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District B, Latoya Cantrell**

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The State of Health in District B



Latoya Cantrell is the newly elected Representative of New Orleans City Council District B. Recently, she made her "State of the District Address," outlining the progress made in District B since her election. The district includes portions of Central City, Broadmoor, the Central Business District and the Lower Garden District.

By Eric D. Griggs, M.D.
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Latoya Cantrell has been in the community contributing to positive change for over a decade. Where she was a vigilant advocate for her neighborhood of Broadmoor and now she is making her presence felt as the newly elected Representative of New Orleans City Council District B. Recently, she made her "State of the District Address," outlining the progress made in District B since her election. The district includes portions of Central City, Broadmoor, the Central Business District and the Lower Garden District.

The speech touched on numerous recent successes in the district; the groundbreaking of a new Whole Foods Market on North Broad Street and addressed mainstream issues such as crime, blight, community involvement and opportunities for youth and economic development. Of particular interest was her focus on Health, Education and Social Services. I had the chance to talk with the Councilwoman in her office and on the air for an interview that aired on WBOK 1230 AM.

In her State of the District Address, Cantrell placed emphasis

on the health of the constituents in her district. And since winning a seat on the council, she is the chair of the committee that addresses health concerns for the City. "I am the Chair of the Health, Education and Social Services Committee for the City Council that meets monthly" Cantrell said. Continuing, she said, "I see those three components, Health, Education and Social Services, as the top three critical issues that are facing the progress of our City."

She has brought with her many years of working in the community and understands the issues of health, education and social services and public health risks which arise when these issues are not addressed. "My focus and a lot of what has made this committee a good fit for me based on my background and experience that has been holistic and has been focused on health, education, social services, and of course, housing and economic development. Focusing on the first three (Health, Education, and Social Services) is how we are going to improve the quality of life of our City and our district."

There are areas of the City that lack adequate access to health-care facilities, leading to problems for the citizens that could

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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

Edwin Buggage

Editor

Calla Victoria

Executive Assistant

June Hazeur

Accounting

Contributors

Julian Bond

Edwin Buggage

Gary Estwick

Eric D. Griggs, M.D.

Damian Gordon

Terry Jones

Peter Nakhid

Glenn Summers

MG Calla Victoria

Art Direction & Production
MainorMedia.com

Editorial Submissions
datanewseditor@bellsouth.net

Advertising Inquiries
datanewsad@bellsouth.net

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have been easily cared for if there were neighborhood clinics. In her address Cantrell mentioned a new health facility that will be coming to an underserved area on S. Broad and Washington Avenue. Cantrell stated "There is a Health Clinic, a medical home, coming to South Broad St and Washington Avenue. The project was driven by the Broadmoor community as well as five other neighborhoods- Central City, Zion City, Gert Town, Hoffman Triangle and the Freret Community. They share a role on the governing board of the South Broad Community Health Center and it's in partnership with Tulane Medical Center. We look to have it open in the next two months and it will service thousands of people in these neighboring communities that have been identified as high-risk."

Outside of primary care Cantrell says that there are other health concerns and speaks about the need to address health disparities, not just in the district but

sees this as a citywide problem.

"The clinic will be fully comprehensive", she said. "HIV/ AIDS/ and sexually transmitted infections will be heavily addressed. A large percentage of those infected are African-American women with new incidences. OB/GYN services will be available. There will be a Health Education component, as well as Behavioral Health."

She says the clinic has been in the works for a number of years and she is excited about it coming into the neighborhood. "This project has been in the works since 2008, having secured a Federal Health Planning Grant that allowed the Broadmoor community to do a comprehensive needs analysis on its residents and its neighboring communities. That lead us to determining that a health clinic not only is needed, but could be sustained by the population that it served. It will serve adults and children", Cantrell stated.

She says this is only one of other facilities that are in District B.

