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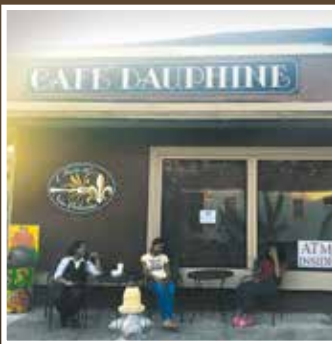
A Data News Weekly Exclusive



Duncan Exits Dept. of Education

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Education Secretary Arne Duncan Leaves with a Questionable Legacy for New Orleanians



Education Secretary Arne Duncan is congratulated by President Barack Obama at a press conference in Washington, DC. Duncan's legacy in New Orleans remains in question as under his watch, New Orleans has become the first US city to have its entire public education system to be replaced by controversial charter schools, the effects of which are yet unknown.

by **Charlie Turner**
Data Staff Writer

Arne Duncan stepped down from office as not only the longest serving member of President Obama's cabinet but as the most influential Secretary of Education of all time. Since Duncan's time heading the Chicago Public School System, he has been a vocal about wanting to close the achievement gap between African-American and Caucasian students and elevating the economically disadvantaged through educa-

tional opportunities. His methods of reaching these goals is what has drawn criticism from both sides of the aisle- 'controversial' would be an understatement when speaking on the perception of Duncan's reforms. Today, there is federal legislation hampering the Department of Education (ED) going forward and a public school system in upheaval.

But after paying quite a bit of lip service towards closing the achievement gap, has Duncan been successful in this goal? The answer is impossible to determine as of now since many of these policies were aimed towards

college-readiness, something that cannot be gauged until the students in question reach that age. That said, when examining Duncan's initiatives it is clear that he believes that education reform is the answer to healing social imbalances. That is especially evident in his wholehearted support for charter schools.

More Charter Schools

For New Orleans, Duncan's appreciation for charter schools is perhaps best remembered for his comments on how Hurricane Katrina was the best thing

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to happen for the City's Public School System. Besides being tone deaf, the comments were also inaccurate since only one-third of students ended up returning to New Orleans, with new students predominately coming from White middle-upper class families. But the comments undoubtedly reflect Duncan's strong support in expanding charters throughout the country.

The national boom in charter schools is nothing news for New Orleans since all publicly funded schools are already charter, but quite a controversial for the rest of the country- especially for states that were performing comparatively well, like New York, or that those that have had their share of problems with charters, like Ohio. Generally, the shift away from traditional public schools and towards charters, also referred to school privatization, it seen as a Republican concept but this is increasingly not the case, especially on the federal level. Duncan and Obama represent how the Democratic Party is joining reformists who want to see public education move away from Teacher Unions which have been a long-time liberal bastion and voter of Democrats.

While the rise in charters have indeed weakened Teacher Unions, their efficacy in closing the achievement gap, desegregating schools and elevating education have been called into question. After 10 years of significant expansion in charters, there is no evidence that charter schools are more inclined to produce better results than traditional public schools, while children with special needs are categorically left out of most charter programs. Critics of charters have noticed that administrators tended to target high-performing students while leaving public schools as the only option for those with learning disabilities.

This brand of criticism obviously does not completely apply with the New Orleans system since all schools are charter, but the perception of tiered educational opportunities still exists. The inequity of educational institutions is especially apparent on racial lines, with Caucasians students having a far greater chance of attending the elite charter schools, regardless of distance. Charter school proponents have argued that school choice would increase integration in the education system, but if anything it has been exacerbated. Yet there is no sign of charter schools slowing down, or at least their implementation being revised. In fact, three days before Duncan's resignation he

announced another grant for \$249 million dedicated towards charter school expansion.

The rapid growth of charter schools is especially disconcerting



for a public school system that is attempting to cope with the policies that Duncan instituted. New rigorous standards, some would say experimental, have rightly or wrongly left public schools in a state of disarray- the fear is that struggling public school system will be more reason for the ED to expand charters. A reality that New Orleans has firsthand experience with.

Standards, Tests and Teacher Evaluations

This issue is often linked to talks of Common Core, a set of nationwide standards developed by US governors. A topic that has not received adequate national media considering what a hot button issue it has become. It is near impossible to attend any political rally of any sort in Louisiana and not hear a whole lot about disdain for the new standards that Gov. Jindal has been trying to wiggle out of after agreeing to year ago. Duncan did not devise Common Core, but he did support them especially because they linked standardized testing to how teachers are evaluated- something that defines Duncan's ideology.

