

*Lighting The Road To Freedom*

**New Orleans**

# **Data**

**News Weekly**

*"The People's Paper"*

**Data Zone**  
 Remembering  
 those who left us  
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**December 31, 2005**      **39th Year**      **Volume 34**

*The Soul of New Orleans*

# 2005 In Retrospect

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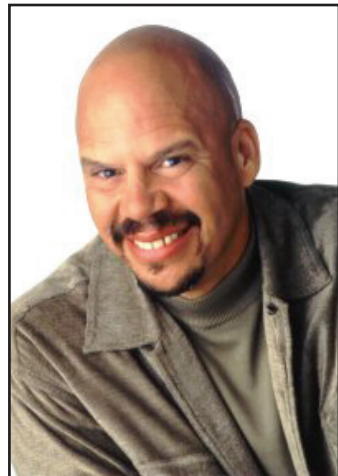
**TRAILBLAZER**



**Modern Day  
Superman!**

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**NEWS**

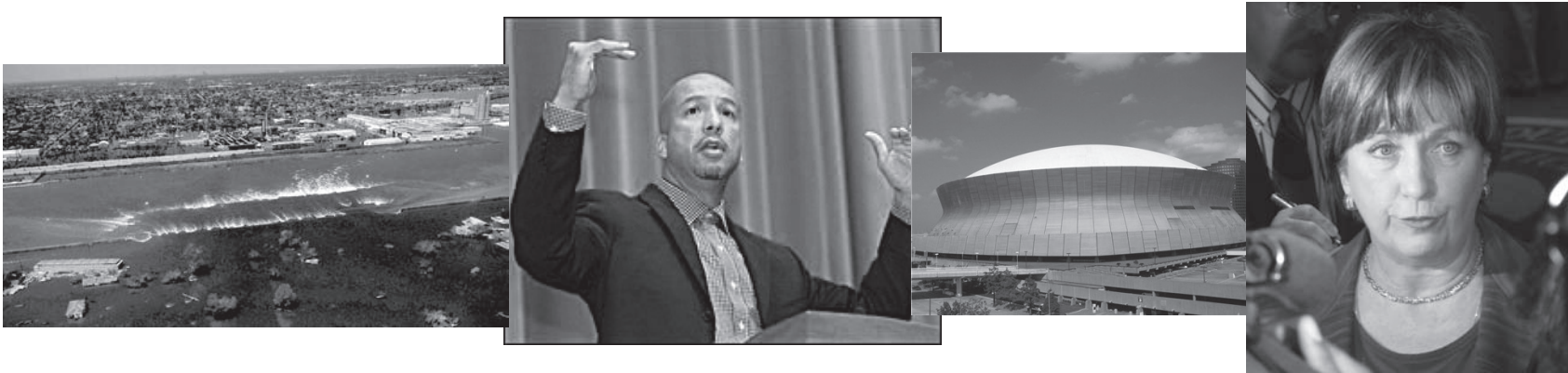


**Tom Joyner  
Says "Lose  
the Corn-  
rows!"**

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COVER STORY



New Orleans 2005 in Retrospect

By: Edwin Buggage



It has truly been an eventful year in the city of New Orleans. In lieu of Hurricane Katrina that devastated the city displacing many of its residents and changing their lives forever. But that is not the only thing that has made the headlines this year. Here is a brief summary of some of the things that were happening in and around New Orleans in 2005.

The year started off with the murder of Levon Jones who was murdered by security officers at Club Razzoo's on Bourbon Street in New Orleans. Amidst the chaos the ever present issue of race once again came to the forefront in most things in our city this year. In light of the Levon Jones killing and allegations of racial profiling in the French Quarter an investigation conducted by the N.O. Fair Housing Action Center showed that in fact many of the bars in the Quarter are discriminatory in its treatment of African-Americans. In the area electoral politics the city experienced two historical firsts Marlin Gusman was elected to the office of Criminal Sheriff, the first African-American to hold the post, replacing longtime Sheriff Charles Foti. Former U.S. Attorney Eddie Jordan was

elected to head the District Attorney's Office. His winning was greeted with indignation by some of the loyalist of former DA Harry Connick. Sensing that Jordan dismissed many members of Connick's mostly white staff, and in a monumental move they filed a reverse discrimination suit, and won their case in court. In neighboring Jefferson Parish another case where race became prevalent a teenager was killed by police officers after he was spotted driving a stolen vehicle. This incident led to a war of words between Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee, one to never mince words when it comes to African-Americans, and local pastor Tom Watson for several months they were engaged a war of words through the media. Showing again the issue of race is ever-present reoccurring theme in many things in the city of New Orleans.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

Mailing Address: PO Box 51933, New Orleans, LA 70151  
(504) 822-4433 Fax (504) 821-0320 datanews@bellsouth.net  
Editorial & Business Office: 170 Northside Drive, Suite 507, Atlanta, GA 30313

Terry B. Jones  
CEO/Publisher  
  
Jawna Williams  
Business Manager,  
Advertising Director  
  
Renetta Perry  
Editor-in-Chief  
  
Cheryl Mainor  
Managing Editor  
  
Contributors  
Edwin Buggage  
James Clingman  
Terry Jones  
K Chandler  
Sandra Isley  
  
Contributing Photographers  
AP, BET.com  
  
Cover Story Photos  
NNPA  
  
Art Direction & Production  
Paul Mainor for  
MainorMedia

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New Orleans once again became the murder capital, as gunshots at night became as common as hearing Rebirth Brass Band blistering horns coming out of the Maple Leaf Bar on Tuesday night. Death surrounded us as mostly young African-American Males gunned each other down in shameful sometimes meaningless acts of violence killing off a generation with so much potential and opportunities.