"The VA Hospital and LSU Medical Center are in my district, as are the Daughters of Charity Clinics on South Carrollton Avenue and the St Thomas Health Clinic with Dr. Irwin, which is one of our star clinics. The Ruth E. Fertel Clinic located at N. Broad and Orleans (formerly Ruth Chris Steak House) has been open for about two years now and has been done in conjunction with Tulane. The VA Hospital is expected to be completed by 2014 and the LSU complex will be open by the end of 2014, early 2015."

Regarding other clinics and facilities which currently are planned for District B, Cantrell said, "There is a Planned Parenthood Clinic coming to South Claiborne Avenue." She continued, "Given the health disparities as I outlined in the address that exist, there are certain parts of the district, particularly in the Central City and Freret area, in need of

help. This area is one of our communities where health disparities are very prominent. When we looked at the results of the comprehensive needs assessments, we noticed people were dying faster of heart disease and diabetes, and had higher incidences of HIV and STI's." Cantrell said, "These people even had lower birth weights than their neighbors just a few blocks over; It was amazing and sad. When you looked at it on a map, it was as if everything you wouldn't want could be found in one neighborhood."

"Given the fact that New Orleans ranks sixth in country in teen birth rates and the disparities that exist, the Planned Parenthood facility will provide health education, wellness exams and a whole host of services for men and women, in addition to reproductive services in efforts to address and improve these alarming statistics in the district" she stated.

Cantrell is looking at the prob-

lems of her district in a holistic way. And since Hurricane Katrina sees the need for mental health service on the rise. "May is Mental Health Month. We are going to be spearheading efforts to canvas the community with literature to give out the Mental Health Crisis number. For those who don't know, the number is 504-826-2675. You can call at any time. This is a number where neighbors, family members, and members of the community can call for help for their relatives, neighbors and friends in need. They have an eighty five percent success rate. Eighty five percent of the people who call have their needs addressed completely. We live in stressful times and we want people to know that help is available whenever they need it."

Prescription for the week: Take time for yourself to assess your well-being, physical and mental. The life you save could be your own. Get checked. Get fit and Get MOVING!!!

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Six Judgeships, Four Gavel

By Gary Estwick
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The political sparring began in early February as Orleans Parish Juvenile Court judges toured the newly-constructed \$32 million Juvenile Justice Center - they learned hours earlier that it was purposely missing two courtrooms.

Six judgeships, four gavels

"The most important part of the facility is the amount of money we invested in the kids, and not the administrative costs," Landrieu said at the groundbreaking ceremony. The very public moment made the mayor look bullish or better yet, as a politician stretching his powers too far in a post-Katrina City full of other financial issues.

For weeks, maneuvering continued from both sides - the judiciary, led by Chief Judge Ernestine Gray, and those who aimed to downsize the juvenile court: Mayor Mitch Landrieu and Rep. Helena Moreno, who sponsored the bill.

The latest chapter in Louisiana politics occurred last Wednesday in Baton Rouge. Judges Gray and Lawrence Lagarde were unable to convince a Louisiana House committee that their current caseload warranted more than four judges in a City besieged by youth offenders that become dangerous adults - many don't wait that long to earn such reputations.

Surprisingly, Gray did not give an answer when State Rep. Ray Garofalo, R-Merau asked if four judges could handle the current caseload, and declined to discuss juvenile court hours on the bench. She suggested that he look at their court dockets.

So it came as no surprise that the House Committee on Judiciary voted 12-3 to advance House Bill 607, which will abolish two judgeships in the court, starting



with the retirement of Judge Lagarde in 2014. The second would be abolished after the death, resignation, retirement or removal of a judge.

The issue is scheduled for debate on May 22.

Which side will improve the City, including life for thousands of youth?

Perhaps Landrieu's tip-toeing into the judicial branch, part of a post-Katrina consolidation of public services, should be celebrated.

Maybe juvenile court is right. However, this all seems premature, especially for an issue which would not be enacted until Jan. 1, 2015, according to the bill. These issues could have been tabled until next year's legislative session.

