

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

# Data


News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

## Data Zone

### Belafonte Speaks Out

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January 28, 2006      39th Year      Volume 35



*The Soul of New Orleans*

# Black History Month

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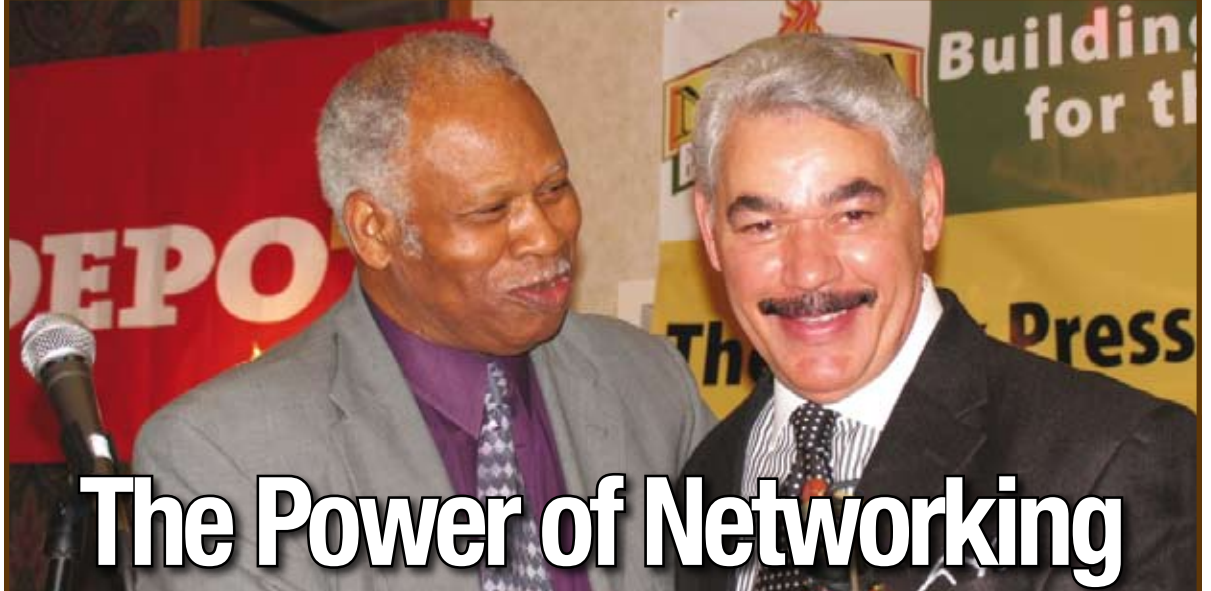
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COVER STORY

# New Orleans Black Music History

## The Soul of New Orleans

By Thomas Dorsey



Louis Armstrong



Buddy Bolden



Marsalis Family

### Jazz Traditions:

Jazz historians debate the precise founding of Jazz, but the ingredients are well known. The History of Jazz is rooted in the history of Black New Orleans, the two are inseparable, New Orleans and it's child The Reconstruction Era (1865-1877) gave many African Americans unprecedented human rights and business opportunities. Many ex-slaves, Civil War veterans, Buffalo Soldiers, Caribbean immigrants found work and started businesses in New Orleans. Live improvisational music was a common past-time influenced by West African rhythms in Congo Square. Simultaneously, light-skinned Creoles were proud to be schooled in the European arts of literature and Classical music with its delicate chords. Creole musicians looked down on the unwritten music of their darker brethren. Politics and growing racism would alter their feelings and lifestyle.

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### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Jelly Roll Morton

In 1894, the infamous "White Act" was passed forcing Creoles, since they also had African ancestry, to lose their privileged status. Creole musicians, in order to continue working, mingled with African American Blues musicians from Faubourg Tremé. At the same time, Ragtime musicians looking for gigs arrived by riverboat from St. Louis and Memphis. A spicy mixture of high energy for Ragtime, structure from Classical music and the stinging improvisation from the Blues evolved into a musical gumbo.

The major commercialization of Jazz occurred in the Storyville section of Faubourg Tremé. Bounded by Basin Street, Iberville Street, Robertson Street and St. Louis Street, Storyville was named after councilman Sidney Story who advanced city legislation to quarantine, but not prohibit prostitution in 1897. Given 24-hour bordellos, lax drinking laws and visiting plantation owners, money flowed. Political powers of the time enjoyed a windfall ownership of saloons, restaurant-bars and bordellos. You couldn't have wine and women without song, so Black and Creole musicians were employed to keep the atmosphere banging. Band leaders and composers of that time, Buddy Bolden, King Oliver, Sidney Bechet, and "Jelly Roll" Morton, soon became the larger-than-life founders of Jazz.

As the city grew more sophisticated, public sentiment turned against blatant prostitution, excessive drinking and resultant crime. Politicians were forced to close raucous Storyville in 1917.

Most reputable jazzmen scattered to Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and New York. Enough stayed to make a living, thereby sustaining the tradition and laying the Jazz roadmap for generations to follow. Of the Jazz musicians who stayed, they survived by playing on riverboats, upscale venues, making recordings and occasional tours to New York and Chicago. Kid Ory's and King Oliver's Jazz bands come to mind. By the 1930s, one unforgettable New Orleanian trumpeter, who sharpened his craft in King Oliver's band, vaulted to international fame. Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong eclipsed his mentors as the first Jazz Ambassador of the world.

A torch was passed to Fats Domino and Professor Longhair, who became legends in their own right. Preservation Jazz Hall employs old-time jazz musicians in the French Quarter. The Marsalis Family, Pud Brown, Dr. Michael White, the Neville Brothers and Percy Humphrey continue the tradition of keeping jazz in the vanguard of New Orleans culture at various clubs around the city. Sometimes they just drop in spontaneously to jam in one of the city's serious jazz clubs like Snug Harbor, Funky Butt, or Tipitina's. They always come around for New Orleans Jazz Festival. Today, jazz keeps its story, but lists the world as its address.



