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New Orleans

# Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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April 22 - April 28, 2017 51st Year Volume 52 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

A Data News Weekly Exclusive



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# Data Picks

## Artist to See During Jazz Fest 2017



### ELLIS MARSALIS Sunday May 7th at 1:30 p.m.

Zatarain's/WWOZ Jazz Tent

Modern Jazz Legend, and elder of the musical Marsalis family and innovative pianist will rock Jazz Fest on its closing day. Marsalis recently performed at the French Quarter Festival this past April.

**Eric M Craig**  
Multimedia Editor

Next weekend, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation will hold its well-anticipated Jazz and Heritage Foundation Festival—Jazz Fest. The seven-day

event will feature thousands of musicians, vendors and artist, and will expect over 400,000 visitors in attendance. The event, held at the Fair Grounds Race Course, will start at the end of April.

Jazz Fest officially begins the last weekend in April and the first weekend in May—April 28th, 29th 30th,

and May 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th.

This year's headliners include Stevie Wonder, Maroon 5, Usher & The Roots, Snoop Dogg, Pitbull, Irma Thomas, and many other national artists. However, as always, Jazz Fest will also have a selection of up and coming and well-seasoned artist from New Orleans.

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



**KERMIT RUFFINS  
& THE BARBECUE SWINGERS**

**Friday April 28th 3:30 p.m.**  
Acura Stage

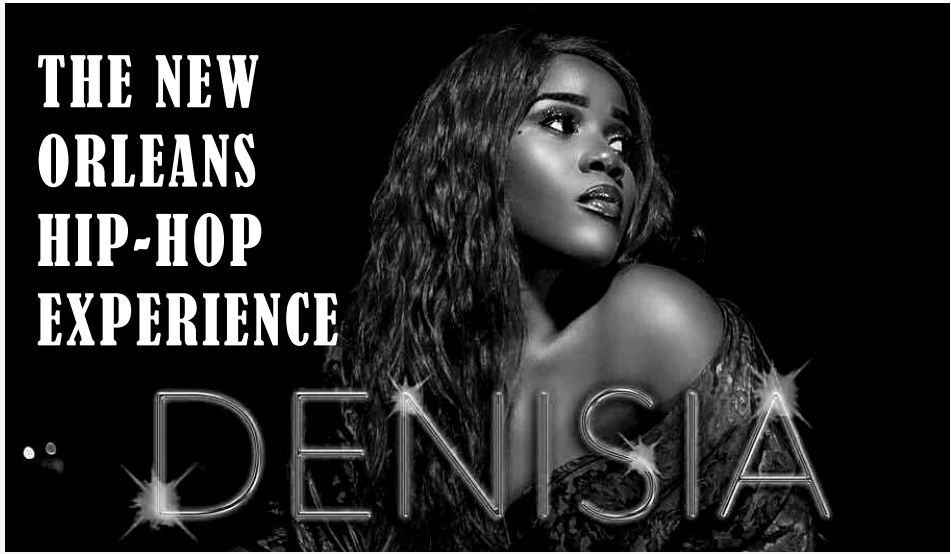
As one of the top modern trumpeter in the world, Kermit Ruffins & The Barbecue Swingers will perform on the opening weekend of Jazz Fest. Ruffins is known for his laid-back, talented approach to Jazz music, and playing himself on HBO's "Treme". Ruffin's "#imsoneworleans" album won OffBeat's Best of the Beat Award for Best Traditional Jazz Album.



**AARON  
NEVILLE**

**Friday April 28th at 5:45 p.m.**  
Blues Tent

If French Quarter festival wasn't enough, R&B Legend Aaron Neville will return to the stage during the opening weekend of Jazz Fest. The Grammy-winning artist released his newest artist "Apache," in July of 2016.



**THE NEW  
ORLEANS  
HIP-HOP  
EXPERIENCE**

**DENISIA**

**Sunday, April 30th at 12:30 p.m.**  
Congo Square Stage

Featuring Artist Squad Up, Denisia, Roca B. and T-Ray, the Violinist and Dreams 2 Reality, each artist will exhibit diversity in the field of hip-hop, delivering a powerhouse performance.



**IRMA  
THOMAS**

**Saturday, May 6 at 3:05**  
Acura Stage

Irma Thomas, the Soul Queen of New Orleans will perform during the last weekend of Jazz Fest. The Soul Queen will give a powerhouse performance, performing some of her most breathtaking hits from her eighteen-album catalog.