We also saw our N.O. Schools threatened with another federal takeover after another dismal performance by our students on the LEAP test. And we also saw the tide shift as the citizens became dissatisfied and wanted more accountability and made that known at the polls as some who once held seats on the school board were ousted by the angry electorate.

On a lighter note, there were a record number of people attending the party with a purpose; during the Forth of July weekend beautiful African-American people from all over the country flooded the streets of our city to attend concerts and seminars making their economic impact felt.

In 2005 we lost famed Mardi Indian Chief Charles 'Tootie' Montana, and local civil rights icon and former Urban League President Clarence Barney. This year has also been a year where so many people have lost loved ones and there entire way of life in the midst of the most devastating natural disaster of the modern era.

Hurricane Katrina wrath hit the city and with the collapsing of the levees in a matter of a few hours caused much death, damage and destruction. In its aftermath many of our residents spent days on bridges, the Superdome and Convention Center were transformed from places of leisure to places of desperation as news crews from around the world showed a face of New Orleans the world never sees. A city besieged by third world conditions, racism, and political corruption.

Our Mayor Ray Nagin weathered the storm, and faced the situation as best he could given the circumstances. The mayor was upfront forthright and courageous during the storm and after and his effort is to be commended.

Its fallout left many persons pointing fingers and heads rolled. Locally we saw the surprising resignation and retirement of Police Chief Eddie Compass, who was replaced by Warren Riley. But this change in command has not stopped the age old problem between law enforcement and facets of the African American Community. Soon after Hurricane Katrina three New Orleans Police Officers beat a sixty four year old retired school teacher and

roughed up a member of the media who tried to intervene. And as we near the end of the year the police shot and killed another man causing another black-eye for the N.O.P.D.

As we approach 2006 we face a number of challenges in the coming year. How are we going to rebuild our city to its previous splendor? How are we going to get the people who made the city a unique and wonderful cultural mecca to come back without

affordable housing?

For those who choose to return are they going to hold those who they elect accountable, or will it be business as usual? Will we ever get past race being at the root of many of our problems in the city? Of course as we all know these problems are nothing new, but if 2005 is any indication on how we are progressing we have a lot of work to do.



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NATIONAL NEWS

Joyner tells A&T Grads to get Jobs, Lose Cornrows

By Sandra Isley  
Special to the NNPA from The Chronicle

GREENSBORO, NC (NNPA) – Amid a sea of colors, especially royal blue and gold, N.C. A&T graduating class of 2005 marched into the Special Events Center at the Greensboro Coliseum recently to end an educational journey, which, for most, began four years ago. The winter commencement exercise marked the 114th year of graduation ceremonies for the historically Black university. Delivering the commencement address, as well as receiving an honorary degree, was “the hardest working man in radio,” Tom Joyner. Hailing from a long line of HBCU graduates, Joyner’s message was about staying committed to these

institutions, staying involved in the community and staying employed so that graduates can support themselves. “It’s time to put more zeros behind those commas on your paycheck,” Joyner said. “No one who is successful in this life did it on his or her own.” There is a debt now owed, according to Joyner, that doesn’t require graduates to put money first. Joyner unveiled a tongue-in-cheek plan that he said he formulated to help graduates be successful. The plan included a dress code for men. “Take the cornrows out your hair,” Joyner stated. “Unless you have an NBA contract, you’re more likely to get a good job if you have a nice, neat haircut.” On a more serious note,

he said part of his plan was for graduates to dream. Like the 31 flags that adorned the stage area, representing the various countries of origin of students graduating that day, many of the seniors had varied opinions about what graduation meant for them, as well. “Relieved.” That was Phillip Martin’s response about graduating as he headed for lineup. Even though he hasn’t found a job yet, Martin, who majored in human performance and leisure studies, felt graduation, in itself, was a feat. “It feels like I’ve accomplished a lot,” he said. “It means a lot.” For psychology major LeJoy Evans, the event held a different meaning. She’s the first in her family to attend