Duncan's push for gauging teacher efficacy on test scores began with the Race to the Top (RTT) Program which was part of the 2009 stimulus package. RTT incentivized states to compete for \$4.3 billion in grant money if reforms were enacted that the ED believed would improve US education. In order to get the money schools had to adopt measures, which included lifting restrictions on charter schools; but were mostly centered around increasing educational standards and holding teachers accountable for student performance on tests. RTT incentivized states to implement Common Core standards that met requirements for RTT dollars.

The federal dollars were significant enough to make states quickly change their educational policies, but the end results have been dis-

couraging to say the least- especially for African-American students. In New York for example, the achievement gap between White and Black students was 14 points for eighth

grade reading & writing proficiency in 2011. Once Common Core was implemented, the standards raised nationwide with increased testing, the achievement gap jumped to 25 points.

To be clear, test scores went down in every demographic group but were devastatingly low for students of color. To Duncan, the shockingly low-test scores are good because they are honest. A refreshing reality that goes back to

Duncan's philosophy that he once shared at a National Press Club Conference in 2009 "so we have to stop lying to children. We have to tell them the truth. We have to be transparent about our data. We have to raise the bar so that every child knows on every step of their educational trajectory what they're going to do".

It is undeniable that states have set a low-bar in the past on what was considered grade-level reading and math, something that Common Core and RTT aimed to combat. For students who come from households with adequate emotional and financial support, lacking college-readiness is something that can be overcome with increased expectations and proper tutoring. The question is how much can US public schools, and teachers specifically, do to elevate children coming from low-income households within the span of a school day? Can a public school ever be properly equipped to close the achievement gap and can you base a teacher's job security on that task? Duncan's policies, and rhetoric, have shown that he

believes that poor academic performance is a result poor schooling, with little consideration given to poverty and other obstacles outside the classroom.

His track record injecting more testing, hard standards and more consequences for teachers has been an ambitious mission that has garnered many detractors. Duncan's policies can only be fully judged once the children undergoing these new standards, reach college age and their readiness can be gauged instead of speculated. After all, Duncan envisions that low-test scores tied to teacher evaluations are a starting point that will catalyze increased academic success in the future. But for now, Duncan leaves office with a public school system wary of the federal government and with dreadful numbers for how well the US system is doing. The new standards are hopefully met, because many in public schools fear that the poor tests results will be used as another excuse to increase charter schools. Something that interim Secretary of Education John King is surely going to encourage.

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Lower Ninth Ward Economic Recovery



**Story and Photos By
Kendall Lawson
Data News Weekly
Staff Writer**

Residents in the Lower Ninth Ward have seen their schools restructured, their real estate spike, and now the long-time business establishments from restaurants to barbershops shutter their doors. Others have managed to survive the economic downturn in the community thanks to a revival of tourism to the area.

The Lower Ninth Ward has become the post-Katrina poster for sedated recovery. Businesses and restaurants that used to prosper through the community have yet to return, essentially since it's more affordable for them to take their services elsewhere, than rebuild and restructure. Places such as, Willy's Auto Shop, House of Dance and Feathers, and Mark's Muffler shop were very prominent in the community and have made their return. "We didn't have too much to start," said Milton Carr, a tour guide for Ninth Ward Devastation Tour. "Local stores were important because some specialized in the materials houses in the area needed. Stores ran out of homes like mechanic shops, mom and pop stores, and people selling frozen cups," Carr explained.

Several generations of families lived near each other, inherited small businesses, and shared

similar culture and heritage in the Lower Ninth Ward. Houses that appeared to be homes were actually local shops since residents used them for businesses and resources they lacked. Pastor Brenda Square of Beecher Memorial United Church of Christ said she remembers contributing to the neighborhood when she was only a child. "I grew up in this neighborhood and looking into these vacant lots, these used to be homes," Square said. "We built the first library in the community out of a house donated by a resident from the Lower Ninth Ward."

Prior to Katrina, the Lower Ninth Ward wasn't only a neighborhood of predominately black families, but New Orleans most economically ignored community, said Karran Harper, a founding member of Parents Across America. "I believe the disinvestment of dollars in certain neighborhoods has played a role in how some neighborhoods came back," Harper said. However, the community thrived despite its neglect by city government because it consisted of a working community of homeowners, with several small locally owned groceries, churches, and businesses.

"Our area used to actually flourish with mom and pop grocery stores," said Mark Ford, a member of the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission and a Lower Ninth Ward resident.