**TRUMBONE  
SHORTY**

**Sunday, May 7 at 5:35 p.m.**  
Acura Stage

New Orleans trombonist, Trumbone Shorty, will grace the Jazz Fest audience on the last day of the performance. The artist has an upcoming artist, entitled "Parking Lot Symphony," which will be available on Friday, April 28.



**TANK  
AND  
THE  
BANGAS**

**Friday April 28th 3:30 p.m.**  
Acura Stage

Started in New Orleans in 2011, Tank and The Bangas has continued to impress new audiences as a growing sensation. The band exercises a constant change in genre, slowing through rhythmic soul, spoken word, funk, folk and more. Recently, the five-member band was announced as the winner of the NPR Tiny Desk Concert.

Some of the other artist include Chocolate Milk, Jason Marsalis, Deacon John, Big Freedia, Rebirth Brass Band, Bo Diddley, Jr. & The Wild Magnolias, Cyril Neville, Big Chief Donald Harrison, Jr., George Porter Jr. & Runnin' Pardner.



# Group Pressures City on Monument Removal, City Stalls

Eugene Cooper  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

With the April 13th date passed to remove four confederate monuments in the City, local coalition Take Em' Down Nola said it will continue to press the City to follow on its 2015 vote to remove the monuments. The group staged a protest on Monday, April 17th, 2017 in front of City Hall around 11 a.m., citing both state interference in the removal, and reports of threats and other retaliation should the removal of the monuments continue as planned.

"These efforts by these diehards in the state government...are another attempt to rescue the lost cause," said Malcolm Suber, a Coordinator for Take Em' Down Nola.

On March 6th, the 5th Circuit



Community Activist Malcolm Suber leads a demonstration, asking for a hasty removal of the City's confederate monuments. Photo by Eugene Cooper.

Mid-City, Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard at City Park, and the Battle of Liberty Place Monument at Iberville Street.

Local Organizer Michael "Quess" Moore described the ongoing protest as always being about the need for a public conversation about public space and symbolism for all people in the City and the state.

The monuments were "visual reminders of the horrid legacy of slavery that terrorized so many of this City's ancestors," Moore said at the protest. "They deeply misrepresent the community of New Orleans. This is a City that demands freedom to live, not forced to pay taxes for maintenance of public symbols that mean us terror. They don't belong there." Moore said. He said he wanted the removals to be a public act that reconciled the City and the country's racist past and allowed history to be truly represented and not whitewashed.

The City is still to find a firm willing to remove the monuments. The group said they will not take unauthorized action against the City, but instead, they will continue to appeal, lead the community in protests and ask residents to call their council members to push them to follow-through on removing the monuments.

U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the City's decision to remove the four statues after the City was challenged in court by the Monumental Task Committee and the Louisiana Landmarks Society. The City should have removed the monuments by now, but the group is protesting that no action has occurred to date. The four statues marked for removal are Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee at Lee Circle, Confederate President Jefferson Davis in

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# Boeing Donates \$25,000 to Red Cross

*Relief Efforts Donation Supports New Orleans East Tornado Recovery*

## Data News Staff Edited Report

Boeing presented the American Red Cross of Louisiana with a \$25,000 donation this afternoon at the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans East. The contribution supports Red Cross Relief Efforts following a historic tornado that touched down in the area about two months ago.

"Amidst the aftermath of the tornadoes, what shines brightly is the spirit of the community coming together to support each other. The Red Cross has been at the heart of the cleanup effort, and Boeing is glad to help support their efforts with this contribution," said Jacqueline Nesselroad, Michoud Assembly Facility Operations and Site Executive for Boeing.

Boeing's presentation to the Red Cross was part of an event the aerospace leader hosted



Boeing's presentation to the Red Cross was part of an event the aerospace leader hosted to recognize employees who worked to keep people and critical national assets safe before, during and after the storms.

to recognize employees who worked to keep people and critical national assets safe before, during and after the storms.

Six tornadoes struck Southeast Louisiana on Feb. 7th, in-

cluding an EF-3 in New Orleans East, affecting more than 600 homes in Orleans Parish alone. During this time, the Red Cross provided more than 500 overnight stays at a shelter in New Orleans East, as well as served nearly 39,000 meals and snacks and supplied more than 15,000 relief supplies such as rakes, shovels and other clean up tools throughout the affected areas.

