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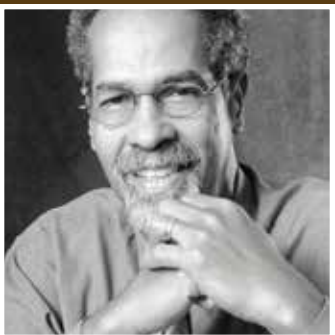
September 8 - September 14, 2012 47th Year Volume 17 www.ladatanews.com

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Seven Years After Katrina, A Divided City



There is wide agreement that most of our government services have long deep, systemic problems, but in rebuilding New Orleans, the key question is not only how much change is needed, but more crucially, who should dictate that change.

By Jordan Flaherty

Seven years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has become a national laboratory for government reforms. But the process through which those experiments have been carried out rarely has been transparent or democratic. The results have been divisive, pitting new residents against those who grew up here, rich against poor, and White against Black.

Education, housing, criminal justice, health care, urban planning, even our media; systemic changes have touched every aspect of life in New Orleans, often creating a template used in other cities. A few examples:

- In the weeks after Hurricane Katrina, more than 7,500 employees in the city's public school system were fired, despite the protection of union membership and a contract. Thousands of young teachers, many affiliated with programs like Teach

For America, filled the empty slots. As charters took over from traditional public schools, the City became what then-Superintendent Paul Vallas called the first 100% free market public school system in the US. A judge recently found that the mass firings were illegal, but any resolution will likely be tied up in appeals for years.

- Every public housing development has either been partially or entirely torn down. The housing authority now administers more than 17,000 vouch-

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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123,934 Fewer people in New Orleans now than in 2000. The Census reported the 2011 population of New Orleans as 360,740. The 2000 population was 484,674. Source: US Census Bureau

ers – nearly double the pre-Katrina amount – a massive privatization of a formerly public system. During this period, rents have risen dramatically across the City.

- The US Department of Justice spent three years in negotiations with city government over reform of the police department. The historic consent decree that came out of these negotiations mandates vast changes in nearly every aspect of the NOPD and some aspects could serve as a model for departments across the US. But organizations that deal with police violence, as well as the city's independent police monitor, have filed legal challenges to the agreement, stating that they were left out of the negotiations and that as a result, the final document lacks community oversight.

- As the City loses its daily paper, an influx of funding has arrived to support various online media projects – including \$880,000 from George Soros to one website. In a City that is still majority African-American, the staff of these new media ventures is almost entirely White, and often politically conservative. These funders – many of whom consider themselves progressive – have mostly ignored the City's Black media, which have a proud history of centuries of local resistance to the dominant narrative. Publications like *The Louisiana Weekly* covered police violence and institutional racism when the daily paper was not interested. Wealthy liberal foundations are apparently still not interested.

There is wide agreement that most of our government services have long deep, systemic problems. But in rebuilding New Orleans, the key question is not only how much change is needed, but more crucially, who should dictate that change.

New Orleans has become a destination for a new class of residents drawn by the allure of being able to conduct these experiments. For a while, they are self-identified as YURPs (Young Urban Rebuilding Professionals). Now they are frequently known as “social entrepreneurs,” and they have wealthy and powerful allies. Warren Buffet has invested in the redevelopment of public housing. Oprah Winfrey and the Walton family have donated to the charter schools.

Many residents – especially in the Black community – have felt disenfranchised in the new New Orleans. They see the influx of college graduates who have come to start non-profits and run our

schools and redesign our neighborhoods as disaster profiteers, not saviors. You can hear it every day on WBOK, the City's only Black-owned talk radio station, and read about it in the *Louisiana Weekly*, *Data News Weekly*, and the *New Orleans Tribune*, the City's Black newspapers. This new rebuilding class is seen as working in alliance with White elites to disenfranchise a shrinking Black majority. Callers and guests on WBOK point to the rapid change in political representation: Among the political offices that have shifted to White after a generation in Black hands are the mayor, police chief, district attorney, and majorities on the school board and city council.

In a recent cover story in the *Tribune*, Journalist Lovell Beaulieu compares the new rebuilding class to the genocide of Native Americans. “520 years after the Indians discovered Columbus, a similar story is unfolding,” writes Beaulieu. “New arrivals from around the United States and the world are landing here to get a piece of the action that is lucrative post-Katrina New Orleans... Black people are merely pawns in a game with little clout and few voices. Their primary role is to be the ones who get pushed out, disregarded and forgotten.”

People hear the term “blank slate,” a term often used to describe post-Katrina New Orleans – as a way of erasing the City's long history of Black-led resistance to White supremacy. As New Orleans poet and educator Kalamu Ya Salaam has said, “It wasn't a blank slate, it was a cemetery.” Where some new arrivals see opportunity, many residents see grave robbers. In response, those who find anything to praise in the old ways are often accused of being stuck in the past or embracing corruption.

