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President Obama Visits New Orleans to Discuss the Economy



Local Union member Reginald Johnson (pictured wearing hat) greets President Obama as he arrived to give a speech at the Port of New Orleans on the economy and the importance of the Port to the local New Orleans economy. Photo Credit: Doug Mills

By Edwin Buggage

Last week President Barack Obama came to the Port of New Orleans to speak about the economy. During his speech he called on Congress to get behind his plan to pour tens of billions of dollars into the nation's infrastructure, something he says will

bolster the American economy and put many people back to work.

President Obama stood on the Nashville Ave Wharf to remind Americans that strengthening the economy is still his top priority. In his speech he proposed to Congress to spend \$50 billion for roads, bridges and ports, and establish a National

Infrastructure Bank. Something he says will assist in creating private-sector investments and repair the nation's infrastructure and create American jobs.

Obama's visit to New Orleans is on the heels of much positive press about the City according to many national reports have become the nation's leader in new job creation and new investments.

Cover Photo Credit: (Gerald Herbert/AP)

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President Obama hugs Nancy Richard, an employee at the Port of New Orleans after she introduced him to give his speech on the economy. (photo credit: Gerald Herbert/AP)



Vera Warren-Williams Owner of Community Bookstore feels that new money from the City for business development and tax credits are benefiting new business and not existing ones.



Alexis Sakari is a mental health professional who says opportunities for advancement in the City of New Orleans is limited due to nepotism and a smaller allotment of openings for African-Americans to take advantage of.

But the story on the ground is mixed as Mayor Landrieu continues to spout these statistics, the City and how it is doing economically is a matter of perspective, for there are deeper realities that lie behind the numbers.

Reginald Johnson has been a long-shoreman for over two decades. He has been an Obama campaign worker and was present at his speech on Friday. "I am a supporter of President Obama and his message of change, and him choosing the port to make his speech made sense because it is a vital part of the economic engine that drives New Orleans." Continuing he says, "I feel the changes in the economy is a good thing for people who have skills, but for those who don't they are left out and I believe it is important to work to assist local people in getting the training necessary to fill the new well-paying jobs that are becoming available."

The National Infrastructure Bank is an idea Obama spoke about during his first term and to capitalize the bank with a \$10 billion investment. But down the road many of Obama initiatives have been met with much resistance during his administration, this one is something he hopes to accomplish in his second term.

If funded how much money will get to Louisiana and more importantly to New Orleans given Governor Bobby Jindal less than amiable relationship with President Obama. But there are deeper concerns among some that

feel even if the monies get to the City, that the people who need it the most will not be able to access it. "There is money that is flowing through the City in addition to tax breaks for business, but it seems it is for businesses that are new to the City. Not those that have been in business for a long time especially pre-Katrina," says Vera Warren-Williams, Owner of Community Bookstore.

While the City has seen an influx of new residents coming to the City to take advantage of new found opportunities post-Katrina, some feel that even when they have attained the education and prepared some doors are still closed to them. "I still see that there is a lot of nepotism and fewer slots for African-Americans to take advantage of these new opportunities, what I see is the African-American population being disregarded and put on the sidelines and not being factored into the economic equation at all," says Alexis Sakari, a mental health professional who is also a graduate student at SUNO.

In spite of President Obama's visit to speak on the economy, New Orleans continues to be a tale of two cities on the economic front. And the thorny issue of race continues to play a part in who gets access to what. "In the past few years especially during the Landrieu Administration it seems that programs or contracts that targets Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE's) have fallen on deaf ears and is

not a priority," says Vera Warren-Williams. "New people coming in that are mostly White are being made a priority and given preference in my view, and many of the local business that have been here like myself and others are not being included. And as we move into major elections next year it is my hope that those who are elected do more to assist "true" DBE's and local small business, because they are an important part of our local economy."

Discussing the economy in New Orleans, Sakari stated, "As we approach another holiday season filled with spending gimmicks, there are still millions of Americans out of work. Louisiana's unemployment rate for August 2013 was seven percent. The Obama Administration's focus on doubling exports by 2015 is a great idea, because it creates jobs. However, the trickle down effect is not benefiting most out of work Americans. Not to mention that the plan is way behind target for the goal. Obama's speech in New Orleans about exports apparently affirms his commitment to improving the economy by creating jobs. Unfortunately, his efforts are being overshadowed by criticism of the Affordable Healthcare Act, which was a great initiative. Most Americans are without health insurance. They are usually forced to use the emergency room to see a doctor for illnesses which creates thousands of dollars in medical expenses that can push a person to file bankruptcy. We live in a

society that cares more about money than people's well-being, and because of this, the Obama Administrations' efforts to improve the economy are not being supported by members of Congress. This is evident through the unnecessary government shut down we suffered last month."

As the City debates the budget and as other fiscal issues regarding the financial future of the City the question remains how do you create a City where all can become stakeholders in improving the quality of life for all. Because as you drive, walk, jog or ride a bike, it is evident that New Orleans is a City with great wealth and poverty only blocks from each other. So how do you repair the rift and have a City where all can prosper and have a more humane and equitable distribution of resources?