Patriot Act Gets Short Extension

By Zenitha Prince  
Special to the NNPA New Service from Afro Newspapers

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – After nearly a week of wrangling with the White House and other members of the U.S. Senate, a bi-partisan group of senators on Dec. 21, was able to push through legislation authorizing a six-month extension of the Patriot Act, key provisions of which were set to expire on Dec. 31. President Bush and congressional GOP leadership had pushed to make the anti-terrorism law permanent but were blocked by a group of senators, including four Republicans, who said the measure infringed on civil liberties. “The [American Civil Liberties Union] is thrilled that fair minded senators have decided to take a little more time to examine the Patriot Act,” said Meredith Curtis, spokeswoman for the Maryland branch of the ACLU, which has been outspoken on this issue. “When we’re talking about our security and freedom it’s a good decision to make.” Though a slightly modified version of the bill was passed by the House of Representatives with a 251-174, the legislation seemed to be at an impasse in the Senate, since both sides seemed unwilling to back down. Proponents of a revised bill were successful in suppressing the number of votes (60) needed to invoke cloture, which would override a filibuster and end debate on the bill. If supporters of the bill were successful in breaking the filibuster, they would have been able to bring up the measure for a vote and pass it by a simple majority but the sunset provisions of the legislation seemed destined for expiration. President Bush called the action “inexcusable” and said it would make the country vulnerable to terrorist attacks. “The Patriot Act is scheduled to expire at the end of this year, [but] the terrorist threat is not going to expire at the end of this year,” Bush said in a Dec. 21 press conference. “The senators obstructing the Patriot Act need to understand that the expiration of this vital law will endanger America and will leave us in a weaker position in

the fight against brutal killers.” But civil rights activists and a bipartisan group of lawmakers said though they supported the act it needed to be revised to safeguard the civil rights of citizens and the lawmakers asked for a three-month extension of the act to negotiate those protections. That proposal was killed in a Dec. 16 session after Bush said he would veto any such measure. “Let’s be clear about who’s killing the Patriot Act: President Bush and the Republican leadership,” said Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada at the time. “Twice last week, a bipartisan group of senators tried to move forward on a three month extension, but instead of joining us, the president and the Republican leadership decided they would rather see the bill expire. “We support the Act, but we want to improve it. That’s what this is about... We do not have to sacrifice our basic liberties in the course of strengthening national security.” Bush has since indicated that he would likely sign off on the six-month extension but has continued to emphasize the importance of the act as a “vital tool” in “connecting the dots” to prevent another 9/11. “The Patriot Act tore down the legal and bureaucratic wall that kept law enforcement and intelligence authorities from sharing vital information about terrorist threats,” Bush said on Dec. 19. “It allows federal investigators to pursue terrorists with tools already used against other types of criminals.” Among those “tools” (see list of provisions in sidebar) were two provisions that created significant concern for civil rights activists: one authorizing federal agents to use “John Doe” or roving wiretaps on all modes of communication used by suspects and another that allowed officials to obtain personal records from libraries, doctor’s offices, businesses and elsewhere under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act or a national security letter without court oversight. “I think we’ll be encouraging insensitivity to the individual freedom of Americans and also a troubling expansion of the executive power of the

Not having people like this would’ve been an even greater disaster.



The worst of times can bring out the best in everyone. BellSouth would like to salute the numerous emergency personnel who have been working long hours in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. And we would like to recognize our own employees for their tireless efforts to restore telephone service as quickly as possible. BellSouth is proud to be a part of this community. Nature may be a powerful force, but there is no force more powerful than people. Together, we can rebuild Southeast Louisiana.


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# New Orleans' Levee System Raising more Questions than Answers

By. K. Chandler  
Special to the NNPA from  
the Westside Gazette

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (NNPA) – Nearly four months after Hurricane Katrina deluged the city of New Orleans on Aug. 29, and 100 days after President Bush delivered his impassioned speech before St. Louis Cathedral in the city's French Quarter assuring the American public that federal funds would cover "the great majority of the costs of repairing public infrastructure in the disaster zone, from roads and bridges to schools and water systems," in what would amount to one of the "largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen," financial aid now appears to be stalled in Congress. (Update: On Monday, Dec. 19, Congress allocated \$29 billion toward rebuilding New Orleans) "Katrina breaks my heart," said Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.) a staunch fiscal conservative. Congress must do everything the American people expect us to do to meet the needs of families and communities affected by Katrina, but we must not let Katrina break the bank for our children and grandchildren." Speaker J. Dennis Hasert noted, "For every dollar we spend on this, it's going to take a little bit longer to balance the budget." Their remarks were in stark contrast to the actions of the GOP-led House, which just this month voted for a \$56 billion tax cut package that will primarily benefit wealthy investors by extending to 2010 the 15 percent maximum tax rate on dividends and capital gains that were scheduled to expire at the end of 2008. Meanwhile, "worker recovery accounts" up to \$5,000 for the poor never materialized, nor did loans for minority-owned businesses, or programs to expand home ownership. Instead, abetted by President Bush who proposed, "even deeper reductions in the mandatory spending programs than are already planned," the House voted this month to slash \$54 billion from programs, including Medicaid and food stamps, to help offset among other things, the soaring costs associated with Hurricane Katrina. To date, Congress has allocated \$62 billion in emergency funding