Hurricane Isaac has demonstrated that New Orleans is still at risk from storms – although the flood protection system around the City seems to be more reliable than it was before the levees failed and eighty percent of New Orleans was underwater. But have the systemic problems that were displayed to the world seven years ago been fixed by the radical changes the City has seen? Is reform possible without the consent of those most affected by those changes? These are polarizing questions in the new New Orleans.

Jordan Flaherty is a New Orleans-based Journalist, and the Author of *Floodlines: Community and Resistance from Katrina to the Jena Six*. He can be reached at jordan@floodlines.org.

Katrina Pain Index 2012 7 Years After

By Bill Quigley and Davida Finger

- 1 Rank of New Orleans in fastest growing US cities between 2010 and 2011. Source: Census Bureau.
- 1 Rank of New Orleans, Louisiana in world prison rate. Louisiana imprisons more of its people, per head, than any of the other 50 states. Louisiana rate is five times higher than Iran, 13 times higher than China and 20 times Germany. In Louisiana, one in 86 adults is in prison. In New Orleans, one in 14 black men is behind bars. In New Orleans, one of every seven black men is in prison, on parole or on probation. Source: *Times-Picayune*.
- 2 Rank of New Orleans in rate of homelessness among US cities. Source: 2012 Report of National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- 2 Rank of New Orleans in highest income inequality for cities of over 10,000 Source: Census.
- 3 Days a week the New Orleans daily paper, the *Times-Picayune*, will start publishing and delivering the paper this fall and switch to internet only on other days. (See 44 below). Source: *The Times-Picayune*.
- 10 Rate that New Orleans murders occur compared to US average. According to FBI reports, the national average is 5 murders per 100,000. The Louisiana average is 12 per 100,000. The New Orleans reported 175 murders last year or 50 murders per 100,000 residents. Source: WWL TV.
- 13 Rank of New Orleans in FBI overall crime rate rankings. Source: Congressional Quarterly.
- 15 Number of police officer-involved shootings in New Orleans so far in 2012. In all of 2011 there were 16. Source: Independent Police Monitor.
- 21 Percent of all residential addresses in New Orleans that are abandoned or blighted. There were 35,700 abandoned or blighted homes and empty lots in New Orleans (21% of all residential addresses), a reduction from 43,755 in 2010 (when it was 34% of all addresses). Compare to Detroit (24%), Cleveland (19%), and Baltimore (14%). Source: Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC).
- 27 Percent of people in New Orleans live in poverty. The national rate is 15%. Among African American families the rate is 30% and for white families it is 8%. Source: Corporation for Enterprise Development (CEFD) and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) Assets & Opportunity Profile: New Orleans (August 2012).
- 33 Percent of low income mothers in New Orleans study who were still suffering Post Traumatic Stress symptoms five years after Katrina. Source: Princeton University Study.
- 34 Bus routes in New Orleans now. There were 89 before Katrina. Source: RTA data.
- 37 Percent of New Orleans families that are “asset poor” or lack enough assets to survive for three months without income. The rate is 50% for black households, 40% for Latino household, 24% for Asian household and 22% for white households. Source: Corporation for Enterprise Development (CEFD) and Greater New Orleans Community Data

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Citizens Respond to Hurricane Isaac's Wrath and Aftermath

By Edwin Buggage

The City of New Orleans and the surrounding parishes are again in the mode of recovery following Hurricane Isaac, a slow moving weather system with its strong winds and rain that left much in the way of damage including flooding and power outages throughout Southeast Louisiana. This on the day that coincided with the Seventh Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, a storm that changed the lives of the people of New Orleans and neighboring parishes forever. As Mayor Landrieu and Gov. Jindal declared a state of emergency, many residents heeded the call to evacuate or hunker down to gather up supplies to weather the storm.

Almore Cato, is a recently retired educator who chose to evacuate with his family that includes his wife and three children to Hollandale, Mississippi; after getting over 6 feet of water in his New Orleans East home during Hurricane Katrina. "We always choose to leave because we live very close to the Lake and I do not want to be in harm's way and I don't think that a levee alone is enough if a storm surge comes up and over tops the walls as was the case in Plaquemines Parish."

While many left the City some chose to ride out the storm. Dr. Aaron Harold is a local minister and property owner. "I felt there was a need for me to stay, I think



As New Orleanians prepared to reflect on Katrina, Hurricane Isaac sent waves crashing on the Gulf shores, causing damage and destruction throughout the region again. While the City of New Orleans dodged a catastrophe citizens still had to return to damaged properties and mass power outages.

in the seven years after Hurricane Katrina there's been great progress in the area of rebuilding the infrastructure and this was a

great test for our improved levee," says Harold.

