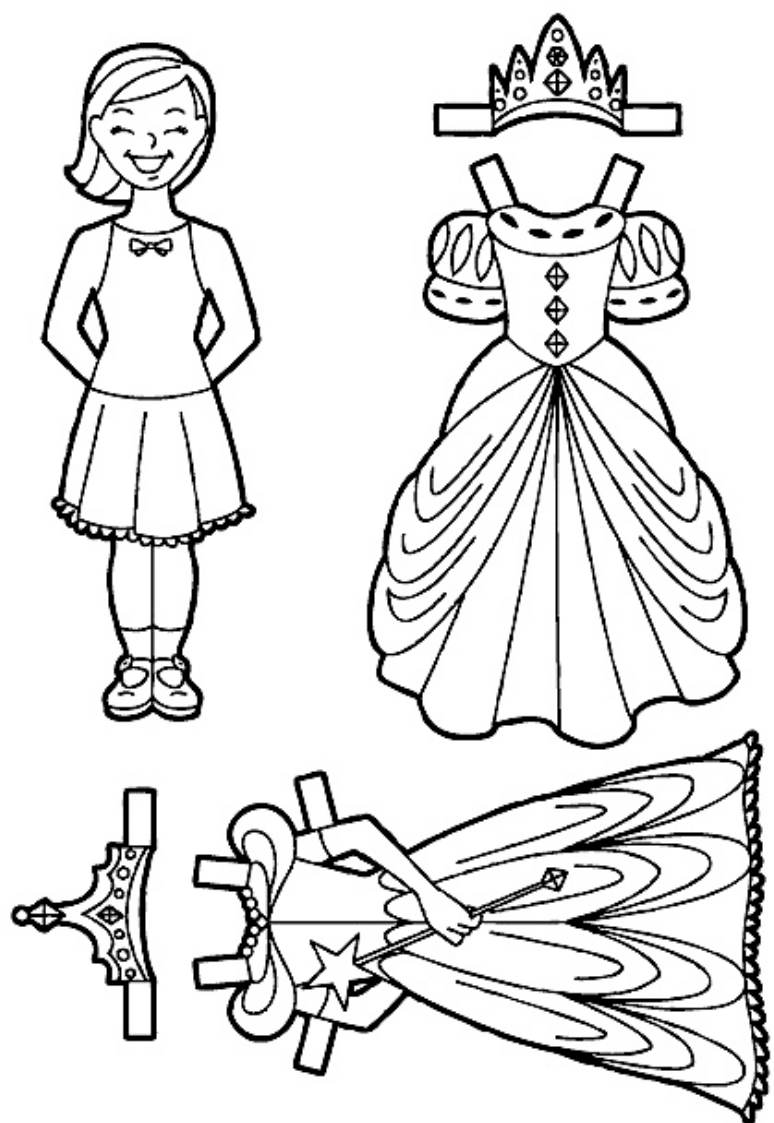
of raising the two kids, a son, 8, and daughter, 11. This has allowed him to be totally immersed in the recovery efforts. They usually communicate daily, by phone or sometimes text messages.

"My wife has just been totally running the show. She could easily be calling me, saying what about this bill, nagging me, 'How ya doin, what-cha doin?'"

Willis says he has no interest in maintaining a public relations or operations role after late August. He's a scientist. He will make himself available once or twice a month to ensure that the process continues to work.

"For me, it's a lot to take in, that my company was involved in this spill, but we were," Willis said. "The response is going to be the key thing: how we repaid the damage. If we don't we should be held accountable for that."

"And if I thought that we wouldn't, I wouldn't be talking to you."



Take time to  
be a dad today.



Call 877-4DAD411 or visit [www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)





# General Mills Names New Orleans Resident A Candidate For Feeding Dreams

Jerome Smith is New Orleans' Community Champion in the Southeastern 2010 Feeding Dreams Competition.

The spotlight was on local community hero Jerome Smith as the 2010 Feeding Dreams campaign officially launched in New Orleans today. Smith is New Orleans' Community Champion as part of the Feeding Dreams grassroots initiative supported by General Mills that celebrates African-Americans' commitment to community service at the local level. Smith's compassion for his neighbors is paired with a deep-rooted passion for creating a more vibrant city through the causes he champions daily in New Orleans' neighborhoods.

Residents of New Orleans and supporters throughout the country may cast a vote at FeedingDreams.com for Smith who is among the 10 Feeding Dreams champions competing for grant monies, and his photograph and story are featured on the web site. This year's Feeding Dreams program highlights Community Champions in 10 cities: Atlanta, GA; Birmingham, AL; Charlotte, NC; Columbia, SC; Jackson, MS; Jacksonville, FL; Memphis, TN; New Orleans, LA; Miami, FL and Norfolk, VA.

Jerome Smith: A dedicated activist, humanitarian, former freedom rider and giant among men-New Orleans' own Smith is revered and respected as a men-



Smith New Orleans Hero Jerome Smith was honored by being named a candidate for General Mills Feeding Dreams National Award

tor, teacher and nurturer of at-risk African American youth in the Seventh Ward and Tremé neighborhoods. A faithful volunteer of more than 40 years, Smith has been instrumental in operating programs that uplift the lives of Black youth. He uses a holistic approach that meets the children's needs and interests. Such programs include "Balls and Books," a program that encourages all youth who want to play a sport to also carry their own library card. "Our youth excel in sports but not in books," Smith laments.



