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The Year in Review

Each year, Data News Weekly takes time to wrap the top events from the year. 2012, It’s almost impossible to grasp that this year has come and is almost gone. 2012, one of the most eagerly awaited years in recent history turned out to be a roller-coaster ride of tremendous highs for some, and tremendous lows for many others. All in all, it will be one for the history books for certain.

2012, a year that many wrongly predicted would bring the end of the First Black President of the United States, President Barack Obama. His Republican challenger Willard Mitt Romney, was touted as the “man who knew how to fix the economy”, but turned out to be a man with “footh-in-mouth” disease. No matter how much momentum he gained, he found a way to gaffe himself right out of it by saying one foolish thing after the next, on camera. He lost by a large margin, and we celebrated Obama’s re-election and look forward to his continued successes as our leader.

2012, this blistering and merciless year had one more punch left and dealt it first in Newtown, Connecticut, where the unimaginable and unspeakable happened on Friday, with the mass killing of 20 innocent children and 6 adult faculty members at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The nation wept for these babies, we at Data News Weekly wept along with you.

2012 has been a year to remember for certain, none of us, will ever live down the events from this year. For many families, the promise of a recovering economy still seems just out of reach, and the struggle is still the word of the day. Many of us are still losing our homes and are still seeking employment. A number, too large to count, of New Orleanians still looking for a way to get back home, and far too many of our mothers and fathers buried their children in this City this year. There is much progress ahead, miles to journey through to get to the other side, but we managed to keep moving ahead, despite the worry, we found the time and heart to hold uplifting community events, to parade, to celebrate births, grand openings, we held elections, and victory parties. We cheered on our Saints even though it wasn’t the best year ever; we just went ahead and loved the New Orleans Saints.

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2012, a year in which we as a nation endured two major hurricanes, one in our own beloved Louisiana. Hurricane Isaac which devastated LaPlace and knocked out power to much of New Orleans for over a week, and Hurricane Sandy on the East Coast which devastated New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless, and parts of New York City in the dark for a month. If that were not enough, 2012, this blistering and merciless year had one more punch left and dealt it first in a shopping mall in Portland, Oregon, and then a few days later in Newtown, Connecticut, where the unimaginable and unspeakable happened on Friday, with the mass killing of 20 innocent children and 6 adult faculty members at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The nation wept for these babies, we at Data News Weekly wept along with you.

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**APRIL 7, 2012**

Danzer Police Officers Get Lengthy Sentences

Five former NOPD officers were given lengthy sentences for their roles in fatally shooting a young man.

Former officer Robert Faulcon was sentenced to 63 years in prison, while former Sergeant Kenneth Bowen and Sergeant Robert Gius eto received 40 years and former Officer Anthony Villavaso received 28 years in prison.

Former Sergeant Arthur Kaufman, convicted only of having been involved in the cover-up, received 6 years in prison.

Lance Madison, the brother of Ronald Brisette, said his life will never be the same. “I never go around the Danziger Bridge anymore, it brings back too many bad memories,” he said in a short statement.

Faulcon faced the most time of the defendants. He was found guilty of both the cover-up and the shooting. Faulcon was the only one of the former officers found guilty of depriving both Brisette and Madison of their civil rights.

Former Sergeant Kenneth Bowen and Sergeant Robert Gius eto were each convicted of conspiracy, deprivation of civil rights and firearms charges, and faced the mandatory minimum sentence of 35 years.

On Aug. 5, 2011, Bowen, Faulcon, Gius eto, Villavaso and Kaufman were found guilty for their respective roles in the fatal shooting in the days after Hurricane Katrina.

**JULY 28, 2012**

President Obama Speaks at Nation Urban League Conference

By Edwin Buggage

President Barack Obama spoke before a receptive crowd at the opening of the National Urban League Conference held in New Orleans. National Urban League President and former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial introduced the president amidst the chants of four more years. As the president it is the middle of a re-election campaign, much of his speech dealt with a broad range of issues from education to the economy, to prevention of crime and a host of other issues that are on the front burner of the political dialog and on the minds of Americans who desire political work to the people.