As the National Guard was called in and a state of emergency declared, some business owners decided to stay behind. One of those persons was Wilbert "Chill" Wilson, owner of a local barbershop who made national and international headlines during Hurricane Katrina as the guy that inspired a City during its darkest days with a tent and a generator, cutting hair and giving people a place to congregate and share information, stories of survival and resources. Today he has become a success story and a beacon light for causes around the City. "I stayed behind to protect my business, but also to be able to use my shop as a place where people can come to get information about resources that are available after the storm and to be a place that can inspire people and give them hope."

While the City of New Orleans dodged a catastrophe of the size and scope of Hurricane Katrina; citizens still had to return to damaged properties and questions on how they will get necessary resources to repair their homes and businesses, "I've returned to my home that has some damage, and after Katrina, I am paying larger insurance premiums and the deductibles are higher as well, and in these times that are economically tough times some people don't have the monies to repair their homes, so what are they to do," says Cato of the dilemma many have to face returning to assess the damages to their homes.

The problem of rising insurance cost something many property owners are concerned about in post- Katrina New Orleans. "I have just suffered some damage to the roof of my residence and also to a rental property I own and I feel after Katrina it is unfair that we have to spend more money and get less assistance

when we are trying to repair our homes after a catastrophic event like Katrina or in this case Isaac," remarks Dr. Harold.

Moving forward the question for many in a region prone to hurricanes and the things that come along with it like evacuations and other inconveniences that come with the Hurricane season; what kind of remedies are in place for citizens who have to use their resources to get out of harm's way. Wilbert Wilson says, "To evacuate is a major problem for a lot of families, some do not have that kind of money stashed away, and I think that more assistance is needed to either reimburse people for the money they spent or figure out a way to expedite the time people wait to have their houses repaired. Because what happens is that families may have other cost going up for instance, electric bills because of broken out windows that go unrepaired or other problems with their homes where families have to spend more money."

New Orleans is a City many people love to call home in spite of its many problems. "My roots are here, I was born here and I believe God wants me to help build for the next generation; the passion for our City as it rebuilds to be a great example of the resilience of a people," says Dr. Aaron Harold. "This is still a great City despite some of the hardships, I am glad to call New Orleans home," says Almore Cato of New Orleans East.

As a City looks back on 7 years after a fatal calamity bought it to its knees. A new and improved levee and other improvements fought back against Isaac. And as a City reflects on where it's been Wilbert "Chill" Wilson says, "After what we've been through, it feels good to be alive and seeing our City improving and being rebuilt better than before." Continuing saying of the City and the preparedness of its citizens and the lessons learned from Katrina he says, "Less lives were loss and we are now better prepared, today citizens stocked up on supplies and heed the warnings when an evacuation is called and I feel that is a good thing for our City because I would hope the suffering that took place during Katrina will never happen again."

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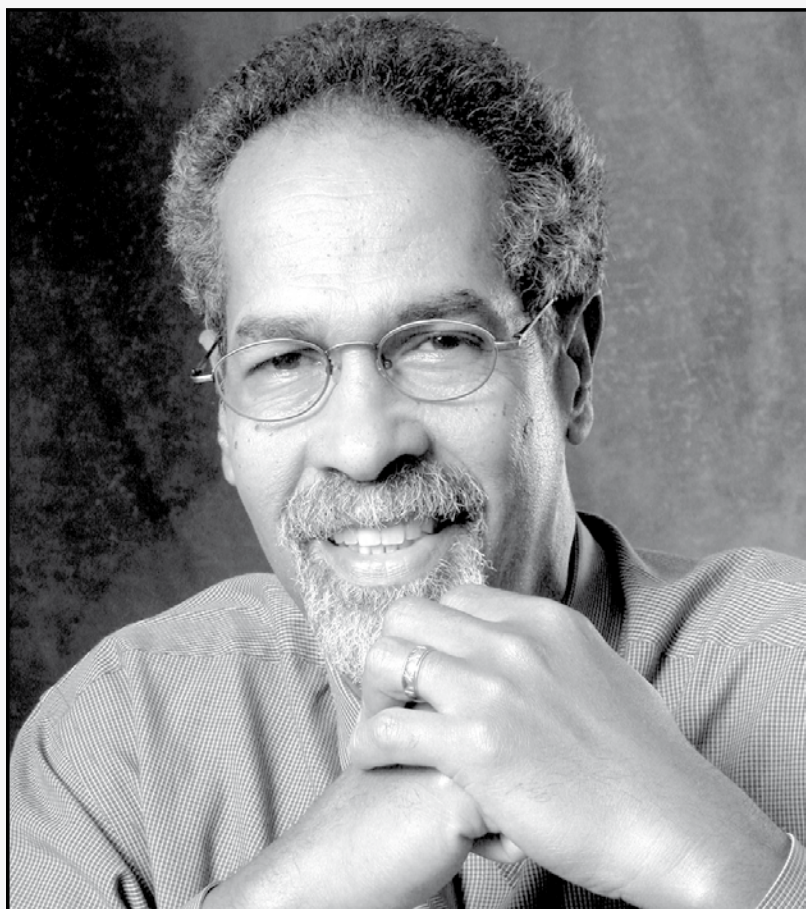
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Lloyd "Love Doctor" Dennis