"Why the rush to judgment?" Judge Lagarde said. "There's no reason for that."

Maybe they're both right. Maybe they're both wrong.

Maybe they're both right. Violence in New Orleans is getting younger, with many of the crimes that plague the communities being committed by teenagers. Maybe they're both wrong.

"It doesn't mean that one is more important than the other," said Dana Kaplan, Executive Director of Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, a non-profit which focuses on juvenile justice reform.

"It's that we need them all adequately funded."

One side argues that the City is in dire financial need, and that each judgeship reduction would save local government approximately \$2 million annually when factoring in staff.

"New Orleans is heavily judged, and juvenile court in particular," said Susan G. Guidry, who mentioned a 2007 study by the Louisiana Supreme Court's Judicial Counsel recommending one judge in Orleans Parish.

"I don't agree with that, but it sure makes it hard to believe six judges is right."

Jefferson Parish has three juvenile court judges.

The other side counters that juvenile court judges are not measured as their peers in (adult) criminal court. For their jobs end as defendants leave the court, but that's where juvenile judges start their work.

What is the role of the Juvenile Court Judge?

It's a job which closely resembles that of a counselor. One minor may be summoned to court every 90 days, depending on the court docket. Judges are there as the authority figure - often the first in these youth's lives - that not only have the authority to punish them with a ruling, forcing their attention, but facilitates courtroom discussion between family members, teachers and others. Hearings that could last more than two hours, quickly filling up what on the surface appears to be a loose docket. Cases aren't cleared until a youth defender is out of the system, including time spent on probation or parole.

Two years ago, he said, a legislative committee was commissioned to study the appropriate number of judges needed statewide. The section dealing with City and appellate judges is complete, while the second section with district judges - OPJC falls under this heading - is due in Spring 2014 - in time for next year's legislative session.

Yet another faction questions why anyone would take funds out

of an already cash-strapped juvenile system.

They can argue that money would be better spent in programs created to keep youth out of juvenile court.

"I understand that in a time of fiscal constraint, the government is looking for where it can cut costs," Kaplin said. "But, it is of utmost concern that the funds not be cut from juvenile programs. If anything, we in New Orleans should recognize that there's a need for increase funding in juvenile programs, where there's job training or job programs or NORD or re-entry programs, we're just not funding juvenile services at the level that they should be."

A discussed compromise was offered that the savings would be allocated for other juvenile services. But even good intentions may have negative repercussions.

"That is a problem that is a recurring problem in the City," said Guidry, who as Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee, co-authored a letter in support of reduced judgeships. "To have the state tell us how to spend our budget dollars. I think it sounds really good, the thought is good, but I think at any given time, where those criminal justice dollars go ought to be a decision that's made right here on the ground, right here in the City."

Which is why Judge Lagarde is leery about any juvenile services agreement. Such a heading could send funds anywhere from NOPD's juvenile bureau to NORD.

"The City wants to try to balance its budget on the backs of juvenile court," he said. "If they're just worried about having too many judges, and if they're already cut our budget three times in the last three years, then why not maintain that money within juvenile court?"

Judge Gray declined comment.

David Batiste

Marching to the Music of Change

By Edwin Buggage
Photo by Peter Nakhid

David Batiste is a legend in the field of music as Founder and Bandleader of David Batiste and the Gladiators. He is most notably known for his soul classic 'Funky Soul Part 1 and 2.' Today he continues to be in demand internationally as a pioneer of New Orleans funk music. Also these days he is giving back to the next generation. When speaking with him he is a fountain of wisdom and positivity. As we talked about his spirit of benevolence he credits his parents John and Estella Batiste as the source of his wanting to serve his community, "My dad John Batiste Sr. had a grocery and hardware store; he was the first African-American to own a hardware store in Jefferson Parish," Continuing speaking highly of his father Batiste says, "He was also a general contractor and was involved in the community. I watched him as he sometimes gave people food that didn't have the money to pay for it; and he also taught me a valuable lesson I try to pass on and that is it is good to give and expect nothing in return."