In his speech he spoke of the National Urban League and its continued commitment to social change. Harkening back to his days as a community organizer and stressing that activism and advocacy for those who are disenchanted continues to be important for a country still grappling with issues of equal access.

**MARCH 31, 2012**

I Am Trayvon Martin

On the night of Feb. 26th, Trayvon Martin and his girlfriend had gone out to dinner in Sanford, Fla., leaving his 17-year-old son, Trayvon, behind at the townhouse with plans to watch the NBA All-Star game scheduled to be televised at 7 p.m. from Orlando's Amway Center.

Trayvon decided to walk to a nearby 7-Eleven convenience store to pick up a bag of Skittles candy and a can of Arizona iced tea before settling in to watch East vs. West all-stars. On his way back to the gated community, however, Trayvon was stalked by George Zimmerman, a non-Black neighbor- hood watch captain armed with a 9 millimeter hand gun and a headful of stereotypes about African-American males.

According to 911 tapes, Zimmerman, 28, told the emergency police dispatcher that he had spotted a suspicious young man walking in the neighborhood. “This guy looks like he’s up to no good. He is on drugs or something,” Zimmerman said, “These _ _ _ holes. They are always getting away.”

When the dispatcher asked Zimmerman if he was following the young man in his vehicle, Zimmerman confirmed that he was. “The 911 operator said, “OK, we don’t need you to do that.””

Zimmerman continued to trail Trayvon, who was unarmed. At one point, Zimmerman got out of his SUV, confronted Trayvon and fatally shot him in the chest. Trayvon Martin was killed around 7 p.m. that Sunday.

**JUNE 2, 2012**

An outcry from around the world ensued, with celebrities, activists and politicians even the President all voicing their outrage and showing solidarity with Trayvon and young black males by donning “hoodies” and proclaiming, “I Am Trayvon Martin.”

Attack on Women’s Health Organization in New Orleans

Women With A Vision (WWAV), a New Orleans advocacy and service organization that provides crucial health care and other support for poor women of color, was the victim of a break-in and arson late Thursday night, May 24. A small organization that has won a national reputation for their work, WWAV was founded in 1991 by a collective of Black women as a response to a lack of HIV prevention resources for those women who were the most at risk: poor women, sex workers, women with substance abuse issues, and transgender women.

The office, on Jeff Davis in Midcity, had been a space where many women dropped in for health care supplies, clothing, advo- cacy, or just a friendly ear. Organizers with WWAV and their allies worry about the ef- fect that the loss of this space will have on the community. “They really got the room at our office that they thought was at the heart of our work, and so really feel it was intentional,” commented WWAV Executive Director Donay Woodrow. “More than any- thing, I’m concerned about our clients not having a place to come,” she added.

The attack comes in the context of a national climate of hostility towards wom- en’s healthcare, including radio host Rush Limbaugh’s slurs against a young college student who testified in support of health care coverage for contraception, and a series of break-ins and arsons on women’s health clinics in Atlanta. The most recent Atlanta arson was just days before the attack in New Orleans, and the FBI is looking into the Atlanta cases.

**MAY 12, 2012**

The Rethinkers Giving Young People a Voice

New Orleans Youth Activist the Subject of a Documentary to air on HBO

“Rethinkers” are a group of students dreaming big about the changes they want in their schools and taking action to make those dreams a reality. The idea is simple: students are experts on their own school experiences and deserve a voice in education reform. “Rethinkers” are mostly middle schoolers, but also have high school interns and eight year old “prethinkers.” “We’re now in our sixth year of Rethinking New Orleans schools,” says Jane Vlachos as the Founder and Director of Rethink New Orleans.