A Prescription for a Better Community

by: Edwin Buggage



Lloyd Dennis is a man who has lived a life dedicated to serving his City and working to empower his community. He is an advocate of self-help and people taking the mission of changing their community in their hands. "I have been working to make a difference since I was 14 years old, when I worked with Mr. Percy Marchand helping people, to get registered to vote after the passing of the Voting Rights Act," says Dennis of one of the first of which would be many efforts to give a voice to the people in his community. Continuing he says, "I felt good about getting thousands of people registered and it showed me the difference that only one person could make and since that time I have worked to make my community a better place."

While Dennis has been active in the community since his teens, he's seen some things change, and points out that some things remain the same, but ever the optimist seeking solutions he says, what he finds is the common link between success and failure is the strength or lack thereof of the family unit. "When I look around I think one of the major problems is that children are being raised in dysfunctional families and not being given the tools to be successful in life," says Dennis. And as opposed to sitting on the sidelines diagnosing and over analyzing he's worked with young people as an educator and mentor. In addition, he came up with "the Love Doctor" moniker that's become a popular column and radio show that discussed giving the community a prescription for change and bettering

their quality of life. Saying of the mission of the Love Doctor, "I felt talking about family and relationships are the foundation of beginning to create solutions to the problems that plague our community."

In addition to his successful Love Doctor Column, Dennis along with Pastor Arthur Wardsworth created the Silverbacks, an organization whose goal is to develop and mentor young men to become

successful family men and leaders in the community. This is something that is near and dear to his heart. "My grandfather didn't know his father, but he was mentored by another man and became a great father and grandfather and it inspired me; and I feel that my goal is to turn boys into better men and additionally, I feel as a father, the goal should be to build a solid foundation for the next generation to do more."

Dennis is a staunch advocate of community people understanding that the power to change their circumstances is in their hands. Always one willing to give people a voice, he was the co-host of the popular show "Between the Lines." While he feels politics and voting are important and part of our civic duty, as a child of the 60's he feels that the power truly lies in the people, "Politics and elected officials are not the only ways to create change, this must start at the grassroots level whether it's in the family, in churches and in schools doing the things that need to be done; and that is the key to making our community places we desire them to be and that is our responsibility not that of elected officials."

Lloyd Dennis is a man who embodies a spirit of positivity and is an example of what he preaches, as a dedicated family man that credits his family as the thing that gives his life meaning and purpose. But he says that he loves to give to others, "I continue to give because I wanted my life to count for something, and live a life that mattered and made a difference."

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Links' Love Session with Irvin Mayfield, Jr.

Photos by Terry Jones

Irvin Mayfield Jr, Cultural Ambassador and extraordinary Community Leader, served again as host of "Love Sessions: A Festival of Giving" which took place during the month of August. The event spans two weeks annually to coincide with the An-

niversary of Hurricane Katrina, with the goal of providing people an opportunity to give rather than grieve. The New Orleans Chapter of The Links, Incorporated was the featured recipient of 100% of the proceeds from the August 23rd performance.

The performance featured "Decision 2012: Irvin Mayfield v Kermit Ruffins." The musicians battled, trumpet to trumpet, for another year's bragging rights as the best trumpeter in New Orleans!



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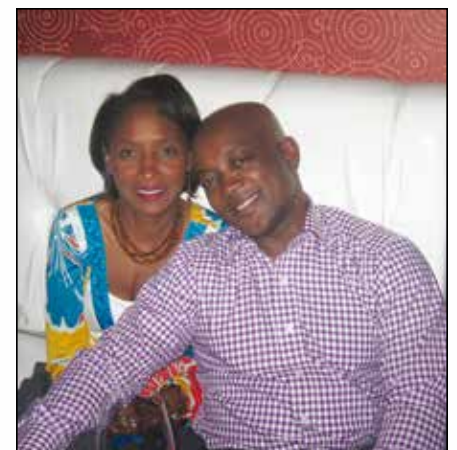


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Community Elder Celebrates Turning 90 Years Young

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

Community elder, Rodney Gautreaux marked his 90th Birthday with family and friends at a dinner party in the church hall of 1st Free Mission Baptist Church in up-town New Orleans. Members of the community spoke of Mr. Gautreaux's mentoring of young males, and assistance with the Boy Scouts at the neighborhood school near where he lived, as only two of many things he did to help out in his community and church. Described by one of his brother-in-laws as being a true gentleman, Mr. Gautreaux, a veteran, who became blind following his retirement from National Gypsum where he had worked for many years, was married to Beatrice White who passed away several years ago. He, along with his wife raised two children, a son and a daughter. Mr. Gautreaux also has two grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren.