Actor Wendell Pierce congratulates Jerome Smith on his honors.

we're excited to have consumers help us empower these amazing people in 10 cities with grant monies," said Rodolfo Rodriguez, Director, Multicultural Marketing, General Mills. "Jerome and other Community Champions have made extraordinary strides to improve the lives of so many. We encourage everyone in New Orleans and supporters nationwide to visit the Web site and cast a vote for their top Community Champion."

FeedingDreams.com also pays tribute to 2008 and 2009 Feeding Dreams Community Champions from Birmingham, Charlotte, Memphis and Norfolk.

"We're celebrating a handful of our brightest community stars, our civic engineers," said Susan L Taylor, Feeding Dreams spokesperson and editor-in-chief emeritus of Essence Magazine and founder of the National CARES



General Mills Representatives join Jerome Smith (center) for a photo while honoring him as a candidate for Feeding Dreams.

Smith's goal is to help our young people build confidence in self, and he sees to it that their knowledge base is steeped in Black history and the achievements of our elders-which he draws from when teaching and inspiring them to achieve against all odds.

At FeedingDreams.com, visitors may vote once per day for their local Community Champion or a Community Champion from another city. The individual who garners the most votes at the end of the voting period will receive a \$10,000 grant to benefit the char-

ity of his or her choice; followed by the second-place winner who will receive \$5,000; and a third-place champion who will receive \$3,000. The remaining champions will receive \$2,000 grants respectively for their designated charities. All nominees receive a \$500 check as acknowledgement of their community service.

"We're honored to recognize Mr. Smith who is making a difference and improving communities. We created the Feeding Dreams program to celebrate the work of our Community Champions, and

Mentoring Movement. "I am truly inspired by their leadership and energized by their work. These champions show that with vision, passion and a plan, we can restore our communities and change our world."

Feeding Dreams online voting began Sunday, August 1, 2010 and runs through Sunday, October 31, 2010. The program culminates in December in Atlanta with a celebratory luncheon and awards ceremony hosted by Taylor.



# Nathan Emanuel

## *I Am Nathan*



Dionne Character, Author  
Entertainment Editor & Columnist

Nathan Emanuel Gros can take you on a trip with his voice dropping your soul off in any genre your heart



so desires. At the age of 15, he has already entertained over 30,000 people in a tribute to his father, the late Elder, Flint Gros. Since the loss of his father, Nathan has vowed to dedicate his voice to withhold his father's passion for life through his music.

He has captured the ears of many becoming a well-known and highly respected voice in the Full Gospel Community. Well rounded, Nathan maintains a 3.8 grade point average as a student at Greater Gentilly High School.

Nathan has performed The National Anthem for several major sporting events in New Orleans, Louisiana namely: The New Orleans Hornets vs. the L.A Lakers (twice), Game 2 of the NBA Western Conference Playoffs for

the Hornets vs. San Antonio Spurs and in Cleveland, Ohio for the Cleveland Cavaliers. He has shared the stage with various gospel greats such as Bishop Paul S. Morton, Bishop Lester Love, Senior Pastor of The City of Love, William Murphy, Kim Burrell, Rod Lumpkin, Ledesi, Maurette Brown-Clark, Rizen, and Crystal Aiken just to name a few.

Jazz, Pop, R&B, Gospel, and Classic Standards are all a part of his repertoire. Once you hear his voice, you will never forget the sound.

Nathan will soon be releasing his Pop R&B debut project, *I Am Nathan*. Check out this young star at [www.nathanemanuel.org](http://www.nathanemanuel.org)

Dionne Character can be reached at [www.dionnecharacter.com](http://www.dionnecharacter.com)

## DST Divas celebrating in New Orleans



## Jimmie Woods Jr. Turns 1



Regina Bartholomew, Jimmie Woods & Jimmie Woods Jr



# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Local Lounges Welcomed The Delta's

Local Lounges Welcomed The Women of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. during their national convention

### @ The Prime Example



Photos by June Hazuer

### @ Broad Street Grill



Photos by June Hazuer

## Night Out Against Crime

Warwick West- held on Weaver Ave between E. Rockton Cr and E. Wheaton Cr – We had a great turn-out by the sign-in. I arrived late when the gathering was to end. Many residents had already left the area. These residents among others were still enjoying the camaraderie along with the food and drinks in spite of the intense heat.