Looking back to 2006, when a band of pint-sized kids — “The Rethinkers” — stood outside a drowned school to discuss their dreams for post-Katrina public education, who would have guessed they’d now be starring in their own HBO documentary? “The Great Cafeteria Takeover” that focuses on the widely lauded non-profit Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools (a.k.a. “The Rethink- ers”) and their pioneering, youth-driven work to improve school food and cafeterias. HBO’s half-hour documentary about “The Rethinkers” is keyed to a national public health campaign called THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION that kicked off May 1. “The Great Cafeteria Takeover” was cablecast on May 16 and again in September. The film follows “The Rethinkers” through months of a strategic drive to improve school food. It zeroes in on the development of the in- novative “School Food Report Card,” with which “Rethinkers” grade cafeterias, and their campaign to continue ARAMARK, a food service provider, to sign an agreement to provide schools with fresh, locally grown food at least twice a week.
**Continuing A Tradition: 47 Years Of Being “The People’s Paper”**

Data News Weekly: A Rich History with Roots in the Community

It was forty-six years ago that Joseph “Scoop” Jones started Data News Weekly against the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement. Today his legacy lives on as a pioneer, as someone who has been hailed for providing an invaluable service to the City’s African-American community. Today Data News Weekly is strong as ever as a second generation and it is at the helm forging ahead in its mission as being “The People’s Paper.”

“We are glad to continue to serve our City in the proud tradition my father set out giving the African-American community a place to have a voice,” says present Publisher Terry Jones who has been running the paper for a quarter of a century.

During his illustrious life “Scoop” Jones not only published a paper but he mentored young people and supported their activism. Dyan French Cole, known to the community as “Mama D,” has long been involved in the struggle for racial equality. She was one of the young people “Scoop” Jones mentored, reflecting back she says, “He was a great man, and a motivator, he was someone who created a publication that wasn’t afraid to discuss and address issues in our community and today the paper continues to do that for the people of New Orleans.”

Data News Weekly has always been at the forefront of civic activism, and true to its motto as “The People’s Paper”. Fred Johnson has been involved in activism since his early years as a high school student at Joseph S. Clark High School. He’s known current Publisher Terry Jones since their days together as student activists. "Back in 1979 we were marching to make Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday a holiday, and we were also involved in activities that were about empowering our community and Mr. “Scoop”. Fred gave us a platform to express our concerns; he was always a man who stood for something fair and just and Data News Weekly is still known in the community as just that, a paper that represents the vision, struggle and celebration of Black New Orleans.”

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2012**

Bernette Johnson
A Question of Justice

Louisiana was again in in the headlines with another racially polarizing issue. This time it concerned the appointment of Bernette Johnson, a woman with an impeccable record, who also happens to be the first African-American to serve as Chief Justice of the state’s highest court.

There was an ongoing power struggle amongst her and her colleague on the court relating to her appointment. As the senior member on the court, a fact that is rooted in the text of the State Constitution, Johnson by law was in line to become the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court after the upcoming retirement of present Chief Justice Catherine “Kitty” Kimball. One of the Justices Jeffrey Victory, who began serving on the court one year after Johnson and presumably would occupy the seat challenged, her seniority and was later joined by the other justices who are all white, stating their lack of support for Johnson is because her first six years was in a district that the court expanded a seventh seat. It was under the cloud of race which the court expanded a seventh seat. It was under the cloud of race which brought Johnson to the bench in 1994. She was initially appointed to the Supreme Court, not elected, as part of a state settlement with the federal government over racial discrimination which expanded the court to seven justices from six.

In response to the decision, Louisiana’s Republican Governor Bobby Jindal challenged the ruling that would allow Johnson to become the next Chief Justice. The position taken by the Governor had the civil rights community in an uproar. Despite Jindal’s attempts, Johnson was eventually confirmed as Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

**NOVEMBER 10, 2012**

Obama ... America ... and the Hope of a Nation

By Edwin Buggage

This week Americans went to the polls and re-elected Barack Obama President of the United States. This has been a long and contentious race that has divided the country. So as we move forward the question is how we find a way to become a nation united in doing the things that can benefit this country and the lives of the American people.