Neville Brothers

Throughout the years, the Blues has become a major influence on American popular music, and is expressed today in nearly all musical forms from modern classical, to R&B, Rock and Roll, Country, and of course, Jazz. Consequently, New Orleans role in the early commercialization of that musical genre is second only to Memphis.



Professor Longhair

## Blues Traditions

It has been said that the Blues has always been the idiom that defined how people defined music. It is the underlying motif of the Gospel, Jazz, R&B/Soul, and Rock & Roll traditions that borrowed heavily from it.

Originally derived from celebratory lyrical songs sung by enslaved Black laborers of the South in the late 19th Century, the Blues was just that—a vocal musical form that expressed how people felt. When free African Americans moved northward at the turn of the century, these a cappella vocalizations came to be accompanied by the harmonica, guitar and piano, later leading to the divergent styles we recognize and love today – Blues, Jazz and R&B/Soul.

In the Mississippi Delta region, particularly New Orleans, horns and extensive piano stylings coupled with storytelling, uplifting lyrics and plodding, complex rhythms were known as New Orleans Blues. Early Blues divas here included Bessie Smith, named the greatest of the classic Blues singers of the 1920's; Ma Rainey, billed as the Mother of the Blues and generally credited with the rise in popularity of Blues music in America at that time; and Irma Thomas, discovered by bandleader Tommy Ridgley in 1959 and known as the Queen, and sometimes Soul Queen, of the Blues. The latter is still actively performing!

Other Blues greats who made their mark here were Little Brother Montgomery, Sugar Boy Crawford, Tuts Washington, Champion Jack Dupree and Professor Longhair. A self-taught pianist noted for his boogie-woogie piano-work and distinctive lyrics depicting some of life's unattractive aspects, Dupree is said to have personified New Orleans Blues. While Professor Longhair (Henry Roland Byrd) on the other hand, was arguably the most influential exponent of the New Orleans Blues style with his widely recognized rocking, raucous piano signature fusing Cuban rumba currents into an Afro-Caribbean sound peppered with traditional Blues piano-style. He was so revered that Tipitina's nightclub is named after a song he wrote by the same name.

He gave a voice to equality.

**We the People**

**Article 1**

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream. He challenged America to live out the true meaning of the Constitution and he called us to liberty and justice for all.

There was magic in his voice and through his powerful speeches and the language of his life, he was able to inspire thousands of people all over the world to come together and share his dream of equality.

The BellSouth family salutes Dr. King. We have always believed that if we improve the way people communicate, we bring them closer together.

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## STATE & LOCAL NEWS

### City Waives Online Fees for Permits

(New Orleans, LA) Mayor C. Ray Nagin today signed a wavier of fee ordinance adopted by the City Council allowing residential homeowners of New Orleans to retrieve single family homeowner permits, through online applications, free of charge from January 10, 2006 through March 31, 2006.

The City of New Orleans Department of Safety and Permits

issued a total of 33,417 permits in 2005, including 16,720 permits that were issued between Hurricane Katrina and the end of the year. The department is issuing permits 500 percent faster than pre-Katrina due to online access. The Department will continue to take the necessary steps to issue a vital number of permits to efficiently and safely drive the rebuilding of New Orleans.

The City of New Orleans also announced it will no longer require permits for electrical inspections of individual trailers to expedite the trailer process and to offer more temporary housing for returning residents.

The free access to safety permits is available both at [www.cityofno.com](http://www.cityofno.com) and through kiosks located on the 7th and 8th floors of City Hall. For citizens to apply by fax, they will be required to use the Fax-In Permit Form, available on the website or at the office of Safety and Permits. The free FAX line is (504) 658-7210. Electronic kiosks will continue to be available for citizens at City Hall.

### Governor Blanco sets dates for special session

"In order to keep Louisiana's recovery moving forward, I will call the Legislature into special session on February 6. During the twelve-day session, I will put forth a focused agenda that will accelerate our recovery.

"We must consolidate our levee boards and this will be the centerpiece legislation for this session.

"The times require strong action to secure our state's successes.

"From reopening the I-10 "Twin Span" and taking over troubled New Orleans schools to passing the state's first building code and the state's first uniform coastal protection authority, we've had many successes in this recovery.

"I am confident that this special session will continue our string of successes by protecting the families and businesses rebuilding in the hurricane zone.

"The Special Session is scheduled to run from February 6 until no later than February 17.

"Other items under consideration include: housing, limited insurance and election issues, and consolidating some portions of Orleans parish government.

"An official call will be issued on January 31."



FEMA

RECOVERY  
ALERT

### An Important Message for Individuals Affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita...

If you were displaced by the hurricanes and are still living in a hotel or motel, it is important to understand that FEMA will end its direct-billing program for hotel and motel rooms on February 7, 2006, unless you contact FEMA by January 30, 2006.

For FEMA to continue to pay for your hotel room beyond February 7, 2006, you must contact FEMA **no later than** January 30 to receive an authorization code to provide to your hotel. Any evacuee changing hotels or checking into a hotel between now and January 30 must also have a FEMA authorization code.

If you haven't done so already, register for help from FEMA today.  
You can also get help locating housing through FEMA.

To register or request authorization for FEMA to continue to pay for your room beyond February 7, call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or for TTY callers, 1-800-462-7585 as soon as possible, but no later than January 30, and provide this authorization code to your hotel.

If you were displaced from a low income housing unit funded by the government, or you were homeless before the storm, the Department of Housing and Urban Development can help you find housing options. Call 1-866-373-9509 (TTY 1-800-877-8339). Lines are open 24 hours a day.