"The February tornadoes that affected New Orleans East and other Southeast Louisiana communities were not the first severe weather disaster to strike our region this year, nor is it the latest," says Joshua Joachim, Chief Executive for the Louisiana Red Cross, in reference to ongoing April tornado and flood relief efforts. "This Boeing gift serves as a reminder that our mission is made possible by the generosity of our donors and the power of our volunteers."

## Attorney Juan LaFonta Shoots New Commercial

*Features Big Freedia and Gives Back to the Community*

## Edwin Buggage Editor

Over the years' Attorney Juan LaFonta has been on the forefront of serving his community. Making his mark as an elected official, educator, community advocate and now as a top attorney; he continues to be dedicated to serving others and those that are in need. Something he describes as part of his lifelong commitment to making life better for those of the City of his birth. On this warm spring day at "The Original New Orleans Sno-ball and Smoothee" people are gathered on Elysian Fields Avenue in Gentilly treating themselves to Sno-balls, with its shaved ice and flavored syrup, that is a delight and is an essential part of cooling off from the heat in the Crescent City during the warmest months of the year.

But what is also happening on this day is that Juan LaFonta is giving away 100 free sno-balls and t-shirts with various parts of town on them



Center L-R: Bounce Artist Big Freedia, Attorney Juan LaFonta and members of the community come out for shooting of new commercial for Juan LaFonta.

and is shooting a scene for his new commercial with Bounce Artist, Author and Reality Show Star Big Freedia. This is a follow-up to his first commercial, with its infectious bounce beat and the lines 'He fight, he don't play, Juan LaFonta will handle yo case.' Since its initial airing, it has gone viral and is the talk of New Orleans and beyond. In this commercial he's invited the community to take

part, "In this commercial I wanted to include the members of the entire community." Continuing he says, "I am happy that I have been able to serve my City in so many ways and I look forward to doing even more and I am especially committed to our young people and inspiring the next generation to lead our City and also know that it's important for them to give back."

Get Out the

Vote!

Orleans Civil District Court Seat  
Voting is April 29, 2017.  
Let Your Voice Be Heard



## Fashion &amp; Style

## The Curly Corner

# Best Natural Hairstyles for Summer Festivals and Events



**Destiny Johnson**  
Natural Hair Columnist

Summer is right around the corner and this means that it's time to relax, enjoy the beautiful weather and maybe attend a summer event such as a music festival. The Wash and Go tends to be the go to coiffure for most naturals but that isn't the only trendy style that you might want to twist your curls into this summer. Here are 5 natural hair styles that you may want to try right now!

1. Chunky Box Braids – This simple spin on the classic box braids protects your hair for the moment while keeping your curls out of your face to enjoy the mid-July sun. They don't require as much time to install which can be a plus if you're short on summer free time.

2. Chunky Marley Twists – Marley twists can be worn with your own or synthetic hair. You can install 10 to 12 twists in your hair to get the "Island-carefree" look without having to sit with a hairstylist for hours.

3. Space Buns – These are your everyday buns that are instead placed at the top of your head on two sides. Think Mickey Mouse ears with your own hair. You can also add synthetic hair to them to create a fuller look.

4. The Bunhawk – This funky style requires you to part your hair in three sections starting from the back, towards the middle and then the front. Each bun goes on the top of your head imitating a Mohawk. This is the perfect style for any natural wanting to make a statement at any summer event.

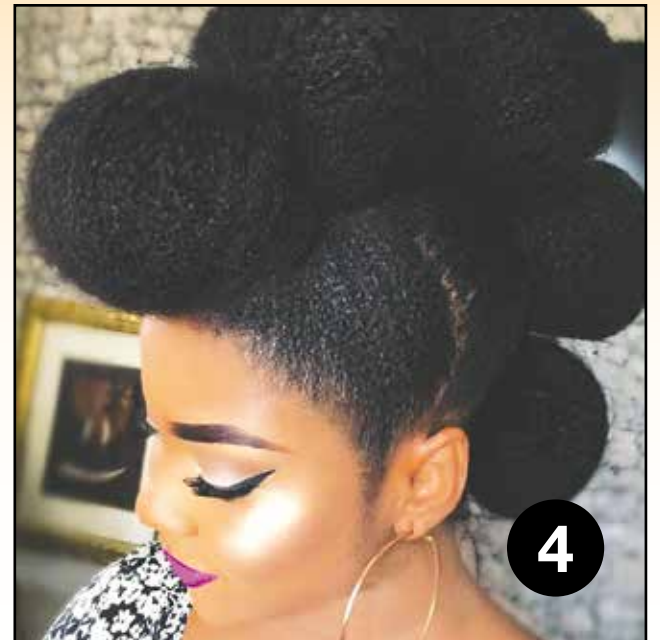
5. The Sleek Pony – This simple style can be worn anywhere especially for elegant or nighttime affairs. All you need is some of your favorite gel, a rubber band, and a phony pony that can be added for more flair and fullness.