Reginald Johnson says the solution lies in people coming together in a sincere selfless way that engaged people at all levels and work to empower them. This he feels will improve the economic disparities and help with other social ills that afflict the City. "It is time for all those with a vested interest to work together, the ministers, politicians, business community, educators, citizens groups and individuals to be committed to bettering the circumstances and life chances for all our citizens. Like the saying it takes a village to raise a child, in this scenario it will take a village to improve and strengthen our City."

Liberty Bank's President Alden McDonald to Receive Education Award

Orleans Public Education Network to Honor Pioneers Who Have Served The New Orleans Public Education System

The Orleans Public Education Network (OPEN) will host the first annual Orleans Public Education Awards on Saturday, November 16 at Generations Hall, 310 Andrew Higgins Drive. This first-of-its-kind event will honor those who have worked to improve New Orleans' public schools, excel in engaging students, and inspire the community. The awards will serve as a way to acknowledge what works in public education, and to highlight the successes of the best

and brightest dedicated to serving the youth of New Orleans.

The distinguished honorees at the first annual OPEAs are Liberty Bank President and CEO Alden McDonald, and L.B. Landry - O.P. Walker High School Principal Mary Laurie, both products of the Orleans public education system who have worked to serve New Orleans students and schools throughout their illustrious careers.

McDonald is nationally recognized as an advocate and catalyst in the movement of minority businesses into the mainstream economy. He has gained a national reputa-



Liberty Bank President Alden McDonald

tion as a creative, insightful and practical problem solver in the areas of affordable housing and providing services for the financially underserved populations of America's cities. Liberty Bank and Trust Company is one of the top three African-American owned financial institutions in the U.S.

Laurie began her career as an educator as a pre-school teacher at Kingsley House. Later, Laurie served as the Di-

rector of the Home Instruction Program for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPPY), after which she became Principal of William Guste Elementary School. Prior to her appointment at Landry-Walker, she served as principal at O. Perry Walker Charter High School until the school was unified with L. B. Landry High School. Under her leadership O. Perry Walker achieved local, state, and national recognition for its rigorous academic program and significant gains in student achievement.

The event will be hosted by the world-renowned jazz musician Irvin Mayfield. There will also be live music featuring the Landry-Walker "Chosen Ones" Brass Band and Gina Brown. Cocktails begins at 6:00 p.m., the awards presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.

2014 NBA All-Star Host Committee Announces Event Co-Chairs

Rita Benson LeBlanc and Avery Johnson to Serve as Ambassadors for New Orleans NBA All-Star Game

The New Orleans NBA All-Star Host Committee and the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation officially welcomed All-Star co-chairs Avery Johnson, ESPN, and Rita Benson LeBlanc, Vice Chairman, New Orleans Pelicans and New Orleans Saints, at a press conference this week. New Orleans locals LeBlanc and Johnson will serve as ambassadors for the 63rd NBA All-Star game coming to the New Orleans Arena on Feb. 16, 2014.

"As an organization, the Pelicans are thrilled to be the host team for the 2014 NBA All-Star Weekend and I am proud to co-chair the host committee with Avery Johnson, who, as a New Orleans native, knows there is no better host city in the World," said Owner/Vice Chairman of the



ESPN Announcer and former New Jersey Nets Coach Avery Johnson



Owner/Vice Chairman New Orleans Pelicans and New Orleans Saints Rita Benson LeBlanc

Board Rita Benson LeBlanc. "In addition to the events of the weekend, the economic impact and international spotlight on New Orleans are incredible opportunities for the city and region. We look forward to having basketball fans

locally and from around the world visit New Orleans for All-Star Weekend and enjoy everything that the City and newly-renovated New Orleans Arena have to offer."

"The NBA All-Star Game is a celebration of unparalleled magni-

tude, and I am honored to serve as an ambassador for my hometown and for the sport of basketball at an event that brings fans and locals together," said Avery Johnson, 2014 NBA All-Star Co-Chair.

The 2014 NBA All-Star Game will mark the second time that New Orleans has hosted the event. All-Star events will kick off on Friday, Feb. 14, with the BBVA Rising Stars Challenge and continue throughout the weekend with NBA All-Star Saturday Night presented by State Farm, the Sprint Pre-Game Concert, and the 63rd NBA All-Star Game on Sunday, Feb. 16. Additionally, fans can enjoy the NBA All-Star Jam Session, the world's largest interactive basketball theme park at The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, as well as a full schedule of NBA Cares events aimed at giving back to the Greater New Orleans community.

For more information about the 2014 NBA All-Star Game and for a complete schedule of events, visit www.nba.com.



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Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center Presents Stephanie Jordan with Rachel Jordan; A Jazz & Classical Musical Christmas

On Saturday, December 14, 2013 at 7:00 pm jazz vocalist Stephanie Jordan returns to The Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center in Ocean Springs, Mississippi with her very talented sister Rachel Jordan on the violin with a holiday show that will soothe the humbug out of any Scrooge. These lovely ladies will lead The Music Alive Ensemble String Quartet in beautiful holiday tunes such as The Little Drummer Boy, I Saw Three Ships, Oblivion, The Christmas Song and more performed by these talented New Orleans musicians.