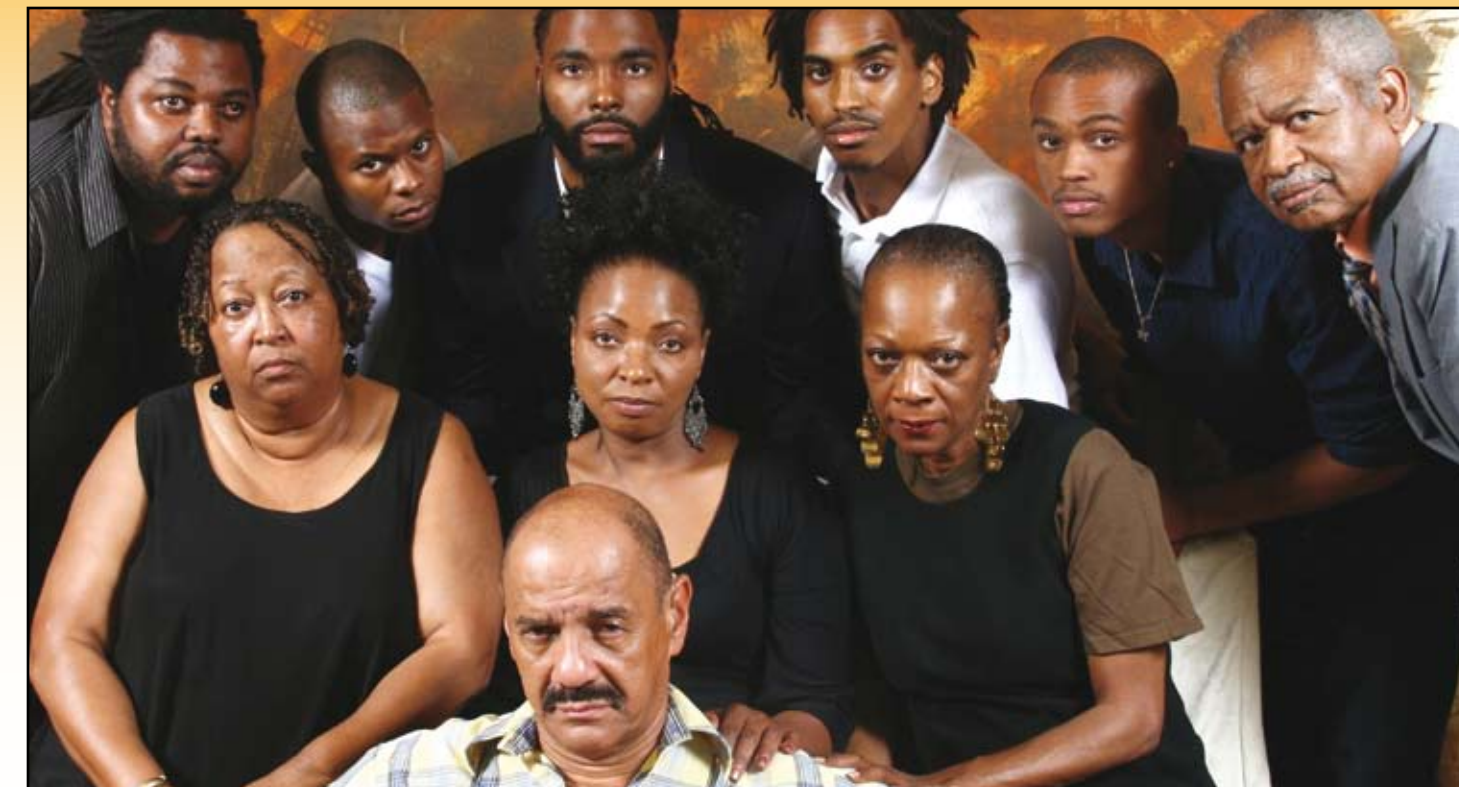
# Ritual Murder

## Chakula cha Jua Theatre Company

By Dionne Character

Chakula Cha Jua Theater Company returns with RITUAL MURDER, its first major production since Hurricane Katrina. Featured in the cast are: Harold X. Evans, Linda M. Merritt, Andrea El-Mansura, Beverly Frank, Bobby R. Toomer, Jr., Christopher M. Williams, Jason Mitchell, Ceth R. Watson and Brian Foy, Jr.

RITUAL MURDER deals with the agonizing theme of Black-on Black violence. The story revolves around Joe Brown, Jr., a 19 year old Black youth who murders his best friend, James Roberts, on a Saturday night "for no apparent reason." A narrator is used in the style of a television documentary to interview the people who knew Joe Brown Jr., to determine why this murder happened? By the end of the play we learn that there are reasons for the murder. Reasons which are "personal and common." Although Joe Brown Jr., and James Roberts never truly understand what happened to them, audiences will be astonished to learn the real reasons behind the murder as RITUAL MURDER examines and analyzes this agonizing problem which con-



Christopher M. Williams, Jason Mitchell, Ceth R. Watson, Bobby R. Toomer, Jr., Brian Foy, Jr., Harold X. Evans Middle Row: Linda M. Merritt, Andrea El-Mansura, Beverly Frank Bottom: Chakula cha Jua, director

tinues to plague us to this day.

Catch Ritual Murder August 1, 6, 7 and 8 Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 pm at ASHE Cultural Arts Center, 1712 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd., New Orleans, LA: General Admission \$12, Students and Seniors \$10. For Further Information call 504.569.9070.

## @ The Autocrat

Friends gather at the Autocrat



**SOAK UP  
THE FLAVOR OF SUMMER**

Satisfy your thirst for summer with Gold Peak®, Minute Maid®, and NESTEA®. With only 99 days of summer, make sure to make the most of every moment.

© 2010 The Coca-Cola Company. NESTEA® and the associated properties are registered trademarks of Société des Produits Nestlé S.A. (Switzerland) used under license by The Coca-Cola Company.