Happy Growing!

Follow me on Instagram and Youtube @ seekyourcurls



3



4



1



5



2

1. Chunky Box Braids: photo credit: un-ruly.com 2. Chunky Marley Twist: photo credit: dabaaafricanhairbraiding.com 3. Space Buns: photo credit: naturalhairmag.com 4. The Bun Hawk: photo credit: insatgram.com @ ms\_leon 5. The Sleek Pony: photo credit: shorthaircutsforblackwomen.com



Delaney's Armoire

# How to Survive Jazz Fest Fashionably



**Delaney George**  
Columnist

While the highly anticipated six-day music festival—Jazz Fest—is around the corner, full of food, music, and cultural fun, some will need to prepare for the worst that can happen fashionably.

Here are a few things you should be considering before stepping out for Jazz Fest this year.

**Shoes:** It's no secret that Jazz Fest can get a bit muddy, but it doesn't mean you have to throw on your plumber boots with your boho sun dress. Rain boots come in all different shapes and colors now, and can be paired with any of your festival favorites. Be sure to pack or wear a pair to stay prepared.

**Hair:** No matter the texture or style, if the rain breaks out at Jazz Fest, a fashionable head wrap is sure to save the day. Head wraps range in a wide variety of prints and fabrics. One to make your outfit or completely match it won't be hard to find.

**Bags:** We all love our totes, and large designer bags but it's no place for a fes-



**Head wraps**



**Fanny packs and backpacks**



**Rain boots.**

tival. The most accessible and fashion forward bag you can bring to Jazz Fest this year are fanny packs or mini backpacks. Weather you're jamming to the

music in a crowd or waiting in line for your New Orleans delicacy, fanny packs and backpacks are a safe, convenient, fashionable way to enjoy the festival.

For more tips on what you may need before heading out to Jazz Fest 2017 email Delinkey@yahoo.com or visit @ Delannii on Instagram.

Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events

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# Remember the Chibok Girls

**Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson (D-Fla.)**

On Thursday, April 14, 2017, the world marked three years since Boko Haram terrorists burst into dormitory rooms at the Government Secondary School in the northern Nigerian town of Chibok and kidnapped nearly 300 girls simply because they dared to get an education. In the days leading up to this date, there will likely be plenty of headlines devoted to the Chibok girls, as these now young women are famously known. This happens each time we reach yet another sad milestone: 500 days, one year, two years, 1000 days, and counting. Soon after, however, the news reports will fade and this ongoing tragedy will slip once more to the backburner.

The 195 Chibok girls who haven't been able to escape their captives or were not among the 21 released

last October, are still the most compelling symbols of the Boko Haram insurgency, but we must never forget that the group has committed increasingly heinous acts in the past three years from which innumerable victims may never recover. Let me count the ways.

More than 2.6 million people are currently displaced across Nigeria and its neighbor nations in the Lake Chad region, and Nigeria is in the process of building a comprehensive orphanage to house approximately 8,000 children who've been separated from their parents. At least one million children have been forced out of school. Millions more Africans are at risk of starving to death and countless men, women and children all of ages, both Christians and Muslims, have been kidnapped, tortured, and/or killed.

It gets worse. In addition to engaging in the human trafficking of women, forcing them into sexual



Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson (D-Fla.) says that the terrorist group Boko Haram may be down, but it is far from out.

and domestic slavery, the insurgents also use children as suicide bombers. Even ISIS, to whom Boko

Haram has pledged allegiance, has expressed concern that the group goes too far.

As a mother, a former educator, and indeed, a human being, I have felt heartbroken, shocked and angered by the daily horrors our West African sisters and brothers have been forced to endure. The actions of the world's most deadly terrorist group have also emboldened me to use my voice and every resource available in the fight to ensure that the Chibok girls are not forgotten and to help eradicate Boko Haram and repair the damage it has caused.