Stephanie Jordan's awe inspiring performance on the Christmas classic The Little Drummer Boy is an excellent exhibition of her authoritative satin-like

voice, enveloping the listeners with each phrase of 'pa rum pum pum pum' tugging at one's heart while placing one in a time warp as the percussion creates a sense of actual presence at the manger. As the story goes, "the lyrics tell of a poor young boy who, unable to afford a gift for the infant Jesus, plays his drum for the newborn with the Virgin Mary's approval. The newborn seems to understand and smiles at the boy in gratitude." Rachel's arrangement of Katherine K. Davis, Henry Onorati and Harry Simeone's composition is yet another version which is destined for acclaim.

Rachel Jordan is a Professor of Violin at Jackson State University, a member of the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston,



Rachel Jordan

Texas and a member of the Carter Quartet at Loyola University



Stephanie Jordan

in New Orleans. Ms. Jordan was also a member of the Louisiana

Philharmonic Orchestra in New Orleans for 12 years. Rachel received both her Bachelor of Music and her Master of Music from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland where she studied with Berl Senofsky.

Come celebrate the holidays in a magical night at The Mary C with Stephanie and Rachel Jordan.

Seating is reserved and limited. Tickets are \$20 (call The Mary C office for group rates) and may be purchased online at <http://www.themaryc.org/Tickets/Index.html>, or by phone at (228) 818-2878. The Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center for Arts & Education is located at 1600 Government Street in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

SUNO's Jami Blackston Named To All-SWAC Second Team

In a season in which Southern soccer captured the program's first SWAC Western division title, the Jaguars picked up another award Wednesday.

Forward Jami Blackston, who led the Jaguars in goals and points, earned second team All-conference honors. Southern will face Alabama A&M in the quarterfinals of the 2013 SWAC Tournament at the Houston Amateur Sports Park Thursday at 10 a.m.

The Southwestern Athletic Conference released its 2013 All-SWAC Women's Soccer teams Wednesday with Alabama State trio, Aaliyah Lewis, Ariela Lewis and Kylee Hathaway sweeping the individual accolades.

The selections were voted on by the league's head coaches and sports information directors. Twenty-five players total this year's post season teams with freshman forward Aaliyah Lewis receiving Offensive Player of the Year. Lewis' twin sister, midfielder Ariela, was selected Freshman of the Year while junior goalkeeper Kylee Hathaway was tabbed Defensive Player of the Year. All three helped lead Alabama State to the program's first SWAC Eastern Division crown with a 12-6 record and 4-0 mark in the conference. ASU

closed out the regular season with a nine-game win streak.

Aaliyah Lewis led the SWAC and the Lady Hornets in goals (16), shots (61), shots per game (3.39), points (38), and points per game (2.1). Ariela Lewis topped the league in assists (9) and matched her sister in the SWAC in game-winning goals with three.

After completing last year on the SWAC Soccer Second Team, Hathaway finished 2013 with 107 saves and tied a league best in shutouts with five.

Alabama State leads the post season honors with seven student-athletes selected while six were named to the first team. Jackson State and Mississippi Valley State followed with three picks each. Prairie View A&M and Arkansas-Pine Bluff had two representatives with Texas Southern rounding the list out with one.

Aaliyah Lewis, Ariela Lewis and Kylee Hathaway also garnered first team honors and were joined by teammates Anastasia McCleary, Iita Pienimaki and Alexandria Cannon.

The first team also includes: Ana Huertas (Alabama A&M), Nykosi Simmons (Mississippi Valley State), Rayana Speight (Jackson State), Molly Stone (Arkansas-Pine Bluff) and Angie Guillory (Prairie View A&M).



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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Treme Creole Gumbo Festival

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

New Orleans turned out for the sixth annual Treme Creole Gumbo Festival, Nov. 9-10 in Louis Armstrong Park. The event featured John Boutte, Da Wright Way Brass Band, sultry singer Robin Barnes, singer Glen David Andrews and crowned the Vegan Gumbo Winner Miss Linda Green "The Yakamein Lady". A special appearance by the LadyFest YeMaYa parade and a "shake your tail feather" dance contest of female dance groups was a special hit at the festival. And Data was there too!



Sudan and Versatile Ladies Parade

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

The Sudan SPC held its 30th Annual Parade and the Versatile Ladies of Style on Sunday, November 10th. As is tradition, everyone joined the parade and danced, danced, danced and it was a great time. Of course, Data was there!!! Congratulations to Sudan SPC and The Versatile Ladies of Style.



Shoot Ya Best Shot!

NOLA Hip-Hop Awards

Photos by Polo and Shawn Royal

The NOLA Hip-Hop Awards was a star studded event bringing out the best in the world of New Orleans Rap and Bounce for an amazing celebration. And during this night many of the legends of that laid down the foundation for putting New Orleans rap on the map were honored, and of course Data News Weekly was in the house.



1. New Orleans hip-hop suffered a great loss with the death of Soulja Slim nearly a decade ago, but his legacy lives on. His son Lil Soulja Slim, Sister GI Peaches, his mother Ms. Linda Tapp, legendary bounce pioneer DJ Jimi and first lady of NO LIMIT Mia X. 2. Mia X, Lucky Johnson and Tyra Barabino. 3. Bustdown, DJ HC, Mia X and Polo.