Looking back at the election it was a clear choice between two differing visions for America. One that was the equivalent of the Autohahn in Germany with unlimited speed limits and the other a stage coach going down a dirt road to its destination; a vision that is like high speed internet compared to one akin to the Pony Express. And given these choices the majority of the American people choose to continue trekking down the path we’ve laid for the beginning of the 21st Century.

This election is a reflection of the changing face of this nation. No longer is it one that freedom and liberty, the singular domain of White males and that they are the only ones deemed capable for roles of leadership. Today we are seeing a shift in those positions of power in this country. America’s landscape is changing where all people can rise to whatever level their abilities take them. Today the glass ceiling is being broken every day and that is good as the lanes of democracy are being widened for more of our citizens.

We will be witnessing this change in the next session of the U.S. Congress, the state of New Hampshire will be sending two women to Capitol Hill to delegate for all the citizens of their state. This is something when you think about how women had to fight for the right to vote and only since the late 20th Century were able to get a legal abortion, or even in the 21st Century with the Lilly Ledbetter Act in 2009 which gave equal pay for equal work to women by President Barack Obama.

Today the U.S. is changing for the better as it is reforming itself into a nation where liberty, fairness and justice are more of a reality.

To read more of these stories, and more, visit www.ladatanews.com and view our archived issues.
Glynn Johns Reed

The Quest for Keeping New Orleans Businesses in the “Black”

by: Edwin Buggage

We are again at the end of another year, and we at Data News Weekly this month is honoring a woman who’s been a driving force in promoting African-American businesses for several decades. Glynn Johns Reed is the Publisher of “The Black Pages New Orleans.” Her fascination, love and will to serve New Orleans began in the mid 1970’s. Moving here from her native Tennessee she recalls where the idea spawned for her publication, “When I first came to the City I didn’t know much about the Black community because much of the City is geared towards tourist.” Continuing she says laughingly, at the time I wore an afro and I went to the yellow pages to find a place to get a haircut and found the Afro House.

A trailblazer in many other ways she was the first Black concierge hired at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, next to the Super Dome. And this is also a significant, watershed moment as it is this experience in part that helped plant the seeds for her ventures into the world of publishing and a promoter of African-American businesses, “I remember people like Dr. J Julius Erving and Pelé (a Brazilian Soccer Player) were staying at the hotel and would ask me where they could find a Black restaurant or a Black cab company,” said Reed, who would soon launch “An Official Guide to New Orleans,” the precursor to “The Black Pages New Orleans.

As we talked and she takes a joyous walk down memory lane, it is evident that she is deeply committed to helping African-American businesses succeed. During our conversation she points out one of the many challenges that many of these small businesses face is they do not have large promotional budgets to advertise in mainstream media. And while she notes the important role African-American media plays, she felt a specialty publication that focused on African-American owned businesses was vital. So she created “The Black Pages New Orleans” as a way to connect businesses to the people of the community.

For many years her publication was an important resource, but as the City faced financial difficulties adversely affecting many African-American businesses, she ceased publishing Black in 1991 and moved to Memphis. But her time in the Crescent City transformed her life making her forever connected to New Orleans and all its splendor. “There is no other City like it; its food, culture, its history it is such an amazing place to live work and raise my children.” Additionally, she has stated in an interview that is to appear in “The Black Pages New Orleans” of her adopted City and how she appreciates the collective spirit of the people regardless of their background, “In New Orleans, it doesn’t matter if you’re Black, White or Ethiopian. It’s a melting pot of cultures,” said Reed, recalling the blues song “Let the Good Times Roll,” or as we say in Louisiana, “Laissez les bons temps rouler.”

After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans she began receiving calls from people who encouraged her to bring back “The Black Pages New Orleans.” So now she has re-launched her publication, it also has embraced the 21st Century, having a strong presence on the web, “I am optimistic about the future of the publication, but most importantly it is great to see so many different types of businesses being created by young people in addition to African-American businesses being re-opened, and I feel good as an advocate in helping them in some way become successful.”