I have traveled twice to Nigeria to meet with victims' families and government officials and brought the #BringBackOurGirls movement to the United States. Each week that Congress is in session, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle participate in a "Wear Something Red Wednesday" social media campaign that helps maintain pressure on the

**Commentary, Continued on page 9.**

# I Won't Be Silenced by the Solar Industry



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

As a journalist and political commentator, who covers issues important to the African-American community and other marginalized communities, I have taken on powerful forces over the years. I have provided a voice for under-represented communities and engaged both the private and public sector and I always strive to be accurate and respectful. After all, how can I demand civility and fairness from others if I don't practice it myself?

Earlier this year, I wrote a commentary about the rooftop solar business, and expressed concerns

that some bad actors in the industry were misleading consumers. I focused on three aspects that worried me: First, that new customers may be unaware that the panels can cost upwards of \$15,000 and can generate an additional lien against their home, making it harder to sell. Second, rooftop solar salespeople often tell customers that they will save a lot of money on their utility bill, which is not always true. Third, salespeople engaging in high-pressure tactics often do so in the hope that a customer will sign a contract before they understand all of the complexities of a long-term financial agreement.

About a week later, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), which represents the rooftop solar industry in Washington, D.C., wrote a response to my commentary. I didn't fully agree with SEIA, but I respected their right to voice their opinion. I saw their response and was hopeful that going forward the industry would take more steps

to protect minority consumers. I decided to move on and continue writing about the other issues important to me.

However, in the last few weeks, I have become a target of an intimidation campaign led by SEIA. Specifically, a gentleman named Michael Schmidt, a Senior Vice President at Crosscut Strategies, who claims to be an agent of SEIA, has repeatedly called and emailed me and my staff. In one call, he even asked a staff member why I had not responded to him, as if I was afraid to respond.

In his correspondence to a woman in my office, Mr. Schmidt states that I wrote, "that solar companies are targeting communities of color." Mr. Schmidt went on to write that: "The SEIA team finds this abhorrent and they wanted to follow up with her about what she knows, since the column didn't provide details. SEIA takes this issue and consumer protection generally very seriously. Would it be possible to arrange a quick call between Dr. Malveaux and SEIA's general coun-

sel about this?"

I believe that Mr. Schmidt's suggestion that I speak with SEIA's general counsel, Tom Kimbis, is an attempt to assert that my comment about "targeting communities of color" could be libelous. If SEIA wanted to provide me with facts to change my mind, why couldn't Mr. Schmidt provide me with that information, or connect me with SEIA's communications or policy experts? The suggestion that I speak with SEIA's in-house attorney was designed to intimidate.

Be assured, I take this threat seriously. I believe I did nothing wrong, but I do not have millions of dollars to defend myself. SEIA represents companies like Tesla that are worth billions of dollars. It wouldn't be a fair fight.

I want to be clear: I wrote the rooftop solar piece based on recent correspondence sent by three Democrats in the Congress to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The letter was read by Rep. Henry Cuellar of Texas,

who is Hispanic, and Reps. Emmanuel Cleaver of Missouri and Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, who are African Americans.

At the end of the letter sent by those Congressmen, they stated that the high-pressure sales tactics used by bad actors in the rooftop solar industry are often targeted towards the least sophisticated consumers. Therefore, the matter is a "particular concern for minority communities in our districts and around the nation." That is where I got the line in my piece that SEIA seems to be so upset about.

If Abigail Ross Harper, the head of SEIA, or anyone at the association has an issue with what I said in my piece, then they should have reached out to me and asked to speak. I would have agreed and had an open mind. But the fact that they decided to try and use a hired gun to try and intimidate me and my staff only makes me believe that my original piece—that the rooftop solar industry does not respect minorities—was sadly all too accurate.



# Wells Fargo Bank Just Got Downgraded

**Dr. John E. Warren**  
San Diego Voice and  
Viewpoint/NNPA Member

Following a series of high profile lawsuits and allegations of misconduct, the embattled Wells Fargo Bank just suffered another loss in the form of a rating downgrade.

Late last month, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency downgraded Wells Fargo's rating from an "Outstanding" to a "Needs to Improve" rating.

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency is an independent government agency within the U.S. Treasury Department that supervises all banks and federal savings associations. The downgrade comes on the heels of an agreement by Wells Fargo Bank to pay \$110 million to settle a class action suit involving customers, who discovered that the bank opened fake accounts in their names.

The amount might seem small compared to the revelation last September that the bank had opened over two million fake accounts in customers' names without their permission.

In September 2016, Wells Fargo agreed to pay \$185 million in fines and penalties and to refund customers \$5 million.

The latest settlement covers at least 10 other lawsuits.