Weekend at Bertha's

Photos by Glenn Summers

Located on Basin Street in the heart of Treme' lies Bertha's Place Bar and Restaurant, it has become the adult place to be for fun, food and music with its great mix of locals from all walks of life and welcoming atmosphere. More recently, it has become a destination for tourist and celebrities who come to town to get a taste of authentic New Orleans. On this particular night Actor and Entrepreneur Wendell Pierce came to Bertha's accompanied by Law and Order SVU star Tamara Tunie and her husband renown Jazz Vocalist Gregory Generet and Data News Weekly was there!!!



1. Actor Wendell Pierce and Ms. Bertha. 2. Jazz Vocalist Gregory Generet, Bertha's son and Bar Manager Mark, Law and Order SVU's Tamara Tunie, Ms. Bertha and clubgoer Rashad enjoying the night. 3. Data News Editor Edwin Buggage, Tamara Tunie, Wendell Pierce and Larry "DJ Bird"



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Time to Raise Minimum Wage



George C. Curry
NNPA

The first federal minimum wage of 25 cents an hour was established in 1938. Since then, it has been raised 22 times. It's time to increase the floor for the 23rd time, from its current \$7.25 to at least \$10 an hour.

According to the Center for Economic Policy Research, the value of the minimum wage peaked in 1968. If the minimum wage had been indexed to the official Consumer Price Index each year, the minimum wage today would be \$10.52. The last time the minimum wage was raised was in 2007, when it was

raised from \$5.15 to \$7.25.

Still, there is resistance.

Republican leaders say raising the minimum wage will cost jobs. But opponents, such as Washington Post columnist Jared Bernstein, argue that rather than job loss, employers compensate by charging higher prices and increasing productivity.

Another common myth is that employers shouldn't be forced to pay young people the minimum wage. But 88 percent of workers who would be affected by raising the minimum wage are at least 20 years old and a third are at least 40 years, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

EPI found that of the workers who would benefit from the raise:

- * The average age of affected workers is 35 years old;
- * 88 percent of all affected workers are at least 20 years old;
- * 35.5 percent are at least 40 years old;
- * 56 percent are women;

- * 28 percent have children;
- * 55 percent work full-time (35 hours per week or more);
- * 44 percent have at least some college experience.

The federal minimum wage is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act. There are approximately 3.6 million workers, or 4.7 percent of all hourly paid workers who are at or below the federal minimum wage of 7.25 an hour. Employers are allowed to pay students and the disabled – defined as those “whose earning or productivity is impaired by age, physical or mental deficiency, or injury” – less than the minimum wage. It also places limits on workers who derive part of their income from tips.

A study by the Congressional Research Service found that 40 percent of those earning the minimum wage or less work in “food preparation and serving related occupations.” It also discovered that 72.2 percent have at least a high school diploma and 8 per-

cent have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Robert Greenstein, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities testified before Congress in February: “I would note that over recent decades, the minimum wage has been allowed to erode and is now 20 percent lower, after adjusting for inflation, than in the late 1960s. For this and a number of other reasons (relating in part to globalization of the economy), wages for low-paid jobs have fallen.”

A fact sheet by Economic Policy Institute found, “A disproportionate share of minorities will benefit from a minimum wage increase. African Americans represent 11% of the total workforce, but are 18% of workers affected by an increase. Similarly, 14% of the total workforce is Hispanic, but Hispanics are 19% of workers affected by an increase.”

Washington State has the highest state minimum wage at \$9.19, indexed to inflation. California

enacted a law that will raise its minimum wage to \$10 over three years. Some cities have wages that are even higher. The minimum wage is \$10.55 in San Francisco. And in the recent election, New Jersey voters approve a constitutional amendment increasing the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$8.25.

Where city or state minimums exceed the federal standard, workers receive the higher wage.

The movement to increase the federal minimum wage has stalled in Congress. In March, the House voted 233 to 184 against raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2015, with all Republicans voting in the majority.

Two Democrats, Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa and Rep. George Miller of California have sponsored legislation, called the Fair Minimum Wage Act, to raise the

Curry/Continued on Page 11

To Be Equal

From the Football Field to the Workplace: Is America Becoming a Nation of Bullies?



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

“Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions.” American Psychological Association

When 12-year-old Rebecca Sedwick jumped to her death from an abandoned concrete plant tower on September 9th because of bul-

lying from her classmates, the world stood up and took notice. While some teen-on-teen bullying was once accepted as a rite of passage, we now know it can have deadly consequences and is being taken more seriously today. The same cannot be said about adult-on-adult bullying, which though possibly just as harmful, is a much less highlighted and much more complex story. Consider the current case of alleged bullying by white Miami Dolphins lineman, Richie Incognito against his black teammate Jonathan Martin.

First, it must be said that a certain amount of hazing is part of football locker room culture. Playful teasing, mild insults and innocent pranks are commonplace among both white and black football players at all levels, from high school to the pros. For the

most part, this has been viewed as acceptable and even beneficial team-building behavior in the high testosterone world of male competitive sports. But every person and every football player is different. Not all are comfortable with locker room roughhousing and crude language, especially when it crosses the line into racial slurs, including Incognito's alleged use of the N word.