In addition to temporary housing assistance, there are a number of grant programs that you may be eligible for. You do not need to complete a loan application with the Small Business Administration to be considered for FEMA's temporary housing assistance or funds for certain other disaster related needs you may have.

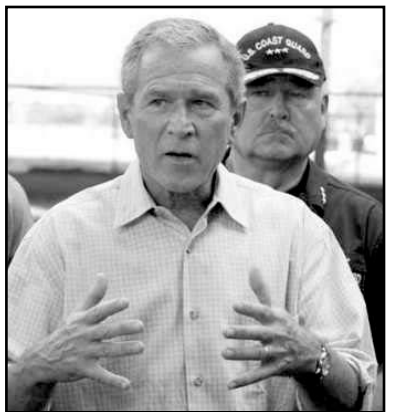
More than 700,000 families have already been helped with rental assistance to pay for long-term housing. Join them and move on to a better housing option today.

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA at 800-621-3362 or contact your State Office of Equal Rights.*

### President Bush Should Fulfill His Promise To Hurricane Katrina Survivors

President Bush met with several foundations at the White House to talk about the Gulf Coast recovery efforts. This meeting comes on the heels of reports that bureaucratic hurdles at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have hindered the clean up and rebuilding effort, and that much of the promises made by the President have not been delivered.

The meeting also follows a speech by former FEMA Director Michael



Brown where he admitted that he failed to respond adequately to Hurricane Katrina and that the recovery effort "was beyond the capacity of the state and local governments. "Four months after Hurricane Katrina, local officials report that there still seems to be a lack of commitment to a long-term recovery plan at the federal level. [The Boston Globe, 1/19/06]

"In response to wide spread criticism of his Administration's failed response, President Bush initially held photo-ops and press conferences promising residents that this would be the largest rebuilding effort ever, and that the federal government would be at the forefront of the assistance," said Democratic National Committee Spokesperson Amaya Smith. "Four months later the President has failed to deliver on his promise. Local residents are working hard on the ground to rebuild their communities and they deserve the backing and help of our federal government."



# News Orleans Data News Weekly

## TRAIL BLAZERS

# Vincent Sylvain: A Beacon in the Darkness

*Founder and Publisher of The New Orleans Agenda*

As the television reported to the citizens of New Orleans and the surrounding areas, that a mandatory evacuation was being called, the family of Vincent Sylvain, began calling each other, making a plan to meet at I-10 like most, not knowing where they were going, or how long they would be there. But unlike many unfortunate others, they did have a plan. Thankfully, says Sylvain, we had one, and my sisters had booked some rooms in Texas. We arrived there, all together, safe and sound. But that isn't when or how the story of this trailblazer began, or how it ends.

After enduring the Hurricane George evacuation to the Convention Center in 1995 when he was employed by then Mayor Marc Morial, Sylvain, became intimately aware of how important information is when people are in a crisis, or scared and worried, in these types of situations. He recalls passionately being in a dark room with others, no lights, no windows, and being asked by another, for the time. When he responded he was then asked.... "Is that day or night?" It was at that moment, that he became passionate about information and how critical it is.

Little did he know, that when he began his fledgling website in 2003, [www.theneworleansagenda.com](http://www.theneworleansagenda.com), would one day be the catalyst for generating information throughout the country to his fellow New Orleanians who were forced from their homes and city, disconnected from their husbands, wives, parents, siblings and children, and strewn throughout the country from the flood following Hurricane Katrina. Indeed, even Sylvain himself with his family was a visitor in a strange place when they arrived in Texas.

Upon receiving the first reports that New Orleans had been spared from Katrina's wrath, he made plans to return home. Then he, like everyone else was confronted with the reports of flooding beginning to engulf the city. He began to wonder what would be his next move, when he received an email from the Jordan family saying that they were safe in California and he responded. The next email he received would direct his steps. He mentions that about a week before Katrina, he had a dream which he had shared with his father and members of his church. It was that he was rebuilding New Orleans from Texas. Not knowing what it meant, he was reassured by members of his Bible study group that everyone has a purpose, and to be ready when God revealed his to him. That next email, gave him that revelation. It was from a person, who by some way, had been able to get out a transmission to him that they were trapped on the roof of a house asking for him to contact someone to get them off. He received more emails of that sort, which charted his course. He was clear that his website was to be used to transmit crucial information to those who were unable to evacuate, but could



get to his website, and then to those who had dispersed, to communicate to each other, and find out what happened to their own loved ones with whom they had become disconnected.

What followed, was a super-website, which was the mechanism for people to communicate back and forth, find out useful information such as how to prepare water for drinking, where to find supplies and resources wherever they were, and receive messages from people who were trapped. The site linked to other sites with information and postings, and lists of evacuees and their whereabouts. In short, it was a miracle for those who were searching sometimes fearing without hope for their families but finding what they needed, sometimes the news was not good, but more often, it was the beginning of a joyous reunion, and sometimes it saved lives.

Since the immediate aftermath, much of the media has died down regarding life after Katrina, but Sylvain has not stalled his efforts. The website has over 20,000 subscribers, and countless other readers who are forwarded the link from subscribers, or get the link from other websites. [www.theneworleansagenda.com](http://www.theneworleansagenda.com), is a source of local information for most of the major news outlets, from CNN to the Networks and their affiliates across the nation, and even receives requests for information on the ground in New Orleans from people and media overseas. Notoriety of this sort could cause one to become clouded about what they are doing and why they are doing it, but not Vincent Sylvain. When asked what he sees as the continued need for this website, he without hesitation responded, "The Redevelopment!" "I now exist to ensure that the victims are a part of the redevelopment process in this city." Sylvain continued, "The current 'powers that be' are trying their best to keep the people in a vacuum, when what is needed most is transparency." "I intend to keep publishing, and bringing information to the people until they are home. Here, in New Orleans, where they belong, with their families in tact, and living life here again. I will not rest until that day comes," he says.