for the hurricane-ravaged Gulf region, the bulk of funds going for debris removal, food, clothing and temporary housing accommodations for the victims of the storm. Yet, to come are major expenditures for rebuilding roads and bridges, restoring sewerage systems and electrical power lines, ports, hospitals, schools, and the city's failed levee system. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which plunged 80 percent of New Orleans underwater, killing 1,000, there was a great deal of speculation by local Army Corps of Engineers, who designed and constructed the city's floodwalls, that Hurricane Katrina, a category four storm, was just too powerful for the levee system to withstand. That theoretical premise was subsequently dismissed by several independent engineering and research teams, including Ivor van Heerden, deputy director of the Louisiana State University Hurricane Center, and a member of the levee investigative group, Team Louisiana, who noted that while the Industrial Canal floodwalls did overflow, two other canals, the 17th Street Canal and the London Avenue Canal, may have had their floodwalls breached due to design flaws, or construction errors, a possibility that the Army Corp is reticent to buy into pending the results from their own investigation. Also investigating the levee failures are The American Society of Civil Engineers, Team Louisiana, the National Science Foundation, The National Research Council, U.S. Senate and House committees, the Louisiana Attorney General's Office, and the FBI. It is widely held that the sinking Louisiana coastline may have contributed to levee failures. By all accounts, Louisiana's coastline has been shrinking half an inch each year. In East New Orleans, which experienced the worst devastation, it is sinking even faster. Exacerbating that precarious situation were floodwalls, designed to be flexible rather than immovable structures and consisting of narrow, elongated, inter-joined sections of corrugated steel sheet piling, topped by concrete and deeply embedded in mud. It is believed that rising water in the city's canals, coupled with the storm

surge, would have applied a tremendous amount of pressure on the levees from both sides. However, according to van Heerden, the levee walls were supposed to be able to "withstand 2.5 times" the amount of force

that a hurricane the magnitude of Katrina could put on them, raising the inevitable question, why — if the walls were not swamped from the storm surge, and if the Corp had built in a substantial safety component — did they fail?

Recently, using ground sonar, LSU professor, van Heerden, and Team Louisiana said that the sheet piling used by the Army Corp to hold up the floodwalls was only 10 feet deep, falling far short of the canal's 18.5-foot depth. That claim



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New Orleans Out and About



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The sold out Georgia Dome is alive with both Saints and Falcons Fans for the yearly grudge match between these two Southern



30 Mayor and Mrs. Ray Nagin with family and executive assistant Kenya Smith at Bayou Classic.



Moses Brewer and friends in Coors Suite at the Bayou Classic in Houston.



The Honorable William H. Jefferson and Mrs. Jefferson.



Jody Jiles and Sonny Messiah Jiles publisher of the Houston Defender and friend enjoy themselves at the Coors Suite



New Orleans Urban League President Edith Jones, with husband Attorney Ernest Jones at the Bayou



#26 Dr. Medley and Attorney and Mrs. Craig Mitchell, New Orlenanians, in Houston for the Bayou Classic Game.



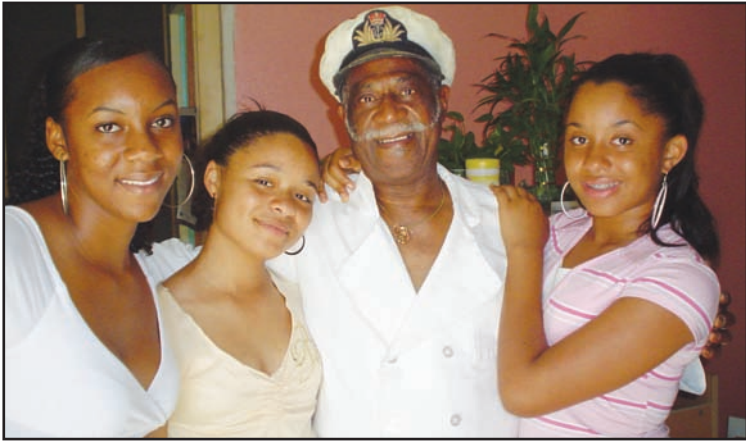
State Rep. Karen Carter and Attorney Wayne Woods join the festivities at the Bayou Classic



Tommy Dortch, 100 Black Men of America, Emmanuel Lewis and guests enjoy themselves at the 100 Black Men Suite at the Georgia Dome during the Saints/Falcons Monday Night



## DATA ZONE In Memoriam



**Chef Austin Leslie**, African American Master Chef, the Godfather of Fried Chicken Died September 29, in Atlanta, GA, from a heart attack and did not recover.



**Johnnie Cochran** (lawyer) – Dead. Brain cancer. Died March 29, 2005. Born October 2, 1937. LA lawyer for OJ in the infamous Simpson/Goldman murder case.



**John Johnson** (publishing entrepreneur) - - Dead. Heart failure. Died August 8, 2005. Born January 19, 1918. Started Ebony and Jet.



**Shirley Chisholm** (politician) – Dead. Died January 1, 2005. Born November 30, 1924. First black Congresswoman, she ran for president in 1972.

**Lamont Bentley** (actor) – Dead. Car accident. Died January 18, 2005. Born October 25, 1973. Hakeem on Moesha, bit parts in a number of movies.