On any given day you can see Mr. Batiste engaging young people at the Batiste Cultural Arts Academy, a Pre-k thru 8th Grade School started by one of his sons Damon Batiste. The school was one of eight schools

across the nation that won the President's Art Initiative Award through the President Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. "I feel blessed to have this amazing opportunity working with kids, when I see how they light up when we help them there is no dollar amount that can compensate for seeing children being given the tools to be successful in life." Continuing he says, "I try to tell young people to learn to think for themselves, and to push themselves to be their best. I am glad to see these young kids go on to do great things with their lives. We have children this year that will graduate and go on to Benjamin Franklin, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) and so many other schools around the City and it feels good that we played a part in these kids' lives and encouraged them to strive for excellence."

In a world full of strife and people divided it seems many times there are two things that bring people together from different backgrounds and that is sports and music. Batiste, who has lived to see society change travels the globe and sees that music strikes a chord that connects people, and he has a spiritual connection to people's souls that can bring about social change. "Music is a universal language that all



people can relate to, and even when times were bad I remember 50 years ago when I first started performing music, we would enter in the back, but when we were on-stage we're all together having a great conversation and looking at each other as human beings. I have seen social barriers come down and it has been music that has been at the forefront as a soundtrack helping fuel much social change throughout my life."

He is a man whose traveled the globe and says it has broadened his horizons and outlook on life, this is something else he

way the possibilities for your life is endless."

In the 21st Century for young people many of the opportunities that may present themselves may appear in any corner of the globe, so having a broader worldview is important. At the Batiste Cultural Arts Academy this is part of the kids experience at the school. David's son Damon is the Founder of the New Orleans South African Connection (NO-SACONN) a cultural exchange and economic development partnership between South Africa and New Orleans. David Batiste, who has traveled to many places, says as an African-American traveling to South Africa and other parts of the continent was a life changing experience for him. "South Africans are great people musically and socially, the experience was very enlightening and I came back as a different person."

New Orleans has been called the most African City in North

America, likening it to the motherland he says, "I looked at the people of Cape Town, and thought I was at a second line, it felt so at home, also East London in South Africa reminded me of what Rampart Street was like in its heyday with its great shops and vendors. We have brought all this amazing things to the schools of New Orleans where the kids experience Africa in an authentic way, free of others bias, where they can feel good about their land of origin."

A true New Orleansian, he is inspired and influenced by the music of Fats Domino and he continues leading many to 'Higher Ground' the title of the song by one of his other favorite artist Stevie Wonder. David Batiste is a spirit filled man who is working to lead young people into the future. He is a drum major leading our young people to march to the music of change.

JMJ
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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Dillard University 2013 Commencement

Photos provided by Dillard University and Shari Burrell-Lemonious

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Hail To The Zulu Characters

Photos by Glenn Summers

Zulu Character's Campaign Parade was held on Sunday, May 19, 2013



Shoot Ya Best Shot!

NDF Annual House Party Highlights

Photos by Renard Thomas

The NDF Annual House Party event provides funding to help subsidize the cost to provide financial fitness and homebuyer counseling and education services to low and moderate income individuals and

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Leadership Award Winner Nick Harris with Fred Johnson



Enterprise Award Winner Ashton Ryan, Jr. with Fred Johnson

Nathanael K. Scales Turns 30

Photos by Damian Gordon

Family and friends of Nathanael's surprised him with a birthday party at La Maison du Lac on the lakefront and Data was there!! He

is the owner of the Garden Doctors Architectural Landscape Construction Company and Louisiana Medical Hospice of New Orleans.



(L - R) Congressman Cedric Richmond, Terry Jones, and Dr. Calvin Mackie



Dr. India Gaines and Cody Avery



Congressman Cedric Richmond with Nathanael Scales and friends.