Today Glynn Johns Reed comes to New Orleans bi-weekly to run her business and re-charge her battery in a City that she is forever connected to. Over these several decades she has forged a relationship to the infectious spirit of this City that has a way of taking one over and forever con-necting them to the uniqueness of its traditions and heritage. And one of those is this City’s place in history where African-American businesses thrived, and today as the City poises itself for a renaissance, it will once again. And it will do so with a burgeoning class of African-American entrepre neur.s. And Glynn Johns Reed will be there helping keep New Orleans businesses in the Black.
LayToya Cantrell Takes her Seat

*Photos by Terry Jones*

Newly elected Councilwoman District B LaToya Cantrell was sworn in as one of the newest members of the New Orleans City Council on Wednesday, December 19 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Magistrate Commissioner Harry Cantrell, who is her father-in-law, conducted the ceremony.

A Touch of Jazz

*Photos by Terry Jones*

A Touch of Jazz at The Dish featured a Paris Soul Cafe Spotlight of Special Achievement in honor of the Legendary David Batiste and the Honorable Damon Batiste. The evening featured many Jazz artists and included a special performance by New Orleans’ own Gina Brown and Data was there!!!

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504 Magazine and LeRoux Supper Club held their 1st Annual Toy Drive and Holiday Concert at LeRoux Supper Club located at 1700 Louisiana Avenue. The event, which was also sponsored by Data News Weekly Newspaper, featured recording artist Nayo Jones and gathered toys to be donated to Armstrong Family Services. Merry Christmas!
The horrendous news from Newtown, Conn. has pierced our hearts. A black-clad man in his 20s armed with two semi-automatic handguns, entered the Sandy Hook Elementary School and made an elementary school for kindergartners through fourth graders the scene of the worst mass shooting in a public school in American history. Twenty children were shot and killed. Six adults were shot and killed. We don’t yet know how many were wounded. We do know dozens of parents are experiencing the worst nightmare any parent could imagine. We do know more than 500 young children in the school are traumatized.

Once again we are faced with unspeakable horror from gun violence and once again we are reminded that there is no safe harbor for our children. How young do the victims have to be and how many children need to die before we stop the proliferation of guns in our nation and the killing of innocents? The most recent statistics reveal 2,694 children and teens were killed by gunfire in 2010 – 1,773 of them were vic- tims of homicide and 67 of these were elementary school-age children. If those children and teens were still alive they would fill 108 classrooms of 25 each. Since 1979 when gun death data were first collected by age, a shocking 119,079 children and teens have been killed by gun violence. That is more child and youth deaths in America than American battle deaths in World War I (53,402) or in Vietnam (47,434) or in the Korean War (33,739) or in the Iraq War (3,517). Where is our anti-war movement to protect children from pervasive gun violence here at home?

This slaughter of innocents happens because we protect guns, before children and other human beings. Our hearts and prayers go out to the parents and teachers and children and the entire Newtown community that has been ripped apart by each bullet shot this morning. We know from past school shootings and the relentless killing of children every day that Newtown families and the community will never be the same. The Newtown families who lost children today will never be the same. The families of the teachers who were killed will never be the same. Every child at the Sandy Hook Elementary School this morning will never be the same.

Each of us must do more to stop this intolerable and wanton epidemic of gun violence and demand that our political leaders do more. We can’t just talk about it after every mass shooting and then do nothing until the next mass shooting when we profess shock and talk about it again. The latest terrible tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School is no fluke. It is a result of the senseless, immoral neglect of all of us as a nation to protect children instead of guns and to speak out against the pervasive culture of violence and proliferation of guns in our nation. It is up to us to stop these preventable tragedies.