**Ossie Davis** (actor/writer/activist) – Dead. Died February 4, 2005. Born December 18, 1917. Kennedy in Bubba Ho-tep, the judge in The Stand, married to Ruby Dee for over 50 years, very active in the civil rights movement.

**Bobby Short** (classy pianist/singer) – Dead.

Leukemia. Died March 21, 2005. Born September 15, 1924. New York City institution, played at the Hotel Carlyle for 36 years, played himself in Hannah and Her Sisters



"Here and Now", lapsed into a coma following a stroke on April 16, 2003, recovered somewhat but died just over two years later.

**Brock Peters** (actor) – Dead. Pancreatic cancer. Died August 23, 2005. Born July 2, 1927. Tom Robinson in To Kill a Mockingbird.

**Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown** (guitarist/singer) – Dead. Lung cancer/heart disease. Died September 10, 2005. Born April 18, 1924. Cajun musician and New Orleans fixture who died a few days after evacuating from hurricane Katrina.

**August Wilson** (playwright) – Dead. Cancer. Died October 2, 2005. Born April 27, 1945. Wrote many plays including The Piano Lesson, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fences, had a Broadway theater named in his honor just before his death.

**Nipsey Russell** (comedian) – Dead. Cancer. Died October 3, 2005. Born October 13, 1923. A semi-regular on The Match Game, in the movie The Wiz - A comic, a poet, and he surely did know it!

**Shirley Horn** (singer/pianist) – Dead. Diabetes. Died October 20, 2005. Born May 1, 1934. Jazz legend who worked with Quincy Jones and Miles Davis.



**Rosa Parks** (long-time civil rights activist) – Dead. Died October 24, 2005. Born February 4, 1913. Woman who defied the segregation laws in

Montgomery Alabama by refusing to sit in the back of the bus, the first woman to lie in state in the Capitol rotunda.

**Richard Pryor** (comedian) – Dead. Heart attack. Died December 10, 2005. Born December 1, 1940. Great stand-up comic and writer, starred in Uptown Saturday Night and many TV specials, struggled with addictions and multiple sclerosis.



*We will miss you all...*



NEWSMAKER

Beware!



Terry B. Jones  
Publisher

It may seem late us pulling the trigger on the killing of Mr. Anthony Haynes, a 38 year old man on St. Charles Street in the middle of the day, but the facts as they are represented seem to be a bit confusing.

So let's take a minute and just walk through the scenario as we perceive it. Mr. Haynes had a confrontation inside a Walgreen's, and even though, it became

physical it did not become deadly. In fact, if Mr. Haynes had his weapon on him in the store, he chose not to use it.

After being confronted by 3 police officers, which were joined by an additional 15 officers, Mr. Haynes was faced with 18 officers with fully loaded weapons, as he held a 3 inch blade. Obviously from the videotapes I saw, he was well secured and posed no real threat to anyone outside of the police boundaries. Which leads us to a question; not being privy to police procedures, is it each individual policeman's call to decide whether or not to shoot, and if not, who was the one charged with issuing the order to fire? Or, if it is the responsibility of the individual officer, and Mr. Haynes "lunged" at one officer, who was holding a fully loaded pistol on him, what was the need of the other three officers to fire as well? And if it was an order, then why did only three out of 18 fire? These are questions that need to be answered.

This brings us back to the tragedy of Katrina. Many New Orleanians are coming back and are suffering from a state of trauma, what are the effects mentally on us, and how are the police training to handle possible situations that may arise? My assumption is that the police are there to "serve and to protect", but incidents like this one and the one with the 64 year old school teacher, Robert Davis, who hadn't had a drop to drink in 25 years, and was accused of being drunk and was assaulted by police officers, makes me wonder, and makes me wary.

Let's compound the fact that over 150 officers left their post during the flood and were fired, and have been replaced with new officers that may not have the experience to handle situations that can arise. What is going to be the method used to contain rowdy or unruly individuals doing things that people do during Mardi Gras?

According to Superintendent

Riley of the New Orleans PD, Patrol officers don't carry stun-guns, or beanbag guns. And Officers are trained to shoot-to-kill with the target being the head or the chest. I have been observing the methods of other police departments in major cities like Atlanta, and know that their patrol officers are both equipped and trained with non-lethal weapons and these means are used effectively to apprehend and subdue suspects that do not result in death. Why isn't this done in New Orleans?

Looking at these factors, it makes you wonder if New Orleans is ready for any major event, let alone the one that has historically been the most uncontrolled event in the country. I am not accusing anyone of any wrongdoing, but surely there is a lot more work to be done before New Orleans can be considered a safe environment, and anything like what we used to know.

Basically put, New Orleans friends and guests, BEWARE!

**SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW**  
**SATURDAY, JANUARY 7**

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PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN

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National News cont'd.