Incognito's words and actions caused Martin to abruptly leave the team and seek counseling. Incognito has been indefinitely suspended by the Miami Dolphins and the NFL is conducting an investigation of the matter. Attitudes on the team and within the football fraternity are split, with many of the team's black players even defending Incognito and criticizing Martin for breaking a

code of silence. Some of this may be due to the fact that as a Stanford grad and the son of Harvard educated parents, Martin does not fit the traditional tough football player mold. As Jason Reid wrote recently in the Washington Post, “To African Americans on the Dolphins, Martin was a 6-foot-5, 312 pound oddball because his life experience was radically different from theirs. It's an old story among African Americans. Too often, instead of celebrating what makes us different and learning from each other, we criticize more educated or affluent African Americans for not keeping it real.”

How this turns out is anybody's guess, but what concerns me more than the particulars of this incident is the larger message it sends about setting and honoring racial and other boundaries

of respect in the schoolyard, at the workplace and in public discourse.

Nearly every state has mandated measures to prevent bullying in our schools and more attention is being paid to cyber bullying. But, name-calling still too often takes the place of civil discourse in public debates, “attack ads” have become a staple of political campaigns and the “comments” section on many newspapers and blogs are filled with hateful speech. In addition, according to the Workplace Bullying Institute, about 35 percent of U.S. workers say they are bullied on their jobs. As the NFL and the Miami Dolphins decide the fates of Richie Incognito and Jonathan Martin, we must all ask ourselves: Is America becoming a nation of bullies?

Vote Vote Vote!!

Data News Weekly Endorses Harry Cantrell and Steven Jupiter



Terry B. Jones
Publisher,
Data News Weekly

Again it is time for us to go to the polls to vote in the run-off election for Magistrate of Criminal District Court and for Judge of Traffic Court Division D. As I have said many times we must remember that all elections are

important, so I ask you to please get out and vote. If you don't then your concerns will not be on the agenda of those elected. We need our voices heard for this is a crucial time for our City, as we are on the eve of the races for mayor, the city council, sheriff and other seats in a few short months. It is time for us to organize and let our collective voices be heard.

In the race for Magistrate Judge of Criminal District Court I again support Harry Cantrell. He has the experience and the compassion to lead the court. He has gained support from not

only elected leaders, but civic groups because he is a candidate who believes in law and order, but he is someone who has deep roots of serving others and is grounded in the community. I feel Cantrell if elected has the ability to be tough yet compassionate while serving on the bench. So as we near Election Day, Data News Weekly lends the full weight of our support behind Harry Cantrell, he is a man who we feel will occupy the office with dignity and integrity.

Also during this election cycle there is race to see who will occupy the seat over at Traffic Court

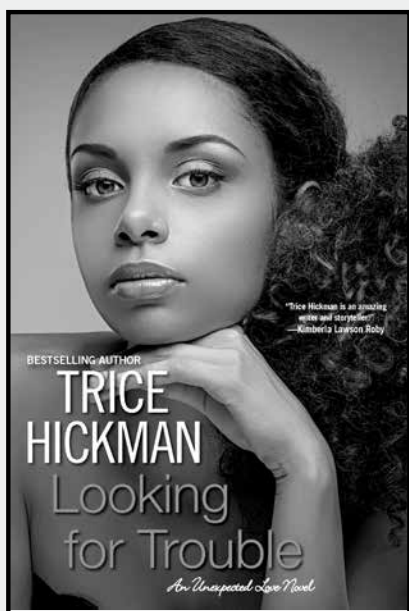
Division D that has been vacated by longtime Judge Ron Sholes. In the primary many candidates vied for this post, but after the people went into the polls only two remain. And while I feel both candidates are qualified to fill the seat, I believe Steven Jupiter would be best suited for what we need right now. He is young, bright and full of new and innovative ideas that would help the court move into the 21st Century and make it more efficient and fair for our citizens. He is someone who I feel has the temperament, competence, intelligence and the people skills that's needed down at Traf-

fic Court. I also believe Steven Jupiter is someone who represents the future, so that is why we are supporting him in this race.

In closing let me say in these what are changing times for our City we must get out and vote. Our dismal numbers in the primary is unacceptable, and we must do better if we want to be a force to be reckoned with and get the things we need for our community moving forward. So as we make our endorsements of Harry Cantrell and Steven Jupiter, we ask you to please make it to the polls on Election Day. The future of our City is in your hands.

Book Review

Looking for Trouble



"Looking for Trouble"
by Trice Hickman
c.2013, Kensington Dafina
\$15.00 / \$16.95 Canada
336 pages

By The Bookworm Sez

Just sixty minutes.

Oh, how you wish you had it so you could reach back in time and spend it with your great-great-grandmother. You could ask her questions, find out about her life, learn about yourself, and ask for advice.

Imagine the things your forebears would tell you – then imagine how it would change your life if they did. In the new book "Looking for Trouble" by Trice Hickman, a little guidance from the past is a welcome thing.

Alexandria Thornton tried to fight it.