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And Much More....

The Plight of the Powerless

Do New Orleanians Collectively Know What it Means to be Powerless?



Andre Perry, PhD
Data News Guest Commentator

Although Hurricane Isaac blew out electricity for the entire New Orleans metro, do we collectively understand what it means to be powerless? For too many residents, neither Isaac nor Entergy will prevent electricity from returning; powerlessness will. The silver lining to our temporary blackout should be that it illuminated our awareness to the day-to-day conditions of the poor in New Orleans.

For now Entergy is being cast as spoiler for an otherwise successful hurricane defense. Otherwise, air conditioning could have literally brought cooler heads. So will residents hold Entergy in such venomous contempt when power is restored? I ask this ques-

tion because I believe the notable acrimony towards Entergy will subside when electricity is completely restored in the upper-income neighborhoods. However, the quest for energy solutions should not end when those with power are comforted.

I'm concerned that emotional responses will bury opportunities to deal with deeper questions of energy and power. Anger, pain and pity seldom provide clarity. Deeper problem solving requires people to look beyond their own feelings - no matter how hot - toward the greater good.

More than 769,000 people went without electricity in Louisiana as a result of Hurricane Isaac. For at least three days, electricity didn't flow through the veins of approximately 50 percent of New Orleans' households. Significant portions (18 percent) of the city sweated six nights without air conditioning, refrigeration and coffee makers.

If for a week, many of us felt powerless. Powerlessness is the first cousin of dependency. Our neighborhoods, communities and families depended upon the expertise, rectitude and infrastructure of municipal governments,

energy companies and first responders. I trust all of these entities, but if you're like me, you don't like feeling dependent or powerless.

Consequently, the weeklong battle to get electricity restored to the region motivated the New Orleans City Council to hold an "emergency meeting." Fortune 500 companies don't need a defense, but this meeting was called only a day after crews could get on utility poles. Power outages and restorations were surprisingly democratic. Black and poor areas seemed to get power alongside white and wealthy sections at ostensibly the same pace.

Nevertheless, neighborhood leaders and callers on radio talk shows are crying for the Entergy New Orleans President Charles Rice's ouster. Particularly on radio talk shows, questions have turned to diatribes and threats. I find the acerbic and often times unreasoned reactions to our recovery as dramatic and anticlimactic as Hurricane Isaac.

If I questioned Mr. Rice I would ask, "How many people lived without electricity before Isaac? For those families who did not have electricity for sustained peri-

ods of time, how can we increase the likelihood of them having it thereafter?" In addition, "How was our response to the elderly and infirmed?" In other words, how can we recognize and defend against the seemingly never-ending storms for the most vulnerable in New Orleans?

A recent study by the Greater New Orleans Data Center Found that in 2010 as partly a consequence of the Great Recession, New Orleans poverty rose to "27% - statistically the same as a decade ago, and well above the national rate of 15%."

Clearly, a conversation regarding the region's physical infrastructure should include talk about a diversification of power services and the development of adequate backup systems. These systems should be green. Noisy gas driven generators don't seem like a citywide solution. We must also talk about energy affordability. The long lines outside of Entergy don't just emerge after hurricanes. Many families have to make paradoxical decisions on whether to pay health insurance or their electric bill.

As an educator, I know that stressful conditions open oppor-

tunities for growth and improvement. Stress also starts the blame game. Blaming rarely finds solutions. We have to do better next time. There will be a next time.

If the city and region is actually one of the most innovative as recent reports say, then shouldn't our infrastructure be transformative for the people who need it to be? A measure of how quickly we become cool shouldn't be an indice of improvement. An innovative city is one that uplifts people who are seldom cool into power. That would require caring about problems that exist next week and the week after. There is nothing more innovative than care.

At least for a few days, powerlessness unified New Orleans more than the Saints or Mardi Gras ever could. How long will that bond last? The New Orleans metro should collectively demand energy solutions from Entergy, government and us. But those demands should expose our better selves.

Andre Perry (twitter: @andreper-rynola) is Associate Director for Educational Initiatives for the Loyola Institute for Quality and Equity in Education and author of *The Garden Path: The Miseducation of a City*. His blog can be found at www.drandreperry.com.

Who Built What?



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

The Republican National Convention's theme was, "We Built This." One of the speakers was Sher Valenzuela, a Delaware businesswoman who happens to be Latina. She touted the success

of her upholstery business and implied it thrived because of her hard work.

That's only partly true. She also thrived because she started out with \$2 million loan from the Small Business Administration, and got another \$15 million in non-competitive government contracts. Would her company, First State Manufacturing, have made it without government help? Your guess is as good as mine. But the notion that "we built this" is extremely shortsighted.