Patriot Act, from page 4.

presidency," said Meredith Curtis, spokeswoman for the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland. The fear of unchecked presidential power became even more significant when a recent [New York Times] report revealed that after the Sept. 11 attacks, Bush secretly authorized the National Security Agency to "eavesdrop" on Americans without the court approval needed to authorize domestic spying. In a Dec. 19 address, Bush said he only authorized the monitoring of international calls, and that not only was his decision legal under the Constitution, but it

was also necessary to effectively fight the war on terrorism. "We know that a two-minute phone conversation between somebody linked to al Qaeda here and an operative overseas could lead directly to the loss of thousands of lives. To save American lives, we must be able to act fast and to detect these conversations so we can prevent new attacks," he said. Curtis said while the ACLU understands the need to grant the White House additional powers to act during times of war, the nature and length of the war on terrorism is such that measures like the Patriot Act and

others need to be fully evaluated. "I think that can be the case when you're talking about a limited time period, but we're now four years into the war on terror, which seems to have no end in sight. I think Americans should be having a national discussion about national security and what tradeoffs we're willing to make," she said. "I don't think that the president making decisions in secret, except for, perhaps, having conversations with a few legislators is appropriate for making policy."





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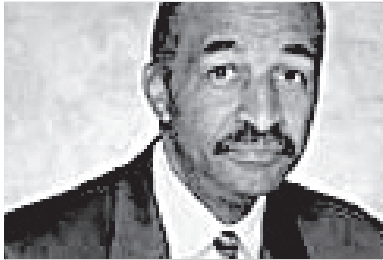
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## OPINION

# A New Iraq or a New Orleans?



James Clingman  
NNPA Columnist

Blackonomics. Why have we spent as much as \$1 billion per week to build a "New Iraq," yet our compassionate government, headed by George Bush and his boys and girls, cannot find a billion a week to spend on New Orleans and those wiped out by Hurricane Katrina? What kind of a country is this anyway? What kind of people are running this show? Immediate expenditures totaling billions of taxpayer dollars to rebuild a country we intentionally destroyed, but four months after the worst catastrophe in this country our government has hardly moved to take care of its own. Yes, our eyes have been opened to several realities since the hurricanes hit the gulf coast, most of which we knew all along but were afraid or ashamed to admit, but this is ridiculous. Now we must face our deepest fears; Black and poor people must look at this country in a different light now; and we must respond, because we cannot like what we see. We cannot turn deaf ears to what is being screamed at us: "You don't count!" Yes, it took a hurricane, but as Eric Benet says on his latest CD, "Hurricane" released, by the way, prior to Katrina, "Sometimes what you fear the most is what you need, to find that road, right around that curve a lesson learned, now that I have the eyes to see. A hurricane — sometimes the only way to wash way the pain." How prophetic. The president is touting his "plan" for victory in Iraq, now that the oil wells are secured and the petrodollar is back in full swing in that country. He is spending our money like a drunken sailor, urinating on us and telling us it's a spring rain. His attention

is always on the New Iraq and seldom on a New Orleans. Victims of Katrina are testifying at congressional hearings, while Bush is busy justifying a war that he started under false pretenses. Bush and his ilk try to instill guilt in those who want to withdraw from Iraq by saying if we leave the 2000-plus who have died, would have died in vain. Two questions: Won't those killed in Iraq, no matter when the war ends or how it ends, have died in vain anyway since they were there because of lies and deceit? And what about the folks in New Orleans who died as a result of mismanagement by FEMA's "Brownie" (the guy George Bush said was doing a fine job). Did they die in vain? Did the 911 victims die in vain, since we have not caught Osama Bin Laden? Hmmm. We cut and ran from New Orleans, but in New Iraq we will stay until the people "put their lives back together," "...until they are back on their feet," "...until they have a stable government." We can't have a timetable for leaving Iraq, but we certainly came up with a timetable for putting New Orleans evacuees out of their hotel room shelters. George Bush says, "We have \$62 billion on the table" for New Orleans (that's the problem, George; it's "on the table"); but, we have about \$250 billion "on the ground" (And in the pockets of corporate raiders) in New Iraq. What hypocrisy! What disdain is being shown for the people of New Orleans by Mr. Compassion himself. Why so much concern for the New Iraq and little or no concern for New Orleans. Could it be economics?

In an interview, Bush said, "Call me anything, but don't call me a racist." Well, here goes. Bush is arrogant, vindictive, egomaniacal, and aloof; he's disconnected, discombobulated, befuddled, entrenched, recalcitrant, obstinate; he's corny, spoiled, ignorant, scornful, disrespectful, phony, condescending, and just plain weird. (Maybe it

would be better if he were just a racist.) I am sure there is some good stuff somewhere inside this guy; I just haven't seen it. Bush spends billions for the New Iraq, while he emphatically brags about asking congress to allocate a measly \$1.2 billion to stockpile bird flu vaccine, which by the way will only buy enough to vaccinate 20 million citizens. I wonder which 20 million they will be. Bush's Secretary of Defense should be happy with that decision; according to an article I read, Rumsfeld stands to make "a fortune on royalties as a panicked world population scrambles to buy a drug worthless in curing effects of alleged Avian Flu." Another article stated, "Among the beneficiaries of the run on Tamiflu is Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who was chairman of Gilead [Sciences] and owns at least \$5 million of the stock, which has jumped from \$35 in April [2005] to \$47." Can you say, Cheney and Halliburton? Finally, Bush says the New Iraq is comparable to the nascent years of the United States. Oh, really? What if a "coalition of the willing" had come to this country during the Revolutionary War to liberate enslaved Black people from the tyranny under which they suffered? Too bad there was no coalition back then — with cowboy George W. leading the charge. Instead, George W. is leading the charge to build a New Iraq but has little time for and will not allocate adequate resources to build a New Orleans. Hey George. Be sure to close the door to the bank vault behind you when you and the guys finally get as much money as you can carry, Okay?