We have so much work to do to build safe communities for our children and need leaders at all levels of government who will stand up against the NRA and for every child’s right to live and learn free of gun violence. But that will not happen until mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers, sisters and brothers, and neighbors and faith leaders and everybody who believes that children have a right to grow up safely stand up together and make a mighty ruckus as long as necessary to break the gun lobby’s veto on common sense gun policy. Our laws and not the NRA must control who can obtain firearms.

It is way past time to demand enactment of federal gun safety measures, including:

- Ending the gun show loophole that allows private dealers to sell guns without a license and avoid required background checks;
- Reinstating the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004; and
- Requiring consumer safety standards for all guns.

Why in the world do we regulate teddy bears and toy guns and not real guns that have snuffed out tens of thousands of child lives? Why are leaders capitulating to the powerful gun lobby over the rights of children and all Americans.

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**To Be Equal**

“These neighborhoods are our neighborhoods and these children are our children. We’re going to have to come together and take meaningful action to prevent more tragedies like this...” President Barack Obama

A movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. A Silk Temple in Wisconsin. A shopping mall in Oregon. A political event in Tucson, Arizona. The weekend streets of big cities like Chicago. And now a first grade class in Newtown, Connecticut. When will the madness stop? When will we take “meaningful action” to end gun violence in America? These are just the latest high-profile mass shootings that have taken the lives of too many innocent victims. And when those victims are small school children and their teachers, the weight of grief is almost too much to bear.

A weight of responsibility also falls on our shoulders. Immediately after one of these mass killings, someone always says it is too soon to talk about sensible gun control measures. We must take time to grieve first. But after the flying of flags at half-staff and the tawdry memorial services, we invariably go back to business as usual. I say not this time. As a father, a former mayor and a life-long advocate of a safe and quality education for every child, I too am in mourning. But at the same time, I call on our leaders in Washington and in states across this nation, to take immediate action to protect our children and prevent the kind of senseless carnage we saw last week.

Even before this latest tragedy, for years, the National Urban League has been calling for sensible gun control. In fact, on the day after the recent presidential election, I sent a letter to President Obama and the leaders in the House of Representatives, saying in part: “The scourge of gun violence cries out for a comprehensive approach to community safety and crime reduction. This requires stronger enforcement of existing gun laws and re-enactment of the assault weapons ban...” We asked the President and the Congress to make this a top priority for the next four years.

Gun violence has often been associated with poor, urban neighborhoods, and it is true that urban violence is much too prevalent. But most of these mass shootings have occurred in quiet, suburban towns where crime is typically low and gun ownership is high. The point is, gun violence can happen anywhere. The one common denominator is easy access to guns. In a nation of 314 million, there are 270 million privately held firearms. It is no coincidence that America has the highest gun-related murder rate of any developed country. And it’s not just about gun violence. There are a substantial number of gun-related suicides and accidental deaths. Just last week, a 3-year-old Oklahoma boy found a gun in a relative’s home, shot himself in the head and died. Clearly, fewer guns in America and none in the wrong hands must be part of the solution. We are pleased that on Sunday’s “Meet the Press” Senator Dianne Feinstein pledged to introduce a gun control bill on the first day of the next Congress that would limit the sale, transfer and possession of assault weapons, along with high capacity magazines. She expects the President to offer his support for the law. We hope so. It’s time to turn our tears into action.

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**Gun Violence in America**

It’s Time to Turn our Tears into Action
“Tis the season to be jolly…”

Jolly, the word invokes images of a larger than life bearded man in a red suit with a big happy belly belothing “HO, HO, HO!!” to all that will hear. The larger the Santa, the more cheer he brings. While kids dream of Santa and an abundance of toys and gifts, adults dream of cakes, cookies, turkeys, parties and drinks to fill our agendas and our big happy bellies. It is the season of accepted overindulgence shrouded in the spirit of love and giving. A recent study found in The New England Journal of Medicine has shown that the average American only gains one pound between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day. However, don’t go back for that second helping of cake and eggnog just yet.