# Who Will Meet Richmond In The Democratic Runoff?

By Allan Katz

## Special Guest Columnist

Armed with significant endorsements from former U.S. Senator John Breaux and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Second Congressional District candidate State Rep. Cedric Richmond appears to be guaranteed a slot in the October 2nd Democratic Runoff, if necessary. However, an all-out Democratic primary win on August 28 would give Richmond much needed momentum heading into a tough November general election to unseat Republican incumbent Anh Joseph Cao.

Richmond has received the support of every Democratic elected official who has endorsed in this race. Richmond has been in the Louisiana Legislature for eleven years and is known to be extremely bright and a skilled coalition builder. He will face State Rep. Juan LaFonta, newcomer Gary Johnson and former Bill Jefferson Chief-

Of-Staff Eugene Green in the August 28th primary.

Richmond has raised in excess of \$500,000 – more than all his opponents combined. He may need a war chest to defend his voting record and any potential negative attacks. Richmond has already begun his first round of television commercials.

LaFonta, a hardworking campaigner, is the legislator who represents Gentilly, the Marigny and Bywater. LaFonta has strong support from the lesbian, gay, transgender and bi-sexual community (LGTB). He also received a unanimous endorsement from the Forum for Equality, an organization that unites Louisiana lesbians and gay men in political matters. This constituency has been his strongest base to date, especially in fundraising.

LaFonta is politicking heavily on the street corners and can be found greeting voters most mornings, sometimes even



Cedric Richmond

Green will be hard pressed to gain name recognition and garner much voter support. If Green has any chance at victory, he too will need to get past LaFonta and meet Richmond in the October 2nd runoff.

Green is already on the radio challenging Richmond's Democratic credentials. This was a questionable move considering Green has to catch up in name recognition to overtake LaFonta, who may have been the beneficiary of Green's attack.

That brings us back to Cedric Richmond.

A poll by Zata, taken before the DCCC endorsement, shows Richmond ahead of LaFonta, 53-13. If this primary race becomes a heated contest, Republican Joseph Cao would be the beneficiary. In a District that is 74% Democrat, 11% Republican and 15% Independent, it is highly unlikely that a Republican incumbent will be able to hold on to this seat if African-Americans view the race as a cause.

In Joe Cao's last election, he benefitted from the perfect storm. Hurricane Gustav pushed the election back 30 days into December. This off election saw a record low turnout among African-American voters. Cao was challenging an embattled incumbent, Bill Jefferson, an African-American Democrat who was under federal investigation.

Jefferson was low on funds and unable to mount much of a GOTV effort.

The Democrat who faces Cao in November is expected to be a much tougher challenger than Bill Jefferson. If lightning does not strike twice, we could expect the election to be held on November 4th as scheduled without the distraction of a hurricane and alongside a highly contested Senate race that should ensure much higher voter turnout.

Whatever candidate receives the Democratic nomination he will need a strategy and the resources to get out the heavily African-American and Democratic vote in the 2nd Congressional District. It is obvious that most of the local elected Democrats and the DCCC believe that Richmond is better suited for the challenge. He has raised significant resources, has a well-tooled GOTV machine and is an outstanding campaigner in his own right.

With the second Democratic runoff spot still up for grabs and a small possibility of an outright victory for Richmond in the Democratic primary, there is only one thing that is guaranteed – that this time Republican incumbent Joseph Cao needs to be prepared for the storm.

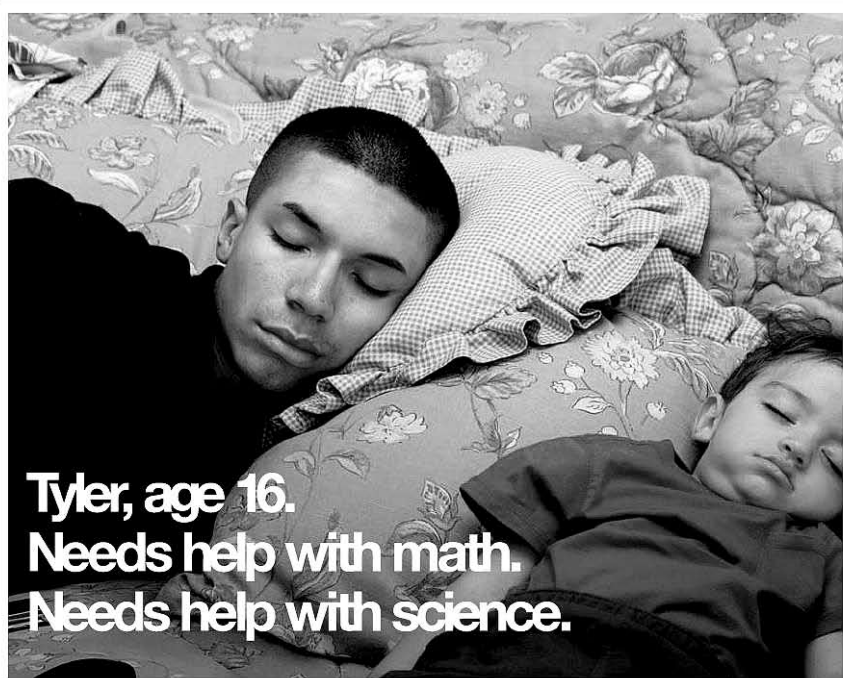
Allan Katz has been a New Orleans journalist for more than forty years and currently the host of the television program, Louisiana Newsmaker.

alone. LaFonta raised close to \$200,000 but has only \$30,000 on hand in the last reporting period. Although LaFonta has been elected to the State House of Representatives for over 5 years, he has yet to receive an endorsement or stamp of approval from any other elected official. But he still remains Richmond's toughest challenger in the Democratic primary.