She had always known that she had a "gift." As a little girl, she played with spirit-children and she was always able to predict the future. But lately, an older woman's voice came to her ears and it was loudly insistent, telling Alexandria that someone was going to protect her.

Protect her from what, Alexandria didn't know. Maybe from her own heart, which surely needed help these days? Her boyfriend, Peter,

was Mr. Wrong and there was nobody else on the horizon. Maybe, if she could tame this person in her head, she would know what the heck was so important.

John Smalls wondered if his girlfriend, Madeline, was The One.

Sometimes, he thought she might be. She was the total package: smart, beautiful, elegant, and good in bed. Then again, she could be demanding, bossy, and crass. Now they were in John's hometown of Nedine, South Carolina, to see his family and he had a feeling he'd find out about the real Madeline soon enough.

And he was right – Madeline did nothing but complain, and she was rude to his parents. He knew his mother didn't like her. He was sure his grandmother wouldn't, either – and Grandma Allene's opinion was the one that really mattered.

Allene Small stood on her front porch and stared into space and time.

She didn't like that evil woman her grandson brought home. That woman was trouble, she'd cause big problems for John, and Allene wasn't

having any of that. She also knew her great-great-granddaughter would need help, too, someday, but reaching that child surely wouldn't be easy.

It would be several generations before Alexandria was even born.

"Looking for Trouble" is a huge novel, not in page count but in storyline.

Author Trice Hickman sweeps through several decades in this romantic tale of a family united by a "gift" that is only granted to certain female members, and that is only partially understood. Overall, the characters here are good (if not a little predictable) and the plot is unusual, although it does sometimes get too convenient and a bit silly. Still, I'm happy to say that I couldn't predict what was going to happen next and I liked where Hickman took me.

This book is not like other paranormal romances but, like others in its genre, it asks you to suspend disbelief long enough to enjoy – which isn't hard to do here. So look for a place to settle in, and grab "Looking for Trouble." Getting lost in this story won't take but a minute.

Bonsai-Gardening in Small Spaces

By MG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

Do you love gardening but are short on space, then by all means consider Bonsai. This ancient Japanese art form consists of miniature trees grown in containers. Bonsai, pronounced bone-sigh, is defined as plantings in a tray. Bon means a tray or low-sided pot, and Sai means a planting or plantings, hence the term Bonsai. The most common bonsai are made using evergreen trees like junipers and Chinese elm, but I prefer the flowering bonsai like bougainvillea, and wisteria to name a few. I took a bonsai class a while back and we did azalea bonsai and I love mine when it is in bloom. It looks like a little gnarly mutant tree bursting with pink blossoms. There are bonsai societies in most cities, and they do offer classes. And for the fee you learn basic bonsai, and you walk away with a bonsai plant that you created.

Almost any tree or woody shrub can be a bonsai even fruit trees. It is important however to take into consideration the tree's specific needs, if it is evergreen or not, will it grow well in your specific zone, etc.

The art of bonsai consists of:

- Selecting your plant material and deciding how tall you want your tree at maturity. Bonsai can be as small as 3 inches tall or up to three feet tall.
- Training the branches and shaping your tree. This process is completed by first ob-



serving the existing branching and shape of the plant material, then removing some branches to create space, and finally training the remaining branches to form the shape you want. Heavy gauge wire is wrapped around the branches to shape and bend them into the desired form. To maintain your bonsai does entail a lot of pruning and patience. There are specific tools required in the pruning process, you can find kits online.

- Selecting your bonsai pot or tray, the deeper the pot the larger the plant will grow. So if you want a very small tree then select a very shallow pot. If the pot/tray does not have drain holes you will have to drill some. It is also recommended that you place a drip/humidity tray under the bonsai pot to protect your furniture as the bonsai pot will have holes in it. Place gravel or rocks in the drip tray and leave a little water in it at all times, this will create a constant humid environment for the bonsai.
- Removing part of the root system from the well rooted plant. And by removing, I mean slicing off the bottom portion of the roots. The purpose of removing the bottom half of the root system is two-fold. First of all it will dwarf the growth of the tree, and secondly your new bonsai has to fit into one of those cutesy shallow bonsai dishes/trays. If you have a plant in a 6-inch

deep pot, and you purchased a 2-inch deep bonsai tray; you will need to cut four inches from the bottom of the root system for the plant to fit the bonsai tray.

- Potting your bonsai in a very well-drained potting mix because you do not want your plant to drown by taking up too much water.

Typically bonsai should be kept outdoors. Remember that although miniature, they are still trees therefore equipped to live outside. Bonsai require 5 hours of direct or indirect sunlight daily. Lowlight plants and shrubs will be lowlight bonsai. My bonsai stays outside year around and faces the west, so it gets tons of sun.

The Japanese art of Bonsai is fascinating to say the least. I think what is most amazing to me is, as a gardener, we are always trying to preserve the roots of a plant, but in bonsai they just whack off most of the roots and the plant is just fine. Also, as gardeners, we always want to make sure that we are planting deep enough, especially where trees are concerned. However, in the art of bonsai, two to three inches of soil is more than enough to sustain a tree. Nature is phenomenal and plants ability to conform and survive leaves me in awe!