What exactly did these Republicans build without government help? They don't even go to work every day in our nation's Capitol without the help of unpaid en-

slaved people who toiled rock and worked in hot sun to build our nation's Capitol. It took until 2010 for our nation's leaders to erect a plaque commemorating this effort. We built the Capitol? And it's isn't the same "we" the Republicans are talking about.

It reminds me of a book written by Pulitzer Prize-winner Annette Gordon Reed, *The Hemmings of Monticello* (2008). As she reprises some of former President Thomas Jefferson's diaries, he writes about all the cotton and tobacco "we" planted. I had an amazing visual of Jefferson with a hoe picking and planting. He didn't. He appropriated the effort of other people's work,

initiative, and infrastructure. He didn't plant a thing. Enslaved people did the work. Based on his diaries, though, the man who died nearly bankrupt, expropriates the work of others in his use of the term "we."

Republicans held their convention last week at the Tampa Bay Times Forum. This is a convention center that was partly built with government money, to the tune of \$86 million. As the arena was renovated to accommodate Republican attendees to the convention, no doubt government funds were also used for some of this. This is one of the tax subsidies that Republicans often decry. And how does government justify

this? The infusion of all those big spenders might bring money to local vendors and tax dollars to the community. I'd like to see the accounting.

President Obama is right to talk about the way all enterprise is interconnected and the many ways that the government role stimulates business. Federal, state, and local government engage in practices that subsidize businesses because they hope for a return, or because they believe that there are benefits to the community that may come because of government investment.

Malveaux, Continued
on page 11.

President Obama Surveys the Damage, Gives Assistance to Louisianians

By Cheryl Mainor

President Barack Obama visited Louisiana on Monday for a first-hand look at the damage from Hurricane Isaac, on the eve of the Democratic National Convention in North Carolina.

President Obama's tour was uncharacteristically pre-empted by his Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, who diverted from the campaign trail to Louisiana on Friday to inspect the fallout from the storm a day after accepting his party's nomination for the Nov. 6th election.

Flying into New Orleans, the President traveled by motorcade to nearby St. John the Baptist Parish, one of the hardest-hit communities, to meet federal, state and local officials and assess the disaster response before surveying the area.

As he arrived, Obama saw evidence of the storm's fury - twisted road signs, toppled trees and pools of water beside the road.

The White House has taken steps to be deeply engaged in the



government's handling of Isaac and its aftermath. His predecessor, George W. Bush and his Administration, remains heavily criticized for the sluggish federal response to Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans in 2005.

Isaac was the first hurricane to strike the United States this year, hitting New Orleans almost exactly seven years after Katrina

devastated the City, causing an estimated 1,800 deaths.

But Isaac was a much weaker storm. It was blamed for six deaths in Louisiana and two in neighboring Mississippi, and both states suffered from widespread flooding.

More Than 100,000 Without Power

Even as the fading remnants of



Isaac moved east, about 125,000 people remained without power in Louisiana, the governor's office said. With floodwaters not yet receded in some areas, about 2,600 people remained in emergency shelters. President Obama has declared disasters in Louisiana and Mississippi.

President Obama stayed away from the region while emergency officials were occupied with the

height of the crisis, waiting until Monday for his visit. Romney, who has struggled to show that he can connect with ordinary Americans, wasted little time before detouring to the disaster zone the day after his convention.

The White House sought to play down any political implications and highlighted the fact that Louisiana's Governor, Bobby Jindal, accompanied both of the men.

But White House spokesman Jay Carney echoed Democrats who have pointed out that Romney's vice presidential running mate, congressional fiscal hawk, Paul Ryan, had earlier proposed sharp cuts in disaster relief spending.

"Disasters are apolitical," Carney told reporters on Air Force One. But he added, "Last year there was an effort to underfund the money that's used to provide relief to Americans when they've been hit by disasters. That effort was led by Congressman Paul Ryan."

Cover Story/ Continued from page 3.

Center (GNOCDC) Assets & Opportunity Profile: New Orleans (August 2012)

40 Percent of poor adults in New Orleans region that work. One quarter of these people work full-time and still remain poor. Source: GNOCDC.

42 Percent of the children in New Orleans who live in poverty. The rate for black children is 65 percent compared to less than 1 percent for whites. Source: Census.

44 Rank of Louisiana among the 50 states in broadband internet access. New Orleans has 40 to 60 percent access. Source: The Lens.

60 Percent of New Orleans which is African American. Before Katrina the number was 67. Source: GNOCDC.

60 Percent of renters in New Orleans are paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities, up from 51 percent

in 2004. Source: GNOCDC.

68 Percent of public school children in New Orleans who attend schools that pass state standards. In 2003-2004 it was 28 percent. Source: GNOCDC.