Vincent said that this tragedy brings to mind the stories told of when the Africans were loaded on the slave ships before their trans-Atlantic trip through the middle passage. Visions of seeing Black families separated again, loaded on busses and planes, not knowing where they were going, where their families were, if they were alive or dead, or if they would ever see their children again. Black families. He said the parallels were just too great to ignore. If there was something that he could do, to help, to comfort, to inform these people, his people, he did what he was compelled to do.

Vincent Sylvain, we salute you as a Trailblazer. Our local Unsung Hero!

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## DATA ZONE Entertainment

# Starz Inblack Celebrates Black History Month With A Diverse Array Of Fresh Entertainment

**Featuring World Premieres, Originals, Documentaries and Music  
Every Night, All Month Long, at 8 p.m. ET/PT Only on Starz InBlack**

Starz InBlack celebrates Black History Month with a diverse slate of world premieres, originals, documentaries and music, every night at 8 p.m. only on Starz InBlack. Special features during February include the world premiere of the soulful blues concert "**Blues Divas**" with interviews by **Morgan Freeman**, the film, **In My Country** starring **Samuel L. Jackson** and much more.



"At Starz InBlack we celebrate the rich history of African Americans every day of the year with our diverse selection of movies, originals and documentaries," said Stephan Shelanski, senior vice president, acquisitions, programming and scheduling. "To commemorate Black History Month, we've created a month-long celebration, saluting the achievements of African Americans in Hollywood with a special presentation every night at 8 p.m."

Also making its world television premiere on Starz InBlack on Saturday, February 11, is **In My Country** starring **Samuel L. Jackson** and **Juliette Binoche**. **Langston Whitfield** (Jackson) is a Washington Post journalist who travels on assignment to South Africa to cover the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. Also covering the hearings, which serve as a forum for those accused of murder

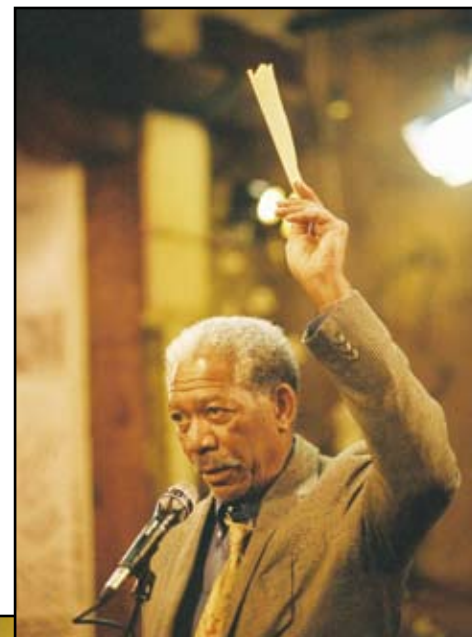
and torture to be confronted by their victims, is **Anna Malan** (Binoche). Through their stories about courage, compassion and the redeeming power of love the two journalists, inspire both the world and themselves. The film was directed by Academy Award® nominee **John Boorman**.

Another featured presentation is **Lightning in a Bottle** on Friday, February 10. Hosted by two-time Grammy Award® winner **India.Arie**, **Lightning in a Bottle** is a remarkable concert film that presents live performances from blues legends who gathered at Radio City Music Hall for

an unprecedented and thrilling music event. **India Arie** also performs in the film, along with legendary performers from rock, jazz, rap and the blues, including **Buddy Guy**, **B.B. King**, **Chris Thomas King**, **Macy Gray**, **Aerosmith**, **Bonnie Raitt**, **Mavis Staples**, **Natalie Cole**, **Chuck D** and others.

Starz InBlack will also present its original documentary **UNSTOPPABLE: A Conversation with Melvin Van Peebles, Gordon Parks and Ossie Davis** on Tuesday, February 28. **UNSTOPPABLE: A Conversation with Melvin Van Peebles, Gordon Parks and Ossie Davis** provides a candid and revealing look at the first African Americans to direct Hollywood features - **Melvin Van Peebles** (Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song, Classified X), **Gordon Parks** (The Learning Tree, Shaft) and **Ossie Davis** (Cotton Comes to Harlem). Also featured in the documentary are testimonials from actor/writer/director **Reginald Hudlin**, director **Julie Dash**, actress/

director **Ruby Dee**, writer/filmmaker **Nelson George**, and actor/director **Mario Van Peebles** who comment on the trio's influence on their careers, our culture and society. Producer **Warrington Hudlin** (House Party, Boomerang, Bebe's Kids), who is also president of the **Black Filmmaker Foundation**, moderates the conversation.



Other features presented throughout the month at 8 p.m. et/pt, include:

**Do The Right Thing**, starring Ossie Davis, Spike Lee and Ruby Dee, Wednesday, February 8.

**Last of the Mississippi Jukes**, Thursday, February 9.

**Hitch**, starring Will Smith, Sunday, February 12.

**Blade: Trinity**, starring Wesley Snipes, Saturday, February 18.

**Hendrix: Band of Gypsies**, starring Jimi Hendrix and Buddy Miles, Monday, February 20.

**Mr. 3000**, starring Bernie Mac, Saturday, February 25.



## DATA ZONE Entertainment

# Belafonte: Entertainer Turns Activist

By. Nayaba Arinde

Special to the NNPA from the Amsterdam News

NEW YORK (NNPA) – “I don’t know if President Bush is the greatest terrorist, I’ve not met them all, but he’s damn sure in the running,” as mild and gentle as you want to be, civil rights activist and beloved performer Harry Belafonte addressed the audience at the Cnaan Baptist Church annual King Day celebration.