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" at www.thegardeningdiva.com

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

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Curry/ Continued from page 8.

federal minimum wage. The hope to overcome past opposition by adding some sweeteners for small businesses, including allowing them to deduct the full cost of equipment and expansion up to \$500,000 in the first year.

In his State of the Union address in February, President Obama proposed a federal minimum wage of \$9.

The EPI study stated. "When describing who would see a raise if the minimum wage were increased, it is important to look at everyone who earns between the current minimum wage and

the proposed new one, as well as workers earning just above the new minimum wage (who would likely also see a small pay increase as employers move to preserve internal wage ladders). The typical worker who would be affected by an increase in the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour by 2015 looks nothing like the part-time, teen stereotype: She is in her early thirties, works full-time, and may have a family to support.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of *Emerge* magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA.)

Heart Health During Saints Football Season



Eric Griggs, MD
Data News Columnist

Watching sporting events can be stressful to the heart - literally. Several studies have shown that watching sporting events can temporarily worsen any existing heart problems. Emergency Room doctors typically expected

a surge in ER visits for heart attack after the Super Bowl or other major sporting events.

Most heart attacks occur when there is a 90% or greater blockage of one (or more) of the main arteries supplying blood to the muscles

of the heart. About 1.2 million Americans have heart attacks each year, and it's the leading killer of both men and women. About a third of these victims die before they ever get to the hospital. This is because you can actually have a heart at-

tack and never realize it. It's called a "silent" heart attack, and it happens more often than you might think.

"Doc Griggs" WHO DAT Game Watch Heart Health Prescription:

W

W - Water- STAY HYDRATED!!! A study (published in 2002) in the American Journal of Medical Epidemiology indicated that participants who drink five or more glasses of plain water a day had a much lower risk of fatal coronary heart disease, (CHD) when compared to those who drink less than two glasses of water per day. - WOOOO-saaaaahhhh - It's not the playoffs yet (we're still in first place) -- RELAX!!! Enjoy the game.

H

H - Hypertension/Heart / HEALTH -- make sure to take ALL of your prescribed medications as directed BEFORE, DURING and AFTER the game particularly if you have a history of Heart disease and/or Hypertension!

O

O - Be OBSERVANT of any physical changes you may feel during the game (- in particular symptoms of (TAKE ALL OF THESE SYMPTOMS SERIOUSLY!!- IT COULD MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH) sweating shortness of breath chest pressure chest pain prolonged squeezing in your chest area pain shooting through arms, shoulders, back or jaw nausea and vomiting clenching of the jaw Women may also experience additional symptoms when they have heart attacks, like a clammy skin, dizziness, a burning sensation in the chest and unexplained fatigued.

D

D - Should you experience ANY of the above, DIAL 911 IMMEDIATELY and chew an ASPIRIN (325 MG during a cardiac event) while you wait!! When you Call 911, say "Heart Attack!" - Phone a neighbor or a family member who lives very close by. - Say that you have taken an aspirin (325mg) (or at least two 81 mg aspirin tablets). - Take a seat on a chair or sofa near the front door, and wait for their arrival and ...DO NOT LIE DOWN! MOST IMPORTANTLY, DO NOT WAIT TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL UNTIL THE END OF THE GAME! YOU MAY NEVER SEE THE FINAL SCORE! You can catch the highlights later.

D - also stands for DIET- we tend to overindulge during games. TRY to eat as many healthy snacks (i.e. - fruits and vegetables, etc.) Go easy on the salt and high sodium snacks! Which leads to...

- The other Big "D" - Drinking - try not to celebrate the ups and downs of the game with too much alcohol. Overindulgence increases your risk of heart attack as well as a number of other well-known ill effects, not to mention the WICKED hangover the next day.

A

A - During the week before game day, STAY "ACTIVE." People who maintain an active lifestyle have a 45% lower risk of developing heart disease than do sedentary people. Moderate exercise improves cardiovascular health and has been shown to decrease the effects of aging. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of exercise on most -- if not all -- days. Anyone with existing high blood pressure should discuss an exercise program with their doctor.

T

T - TIMEOUT - when you feel yourself becoming to worked up over the game, the refs, the score, etc...take a "TIMEOUT" and go to another room; take a walk outside; practice slow breathing techniques...whatever it takes to decrease your current stress levels to a point where you can enjoy the game. Stress spikes in blood glucose levels and blood pressure have been known to take many an overzealous fan out for the season- for good!

Remember, it's early in the season. The Saints are at the TOP OF THE DIVISION. We've got a long way to go but we will win again. 2 DAT!!!!
Get Checked. • Get Fit. • Get Moving!

Letter to the Editor

Cursive Writing Skills No Longer Being Taught in Our Schools

Dear New Orleans Data News Weekly Editor:

I am writing to express my concern over the matter of cursive writing skills no longer being taught in our schools. I know that in this age of technology we are being allowed to take shortcuts in how we do business.

I know that we are not ranked in the top five nations for our students excelling in math and sciences. But because of our ranking, I believe that we should not neglect one of the cornerstones of early learning.

Cursive skills are necessary because current documentation requires that we sign our names as well as print them to validate a contract, etc..