75 Percent of public school students in New Orleans who are enrolled in charter schools. Source: Wall Street Journal. This is the highest percentage in the US by far, with District of Columbia coming in second at 39 percent. Sources: Wall Street Journal and National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

76 Number of homes rebuilt by Make It Right Foundation. Source: New York Times.

123,934 Fewer people in New Orleans now than in 2000. The Census reported the 2011 population of New Orleans source as 360,740. The 2000 population was 484,674. Source: Census.

Bill and Davida teach at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law.

Hurricane Isaac Relief Fund Now Accepting Grant Applications

\$250,000 in emergency grants now available for nonprofit organizations in affected areas

The Greater New Orleans Foundation announced today the availability of \$250,000 to nonprofit organizations working to meet the most pressing needs of individuals and families in the following parishes: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany.

The grants from this fund are to provide direct relief in the form of food, water, and clothing in the wake of the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Isaac throughout the region. "These resources

are to help those who need immediate assistance," said Albert Ruesga, president and CEO of the Greater New Orleans Foundation. "We are funding nonprofit organizations that are helping people who have faced incredible hardships and need life's basics like food, water, and shelter."

Organizations that wish to apply can access the application on the Foundation's website here (www.gnof.org). Grants from this fund will average between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and the Foundation will continue to make grants until all the funds have been expended.

Applications are also available at the offices of the Greater New Orleans Foundation: 1055 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70130.

ladatanews.com

First Lady Brings the House Down

Michelle Obama was the overwhelming star of Tuesday night's Democratic National Convention, delivering a powerful personal narrative about her husband still being the same deeply principled man she fell in love with 23 years ago when they were both broke and watching their families struggle.

Obama's speech contrasted with barnburners from the rest of the night, which attacked GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney on everything from his Swiss bank accounts to flip-flopping on abortion. But the first lady's remarks also touched on the message that others, including the keynote speaker, San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro, made earlier: Struggle and success aren't just Republican ideals, and there's nothing un-American about getting help.

Obama's speech, like Ann Romney's at the Republican National Convention last week, focused on her relationship with a candidate that she knows as a husband and a father. But while Romney's talk of saving money by eating tuna and pasta fell flat, Obama's stories of student loan debt and family hardships made for a more convincing case that they can relate to middle-class struggles.

During her remarks, the First Lady said she knew Barack would make an "extraordinary" presi-



First Lady Michelle Obama

dent when he first ran in 2008, but in her quieter moments, she worried about the toll the spotlight would take on their daughters.

She said she feared losing "the simple joys" she shared with her family.

"Saturdays at soccer games,

Sundays at grandma's house," Obama said. "And a date night for Barack and me was either dinner or a movie, because as an exhausted mom, I couldn't stay awake for both."

Obama said she loved the life they had, and she didn't want to lose it because "I loved Barack just the way he was."

She described first dating Barack and painted a side to him that most people would find hard to imagine.

He was a guy who "picked me up for our dates in a car that was so rusted out, I could actually see the pavement going by in a hole in the passenger side door," Obama said to laughs. "He was the guy whose proudest possession was a coffee table he'd found in a dumpster, and whose only pair of decent shoes was a half-size too small."

Still, she said knew she'd found "a kindred spirit" in Barack when they talked about their families. She grew up with a father with Multiple Sclerosis who would "prop himself up against the bathroom sink, and slowly shave and button his uniform," and a brother who, like her, relied on student loans to go to college.

Her story, said Obama, was just like Barack's story.

"I realized that even though he'd grown up all the way across the country, he'd been brought up

just like me. Barack was raised by a single mother who struggled to pay the bills, and by grandparents who stepped in when she needed help," she said.

Now, four years later, after watching her husband go through "so many struggles and triumphs," Obama said she learned firsthand that being president doesn't change who you are.

"It reveals who you are," she said. "As president, all you have to guide you are your values and your vision and the life experiences that make you who you are."

The First Lady kept a measured tone through the speech until the end. She choked up as she talked about her most important title still being "mom-in-chief," and as she said, repeatedly, that she loves her husband more now than when he first became president, and even more than she did when they first met 23 years ago.

"Today, I have none of the worries from four years ago about whether Barack and I were doing what's best for our girls," she said. "We must once again come together and stand together for the man we can trust to keep moving this country forward. My husband, our President, President Barack Obama."

Obama got a standing ovation from the crowd, and as the camera panned around the room, several people visibly wept.

National Urban League's Morial Welcomes Federal Judge's Decision In Justice Bernette Johnson Louisiana Supreme Court Case

Asks Court to "Move Forward in a Spirit of Unity"

National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial applauded a federal judge's ruling that Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson is the state's rightful chief justice, but remained concerned that the court's inter-

vention was necessary.

"The consent decree that placed Justice Johnson on the court was clear that her position included all the rights, privileges and emoluments of a Supreme Court justice," Morial said. "The attempt to deny Justice Johnson her rightful position was a deliberate attempt to undermine both the consent decree and the Voting

Rights Act. At a time when the Voting Rights Act is under attack across the nation, it's imperative that the federal courts staunchly enforce prior voting rights decisions."