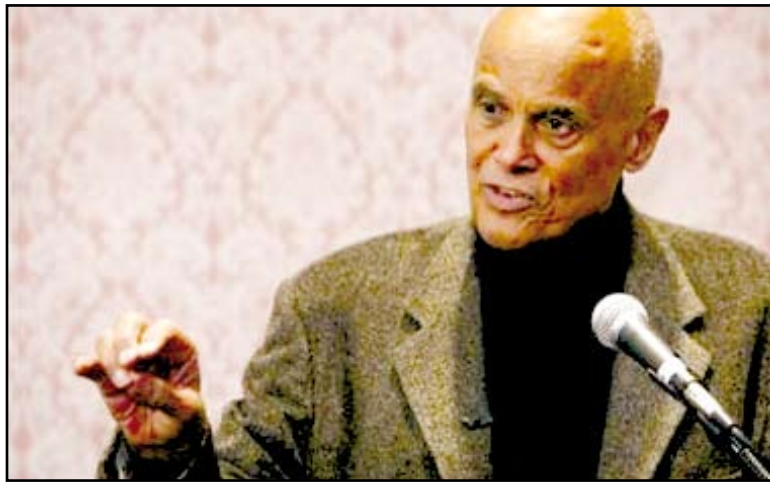
Introduced by Rev. Al Sharpton, he was a surprise guest speaker at an event attended by ambitious politicians like Democratic New York Senators Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer, and higher-office hopefuls like Jeanine Pirro, Thomas Suozzi, Mark Green and Eliot Spitzer

>From Katrina to the occupation of Iraq to the gravalicious prison industrial complex, the 78-year-old former Calypsonian told an audience in awe that “terror is unleashed. The Gestapo is here.” Repeating a charge he first made at the beginning of this month in Caracas, Venezuela, when he and Danny Glover and Professor Cornel West met with President Hugo Chávez, with a quiet force Belafonte once again labeled George Walker Bush, the president of the United States, one of the greatest terrorists the world has ever seen.

Far from being stunned, the audience of more than three thousand hung on his every word and applauded him like he had delivered a grand and honest state address. Politicians, activists, Katrina evacuees, the general public, and members of the press stood for the man as he retold stories of his encounters with Dr. King; his last conversation when he asked him why he seemed so out-of-sorts; the wisdom he imparted to the popular entertainer; and the immense national, global and international impact of his life and death.

But it was when he delivered his no-holds-barred barrage against Bush that Belafonte electrified an audience that had to sit through Sen. Hillary Clinton’s obsequious comment: “When you look at the way the House of Representatives has been run, it has been run like a plantation - and you know what I am talking about.”

Addressing everyone, but noting the gathering of Gulf Coast evacuees in particular, Belafonte told of how in the wake of the government’s



Entertainer and human rights activist Harry Belafonte speaks during a press conference at the Arts Presenters Members Conference in New York, Saturday, Jan. 21, 2006. Belafonte called U.S. President George W. Bush ‘the greatest terrorist in the world’ in a recent television broadcast. (AP Photo/Shiho Fukada)

abandonment, “a third world country” had made offers of help, only to be refused by the U.S. government. Nonetheless Venezuela shipped oil to the people of the South Bronx and even Massachusetts.

Berated in the white-owned media following the “Bush is a terrorist” analysis he delivered a few weeks ago, Belafonte could be mistaken for Kanye West, who determined in the wake of Katrina during a live televised fundraising effort that “Bush doesn’t like Black people.”

Belafonte brushed off the banshee critics.

“I’m not running for office, but I’m not running for the border, either,” he said. Having to bare the burden of adversity is nothing new, he noted. Black folks have “survived centuries of terror – the greatest terror of all was slavery.” After 9-11, “We decided that Osama bin Laden was the terrorist,” now terror rains down from an individual who may have usurped the presidency. “It’s dubious how he got there,” said Belafonte, and he “seizes upon the fear and rage [and vulnerability] of a nation which had just been assaulted. ... He lied to the people of this nation, distorted the truth, declared war on a nation who had not attacked us ... put America’s sons and daughters in harm’s way ... and destroyed the lives of tens of thousands of [Iraqi] women and children who had nothing to do with it. It was an act of terror. Those who commit acts of terror are usually defined as terrorists.”

The crowd soaked in all he said, but church being church, and Black folk being Black folk, several hundred responded orally to just about every word he said.

During Katrina, while thousands of people were drowning, on the first

day Bush was playing golf, Belafonte said. Days later he visited the area briefly. But when you leave an “abyss of fear, that’s an act of terror.”

Then he addressed the prison system. “America has the largest prison population in the world,” he said, and the majority of folk therein are Black people.”

As a matter of public policy, prisons are being thrown up with a speed surpassing healthcare centers, churches and schools, Belafonte said, and as the system is being turned over to the private sector, rest assured, everything is geared up to fill those cells. No profit comes from empty cots, so here come the draconian laws to ensure the bottom line is maximized.

“King and Nelson Mandela were called terrorists. That turned out to be false [and they became known] as some of the most honorable men of our time,” he said.

Belafonte recalled that back in his early activist days he had been spied upon by the CIA; now it is Homeland Security monitoring everyone he talks to. “The CIA followed me everywhere. They said I was a terrorist. Now in these final days, Homeland Security is investigating everything.” Perhaps they figure him a terrorist, he concluded, smiling broadly.

Later, Belafonte stepped up his criticism of the Bush administration, particularly the Department of Homeland Security.

“We’ve come to this dark time in which the new Gastapo of Homeland Security lurks here, where citizens are having their rights suspended,” he said at the Arts Presenters Members Conference. “You can be arrested and not charged. You can be arrested and have no right to counsel.”

SOMETIMES THE SEASON’S BEST COMEDY CAN SNEAK UP ON YOU.