Nathanael K. Scales

Craig Robinson

Comedy's Renaissance Man

By Edwin Buggage

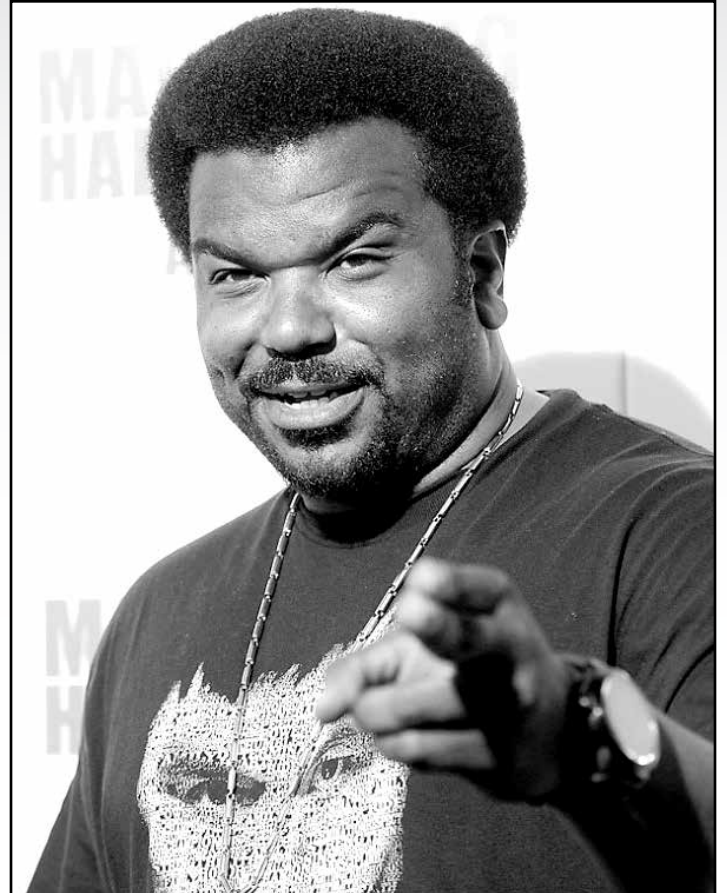
Funnyman Craig Robinson's star has been on the rise for quite some time, as a scene stealer in many of the films he's appeared in. Most notably he is known for his role as Darryl Philbin on NBC's hit series *The Office* and in his first starring role in new film that Tyler Perry produced "Peeples" opposite the lovely and talented Kerry Washington. Ever the comic he said that there were two words that attracted him to the project "Kerry Washington." Continuing in a more serious tone he says, "She as well as all the cast was really great to work

with, we had a lot of fun on the set and I was glad to be part of a project with so many talented performers."

Robinson is atypical of many in show business many of whom always wanted to be an entertainer. Entering the business after obtaining both a bachelors and master's degree in Education, he worked as a teacher before endeavoring into entertainment full time. The Chicago native says, "I am from a family that valued education, so that was priority one, my father was like before you go off and do anything you will have a college degree." Speaking of

some of the pitfalls of the business as well as his outlook on how he envisions his career he says, "I think getting into this business later on prepared me mentally for some of the things that trip up a lot of people pursuing careers in entertainment, for me I have tried to chart my own course and I've been fortunate to continue working in an industry where you can be hot one minute and the next day the phone stops ringing."

He says that he is influenced by comedians both Black and White, and feels it is about being versatile as a performer and willing



Actor Craig Robinson

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to learn all aspects of the business and that is the key to longevity in the world of entertainment. "I have been fortunate being around so many people who understand that talent alone is not what keeps you in the business and that has been an invaluable lesson, working with the likes of Tyler Perry I see that you can evolve in the entertainment industry, and eventually I see myself getting more into producing, directing and writing in the future."