Many of the shops served community events, Ford said, like those held by the Mardi Gras Indians, or the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, that were regular sources of economic activity in the community. Now, Ford said, many of these shops sit in neglected and abandoned lots with boarded up windows, doors, and graffiti completely masking their prior use. "None of the owners came back after Katrina because they couldn't finance and afford it," Ford said. "A majority of the owners love it down here but couldn't afford to refinance after Katrina," he added.

The loss of some of the traditional businesses of the Lower Ninth is coupled with the opening of a few new ones. In response to the lack of a grocery store for nine years, Burnell and Keasha Colton have opened one of the first local markets in the Lower Ninth Ward since Katrina. "The community loves us and no matter what we'll continue growing," said Keasha Colton, owner of the Lower Ninth Ward Market. "We're hoping to give them the businesses before the store. The storm is gone but still here. Me and my husband go around and see what the residents need." Since Colton and her husband opened the market, it has spawned other small ventures. "So far we had a barbershop, a sweet shop, and a grocery store, and we're soon expanding to a

Laundromat," Keasha Colton said. "There are other business, but if we go one at a time, ...we'll make it there."

While the local grocery attracts and supports local residents, its one of the community's first steps into recovery. Residents say they are also happy to see some of the long-time business slowly reopen again. "Most of the businesses in the Lower Ninth Ward were mom and pop. Like Willy's Auto Shop, the muffler shop on St. Claude Ave, both came back after the storm," Carr said. "A lot of convenience stores of which four have returned." New Orleans creole cuisine, one of the more reputable and recognizable tourist draws for the city has allowed most of the restaurants to keep their doors open and new ones to take off, Carr said. "Restaurants, we have a good one after the storm in another location run by a family that is from down here called Café Dauphine," Carr noted.

In June 2012, the Henry family started up Café Dauphine, a new traditional soul-food restaurant. The small restaurant, located on Dauphine street in the Lower Ninth Ward, was filled with people for its opening day, according to Keisha Henry, one of the owners of Café Dauphine. This is the first time that the owners, Tia and Fred Henry Jr. and his sister, Keisha, worked in the res-

taurant business. "We're actually the first full service sit down restaurant in the area [since Katrina]. It feels good to contribute back to the community that we love so much," said Henry. "The Ninth Ward neighborhood and community of New Orleans have been supportive of us and we are appreciative of it," she said.

While each year, families continue to return to the city, the lack of services, resources, and businesses in the Lower Ninth Ward also means fewer employment opportunities in the area. "Everything comes down to price. It comes down to the amount of people and resources to rebuild," Carr said. According to The Data Center's Census analysis for the Lower Ninth Ward, in 2004 the total number of workers living within the neighborhood was 4,663 people. Seven years later in 2011, that average plummeted to 1,192. This led residents to find employment in other areas of the city, due to the inactive local operations still devastated from Katrina. "We have about 40 percent of the population back and about the same amount for buildings," Carr said.

"Comeback here is very slow, because we had a lot of people whose whole family was from the Lower Ninth Ward," Carr said. "It is hard to return without a place to live while trying to find a job to get established again."

Rams Pride is Restored at Carver

Jermal Greenberry
Data News Weekly
Contributor

There are several things to fear when facing a Ram in battle. The average Ram weighs between 117 and 279 pounds. Its horns are curled, and the bigger they are, the stronger their attack is on an opponent. Rams have keen eyesight, meaning they can spot a predator from miles away. The strength of a ram surpasses most animals in the wild, which is why many animals fear the mighty ram. It is no coincidence that this strong animal is the mascot of a school that has been through so much, but still manages to come out victorious. There's no question that the Alumni of George Washington Carver has taken on the character of this prestige animal setting the example for the Rams football team to follow.

When you think of the George Washington Carver Rams Football Program, names such as NFL Hall of Famer Marshall Faulk, former Houston Oiler Robert Woods, and Hollis Brent come to mind. Along with them, there were many others who set the standards for this football program. Legendary coaches including the late greats Enos Hicks & Johnny Harris, Jack Phillips, and current McDonough 35 Coach Wayne Reese were not just great football coaches, but great life coaches. Each player who played under these great men can say they learned more than schoolwork; they learned valuable life lessons. Coaches Sam Holden and Dowone Sanders taught and made hard work, discipline, and perseverance the Carver way. Years later, those core values still stand tall through the hallways, football field, and basketball court at George Washington Carver Senior High School.