James E. Clingman, an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African American Studies department, is former editor of the Cincinnati Herald newspaper and founder of the Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce. He hosts the radio program, "Blackonomics," and has written several books, including Black-o-Knowledge-Stuff. To book Clingman for a speech or purchase his books, go to his Web site, [www.blackonomics.com](http://www.blackonomics.com) or call him at 513/ 489-4132.

### State & Local News cont'd.

foot depth. That claim was vigorously refuted by the Corp which adamantly maintained — and corroborating government evidence backs them up — that it had accurately installed the sheet piling to the depth of 17.5 feet. According to a Nov. 30 article in The Times-Picayune, 17th Street canal levee was doomed, report blames Corp: soil could never hold, "The floodwall on the 17th Street Canal levee was destined to fail long before it reached its maximum design load of 14 feet of water because the Army Corps of Engineers underestimated the weak soil layers 10 to 25 feet below the levee, the state's forensic levee investigation team concluded..." The Times-Picayune article reiterates Team Louisiana's assertion that the Corp's stated depth range would not have changed the outcome in New Orleans, and that even at depths of 17 feet it still would have resulted in the floodwall being breached. "Using the data we have available from the corps, we did our own calculations on how much water that design could take in these soils before failure," stated van Heerden. "Our research shows it would fail at water levels

between 11 and 12 feet — which is just what happened" in Katrina. "This is the largest civil engineering disaster in the history of the United States. Nothing has come close to the \$300 billion in damages and half-million people out of their homes and the lives lost," said Robert Bea, a University of California, Berkeley professor who spearheaded the National Science Foundation's probe into the levee failures. "Nothing this big has ever happened before in civil engineering," he added, noting that it was incomprehensible since the project being undertaken by the Army Corp of Engineering was so "straightforward." While the debate rages on over the levee failures, new information has surfaced that raises questions as to who, if anyone, was keeping watch over the levees. According to documents recently produced by CBS News, "no one with any professional experience" was monitoring the levees. There were "no formal records found of levee inspections or maintenance and performance." In fact, the only qualification you had to have was to be a "resident of Louisiana."

### National News cont'd.

Tom Joyner, from page 4.

college. "It means a whole lot. I'm the baby of my family and the only girl," she said. Evans plans to continue her education at a different college, where she will pursue a nursing degree. Other graduates plan to stay within the Aggie family. For some, A&T is more than an educational opportunity. It's their source of income, as well. Marychristiana Uzochukwu received a master's degree in biology while working as an adjunct instructor in A&T's School of Medicine. "It's good to further your education. I love to learn. With a higher education, I can serve my students better," she said. Many viewed the ceremony as an end to a long, long journey, not just for those graduating, but for those who supported the endeavors of the new alumni. Pamela Miller, who was on hand to witness the graduation of her goddaughter, Renae Kinsey, remarked that it had been a long time coming. "I'm glad to see that she's graduating. It's been a long four years. She'd come and visit me in my home, because I was closer to her than her parents' house was." Velma Speight-Buford, chairperson for the board of trustees, informed the students that after Saturday's ceremony, they would be entering a world of challenges. Joyner, in his speech, spoke of a challenge as well, citing that they were graduating at the wrong time of the year, because it would be hard to find graduation cards at Christmastime. "Many of the cards will read, 'Merry Graduation,'" Joyner explained. He concluded his message of the season by saying, "This is the best gift you can give to yourself, not just graduating, but graduating from an HBCU." Joyner's final request to the graduating class was, "Don't let this be the last step you make, Aggie pride, Class of 2005."



# News Orleans Data News Weekly

## TRAIL BLAZERS

# Jamel Jones: 'A Modern Day Superman'

By: Edwin Buggage

Courage, overcoming fear, tenacity, and fortitude are traits a hero must exude. These character traits and then some were displayed by Jamel Jones, this month's Data News Trailblazer. During Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath he captained an effort that helped save lives, and his calm and reserve under extreme circumstances earned him the title Superman by those he helped during this horrendous time.

Four months after this event he still recounts this episode as if it were yesterday, with a resolving calm that befits his warm affable congenial personality. "I like so many people in New Orleans live from check, myself and my family evacuated three times before, but we figured not this time." He continues, "My wife was watching Prophet Peter Popoff the television evangelist, and they had a program where he prophesized disaster is about to strike, and we were watching something about Hurricane Andrew, its aftermath and how the people weathered it."