According to Dr. Rob S. Weider from calorielab.com, “That one-pound overall average includes a lot of thin and normal-weight people. For persons who are overweight to begin with, however, that number can spike to five pounds or more. Since two-thirds of us now qualify as overweight, two-thirds of us are at risk for more additional weight gain in the next six weeks than is really good for us, especially given that weight’s tendency to remain with us. And even for those of us who are not overweight, that one pound represents fully 50 percent of the weight that U.S. adults gain per year on average.” With that said, here are a few tips to help enjoy this season of cheer with family and friends without paying for it later on our waistlines:

1. Plan to Party - This is a really simple rule, enforced by moms everywhere. Eat before you go out. Never arrive at a holiday party hungry. The temptation to overeat is too great. Before you depart for that big event, eat a healthy nutritious meal and drink at least 2 full bottles (16.9 ounce) of water. This will work to both decrease your appetite and prehydrate you for possible overindulgence in party favors. No one enjoys a “Holiday Hangover.”

2. Portions make a Pretty Plate - Make it a point to be a gracious guest. Sample, a portion no larger than half a deck of cards, all items catching your fancy at holiday buffets, adding as much color to your plate as possible without overcrowding your plate. Take your time and make it a point to nibble on hors d’oeuvres and tasty treats throughout the event as opposed to gorging or overeating when you first arrive. Remember again, water is key. Relax, it’s a party. Enjoy the experience.

3. Focus on the Reason - Be Active - Smiling and laughing burns 1.3 calories per minute. Each kiss can burn up to 8 calories. Hugs have been said to burn up to 50 calories. Instead of focusing on the amount of food and number and kind of holiday beverages, spend some time under the mistletoe. Focus on the ones you love. Tell some old stories and enjoy the experience. Create new memories. Laugh with the ones you love. Smile with the new friends you meet and remember to give to those less fortunate. Mr. Chill, of Chill’s Barber Shop, invites each of his customers to join him in feeding the homeless at the New Orleans Mission on Christmas weekend. “It is easy for a lot of us to forget what the season is all about. I just want to make sure I can do my part to make someone’s Christmas a little better.”

Well said sir. Well said.

Prescription for the Week: Spend time laughing and loving with family and friends. These gifts will always be priceless. Get checked. Get fit. Get moving!

Happy Holidays!

Dr. Eric Griggs
Will This be America’s Moment of Truth?

Analysis: The horrific mass killings in Connecticut may finally spark a real debate on gun control, but will it be enough?

Their names and faces are now achingly familiar to tens of millions of Americans: Emilie Parker, just 6 years old, a little blond elf; Ana Marquez-Greene, also 6, playing on the piano; Victoria Soto, so proud to be a teacher, who tried to shield her first-graders with her body and died for it.

“These neighborhoods are our neighborhoods, and these children are our children,” said President Barack Obama, wiping away tears as he addressed the nation on Friday.

That was certainly true over a weekend that many Americans spent glued to their radios and televisions, grieving with the residents of Newtown, Conn., an idyllic New England village that will never be the same.

Twenty children and six adults were shot dead at the Sandy Hook Elementary School on Friday, in addition to the shooter, Adam Lanza. Lanza’s mother is also dead, killed at her home before Adam went on his deadly and inexplicable rampage.

As America goes into a holiday season dimmed by the tragedy, the debate is already raging. But efforts from Prohibition to the war on drugs have shown laws can only do so much — and have been known to backfire.

Even if weapons reform passes, what chance does the federal government have to regulate guns when state and local entities are doing their own way on the issue?

Just one day before the Dec. 14 Newtown massacre, Michigan’s legislature passed a law allowing those with some specialized training to carry concealed weapons in once-forbidden zones such as schools, churches, hospitals, stadiums and bars.

Proponents of gun control are insisting that tougher gun laws be enacted immediately. They want bans on certain types of semiautomatic weapons, more intensive background checks, longer waiting periods.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) has already pledged to introduce new gun-control legislation at the beginning of next year’s congressional session.