August 29, 2005 is a day that will forever be remembered in the hearts of many New Orleanians. Hurricane Katrina destroyed the entire City, especially the Ninth Ward area, leaving many citizens displaced. A school that is considered to be the heart of the ninth ward was left puzzled about its future. However, for Carver and the Ninth Ward Community, this has been one of their toughest battles to date. A school that meant so much to many in that area seemed to be no more, and the road back seemed long and hard. Ten years later, with



George Washington Carver players showing Ram Pride before big McDonough 35 Sr High. Carver Rams players are: #59 Nathan Wilcox OG, #6 Dekalon Burton RB, CB, #17 Ryan Felt WR, #55 Alvin Brown III DE

a brand new building on deadline to be opened next year and the "Marshall Faulk Field of Dreams" to follow, Carver is back and stronger than ever. Coach Byron Addison, Head Football Coach of Carver reflected on what this program means to him. "Champions, Pride," he said. Those were all the words needed to sum up a bottle of feelings about a school so dear. Lessons that Addison teaches his players are some of the same life lessons that were taught to former Carver Rams who entered the building.

"[I'm just] trying to teach those young men how to conduct themselves on and off the field," Addison said. "How to be productive citizens; how to be able to go out into this world and compete at a high level, whether it's in corporate America or whether it's in athletics."

Tulane's 2002 Hawaii Bowl MVP Lynaris Elpheage, who is also a Carver Ram alumnus, came back to his Alma Mater to help out Coach Addison restore Carver and instill those life lessons he learned during his beloved glory days.

"This is where it all started for me," he said. "This is where I had my foundation and this is what carried me through life."

Elpheage's only goal is to lay the foundation that was laid for him when he was a Carver Ram. "This is what I'm trying to give back to these young men," he explained. "[I'm] just trying to pave the way so they can have a smooth transition to the next level. [I'm trying to] show them how to be winners, the work ethic, and the time it takes to

be a winner."

For years since Hurricane Katrina, Carver has been housed in trailers on what used to be two different school campuses: Abramson High and Livingston Middle. When a family doesn't have a home, the

people are lost. In 2014, Carver began to rebuild their home with a groundbreaking ceremony for their brand new facility. The home and pride of the Carver Ram is restored once again.

"We have a building now, and

all the things that were lacking are starting to fall into place," Coach Addison said. "I told my guys from day one, 'Just continue to work hard, and we won't be down for long'."

Carver is back and here to stay. The Rams football team is off to a great 4-2 start, only losing two heartbreakers to McDonough 35 and being shut out by Saint Thomas Aquinas. They may have lost those battles, but they haven't lost the war. The Rams are still in control of their own destiny. The future is bright for Carver High. After more than a decade Carver will finally move back to its original home site, 3059 Higgins Blvd., next fall. The complex will be an 185,000 square-foot campus to include 40 classrooms, six science labs and a 1,500-seat convocation center. In 2016, the Rams Football Team will also have a stadium to call home. The Marshall Faulk Field of Dreams complex will complete the restoration of pride to a community that is well deserving and has been through enough.

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Roses are Getting Ready for their Encore Appearance



By LMG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

Roses will be putting on their next blooms in November, so to ensure a big show of color then we must prepare now.

First up, give your rose bushes a good pruning; prune them back at least 50%. Roses bloom on new wood, so a good haircut now will result in a ton of blooms next month. If you have only one or two bushes, by all means use pruners. However if you have lots of bushes, a hedge trimmer makes the work easy. Also now is the time to fertilize your rose bushes as they will be in a growth phase from now until the bloom time; so feed, feed, and feed. There are many good store-bought rose fertilizers to choose from,

but Epsom salts is great, cheap, readily available, and will do wonders for your rose bushes.

If you want to buy some rose bushes consider old garden roses. Many are repeat bloomers, easy to care for, and wonderfully fragrant. If you have an old shade that needs camouflage, have simply run out of garden real-estate, or have privacy concerns by all means consider climbing roses. They make beautiful privacy hedges along an otherwise lackluster stretch of fencing, and the thorns are a great deterrent to would-be intruders. No more space to plant? Go vertical with climbing roses on arches as an entry to your garden. Are you annoyed by unsightly structures peeking in from your neighbor's yard? Camouflage the

intruding structure with climbing roses.

Unlike other climbing vines that have tendrils that grab onto things or grow with a natural twist to hold on to objects, know that roses have to be trained to climb. There is some trellising and tying that must go hand-in-hand with training climbing roses to climb, but well worth the work. It is a good idea to plant an evergreen climber like star jasmine along with your climbing rose bush. That way when all the leaves have fallen off the rose bush for the winter, you are not stuck with just dry ugly branches. The star jasmine will use those branches as a trellis and climb up and cover the rose bush's nakedness with a carpet of lush glossy green foliage, therefore your garden will

still look spectacular in the winter.