Morial said he was satisfied that U.S. District Judge Susie Morgan's decision recognized Justice Johnson's seniority, and hopes the Louisiana Supreme Court is now ready to

move forward in a spirit of unity with Bernette Johnson as its Chief Justice.

Morial was chair of the plaintiffs committee in *Chisholm v. Edwards*, which was settled in 1992 with the creation of a Supreme Court district to allow a fair opportunity for African American representation. The Justice Department of then-President George H.W. Bush signed

off on the arrangement which gave that seat the full rights of a Supreme Court Judgeship.

Morial also was a member of the State Senate team that negotiated the settlement with then-Attorney General Richard Ieyoub and members of the Supreme Court. Additionally, Morial co-sponsored the legislation that effectuated the terms of the settlement.

Reimbursement for generator purchased post-disaster

Will FEMA reimburse me for the generator I purchased after the disaster?

In order to be considered for reimbursement for a generator purchased after a federally declared disaster, there must be an existing medical condition which requires you to have medical equipment/appliance for medical purposes.

In addition to the eligibility requirements for the Individuals and Households program, the following criteria will apply to generators:

Generator is purchased or rented to power a medically-required appliance or piece of equipment

Generator is purchased or rented on or after the Governor's Declaration of a State of Emergency up to the end of the incident period or the date power is restored to the applicant's home, whichever occurs first

Applicants will need to send FEMA:

A copy of the proof-of-purchase or rental receipts for the generator
Proof that the appliance or equipment is required for medical purposes (e.g. letter from physician on letterhead that the applicant/occupant has a medical need for the appliance or equipment).

You may fax your documents to 1-800-827-8112 or physically mail correspondence to:

FEMA - Individuals & Households Program
National Processing Service Center
P.O. Box 10055
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

Please write your name, last four digits of your social security number, disaster number and registration number on all pages of your correspondence and keep a copy for your records.

Fema Individual Assistance And Fema Disaster Recovery Center

FEMA mobile Disaster Recovery Center stationed at Engine 31 in Venetian Isles.

Orleans Parish residents are now eligible to apply for FEMA individual assistance. Starting at 11:00 a.m., a FEMA mobile Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) will be stationed at Engine 31 at 19808 Chef Menteur Highway in Venetian Isles.

The FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) program provides homeowners, renters and business owners in disaster-designated parishes -who sustained uninsured or underinsured related damage to their homes, vehicles, personal property, business or its

inventory- money and services, when losses are not covered by insurance, and property has been damaged or destroyed. Upon declaration of the IA program, the registration process for assistance is initiated.

There are several ways to apply for disaster assistance. Residents can apply online at www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362.

Those with speech or hearing impairments should call (TTY) 1-800-462-7585. Users of 711-Relay or Video Relay Services should call 1-800-621-3362.

Following the initial application, an inspector will call to schedule an appointment to visit your property.

Malveaux/ Continued from page 8.

Most sports arenas and fine arts concert halls have some government investment, and hopefully nobody is running around shouting "we built it." Still, the Republican stance seems to be a purposeful amnesia, an attempt to ignore the many ways government facilitates the building that they claim they do.

Congressman Paul Ryan, Mitt Romney's running mate, peppered his speech with slams on President Obama. In his Wednesday night speech, he said "None of us have to settle for the best this administration offers, a dull, adventureless journey from one entitlement to the next, a government-planned life."

What entitlements is he talking about? Subsidies to Head Start, proven to make a difference in early childhood education? Unemployment benefits, which many in his Janesville, Wisconsin hometown community used when a General Motors plant closed under President George Bush not, as he suggested, President Obama? Would he remove Pell grant subsidies to college students? Would he eliminate Social Security? Does he visit national parks? Government subsidies built that. Does he ride on any of our nation's government subsidized roads and highways? Ryan has told us what he feels about Medicare,

but his slam on government entitlements ignores the work government has done. Who built the roads? "We" didn't. Government did, with the help of well-paid contractors.

If Republicans want to know what "we" built, they need to look back to the record of former President George W. Bush. That president built a banking crisis, and gave banks nearly \$800 billion to bail themselves out. Bush built an unemployment rate that continued to soar under the leadership of his successor, President Barack Obama. President Built built a couple of wars, leaving the splash back to President Obama. Romney and Ryan; Do you own the house your party built, the house President Obama is trying to repair? Will you claim the "we" on this?

Republicans need to be reminded of who built what when they walk into our nation's Capitol. Some folks eagerly claim credit for their quasi-accomplishments. Others toil, and it takes more than 200 years for our nation to grudgingly acknowledge them. As a descendent of enslaved people, that "we built it" rhetoric repels me.

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

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