"These payouts are on top of the \$3.2 million Wells Fargo has paid to customers on over 130,000 potentially unauthorized accounts or services," CNNMoney reported. "That works out to a refund of roughly \$25 per account."

The closer one looks at Wells Fargo's practices, the further back



Late last month, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency downgraded Wells Fargo's rating from an "Outstanding" to a "Needs to Improve" rating. (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

the bank's problems go.

According to a September 2016 article by CNNMoney, "six former Wells Fargo employees filed a class action lawsuit in federal court against the bank seeking \$7.2 billion or more for workers who were fired or demoted after refusing to open fake accounts."

CNNMoney article continued: "The federal class action suit accuses Wells Fargo of orchestrating a 'fraudulent scheme' to boost its stock price that forced employees to 'choose between keeping their jobs and opening unauthorized accounts.'"

Some of the legal allegations arising from the case include: wrongful termination, violations involving the California labor code, and failure to pay wages and other charges.

"The suit represents California employees who worked at Wells Fargo in the past 10 years or who continue to work there and were fired, demoted or forced to resign

due to not meeting their sales quotas," CNNMoney reported.

Another federal class action involving the beleaguered bank, alleged that Wells Fargo violated the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and a section of Sarbanes-Oxley Act, that prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers. That lawsuit also alleged that the bank violated the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act covering hours of work. These lawsuits paint a far different picture than the one Wells Fargo offered when it fired more than 5,000 employees, after the bank's own investigation into the fake accounts. The mass firings suggested that the employees who were terminated, opened the fake bank accounts on their own and without the bank's knowledge or participation. The class action lawsuits involving former bank employees shed light on a shadowy pattern of practices that can't be ex-

plained away as a handful of rogue tellers working on their own to defraud customers.

In recent years, Wells Fargo has also received fines for misconduct in their mortgage lending division.

On April 8, 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a press release citing Wells Fargo's agreement to pay \$1.2 billion for improper mortgage lending practices.

According to the press release, Wells Fargo, "admitted, acknowledged and accepted responsibility for, among other things, certifying to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), during the period from May 2001 through December 2008, that certain residential home mortgage loans were eligible for FHA insurance when in fact they were not, resulting in the Government having to pay FHA insurance claims when some of those loans defaulted."

The settlement was approved by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York on April 8, 2016.

In the Justice Department's press release about Wells Fargo's \$1.2 billion settlement, then-HUD Secretary Julián Castro said that the Obama Administration was committed to holding lenders accountable for their lending practices.

"The \$1.2 billion settlement with Wells Fargo is the largest recovery for loan origination violations in FHA's history," said Castro. "Yet, this monetary figure can never truly make up for the countless families that lost homes as a result of poor lending practices."

In the same press release, then-U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara for the

Southern District of New York said that Wells Fargo took advantage of the FHA mortgage insurance program, that was designed to help millions of Americans realize the dream of home ownership, and wrote thousands and thousands of faulty loans.

"Driven to maximize profits, Wells Fargo employed shoddy underwriting practices to drive up loan volume, at the expense of loan quality," Bharara said in the Justice Department's statement.

Bharara continued: "Even though Wells Fargo identified through internal quality assurance reviews thousands of problematic loans, the bank decided not to report them to HUD. As a result, while Wells Fargo enjoyed huge profits from its FHA loan business, the government was left holding the bag when the bad loans went bust."

MSN Money reported that "shares of Wells Fargo gained only 2.9 percent in the last two years, significantly underperforming" the 22.8 percent growth expected by some analysts.

According to MSN Money, "the primary reason for this underperformance is the substantial plunge in shares following the September lawsuit settlement."

The San Diego Voice and Viewpoint is a member publication of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Learn more about becoming a member at [www.nnpa.org](http://www.nnpa.org).

Dr. John E. Warren is the publisher of the San Diego Voice and Viewpoint and a contributing writer for the NNPA Newswire specializing in intergovernmental affairs.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

Nigerian government to keep working to negotiate the release of the remaining Chibok girls and pull out all stops to defeat Boko Haram.

On December 14, 2016, President Barack Obama signed into law legislation that Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) and I sponsored that directs the U.S. secretaries of State and Defense to jointly develop a five-year strategy to aid the Nigerian government, the Multinational Joint Task Force created to combat Boko Haram, and international partners who've offered their sup-

port to counter the regional threat the terrorists pose.