Ground cover (carpet) roses planted between your upright bushes make a beautiful statement. Also lavender is an excellent companion plant to your rose bushes. They smell amazing and are a wonderful herb for the kitchen, or dried as potpourri.

The Fall Garden Festival at the New Orleans Botanical Garden, this weekend, is a great place to pick up your roses and other plant material at a good price, as well as some good food, music, arts and crafts, cooking demos, and gardening workshops.

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

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

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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Marching for Justice

On Saturday, October 10, thousands descended on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., for the 20th anniversary of the Million Man March, organized by the Nation of Islam and the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, demanding justice for Black victims of police brutality. Speakers at the “Justice or Else” rally addressed the high-profile killings of Black men and women at the hands of police, economic empowerment and the need for unity and strong families in the Black community.



Let's stand up and get ahead. Take the pledge at ReadyLouisiana.org.

A child's brain develops the most before the age of four. It is crucial to begin engaging and preparing their minds during this formative time. Unfortunately, the state of Louisiana lacks adequate public early education programs. Nearly half of our children are already trailing behind their peers by the time they enter kindergarten. The lack of available childcare, not to mention the price, also impacts 30% of our working parents.

In 2012, the Louisiana Legislature mandated an overhaul of our early learning system. But budget cuts have forced lawmakers to underfund this vital initiative. It's time to let them know how much this matters to our children and our working parents. Sign the pledge or find out how your organization can join the Ready Louisiana Coalition at readylouisiana.org.

READY LOUISIANA
A COALITION SUPPORTING OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS

"Feral" Facebook Comments Show Racism is Alive and Well



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

You can run, but you can't hide from racism. I was preparing to write a column on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the trade agreement that President Barack Obama wants to fast track through Congress. I considered tackling the Planned Parenthood kerfuffle, as

Republicans are targeting a most important women's health provider for political purposes. But a friend sent me a link to a photo uploaded by Atlanta native "Geris Hilton" with a string of comments that simply turned my stomach, and I realized that the TPP would have to wait (it isn't going anywhere until January anyway).

Hilton, whose legal name is Gerod Roth, worked at the Polaris Marketing Group in Atlanta, Ga. There he took a selfie of himself and a coworker's child and posted it on Facebook. When one of his "friends" asked why the child was running around the office, Roth replied, "He was feral." The dictionary defines feral as "relating to, or sug-

gestive of, a wild beast", and "not domesticated or cultivated – wild," or "having escaped from domestication and become wild." Excuse me? Roth's own daughter hangs out at the office at the end of the day. She plays with the adorable boy whose innocent little face attracted the most "feral" comments from Roth's intellectually challenged Facebook friends.

From one "friend": "I didn't know you were a slave owner."

Others commented about selling enslaved people another suggested that Hilton "send him back," because they are "too expensive."

Sydney Jade is three-year old Cayden's loving, caring and hard working mother. Gerod Roth knew

this, but he never corrected his "friends" who described the child as abandoned and worse. Jade, started using the hash tag #HisNameisCayden on Twitter to affirm her child's humanity and to reject the caricature that Hilton portrayed. She has received an outpouring of love and support from cyberspace.

Thumbs up to company executives at the Polaris Marketing Group, who fired Roth about two weeks after his offending selfie and wrote about the incident and subsequent firing on Facebook. I am among those who think it should have taken less than two weeks, but they deserve credit for taking action instead of hiding behind the "free speech" argument that many

make to defend their racist employees. The Root reported that others who made offending comments about Cayden were also fired from their jobs. Yes!

Gerod Roth is one of those pouty little racists who has now described himself as the "victim" in this matter. He "has been targeted", he says. He whines that his remarks were taken out of context. He posted an "apology" that was several paragraphs long attempting to "explain" how he happened to post the selfie in the first place, suggesting that young Cayden actually asked him to take the picture. He had neither the grace nor the good sense

Commentary, Continued on page 10.

Salute to Rev. Jesse Jackson on his 75th Birthday



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

Seventy-five years ago a freedom fighter was born in Greenville, South Carolina. His name is Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr. and I need to say something about this brother that I have known and worked with for decades in the ongoing Civil Rights Movement in the U. S. and in the overall freedom struggle internationally.

Too often, particularly among Black American leaders, we are too quick to say something negative about each other, and too late to say a positive word about that leader while they're still alive. Yes, I am talking about Black unity among Black leaders. It's a subject or a call that is rarely mentioned today. Why?