Let me remind you that when Velcro was invented, we thought

that we no longer needed to teach our children to tie their shoelaces. But to this day, shoes are still being manufactured with shoelaces that need to be tied.

Just because the powers that be have decided that we no longer need to teach our children cursive writing skills in the short term does not mean they will not need cursive writing skills in the long term.

Thank you for taking time out from your busy schedule to consider my concern.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Charlotte J. Gibson
New Orleans, LA

Dear Mrs. Gibson

We agree with your viewpoint. It was a topic of discussion among our staff during the Trayvon Martin trial. Miss Rachel Jeantel was on the witness stand, and was given a letter to read, which she claimed to have written. The problem was that she had dictated the letter to someone else who wrote it for her. When she was given the letter to read, she could not do so, not because she is "uneducated" as pundits and others claimed, rather, she did not read cursive handwriting; one can only assume it is because she, like many under

the age of 25 have not been taught cursive writing. It was dropped from the core curriculum standards at the US Dept of Education and currently, 41 states do not teach cursive writing. Imagine, our founding documents are written in cursive and our children cannot read them. What a shame!

Thank you for writing.

Cheryl Mainor
Managing Editor

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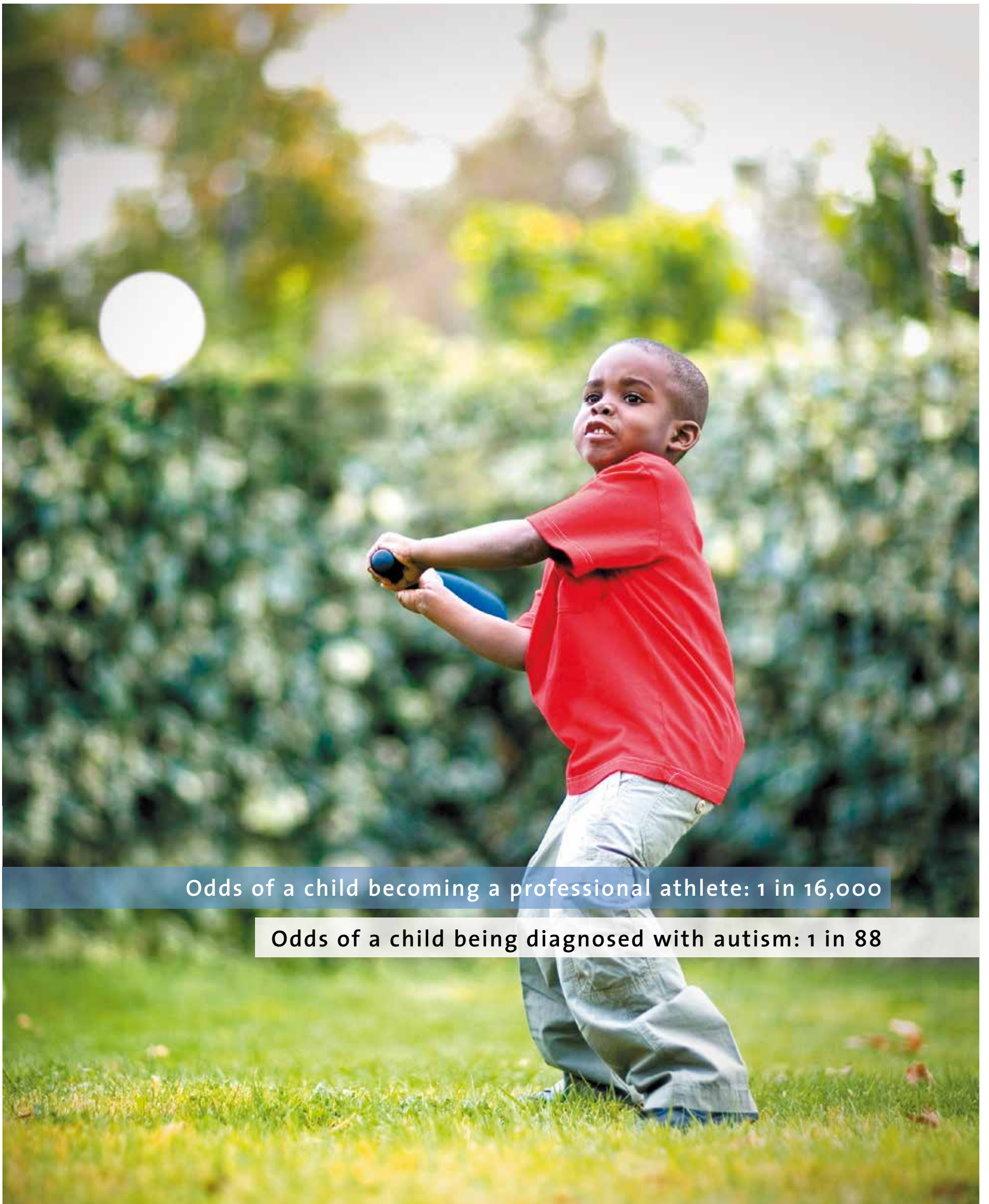
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Odds of a child becoming a professional athlete: 1 in 16,000

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