Sanaa LATHAN Simon BAKER Mike EPPS Donald FAISON Blair UNDERWOOD Wendy Raquel ROBINSON Golden Brooks Taraji P. HENSON and Alfre WOODARD



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PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING  
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creation. It is art that desires,  
encourages and affirms what  
and who we actually are. It also  
reminds us love is the revolution  
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STARTS FRIDAY,  
JANUARY 27th



## OPINION

# New Orleans: Chocolate, Vanilla or Neapolitan?



George E. Curry  
NNPA Columnist

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin opened himself up for a torrent of criticism when he declared in a Martin Luther King Day speech that God wants New Orleans to again be a chocolate city.

In his speech, he said, It's time for us to come together. It's time for us to rebuild New Orleans as the one that should be a chocolate New Orleans. Nagin added, This city will be a majority African American city. It's the way God wants it to be. You can't have New Orleans no other way. It wouldn't be New Orleans.

Under fire, Nagin backed away from his comments.

It's easy to criticize Nagin for his choice of words or for professing to speak for God and many have done just that. But that's the easy way out. What's missing in the

discussion about rebuilding New Orleans is a candid exchange about race. Now that the mayor has apologized for calling for the reconstruction of a chocolate city, let's discuss what's being avoided in the issue of race.

Of course, race is not the primary issue when pondering New Orleans' future. The paramount issue is one of safety and providing protection against future hurricanes in the below-sea-level city. But in deciding how to rebuild New Orleans, race becomes a salient factor, intended or not.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had the fifth-highest concentration of African-Americans among major cities, according to the Census Bureau. With 84 percent, Gary, Ind. led the nation in that category, followed by Detroit with 81.6 percent, Birmingham, Ala. at 73.5 percent, Jackson, Miss. with 70.6 percent and New Orleans, with Blacks representing 67.3 percent of the population (the other leading chocolate cities were Baltimore, 64.3 percent, Atlanta, 61.4, Memphis, 61.4, Washington, D.C., 60 percent and Richmond, Va., 57.2).

Mayor Nagin isn't the only person suggesting that New Orleans should maintain its chocolate majority. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso Jackson, an African-American, predicted that New Orleans will become more vanilla-like. And even those who profess to want a Neapolitan city in similar to the equal stripes of chocolate, vanilla and strawberry in the brick-shaped block of ice cream in know that under current plans, vanilla will become the dominant flavor of the city.

Whatever the final product, race should be openly debated. New Orleans will, in effect, become a planned community and race should be part of that planning. New Orleans, like most major U.S. cities, has a largely segregated public school system that grew out of largely segregated residential patterns. If the city can be revived in a way that leaves no racial group isolated from important resources and services, Hurricane Katrina could be a blessing in disguise.

However, if the unstated plan is to rid the city of its Black majority, then everyone should return to the drawing board.

New Orleans' population approached 500,000 prior to Katrina. The special Bring New Orleans Back Commission places the current population at 144,000. The population is projected to rise to 181,000 by next September and 247,000 by September 2008. The commission says it is hoping to make New Orleans the best city in the world.

But the commission has not helped its image by recommending a four-month moratorium on rebuilding the most damaged neighborhoods, most of them Black. The commission says a determination must be made to allow reconstruction or tear down these areas and allow others to redevelop them.

On January 22, the New York Times carried a candid headline: In New Orleans, Smaller May Mean Whiter. That kind of candor and directness needs to be injected into the discussions about the new New Orleans.

The city, nearly 70 percent African-American before Hurricane Katrina, has lost some of its largest black neighborhoods to the deluge, and many fear it will never be a predominantly black city again, as it

has been since the 1970s, the New York Times article observed.

It continued, Indeed, race has become a subtext for just about every contentious decision the city faces: where to put FEMA trailers; which neighborhoods to rebuild; how the troubled school system should be reorganized; when elections should be held. Many blacks see threats to their political domination in reconstruction plans that do not give them what they once had. But many whites see an opportunity to restore a broken city they fled decades ago.

It's an opportunity for Blacks and Whites to come together and determine what will be best for the city. But they can't do that by ignoring the elephant in the room in race.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. He appears on National Public Radio (NPR) three times a week as part of News and Notes with Ed Gordon. To contact Curry or to book him for a speaking engagement, go to his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com).



The Love Dr.  
Data Columnist

Those of you who have read this column or listened to me on the radio, or watched me on television will know that this short sentence means that my life is more full and rounded as a result and that there may be hope for new - New Orleans. For those of you who are not familiar with several years of my expressions, please know that Sweet Lorraine's is my favorite pub, jazz club, and late evening eatery, my home away from home.

In a conversation with a business associate, we spoke of yearning for life to "get back to normal" only to understand that there will be no "going back" to "normal", only the creation of a new "normal", new patterns, people and places that will

become our new comfort zones, our new normalcy. In the mean time however, for most of us, until we have that predictability in our days and nights, there will be a stress level and a yearning for the familiar, and that is why the reopening of Sweet Lorraine's means so much to me.

With very little water damage, it was only a matter of getting electricity and gas and a familiar part of my life has returned. My return to Sweet Lorraine's was like stepping back in time, to a time when there was order in my life, back to normal.

It's really funny, because I am not a traditional "bar man". Happily married for over thirty years, Sweet Lorraine's only entered my life a few years ago when on a whim Boo and I went to check out my friend's place (Paul Sylvester) when another friend (Philip Manuel) was on stage. It was Boo who recognized me sinking into a state of relaxation that she hadn't seen since? , well since I used to be "into" music

before we were married and had children. So it was "on".

More recently, I began to enjoy the quality of the conversation of the "regulars" and the "specials" from the kitchen (sometimes not on the menu).

Men and women who are hunters in their souls find a great deal of solace in the company of other hunters, and Sweet Lorraine's seems to attract such kindred souls. Busy people who only have limited time for such kinship and who need to invest it wisely tend to hang out at the front tables and bar of the club. Some of this may be due in part to the natural wood surroundings, but this pub feature is due mostly to the ever present owner and the circle he attracts.