Robinson is presently working on an NBC comedy that he will star in where he again teams up with Greg Daniels, the creator of the American version of "The Office." For his character Robinson will draw on his real-life past experiences in education where he is a band leader who is also a substitute teacher. When asked will he ever release a music project, "I know I will at some point but because I am interested in so many different kinds of music and I don't want to be boxed into a cat-

egory, but I do love music and see myself making a record."

His career, as his feelings about his music has been about transcending categories or fitting neatly into in little box being typecast, for his roles have been loved by many different people and is not race specific. "I have not consciously thought about when I go out for roles about the race of the character, I feel today it is about simply being the best at what you do and studying your craft and that is what I've done," remarks Robinson.

He is a man who is outlandish and funny onstage, but he says that in truth he says offstage he is more introspective, introverted and serious. "I am a different person onstage, but that is only one side of me, but as I grow as an actor I would like to do some other things in other genres as well, but for right now I am enjoying where my career is going and my life because I am living my passion and I feel that is important in anything you do or pursue."

Racists Don't Like Being Called Racists



By Julian Bond
NNPA Guest Columnist

I have always suspected that racists didn't like being called out for their racism. Now I have proof.

When I told MSNBC's Thomas Roberts on May 14 that the Tea Party was "the Taliban wing of American politics," a firestorm erupted. Arguing the IRS was correct to target them for extra scrutiny, I also said "Here are a group of people who are admittedly racist, who are overtly political" and therefore worthy of IRS concern.

I was not prepared for the slew of angry emails, including two from self-identified Black people (your worst nightmare, one said) I received. Many of them suggested I leave the country,

reminiscent of the "Go back to Africa" chants racist crowds of Whites shouted at Black protestors in my youth.

One said my advanced age – I am 73 – meant I would not be around to make such mischief much longer, and I should prepare for that quick eventuality.

A few suggested my employer fire me, not knowing that I retired from that job a year ago. Several of the messages were badly written with misspelled words, including one from a relative by marriage – you can't choose your in-laws – reading "Your calling folks Talabans borders on Traitorism."

This same correspondent noted I had been "head of the most classic Racist group in our country," referring to the NAACP, whose board I chaired for 11 years. Others characterized the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights group, interracial in membership and dedicated to racial integration since 1909, in the same way.

After an exchange of messages with some of them, trying to convince them that while I opposed it,

I didn't condemn every member of the Tea Party, the interactions became more civil and less hostile. Some even wished me well.

But to a person they rejected the labels "racism" and "racist," even as I thought I had proved that the Tea Party has had racist, anti-Semitic and nativist elements from its beginning until today.

One source is a study conducted for the NAACP by the Institute for Research and Education for Human Rights. Their study, called Tea Party Nationalism, found "Tea Party ranks to be permeated with concerns about race and national identity and other so-called social issues. In these ranks, an abiding obsession with Barack Obama's birth certificate is often a stand-in for the belief that the first black president of the United States is not a "real American."

It says Tea Party organizations have given platforms to anti-Semites, racists and bigots and "hard-core white nationalists have been attracted" to Tea Party protests.

The link between the Tea Party and the Taliban was made by a prominent Republi-

can office holder.

In 2008, the Washington Post reported that former chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee and present day Congressman Pete Sessions likened the GOP House minority to the Taliban, saying, "Insurgency, we understand perhaps a bit more because of the Taliban."

Just as my arguments failed to convince my correspondents, so apparently does the actual evidence.

Not the ugly racist signs and placards displayed at Tea Party rallies, not the shouts of the "n" word aimed at members of the Congressional Black Caucus, not the spittle hurled at civil rights icon and Congressman John Lewis, not the racists expelled from the Tea Party for their venom, not the association of many members with the Council of Conservative Citizens, a lineal descendant of the White Citizen Council, not the anti-gay slurs aimed at former Congressman Barney Frank (d-Mass.), not the members whose racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia should be an embar-

assment – not all or any of this could get them to acknowledge the label "racist."