Speaking Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” Feinstein said her new bill builds on the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004. The purpose, she said, is to get “weapons of war off the streets of our cities.”

But it will not be easy. Gun enthusiasts are equally vociferous in their defense of their Constitutional right to bear arms. The Second Amendment has become a shield for those who resist any restrictions on gun ownership.

All we know the slogans: “Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.” And “When guns are against the law, only outlaws will have guns.”

There are those who are already arguing that a few well-placed firearms inside Sandy Hook Elementary might have saved lives by stopping Adam Lanza in his tracks.

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The United States leads other so-called “civilized nations” in gun violence by a wide margin. This year alone there have been 16 multiple shootings, six of which qualify as mass killings by FBI parameters — four or more people killed in the course of one single incident.

Many are asking: Is there a deeper problem in society than the numbers of weapons?

We may never know what prompted Adam Lanza to take his mother’s guns and head to the Sandy Hook Elementary School to shoot small children. Some are suggesting that his alleged autism was to blame — something that, judging by active Twitter feeds, those with autism find ignorant and offensive.

President Obama, in his moving address to the nation, referred to the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting in Newton Sunday evening, spoke of using the full power of the presidency to prevent such tragedies in the future.

But he faces an uphill battle, something that the president knows all too well.

“We will be told that the causes of such violence are complex, and that is true,” he said. “No single law, no set of laws can eliminate evil from the world or prevent everyone senseless act of violence in our society, but that can’t be an excuse for inaction. Surely we can do better than this.”

Parents and loved ones struggle to come to terms with unimaginable grief, a nation, with its president in the forefront, is trying to understand what in its president in the forefront, is trying to understand what in its society, but that can’t be an excuse for inaction. Surely we can do better than this.

The answers will not be easy to uncover, but at last, it seems, Americans have the will to begin.
Entergy Charitable Foundation Donates More than $137,000 to New Orleans Non-Profits

Third round of grants support efforts of 10 organizations
Ten New Orleans non-profits will share in more than $137,000 in funding thanks to the latest round of grants from the Entergy Charitable Foundation.

The latest round of charitable grants went to support education, economic development, the environment, disadvantaged residents and the arts in New Orleans.

“These grants represent a meaningful way for our shareholders and our company to make a difference in the city,” said Melanie Hall, Director of Customer Service for Entergy New Orleans, Inc. “We take our responsibility to give back to the community very seriously and are happy to help support these organizations that do such great work in the City.”

Among the programs supported in this award cycle include:
- The New Orleans Start-up Fund, which received $33,000 to help support Economic Development and job creation;
- The Orleans Public Education Network, which received $25,000 for its work in early childhood development and education;
- Green Light New Orleans, which received $25,000 to support their efforts to provide energy efficient light bulbs to area residents;
- Victories in Service, Inc., which received $15,000 to help children and families, overcome the obstacles of poverty and crime.
- School Leadership Center of Greater New Orleans and Start the Adventure in Reading each received $10,000 grants to support educational initiatives. The group 4.0 Schools also received a $6,720 grant to support education in the City, while the Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education received a $5,000 grant to support summer internships that foster academic enrichment.
- Other grants include $5,000 to support the New Orleans Opera Association’s Educational Programming and $2,500 to the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative to help residents of Central City build credit scores to aid in home ownership.

People to life and safety?
I hope these shocking Connecticut child sacrifices in this holy season will force enough of us at last to stand up, speak out, and organize with urgency and persistence until the president, members of Congress, governors and state legislators put child safety ahead of political expediency. And we must aspire and act together to become the world leader in protecting children against gun violence rather than leading the world in child victims of guns. Every child’s life is sacred and it is long past time that we protect all our children.

Albert Camus, Nobel Laureate, speaking at a Dominican monastery in 1948 said: “Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children.” He described our responsibility as human beings “if not to reduce evil, at least not to add to it” and “to refuse to consent to conditions which torture innocents.” It is time for a critical mass of Americans to refuse to consent to the killing of children by gun violence.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children’s Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.
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