Paul is a New Orleans man, period. He worships it's musicians and has created a shrine to them, the back part of the club where Boo and I hang out when I'm at Sweet Lorraine as half of a couple. You see, it's just that kind of place. You can hang out with the

"fellas" (men and women) during the week, and entertain your significant other on the weekends, and the bartender remembers your drink (when you tip).

I particularly need my "place", if only to help my life feel some kind of normal, as I do different work, with different people in a completely different city. I miss my friend and the place named after his mother (and what I call mine), together and separately. My greatest pleasure is good conversation and Paul always holds court over current or historic issues and events, never heated, however energetic. An hour spent at Sweet Lorraine's after a twelve hour shift was uplifting and relaxing, an emotional anchor for my new reality.

He says he's bringing it all back, and Boo and I can't wait for another one of those "last time I saw you relax like that" moments. I know we will laugh when we look at one another across dinner to Someone Wonderful's exquisite music, and know that we are

really home. Whether he knows it or not, my friend Paul has created an institution, both a pub and a performance venue with a distinct flavor.

And speaking of flavor, like I wrote, over dinner, because Paul has had excellent and interesting things come out of his kitchen along with classics. You can spend an entire evening at Sweet Lorraine's, drinks after work, then dine, than get or meet your Boo and stay for the entertainment, which Paul had varied before the storm with the addition of spoken word. Actually I'm working on a "Love Doctor Live" performance style that I may introduce there, and I? Studying bartending for what the new normal may be in my future.

So I guess I can't claim that I'm not a "bar man" anymore ever since I relaxed at Sweet Lorraine's.

Go To [LOVELOGISTICS.COM](http://LOVELOGISTICS.COM) for more information. Lloyd Dennis is also available as a speaker; email him at [LD@LLOYDDENNIS.COM](mailto:LD@LLOYDDENNIS.COM), fax 504-368-1225

## Sweet Lorraine's is open.





# *To Our Readers:*

*It is extremely important during these unprecedented times for New Orleanians, for you to receive information that is pertinent to the growth and reconstruction of our city. The Data News Weekly has taken on the charge to reach out to our readership which is now dispersed throughout the country. It is the responsibility of the Black Press, as historically, it has been the Black Press which has been the trusted source of information for our people, dating back over 60 years. The Black Press was credited with being the number one source of information during The Great Migration, when thousands of Blacks were leaving the South for work opportunities in the North. The Black Press kept them connected, and in its own way, helped in changing the face of America.*

*Continuing in this great tradition, The Data News Weekly in its 39th year of publishing, understands that another "great migration" has occurred, and though the circumstances for our moving are different, the result is the same. We still have a need to be connected, but the large majority of our readership is not currently connected to the internet, and so we have redistributed our newspaper throughout Baton Rouge, Houston, TX and Jackson, MS, in addition to New Orleans, to be a better communication source for our displaced readers.*

*Understanding our responsibility, we also realize that we could not undertake this tremendous effort without the support of the corporate community. Moët Hennesy USA has, prior to this disaster, been a major supporter of the Black Press of America and of the Data News Weekly, and now, as we go through these trying times, we sincerely appreciate their continuing support of our overall responsibility to the New Orleanian African American community.*

*The Data News Weekly, will continue to bring you the news from home, keeping you informed, wherever you may be, and helping you to find your way home. Once again, The Data News Weekly wishes to express it's gratitude to Moët Hennesy USA, for its ongoing support of our publication and our mission.*

## *Thank You Moët Hennesy USA*



## NNPA HIGHLIGHTS

# George Fraser Networks with Black Publishers

By. Jimmie Briggs

NNPA National Correspondent

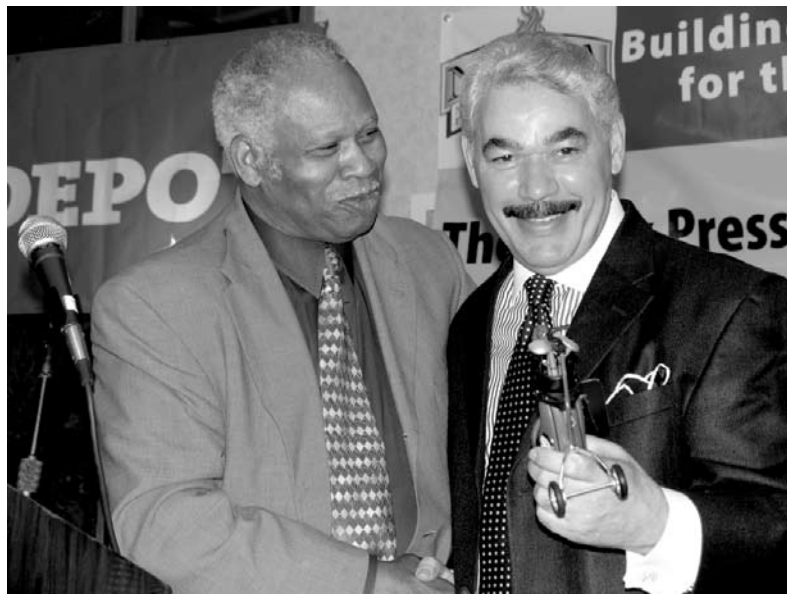
SAVANNAH, Ga. (NNPA) Looking at George C. Fraser, many people think he was born of privilege and wealth. His trademark coifed white hair and monogrammed, cuffed shirts

make that an easy assumption.

Most people are surprised at the truth, he notes with a wry smile. The truth is that the 60-year-old founder of the Cleveland based networking group Frasernet and bestselling author of *Success Runs in Our Race* (Amistad) and *Race for Success* (William Morrow), lived a hardscrabble life in the gritty

Brooklyn, N.Y. neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

One of 11 foster children, he made it through high school but not college. Nevertheless, he managed to attain an enviable life of economic and social success. Fraser believes any Black person in America can do the same, a message he preaches at 150 speaking engagements per year.