In a telephone conversation between President Donald J. Trump and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in February, the two leaders pledged "to continue close coordination and cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria," according to a readout from the White House. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson also has reportedly praised the Multinational Joint Task Force's efforts to defeat Boko Haram a "success story," but while the

terrorist group may be down, it is far from out.

On June 12 we will mark another milestone in this terrible saga. That is the day the State and Defense departments' five-year plan is due. It also is the deadline for the director of National Intelligence to assess the willingness and capability of Nigeria and its regional partners to implement the strategies outlined. We must use our collective voice to ensure they don't miss this urgent deadline.

By now you may be asking your-

self why any of this should matter to African Americans who are fighting their own battles to close the economic and opportunity gaps that still exist here at home and to exercise fundamental rights like the right to vote. Some of you may have never even heard of the Chibok girls. But if we don't, who will? If we don't teach the world to acknowledge that Black lives matter across the globe, who will? Until then, it will continue to cry for victims of terrorism in European nations, the Middle East and even Russia, while

African and African-American lives lost go ignored.

Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and represents parts of Northern Miami-Dade and Southeast Broward counties. She serves on the House Education and the Workforce Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. To learn more about Congresswoman Wilson's work in Congress, please visit her Facebook and Twitter pages and congressional website.



# Chasing Trane

## The John Coltrane Documentary

**Dwight Brown**  
NNPA Newswire Film Critic

"My music is the spiritual expression of what I am...I want to be the force that is truly for good." It was a while before the legendary jazz musician and saxophonist John Coltrane got to a place where he could articulate his mantra that clearly.

The legacy Coltrane left behind is a bit more cryptic than that of Miles Davis or Charlie Parker. More of his devotees are hard-core jazz aficionados than casual music listeners. Chiefly because his last bodies of work and musical style, "Free Jazz," were so cacophonous, fast paced and not that easy on a regular set of ears that might interpret his art form as screeching noises. Though, hard-core jazz fans

knew his genius and appreciated the sounds he made in his later years. To understand how Coltrane got to that musically intense space, you have to see Coltrane and his music evolve, and that's where this enlightening non-fiction film is very helpful.

Writer/director John Scheinfeld is most known for his investigative documentary "The U.S. vs. John Lennon." He has experience digging out the facts and creating a body of work that exhibits his findings. Scheinfeld assembles a very impressive roster of family, friends and fellow musicians whose recollections pull together the chapters of Coltrane's bio.

Coltrane's stepdaughter Antonia Andrews recalls a night when her dad walked all the way home from a gig so he wouldn't spend money on



Born in North Carolina in 1926, Coltrane proved to be a talented jazz musician.



Saxophonist John Coltrane is the subject of "Chasing Trane: The John Coltrane Documentary." (Meteor 17)

Japan and showed a deep compassion for the country, its people and the suffering they endured during and after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Fuji spent a lifetime, as he says, "Chasing Trane."

With all the interviews—from Coltrane's children, intellectuals like Cornel West, musicians like Sonny Rollins and Carlos Santana and dignitaries like former President Bill Clinton—you almost don't notice that there are no live interviews with Coltrane himself; just photos and glimpses of him playing with his band. That's because he only did print interviews, and those precious words are voiced on screen by Denzel Washington. In a strong, illuminating manner, Washington's voice and deliberate cadence take you within Coltrane's soul and thought process.

Scheinfeld uses cutouts, collages and montages to liven up the screen. The reminiscing by the interviewees is provocative and vivid. Photographs from the '30s, '40s, '50s and '60s make you feel like you are leafing through someone's family album. What's on view looks like a fine PBS documentary or educational film. It misses the mark as a major theatrical jazz documentary like "I Called Him Morgan." But, within its own specific genre, this film is illuminating.

Born in North Carolina in 1926, John Coltrane was lucky to be part of a tight loving family with strong father figures. He was unlucky at age 12, when he lost his father, uncle and two grandfathers in the space of just two years. Needing an income, his mother moved him to Philadelphia, where she could find work. She made enough money to afford music lessons for her son who had learned to master the saxophone. Coltrane's talent blossomed and seemed to reach another level when he met and was influenced by the double-timing, rapid-fire playing of Charlie Parker (1945). It was a style that he would incorporate into his own.

Subsequent gigs with Dizzie Gillespie's band (1949-51) and Miles Davis' band (1955-57) brought Coltrane further along his own road. That progress was hindered by an addiction to heroin, which he managed to kick on his own. As Carlos Santana said, "Thank god. He al-

carfare. He wanted to buy her a pair of shoes and every penny counted. This was a sign of his love and caring that she never forgot. She also recalls the night he left her mom and her. Both moments bring tears to her eyes.