Being in the number two spot with little funds puts LaFonta in a vulnerable position. If either of the other challengers – Gary Johnson or Eugene Green – could gain any steam, they may be able to bump LaFonta out of the Democratic runoff. The question becomes, if hit with negative attacks by any other candidate, will LaFonta have the resources to respond?

Gary Johnson, a bright young face with some Washington experience, could become a player in future races or disappear from the political scene altogether. Johnson, who is running a low-budget campaign, has a few yard signs throughout the district but has not reported raising any funds. The challenge for Johnson if he wants to have a future in politics is to make the Democratic runoff or at the very least close the gap between himself and the second place finisher.

Virtually unknown, Eugene Green, a Harvard grad like his former boss Bill Jefferson, has been reaching out to the old Jefferson coalition. Behind the curve on fundraising, Green is telling potential donors he will consider contributions more than \$250 as loans that he will repay. Green must raise plenty to fund a Jefferson-style get out the vote effort. Without proper funding,



**Tyler, age 16.**  
**Needs help with math.**  
**Needs help with science.**

**Needs help with Jordan, age 2.**



**boostup.org**

lets you give students at risk of dropping out the boost they need to make it through high school. Because over 30% of students in the U.S. aren't graduating. And they've got a lot more to tackle than just their schoolwork.



# Congressional Race Heats Up and New Election Rules

By Edwin Buggage

## District 2 Congressional Race

As Louisiana heads towards election season with several seats up for grabs in various offices in the fall, the one race that has been getting the most attention is to fill the post of Louisiana Congressional District 2.

A seat once held by the now defamed William Jefferson. The Republican incumbent Joseph Cao who is running unopposed will be seeking re-election against one of the four challengers who are running in the Democratic Primary.

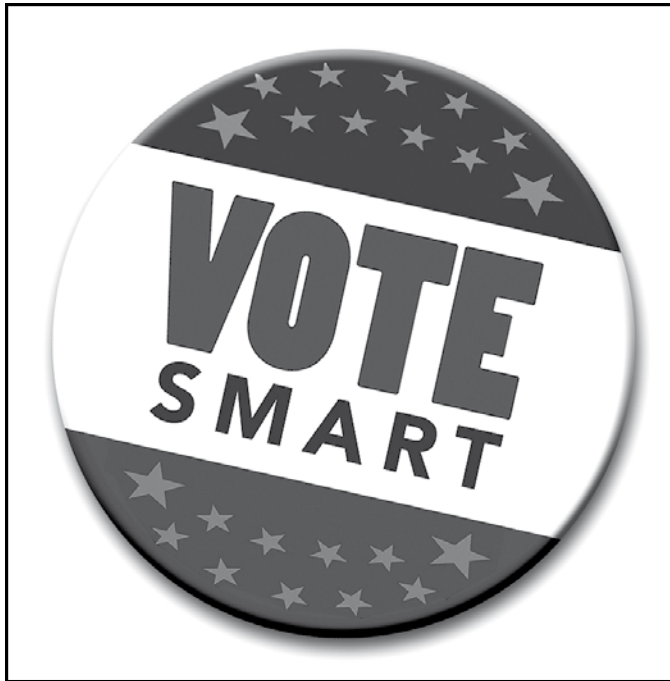
The four challengers are State Representative Cedric Richmond, a well-financed candidate who is making his second run for the District Two seat. One of the other challengers is Juan LaFonta, also a State Representative; like

Richmond he has also chaired the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus.

Eugene Green is a political veteran and insider who have worked with many politicians including William Jefferson. And the final Democratic opponent is Gary Johnson running for office for the first time; and has worked in entertainment with New Orleans native Tyler Perry; and has worked in various posts on Capitol Hill.

## Voting and New Election Practices

Data News Weekly in its role as "the people's paper" in the coming weeks will introduce you to



the views and platforms of all the candidates seeking elected office. We feel it is important that voters

are armed with information that can help them make intelligent well thought out decisions when they get to the polls.

These are crucial times for the city and in an election that low turnout is expected it is important this trend does not continue. In this election it is important to note that there are first the party primaries that may lead to a runoff; and then there is the general election in the fall that will determine who will represent District 2; so voters may be asked to go to the polls a total of

three times.

Data News Weekly feels it is our job to not only inform but educate our citizens about the political process. And it is our hope that the information we provide will help people come out to the polls to participate in selecting the candidate that will represent us.

Today are critical times for the city and these elections will impact the direction of the city moving forward; so it is important to participate and Data News Weekly will do its best to provide you with the most current and accurate information so the voters can get out and participate in democracy. So if you are not registered take the first step and get registered, get involved in the determining the future of your city and who will represent our citizens in elected offices.

# AALP Announces its support for "The Sanders Plan for Governance"

Plan would transfer governance and control of all public schools into the hands of local community parents and residents . . .