My Black correspondents even claimed that their race prohibited them from being racists, as if skin color was a proscription against ignorance. And many of my presumably non-Black correspondents accused me of being a racist, so my race apparently offered me no protection from this evil.

What is the lesson here?

That the label "racist" has become so toxic almost everyone rejects it? That the toxicity makes the label unacceptable but its actual practice is still tolerable for many?

Or that it is a defense against itself? As the relative-I-try-not-to-claim wrote, "I don't know any white people who hate blacks like you advocate blacks should hate whites."

Or only that while the United States has made much progress in race relations, we still have a long, long way to go?

Julian Bond is Chairman Emeritus of the NAACP and a Professor at American University in Washington.

New Orleans Chapter The Links, Incorporated

Celebrating 55 Years of Service to the Community

The New Orleans Chapter of The Links, Incorporated invites you to join in as they celebrate their 55th Anniversary.

Chartered on November 20, 1957 the New Orleans Chapter of The Links, Incorporated was the first chapter of The Links, Incorporated in the state of Louisiana. The original 14 charter members of The New Orleans Chapter shared the vision of the national organization and were committed to educational, civic, and intercultural activities. The dedicated women extended their outreach to national and international endeavors and developed programs that nurtured the visual and performing arts along with other pro-



The New Orleans Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

grams to address the issues of the times. The New Orleans Chapter of the Links, Incorporated is honored to have served this community for 55 years and continues to enrich and effect positive change through its programming.

Join the New Orleans Chapter of The Links, Incorporated for an evening of dinner and dancing, with music by Naydja CoJoe.

The event takes place on Sunday, June 9, 2013, from 6:00 p.m. til 9:00 p.m. at the Westin Hotel, One Canal Place, New Orleans, LA. Admission for the evening is \$55. For Tickets, E-mail The Links at nolalinks55@gmail.com. For more information on the Links, visit www.nolalinks.org

The Dalai Lama's New Orleans Visit

Conference on 'Resilience: Strength through Compassion and Connection' in New Orleans

By Calla Victoria

There was so much excitement about the 14th Dalai Lama's visit to New Orleans sponsored by Tulane University, and he did not disappoint. Prior to the Dalai Lama's arrival several Tibetan Monks arrived in the City to construct the Sand Mandala at the Ernest Morial Convention Center. That ceremony, complete with monks in ceremonial blowing Tibetan long horns and chanting to consecrate the area, opened the weeklong Buddhist event.

The Sand Mandala

The Sand Mandala is an intricate painting made with colored sand. Mandalas constructed from sand are unique to Tibetan Buddhism and are believed to effect purification and healing. Over a number of days, they fill in the design with millions of grains of colored sand. At its



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Spiritual Leader of Tibet, Pictured with Tulane President Scott Cowen, received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters and delivered the keynote address to graduates at Tulane University's 2013 Commencement, on Saturday, May 18th in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

completion, the mandala is consecrated. The monks then enact

the impermanent nature of existence by sweeping up the colored grains and dispersing them in flowing water.

In the area where the monks were constructing the mandala, there was a square table about bistro height, the tabletop was four feet by four feet and seemed to be made of slate or a chalkboard finish. The monks used a compass and protractor to etch out a geometric design on the table top with a white wax pencil. After the drawing was complete they went over to a small table that contained eighteen small silver metal pots, each one filled with a different color of sand. And next to the metal pots were chakpurs (silver and copper