Some would argue that the division or lack of operational unity among Black American leaders today is a symptom or byproduct of

centuries of racial, economic and political oppression. I believe that is partly true. But on the other hand, disunity is not something that we are born with. It is socially generated. My point here is simply to remind all of us that we need more unity not just among our leaders, but we also need more unity in the Black American community in general.

I was in Detroit, Michigan recently to attend the 16th Annual Rainbow PUSH Global Automotive Summit on October 8, 2015 on behalf of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). Sister Glenda Gill, another strong freedom fighter and the Executive Director of the Rainbow PUSH/CEF Automotive Project made sure that the audience was made aware that the day was Rev. Jackson's 75th birthday.

As I watched and listened to the Rev. Jackson take the podium at the kick off reception, it brought back many positive memories of the past. I have been a firsthand witness to the remarkable, game-changing leadership and irrepressible spirit of our brother leader. Although, I was just a little younger, we both had the privilege and awesome pleasure and responsibility to work with the Reverend Dr. Martin Lu-



ther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in the 1960s.

At the automotive summit in front of industry corporate executives, Rev. Jackson challenged everyone to understand that there is a difference between winning freedom and establishing equality, in particular economic equality and equal opportunity to fulfill one's true God-given potential in life. Rev. Jackson stated, "Rainbow PUSH will continue to engage with the auto manufacturers to protect consumers and continue the quest for equity and fairness."

From the early days of SCLC's Operation Breadbasket in Chicago in the 1960s to the 2015 auto summit in Detroit, Rev. Jackson has been the most consistent Black

American leader on the question of economic justice and equality for Black Americans and for all people throughout the world. Black Americans, according to the Nielsen research company, have an estimated collective buying power of \$1.1 trillion in the United States. Yet, too many of our communities remain in poverty.

Thus, the quest today for economic equity and parity should be priorities for all our national organizations and movements. I also remember when Rev. Jackson decided to run to be President of the United States in 1984. His campaign became both a political and spiritual crusade to lift the aspirations and hopes of millions of people across the nation as part of an emerging

Rainbow Coalition. The Reverend Wyatt T. Walker and I were the national clergy coordinators for Rev. Jackson's 1984 political empowerment campaign. "Run Jesse Run" became the proud theme for millions of people who were crying out for freedom, justice and equality.

The truth must be told. Rev. Jackson's 1984 campaign opened the door wider for the subsequent, successful historic political campaign that led to the election of President Barack H. Obama in 2008. During the past 60 years we have made progress, but we still have a long way to go to fulfill Dr. King's dream. We all should be vocal and grateful that Rev. Jackson is still on the case with outstanding leadership.

We thank you, Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr. We salute you, we respect you and may we work today to raise up a new generation of freedom fighters who know what it means to advance the cause of freedom and equality for all.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached for national advertisement sales and partnership proposals at dr.bchavis@nnpa.org; and for lectures and other professional consultations at <http://drbenjaminfchavisjr.wix.com/drbcfc>.

Young Christians say Gospel Rap is their Christian Soundtrack



By Alexia Pierre
Data News Weekly Columnist

This column is a weekly feature taking Data News Weekly readers behind the scenes of the New Orleans gospel scene. We launched this column as a series on New Orleans gospel rap and rappers.

There is a song for everything a person goes through in their lives. However, each person relates to their own genre of music. Specifically, gospel rap attracts more youth. Artists like Lecrae, Var-G,

Andy Mineo, and Dee-1 rap about things that are taking place in the lives of an overwhelming number of youth people.

Experts have found that young adults say they experience societal pressure throughout their adolescence. Young people say they face issues to succeed in school, to be popular, to have sex and to look and act in socially acceptable ways as they transition throughout puberty. The American Psychological Association found that a third of teenagers reported feeling sad, depressed, stressed, and overwhelmed are by the pressures of growing up. The symptoms show up as fatigue or loss of appetite as young people struggle to cope with the changes in life. The struggle continues into their twenties as they graduate from college; must develop a sense of independence, begin

a career or find the first job, and eventually live on their own. The pressure, Christian young adults say, also comes from their desire to maintain a pure relationship with God amidst these challenges.

In the song, "Tug of War," Christian Rapper Andy Mineo sings, "Cause I've been straddling the fence it's time to make decisions. I've been thinking about Heaven lately, don't think I'll get in. 'Cause I've been going back and forth I love the way I'm living. But I hate it at the same time 'cause I know I'm sinning!" Local fans say they relate to Mineo's lyrics because it captures their struggle of trying to commit their life to Christ, while also wanting to live their life as most teens or young adults are doing today.