Once the storm was in the gulf Jamel who is a resident of New Orleans East, with his family in tow totaling fourteen people including his parents, siblings, and their children and two infants one being his ten month old daughter Savannah caravanned to a nearby hotel to reach higher ground. Knowing of the chaos that would be forthcoming they stockpiled enough food to last through and after the ensuing calamity.

Recounting this in the tone of an evangelical preacher his voice resonates to a tremble as he says, "The Lord prepared me, and my wife and me we were truly focused on the best way to survive, so we prepared for the worst."

While in the confines of the hotel, the storm hit, as patrons of the hotel vacated their rooms that were becoming engulfed in water from the now caved in air conditioning units, they soon found themselves in the hallways and lobby areas of the hotel. In what was a three hour onslaught the waters began to rise to nearly six feet. As days passed, and with rescue, efforts not forthcoming food supplies began running low, tempers flared, and desperation set in. That is when Jamel speaking with another gentleman said, "Tomorrow we are going to go out in the water."

The next day armed with an ax and several hammers first they opened a snack machine with the owner's permission, but that was not nearly enough food to feed six floors of people. Soon they went through flood water filled with muck, mud, debris before finally happening upon a gas station, they opened it getting the food they needed for survival. As they got closer to the hotel they were granted a heroes welcome by people some of which hadn't eaten in two days. But he soon discovered this was not nearly enough food to tide the residents of the hotel over for any extended period of time. So with fearless determination he led a group on the way pulling



down an eight foot barbed wire fence and entered an already open drug store where employees from a nearby hospital commandeered much needed drugs for patients. Upon entering they got more food for the patrons at the hotel.

After securing enough food, Jamel says, "People were saying my baby needs diapers, children were suffering, so we made another trip and we got products for hygiene, alcohol, water, diapers and baby formula." Filling seven bags with these supplies they floated in this sea of debris, and arrived unharmed giving the hotel patrons a sense that they would be o.k.

During this trip he stumbled upon help in the way of J-Gutta a local rapper and former protégé of Cash Money Millionaires Lil Wayne. He and some of his friends had a boat and were seeking a place of refuge, so he took them back to the hotel where they opened up some of the vacant rooms so they could have a place to stay. The next day Jamel was asked to bring J to Interstate-10 where helicopters were supposedly rescuing people, but what he saw was disturbing, people who had to sleep on the bridge, small children suffering and losing hope that they would survive this tragedy. "I listened to people stories, and one that touched me the most was an older lady who said she and her husband escaped through their roof, and when she reached back to grab her son he floated up to her, he was already dead."

Jamel says he prayed with and for some of the persons stranded on the bridge, but he knew they needed food and supplies. As the wrangling for the boat acquired the previous day became problematic, Jamel found a canoe and set about finding and delivering food for those stranded on the bridge. Little did he know while he was unselfishly helping those in need, his sister went out in search of him, and he reflects on that moment by saying,

"It really touched me that my sister got out there in flip-flops to look for me, she must really love her brother."

After several trips he returned to the hotel, and later that evening what was the beginning of a rescue effort began, first women and children were taken to what most assumed was a safe haven, to the contrary they were dropped off on a bridge to later be transported to various cities across the nation. As more families became separated tempers began to flare, so Jamel spoke with the rescue workers who eventually reorganized their efforts so they would take entire families. As this effort continued Jamel who planned to be the last person there until everyone was delivered from safety passed out. He kinds of laughs in retrospect when talking about it saying, "I passed out for maybe 15 minutes, but it felt like I slept all night." Finally, the people who he had done so much for said go and get your family.

Soon Jamel found himself wandering on a bridge in search of his wife and family, and a five year old girl from the hotel spots him and says there's Superman and Batman, names he and Rodney one of his cohorts in his rescue operation came to be affectionately known as for their superhero like feats. As the buses came along to take those stranded to safety chaos erupted, and Jamel approached the state troopers as things were getting out of control and suggested how they could organize this effort. At his suggestion they enacted his plan and people began boarding the bus without problems with him manning one line and the State troopers the other.

Jamel finally boarded a bus and was on his way to Houston Texas, but still did not know of his wife Conneisha or his daughter Savannah whereabouts. Once he arrived to the Houston Astrodome he soon found out his wife was in San Antonio. A few days later he was reunited with his family, and as to the question of his family reunion he says, "It's hard to put into words, it was a mix of joy and anger, it shouldn't have happened, when I was holding my daughter she was light as a feather because she hadn't been eating properly, and although I was happy to see my family this distressed me."

He speaks of God's divine power as the thing that helped him find the strength and courage to persevere through the storm its aftermath. "It truly is God who gave me the will to do what I did those days, it is him not me who deserves the credit." He continues, "If anybody don't believe in God now is the time for them to wake up and know that God is real." "God will give you the strength to do things you can otherwise not do." And this is exactly what happened on these trying days, as Jamel Jones put himself on the line, to save others in an act of selfless bravery. One who helped those in their desperate time of need, Jamel Jones, an ordinary man with an extraordinary heart, truly earning his title as a Superman.

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