The African American Leadership Project (AALP) announced its support last week ( 7/29/10) for the reorganization of the public school system in New Orleans as proposed by former Orleans Parish School Board member Rev. Dr. Torin Sanders.

"The Sanders Plan for Governance" creates a single, unified 9 member, term limited district governing board, and consolidates the Recovery School District (RSD) and the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB). It would transfer governance and control of all public schools (charter and non-charter) in Orleans Parish into the hands of local community parents and residents, and institutes decentralized site-based management. The Superintendent would be replaced with a more efficient and accountable Chief Executive Officer, or CEO as parents become more involved and teachers become more accountable.

"After reviewing other pro-

posals to reorganize the school system that are presently being discussed, it is obvious that the Sanders Plan is far superior to the other proposals" said Mrs. Gail Glapion, AALP Chairperson and former school board president and board member for 20 years. She went on to add that "accountable governance is a critical element that affects school performance along with equitable and fair distribution of resources, modernized facilities, contemporary materials, a sound curriculum and competent experienced teachers. Of course parental involvement and supportive services are also important factors in student performance. The Sanders Plan covers all of these critical elements and intelligently integrates them into a holistic framework."

Ever since the state takeover of the schools and the emergence of the charter movement, there has been a confusing and contentious debate regarding governance, accountability, performance, equity, racial disparities and inequalities in the public school system. The RSD record of achievement is

uneven, the charter movement is fraught with uncertainty and the OPSB valiantly attempts to educate its children with severely limited resources. It appears that we now have a plan that addresses all of the major issues that might improve results, learning outcomes and performance indicators for our children.

According to Dr. Mtangulizi Sanyika, AALP Project Manager and former Professor of African World Studies at Dillard University "The Sanders Plan has numerous advantages not offered by any other proposal: 1) it unifies the RSD and the OPSB, 2) it allows for charters and non-charters 3) it supports school autonomy and actively engages the community, 4) it will reduce the performance

gap between the races and 5) it will efficiently deploy public resources in a transparent manner, and eliminate waste and duplication . No other proposal comes close to achieving these objectives."

Finally, AALP member and educational advocate Atty. Ernest Jones asserted that " Dr. Sanders clearly did his homework and has produced a masterful plan that holds the promise of unifying parents, teachers, administrators and the public, while improving the quality of education for all children , especially racial/ethnic children of diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. "

The AALP highly recommends the Sanders Plan to the citizens of New Orleans as an approach that

gives all stakeholders the opportunity to be represented in decision making, and offers a system that can truly deliver a modern educational product to African-Americans and all other students. Best practices from around the country strongly suggest that a unified and decentralized system yield superior results. Thus, if the Sanders Plan were adopted into law and policy and provided with adequate resources, perhaps we all can move beyond the current state of polarization and confusion and move on with the business of educating our children to become effective citizens in a globally competitive society.

"The Sanders Plan for Governance" is available at [www.blacknolathinktank.blogspot.com](http://www.blacknolathinktank.blogspot.com).





# A Movement Rises in Arizona

**By Jordan Flaherty**

Three months ago, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law the notorious SB 1070, a bill that puts her state at the forefront of a movement to intensify the criminalization of undocumented immigrants.

Since then activists have responded through legal challenges, political lobbying, grassroots organizing and mass mobilizations. More than a hundred thousand people from across Arizona marched on the state capitol on May 29. Today, hundreds more have pledged to risk arrest through non-violent direct action. These are the public manifestations of a widespread struggle happening in this state. The organizations leading this fight offer a template of inspiring and strategic actions for people around the US who want to join in resistance to these policies.

## A Rogue State

Yesterday, Federal District Court Judge Susan Bolton issued a preliminary injunction against sections of Arizona Law SB 1070, which is scheduled to go into effect today. The judge put a hold on some of the most outrageous parts of the bill, such as language that mandates racial profiling by officers. However, Judge Bolton left much of the rest of the law intact, including sections that specifically target day laborers.

For Arizona activists, the legal ruling represents - at best - a small respite. "It's not a victory, it's a relief," says Pablo Alvarado of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON). "We're putting a band aid on a wound."

Alvarado and the organizers with NDLON are part of a broad network of national organizations and volunteers who have joined with local organizers to fight not just against this unjust law, but also against a general climate of anti-immigrant hatred. "Arizona is a rogue state," says Alvarado. "We're going to use every single means that we have at our disposal to fight back."

Puente Arizona, a Phoenix-based organization that describes itself as a human rights movement working to “resurrect our humanity,” has formed Barrio Defense Committees in neighborhoods across the city. Emulating the structure of groups founded by popular movements in El Salvador,



the community-based structures work to both serve basic needs, and also builds consciousness and helps bring people together. The committees host regular “know your rights” trainings and ESL classes, and are organizing Copwatch projects. “We ask the community to unite and organize themselves,” says Puente activist Diana Perez Ramirez. “And we are just there to support that.” More than one thousand people have joined these neighborhood organizations so far, with more joining every day.

Puente has made use of volunteers from across the US, utilizing national support to help with local organizing, and initiating direct action with the support of out of town allies like The Ruckus Society, Catalyst Project, and various chapters of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). They have issued calls to action including a Human Rights Summer (modeled after the civil rights movements' Freedom Summer) and "30 Days for Human Rights," a month of actions culminating in mass civil disobedience today, the day SB 1070 will become law.