long narrow funnel shaped tools), and laying beside the chakpurs were long thin stakes in silver and copper with a flat square disk on the end. The monks would dip the larger end of the chakpur (funnel) in one of the bowls and scoop up one color of sand, he would then proceed with the funnel and the thin stake over to the table and starting from the very center of the drawing begin to deposit a fine line of sand by running the thin stake over the ridged portion of the funnel causing a raking sound and that vibration allowed small amounts of sand to exit out of the needle fine hole at the small end of the funnel. This tedious process takes several days to complete. The monks had two small sand bag cushions to rest their elbows on as they were basically almost laying on the table. There was also a wonderful Tibetan Bizarre where you could purchase handmade items from the monks, ceremonial items, and speak with them. I purchased one of the chakpurs along with the paddle.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama is the Spiritual Leader of Tibet and recipient of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violence platform. I was excited to be in that number to hear His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama speak at the Panel Discussion on May 16, 2013. With his interpreter at his side, His Holiness addressed the audience only using the interpreter rarely as he has a very good command of the English

language. Immediately as he entered the conference room everyone stood and begin to applause. His response was, "Why are you standing? Please sit down, I am no one special. Never be excited about any speaker, no one is better than you, we are all the same. We are all just human beings." His Holiness' humility was refreshing and quite surprising. How many celebrities would have said such a thing, we who feed on admiration to stroke our egos? His Holiness is jovial, simple, and accommodating, even donning a Tulane University visor during his presentation.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama spoke of fundamental Oneness, stating that we focus too much on differences which cause bias, which is a manmade problem. He said, "Unfortunately it takes tragedy in many cases to realize that we are all the same, one community." I am sure that comment touched the hearts of many New Orleanians seated there who because of Katrina found themselves all in the same boat... homeless. From the wealthiest power brokers to the most disadvantaged were displaced without their home or their City. His Holiness said that through awareness and education we can change manmade problems. Everyone in the audience signed a "Commitment of Compassion Pledge," because the ultimate goal of every single human being is happiness, and we will find Happiness through compassion for others. His Holiness asked that we strive to live your lives honestly, truthfully, and transparently; as Peace of Mind is ultimate happiness.



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Indoor and Outdoor Plants



By MG Calla Victoria

I am always amused when people ask if a certain species of plant is an indoor plant or an outdoor plant. A-L-L plants are outdoor plants because they all originally came from outside before we started propagating in greenhouses. Now what makes a plant a good candidate for growing indoors is its light requirements. If a plant requires low-light or part shade outside, then those plants will be able to survive in the low-light conditions indoors. Why is the light so important to plants, you ask? Because plants need sunlight to perform photosynthesis to generate food.

Photosynthesis is a process used by plants and other organisms to convert the light (Sun or artificial light) energy captured from the sun into chemical energy and storing it in bonds of sugar. Plants need only light energy, CO₂ (carbon dioxide), and H₂O (water) to make sugar that can be used to fuel the organism's activities. Photosynthesis takes place in the chloroplast using the chlorophyll, involved in the process.

Although photosynthesis is performed differently by differ-

ent species, the process always begins when energy from light is absorbed by proteins called reaction centres that contain green chlorophyll pigments. We erroneously call fertilizers plant food but fertilizers are only supplements because plants make their own food through photosynthesis.

You can just observe the habitats that plants thrive in outdoors to know if they are an indoor plant candidate. Most plants that make good indoor plants you will find growing under the shade of trees, or nestled up against buildings. For example ferns, you only find them growing in shady areas so they are great house plants. Many bromeliad species grow near the bottom of the Rainforest or nestled on tree branches where they only get dappled sunlight. Bromeliads make great house plants likewise orchids, as they grow dangling on tree branches getting only dappled light and we all know that orchids make great indoor plants; also ivy, and some palms. Many succulents make great indoor plants because they can survive in a lowlight situation and because they are succulents their watering requirements are minimal. Take

the Dasylium longissimum for example, as an indoor plant you water it only once a month and it thrives and is happy.

Plants that require full hot sun do not make good indoor plants because even though your home may have lots of windows, there is still is not enough light inside for full-sun loving plants to strive.

Roses do not do well indoors as they prefer full sun in for photosynthesis to produce food.

Enjoy nature both indoors and outside. Check out my website www.thegardeningdiva.com for my gardening tip of the week.

Remember, never get too busy to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!



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