"The lyrics [of gospel rap] are encouraging and I can understand

it better than older church hymns," said Megan Monet, 21, and a member of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church. Gospel rap helps Monet as she tries to bond with Jesus Christ, she said. The upbeat tempos of Christian rapper Tedashii's "Nothing I Can't Do" and Christian rapper Trip Lee's "Lazarus" are Jeremy Longs' favorite songs. Longs said he believes that teens and young adults are attracted to gospel rap because they are a hip-hop generation. Longs, a freshman at Delgado Community College in New Orleans, said his favorite artists are Lecrae, Andy Mineo, KB, and Tedashii because they speak to the struggles that millennials face in staying true to their faith in a modern world.

With a New Orleans' twist, Dee-1 helps teens and young adults proclaim their commitment

to Christ in his song "I'm Not Perfect (I'm a Christian)." With his catchy hook: "I'm a Christian. I can't deny it, I can't deny it, no need to hide it," local fans say Dee-1 encourages young people in the New Orleans area to be bold and courageous about their faith. Joshua Leavell, a senior at Southern University of New Orleans said he believes that artists such as Dee-1 put a contemporary face to what it is like to be a young Christian in the city. "They're relatable people who share some of the same backgrounds and struggles that we face," Leavell said. "I love Christian music as a whole. It's just uplifting and it moves your spirit," he added.

Stay tuned for next week's column as we continue to share opinions and highlights of the local gospel scene.

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Black Men of Labor 22nd Annual Living Culture Celebration

Data Staff Report

The Black Men of Labor (BMOL) invites the “Who Dat Nation” and welcomes thousands of visitors and Atlanta Falcons Fans to Follow In the 22nd Annual Living Culture Celebration and Street Parade.

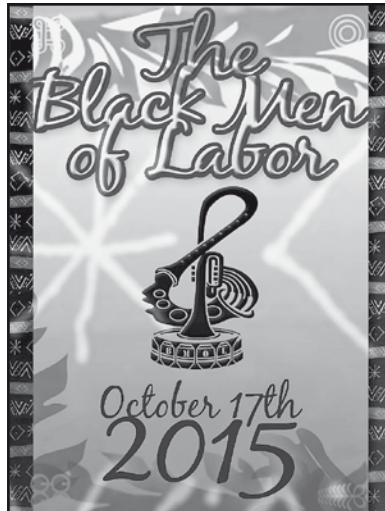
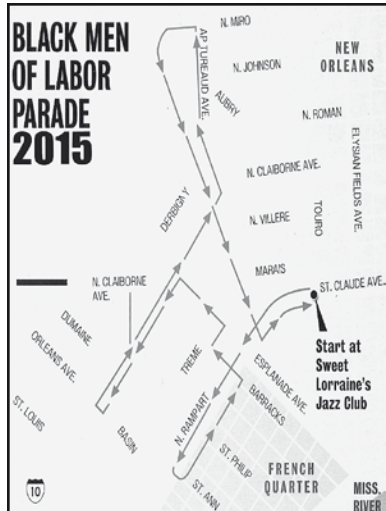
WHEN: OCTOBER 17, 2015

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

WHERE: 1931 ST. CLAUDE AVENUE
(SWEET LORRIANES JAZZ CLUB)

The BMOL will take to the streets of Historic Treme in New Orleans celebrating one of the oldest cultures and traditions of our unique city: Themed “Out of Mali”.

Fred J. Johnson, Jr., president and Founder of the Black Men of



The co-founders of BMOL: Benny Jones Sr., Fred Johnson Jr. and Gregg Stafford. (Eric Waters/Courtesy BMOL archive)

Labor, says, “Everyone recognizes the creative and cultural value of the arts and culture. The Living Culture experience offers us a chance to celebrate the often overlooked economic, educational, and civic

engagement values that our African and African American culture has in our daily lives and contributes to our city.”

The BMOL will electrify its audience and followers with its im-

provisation through the streets, creating formations and dancing in syncopation to New Orleans Traditional Jazz Music. The BMOL is

dedicated to empowering its community with the resources and support necessary to provide access to the arts for all of the people.



TROY CARTER was born and raised on the West Bank, and has worked tirelessly for over 25 years as a small business owner and public servant to give back to the community that has given him so much. For 23 years, he has sponsored an annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner, a toy drive, and a school supply giveaway.

As a former state representative and city council member, Troy has knocked the doors of every neighborhood in District 7. He sees the great potential of the West Bank – too often neglected by the powers that be in Baton Rouge – and he knows what will help the working people of our community succeed.

Troy Carter has the qualifications and experience we need in a Senator. He is endorsed by the Democratic Party, and has the trust of our local leaders.