Just after midnight, as the law took effect, the first protest of the day began. Nearly 80 people blocked the intersection at the entrance to the town of Guadalupe, a small - one square mile - Native American and Latino community just outside of Phoenix. Residents and elected leadership in the town have a history of public criticism of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who has been one of the main public faces of SB 1070, and most of the protesters (and all of the organizers) were from the community. Holding signs declaring their opposition to the new law and leading chants against police brutality; activists declared that Arpaio's officers are not welcome in their town - a point they made concrete by physically blocking the main road leading in. The stand-off against police lasted more than an hour, before protest leaders in consultation with the town's mayor decided to open the intersection. Several more actions are planned for throughout today, and Arpaio has threatened mass arrests.

## Working Proactively

The Repeal Coalition, a Flagstaff and Phoenix-based grassroots organization, was formed in 2007. The group came together because they saw a vacuum in the immigrants' rights movement in Arizona. "Some of the left here were not being very audacious," explains Luis Fernandez of the Repeal Coalition. "The positions in the public debate ranged from 'kick them all out,' to 'get their labor and then kick them out.'" The Repeal Coalition has staked out a position of calling for the elimination of all anti-immigration laws, declaring, "We fight for the right for people to live, love, and work wherever they please." With this call, says Fernandez, "Now we can have a real debate."

When the coalition was founded, organizers brought in labor activists to advise them on how to build an organization along similar models to those that have built strong unions, utilizing house calls, neighborhood mapping, and group meetings. Although they are an all-volunteer group with little to no funding, they have developed a structure that has ini-

tiated large protests and provided direct service, and they are now strategizing more ways to take direct action and non-compliance in the post SB 1070 era.

Fernandez says that this struggle is ultimately about overcoming fear and moving from reaction to proactive action. "We've been in a crisis in Arizona for a long time," he explains. "Even if SB 1070 weren't implemented, it wouldn't matter. The political crisis would continue." To address this crisis, Fernandez believes organizations must build unity across race and class. "Traditionally in America, when the working class starts suffering, instead of connecting together and looking upwards at the cause of the problem, they look sideways or downwards for who to blame." Most importantly, he believes activists must take action to seize the initiative.

In this vision, he has been inspired by young organizers working on the DREAM ACT, a federal law that creates a path to citizenship for undocumented youth. “They came to Arizona and said, ‘we’re undocumented and we’re going to commit acts of civil disobedience.’” At first, Repeal Coalition members tried to talk them out of this action, but the youth explained, “We are going to lose our fear because it is the fear of being arrested or the fear of being deported that fuels the inability of political action.” The bravery and vision of these youth has inspired Fernandez to continue to search for new and bold ways to take action, rather than just continually respond to right wing attacks. “We need to set the agenda,” explains Fernandez. “We have to say, ‘No, you’re going to react to us.’”

Despite a range of tactics and philosophies, one thing organizers here have in common is a dedication to exporting the lessons of their struggle. While Arizona's law is the first and most draconian, similar laws are pending across the country. And during this current national economic crisis, more and more politicians have found that they can score political points by demonizing immigrants. "The last two months we've had a lot of people calling us asking what they can do to help Arizona," says Fernandez. "We say, organize in your own town. You don't have to come to Arizona because Arizona is coming to you."



# Parents Can Aid Homework Success

By: Tobie Blanchard

When parents become involved in their children's schoolwork, including helping with homework, studies show the children do better in school, says Diane Sasser, an LSU AgCenter family life educator.

"But that doesn't mean they are doing their homework for them," Sasser says. "Becoming involved means giving support, guidance and appropriate resources."

Sasser offers these tips to help with homework:

- Maintain contact with your child's school. "Know your child's teachers and their expectations," Sasser says. Ask your child each day what he or she has for homework. If you need or are interested in special services offered by your child's school, consult the list of services at your Louisiana Department of Education. Its website has this listing along with tips for parents and students for LEAP testing and other aids at [www.doe.state.la.us](http://www.doe.state.la.us).
- Set a homework schedule, including both a beginning and an ending time. "Of course, younger children require less time than older children," Sasser says, suggesting a wind-down time after school for kids before they tackle their homework. "Kids need time to be kids," she says. "But make it clear on how much time is allowed for relaxation and when they need to 'hit the books.'"

She says children will whine at first, but if you're consistent, they will fall into the routine. Beware of doing homework too close to bedtime, however, because fatigue may make it difficult. Fridays usually are the best day for homework that must be completed over the weekend. Assignments are still fresh, and last-minute panic rushes can be avoided.

- Encourage your child to divide the homework assignment into "what I can do myself" and "what I need help with."

"You should help only with that part of the homework your child cannot do independently, like reviewing completed assignments, practicing spelling words and so forth," Sasser says. "This builds responsibility and independence in your child."