Jimmy Heath, a good friend and fellow saxophonist, remembers the night Dizzie Gillespie caught John and him in a basement doing heroin. Both got kicked out of the band,

but John begged for his job back, and got it.

Yasuhiro "Fuji" Fujioka is the #1 collector of Coltrane memorabilia in the world. His love and obsession for the musician started in high school when he heard Coltrane on the radio. It was a revelation. He went on a lifelong quest to collect every record he could find and other mementos. His love for the man grew more when Coltrane toured in

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# The Black Press Shows Resilience of the Black Community

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

For 190 years, the Black Press has chronicled the spirit and resilience of the African-American community.

"You can see it in the spirit of the process that we have [developed] in documenting our history—we are marvelously resilient by nature, we are street fighters, guerilla fighters and resilience defines us," said NNPA Foundation Board Chairman Al McFarland.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a trade group of more than 200 Black-owned media companies in the United States, also known as the voice of the Black community, has been the repository of Black history for generations, capturing that spirit and resilience through compelling journalism and stirring images.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, the president and CEO of the NNPA, said that the strength of the Black Press has been widely demonstrated through decades of change.

"Since 1827, the Black Press in America has been on the frontline of publishing in the interests of freedom and justice," Chavis said. "Today, the NNPA continues to represent the resilient, trustworthy tradition of the Black Press that is indispensable to Black America."

Janice Ware, the publisher of the "Atlanta Voice," which was founded in 1966 by Ed Clayton and J. Lowell Ware, said that like other NNPA member newspapers, the Voice had a defined vision and mission.

"[The Atlanta Voice] has been the vehicle that has allowed the important information [affecting African-Americans] to be captured," Ware said. "I celebrate my father



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, the President and CEO of the NNPA, said that the "NNPA continues to represent the resilient, trustworthy tradition of the Black Press that is indispensable to Black America." This photo was taken during a 2016 Black Press Week in Washington, D.C

for his vision to start the publication and our motto, which is, 'A people without a voice cannot be heard.'"

The venerable, award-winning publication was born out of the refusal of the White-owned majority Atlanta media to give fair and credible coverage to the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement, the Voice states on its website.

"Our motto is still prevalent today," Ware said. "We've got to record our history; if we don't, they will."

As the media industry continues to evolve, driven by advances in technology, Black newspaper publishers balance "click-bait" and quick-read content with longer, in-depth news articles.

Rosetta Perry, publisher of the "Tennessee Tribune" in Nashville, said that even though millennials aren't reading traditional newspapers as much as past generations, news organizations in the Black

community—including newspapers, radio stations, magazines and websites—are working together to ensure that critical information reaches the masses.

"There are many stories about Black people both domestic and international that the mainstream media ignores or underplays," Perry said. "The Black Press cannot afford to be silent or not be certain to get the word out about them, whether it's voter suppression or police misconduct and brutality."

In 1973, Howard University, a historically Black institution in Washington, D.C., collaborated with the NNPA, to establish the Black Press Archives at the school's Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.

The archives also include a gallery of distinguished newspaper publishers and historical records related to the Black Press. Black newspapers are also collected and preserved there for scholars, stu-

dents and the public.

"While some think that the Black Press is no longer needed, they need only to look at the newsrooms of the mainstream press—newspaper and television—and see that when pressured after the Civil Rights Movement, they hired more Blacks," in the past than they do now said Dorothy Leavell, the outspoken publisher of the award-winning Crusader newspapers in the Chicago area.

Leavell continued: "And, most said the Black Press wasn't needed. While they were employed, the Black reporters were not given the freedom to report stories as they existed, often White editors changed the story with headlines that fit their perspective, not the essence of the story, if some of them recognized their stories as submitted, it was rare."

Leavell said that when Black reporters were making good salaries at mainstream media outlets, they mostly remained silent. Many now want to speak up as their numbers are dwindling. Many have left predominately White newsrooms and returned home to the Black Press, added Leavell.

"The Black Press is driven by a purpose and a mission to tell the truth and to stand up to those who would rob humanity of its fullness," McFarland said. "We stand to call attention to the truth of our existence and to the commitment of freedom and liberation. Our spirit is underlying in our newspapers; we are resilient and we no longer have to see ourselves through the lenses of Europeans."

McFarland added, "There's a new narrative that says we have been winning and we are winning."

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