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State Senator



Commentary, Continued from page 8.

to say, “I’m sorry and I’m out of order”, and then shut up. Instead, he tried to cover his insensitivity up.

Next thing you know, there will be a group of folks rallying around Roth who some would describe as nothing more than a child molester for his callous exploitation of his coworker’s son. Those who railed against this incident will be told this occurrence is isolated.

The late, great writer Bebe Moore Campbell once wrote an essay about “race fatigue,” about the many ways she was tired of seeing, living, talking and writing about race. She wrote about ignoring slights she might once have challenged, tamping down an anger that might once have been volcanic. In that particular essay, she wrote about seeking a peaceful respite from race matters. We all seek that respite, those days when we don’t have to think about the indignities of both institutional racism and the micro-aggressions that are difficult to quantify. We seek, but we don’t find the respite when cyberspace reveals life as both gritty and grand.

While Roth is little more than gas in the wind, not even a footnote in our nation’s history, he merits attention, because there are so many more of him, lurking out there, fracturing peace because they are so hateful. Who calls a child “feral” and then describes himself or herself as the victim? And who, in the light of this kind of nonsense, says we live in a “post racial” space?

Julianne Malveaux is author and economist based in Washington, DC. Her new book “Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy” is available for pre-order at www.juliannemalveaux.com.



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Farrakhan Advocates for Black Unity



By D. Kevin McNeir
Special to the NNPA from The Washington Informer

A sea of Black men, women and children covered every bit of open space on the National Mall during the 20th anniversary of the Million Man March, held on Saturday, Oct. 10 here in the District.

But when the man behind the march, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, stepped to the podium, his message may have come as a surprise to those expecting controversial rhetoric in his speech.

"We're here because there's no justice in this land – not for us," he said. "Those who continue to suffer the most, the indigenous people of America, those whose ancestors were brought here as burden bearers in chains, we are the ones still seeking civil rights and the human right of self-determination."

He emphasized the irony of the rally being held on grounds that once served as a marketplace for a bustling slave trade industry.

"This massive house behind me, the White House, was built on the backs and blood of slaves. I believe the spirits of our ancestors are pleased that we have come together in peace with one single goal: achieving long-denied justice and refusing to accept anything less," Farrakhan said.

During his almost two-hour address, the Minister spoke to the challenges facing Black women, other ethnicities, veterans and



Black gays and lesbians. And he said that they all have a place with him and other Muslims across the U.S.

"Some have questioned why I'm talking to those of other races, why I'm talking to women, why I'm talking to our gay brothers and sisters," he said. "We are all suffering. What good is life if one is not free? There must come a time when we're willing to say enough is enough and then be willing to do whatever it takes to bring about the change that will secure our freedom."

Farrakhan described Blacks in America as being "seeds who have yet to be placed in their proper environment so they can burst and grow."

"If we only understood our real nature, then we could open ourselves up to the limitless possibilities that the Creator has placed

within us," he said.

Then he pointed to America's centuries-long refusal to treat Blacks and Native Americans in particular as equal citizens and commented on its impact.

"Just like Pharaoh and Egypt brought about their own demise, I believe that America can only escape the consequences of its mistreatment of Blacks for so long," he said. "Thomas Jefferson recognized that in his early versions of the Declaration of Independence in which he advocated for the end of slavery. But he was shouted down, because the politics of the situation would not allow it."

Farrakhan continued: "It's clear that America does not have the heart to do the right thing – it's just not in their nature. But the rumblings are clear, and like a sleep-

ing volcano, an eruption is about to occur in this land. And so we've gathered today to show our dissatisfaction."

In many ways, Farrakhan spoke not to White America, but to those who continue to suffer because of disenfranchisement, inadequate housing, subpar education and generations of poverty.

Those who joined him on stage included Latina women, Muslim leaders from Haiti and the Dominican Republic, spokespersons for Palestine and the families of Black men and women killed by those representing the police.

In a special tribute to former D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, who gave his full support during the original march in 1995, Barry's son, Marion Christopher Barry, and wife, Cora Masters Barry, paid a special tribute to the District's beloved "Mayor for Life."

Afterwards, the hundreds of thousands participating in the March gave the late Barry a round of thunderous applause.

Farrakhan said it would be wrong to describe Oct. 10th as simply "a day."

"This is a movement – not just one day on the calendar. The elders like myself have to begin to pass down the torch to tomorrow's leaders," said Farrakhan. "We have a program and an agenda in place. We need to put aside our minor differences if we want real justice. But it will require integrity, selflessness and sacrifice."

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