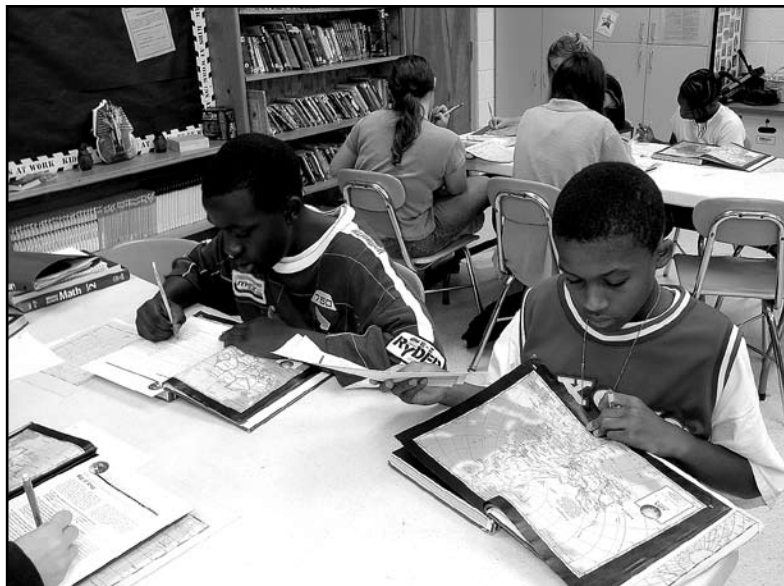
She says not to fall for the old "I can't do it; you do it" trick. Remember to guide rather than do

homework for them.

- Praise your child for doing the homework, especially for accomplishments, rather than pointing out errors. For example, say, "You've spelled 18 out of 20 words correctly – that's the best you've done this semester," rather than saying, "That's good, but you missed two."

On the other hand, if 18 out of 20 are wrong, giving praise for poor work is unproductive as well as misleading. "Instead, encourage your child to talk with you about why there were so many errors, how they can be corrected and what can be learned from them," Sasser advises.

- Be aware of your child's learning style. Does he or she learn better by seeing and reading about things, touching and trying things or hearing about new ideas? Sasser recommends searching for child learning styles on the Internet to help you determine what type of learner your child may be.



- Be available when your child is doing homework so you can answer a question if there is confusion. "If possible, it is better for you to be in another room, so you are easily accessible yet not a distraction," Sasser says.
- Look over the homework when it is completed. "Do not correct it unless you have checked with

the teacher," Sasser advises. "Seeing the pattern of errors is often helpful to a teacher."

- You might try organizing study groups. Your child may benefit from studying with one or two classmates. But make sure they are using the time to study, the family expert says.
- Build an environment con-

ducive to learning. "Be sure everyone in the family understands how important homework is and does not interfere with or interrupt that time," Sasser says. Turn off the TV, limit phone calls or do whatever it takes to maintain an environment conducive to study and concentration.

"Proper nutrition and good health also are keys in helping concentration and avoiding fatigue," Sasser says.

- Provide a homework area for your child with plenty of good light and few distractions. "For example, if your child concentrates better with calming music, provide that help," Sasser suggests.

She also emphasizes having adequate resources. "At a minimum, this should include a dictionary, paper and pens," she says. She recommends taking advantage of the local library, if you don't have a home computer and access to the Internet.

Rocsi Diaz  
AND CHI CHI FOR  
**peta2**  
FREE FOR ALL

FIND YOUR new best friend:  
**adopt an animal!**

Catch Rocsi on 106 & Park every weekday on BET.  
For more ways to help animals and free stickers and DVDs, visit [peta2.com](http://peta2.com).





*I grew up on the Gulf Coast. I know these waters. And I'm doing everything I can to clean them up.* - Fred Lemond, BP Cleanup Operations

## Making This Right

Beaches  
Claims  
**Cleanup**  
Economic Investment  
Environmental Restoration  
Health and Safety  
Wildlife

BP has taken full responsibility for the cleanup in the Gulf. And that includes keeping you informed.

### Searching For And Cleaning Up The Oil

Every morning, over 50 spotter planes and helicopters search for oil off the coast, heading to areas previously mapped with satellite imagery and infrared photography. Once oil is found, they radio down to the 6,000 ships and boats of all sizes that are supporting the cleanup effort and working to collect the oil. These are thousands of local shrimping and fishing boats organized into task forces and strike teams, plus specialized skimmers mobilized from as far as the Netherlands.

We have recovered more than 27 million gallons of oil-water mixture from the Gulf. Other methods have also helped remove millions of additional gallons of oil from the water. We've deployed more than 8 million feet of boom to protect beaches and sensitive wildlife areas.

### Hurricane Preparedness

In the event of a hurricane, our first priority is keeping people safe. In coordination with the Coast Guard and local officials, we may suspend operations temporarily but have organized to resume them as soon as possible.

### Our Responsibility

We have already spent more than \$3.2 billion responding to the spill and on the cleanup, and none of this will be paid by taxpayers. We will work in the Gulf as long as it takes to get this done. We may not always be perfect but we will do everything we can to make this right.

For information visit: [bp.com/restorethegulf.gov](http://bp.com/restorethegulf.gov)  
[facebook.com/bpamerica](https://facebook.com/bpamerica)  
[twitter.com/bp\\_america](https://twitter.com/bp_america)  
[youtube.com/bp](https://youtube.com/bp)

For assistance, please call:  
To report oil on the shoreline: (866) 448-5816  
To report impacted wildlife: (866) 557-1401  
To make spill-related claims: (800) 440-0858  
[www.louisianagulfresponse.com](http://www.louisianagulfresponse.com)