John B. Smith, Nnpa Chairman And George Fraser

Despite a schedule which keeps him traveling regularly, he had never spoken to the Black publishers, editors and reporters of the NNPA (National Newspaper Publishers Association) until its Mid-Winter Workshop Conference here last week.

The extremely light-skinned Fraser opened his lunchtime remarks in a ballroom at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront Hotel with the words, Yep, I'm Black.

Following the expected chuckles and enthusiastic applause from the audience, Fraser followed with a half-hour talk outlining strategies for unity and success, which he aggressively directed to the assembled publishers.

I will not be saying anything you have not heard before, but I will be saying it in a different way, he noted. Words create worlds. But our actions drown out our words.

Prior to his speech, Fraser sat down for a brief interview with an NNPA correspondent.

My story is really a very simple one, he says, as a man with 2,500 names in his rolodex. If I can make it, any brother or sister can make it. You have to convert the knowledge you have into a marketable skill and recognize the power of relationships in our lives.

Fraser spent some amount of time in almost any job one could imagine from encyclopedia salesman to Ford Motor Company executive. Twelve years ago, he graced the cover of *Black Enterprise* magazine, anointed the networker for Black America. Then in 1996, his business, SuccessSource, Inc. was forced to file for bankruptcy.

More than familiar with a lifetime of difficult challenges, the kid from Brooklyn bounced back and created the now-successful Frasernet, an online resource for Black professionals to learn about his suggested tools for networking and producer of annual PowerNetworking conference for guest speakers and the public to interact for several days. The conference has drawn more than 12,000 participants and some of Black America's most successful figures, including Les Brown, Stedman Graham and Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin. SuccessSource Unlimited now creates networking and information resource guides for Black professionals.

I'm not a racist, he explains. I'm a racist. This is a person who has dedicated doing everything he can to first improving the quality of life and creating economic opportunities for his people. First. Not only but first.

Fraser identified what he sees as the three most important components for leadership in the 21st Century to the NNPA publishers. These included wakefulness, alertness and an unwavering dissatisfaction.

Referring to the German psychologist and philosopher Carl Jung, Fraser talked about a need for synchronicity among leaders and professionals within the Black community, including journalists.

Everybody as a role, he noted. You're not the message, you're the messengers. We're not so much a dispossessed people as we are disconnected. We're not effectively networking with each other. God uses everyone.

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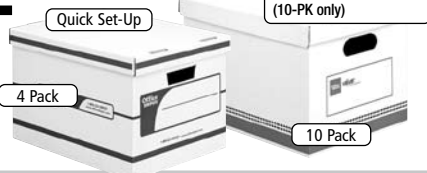
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**Cover Story cont'd.***from page 3.*

Mahalia Jackson

# Gospel Traditions

Like the early Blues, Gospel music (though not named as such in its early beginnings) was also an a cappella expression derived from a rural down home tradition rooted in the African American slave experience.

In the early 20th century in New Orleans, Gospel groups generally consisted of small 3 to 4 person quartets and choirs heard in storefront chapels and spirit-filled churches all over town. Although the vernacular of Gospel music in rural areas of the South incorporated tambourine, drum, trumpet, and saxophone accompaniment, instrumental accompaniment was slow to be introduced in New Orleans. Mainstream AME and Black Baptist congregations considered a great deal of musical instrumentation to be taboo – too much like the “Devil’s music.” This stance was ironic, given that rhythmic movement was very much a part of the stylistic properties and spirit-filled dance that appeared in churches on Sundays. Then Jazz musicians started playing in church.

Drawing from their musical sensibilities and discipline, Jazz musicians introduced slightly richer musical arrangements in 1920’s and 30’s, foreshadowing the great shift towards mass choirs having 30 to 40 singers and a full ensemble complement of horns, drums, pianos, organs, guitars and so on. Despite this shift, which became more pronounced after World War II, a cappella stylization and

minimum instrumentation still remained popular for some, led by the “Grand Daddies” you might say, of the Gospel sound, The Zion Harmonizers.

Founded in 1939 and named after the small New Orleans community called Zion City, The Zion Harmonizers were early proponents of the mid-20th century style of four-part harmony. In 1942, the group came under the management of Sherman Washington, a much beloved figure in town credited with popularizing Gospel music to the Majority. The group is currently in its 6th decade together, and still performs at various New Orleans venues, including at the famed House Of Blues during Sunday Gospel Brunch.

Today Washington is Director of the famous Gospel Tent at the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, where festival-goers enjoy spirited performances from some 80 Gospel singers and groups like Jai Reed, Miss Emma, the Moses Hogan Sisters, the Joyful Gospel Singers, and Mighty Chariots of Fire—just to name a few.

No discussion of Gospel Music is complete without acknowledging “The Queen of Gospel Music”, Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972). Born on Water Street in New Orleans, at age 4 Mahalia began singing Gospel at the Plymouth Rock Baptist Church. Her father, Johnny Jackson, was pastor. Though influenced by music styles and performers common to New Orleans daily life (Blues, Ragtime, Jazz), her Gospel influence was unwavering and the most significant throughout life. Thus, Mahalia’s contralto intonation and phrasing are firmly rooted in her New Orleans church upbringing, though at age 16 she moved to Chicago, where she went on to artistic and commercial fame.

Ask your parents and grandparents, if anyone before or since could sing Gospel like Mahalia Jackson. Though a young Aretha Franklin arguably came closest, no one quite measures up to her powerful, sustained, multi-octave voice. Think you’ve heard her voice by listening to a few of her records? Not really. Master recording tapes and records could not capture the dynamic range of her astounding, resonant voice. In fact Martin Luther King, Jr. said of Mahalia, “A voice like this comes, not once in a century, but once in a millennium.” She is always remembered, celebrated and hailed as finest vocalist in the history of the genre.

Thomas Dorsey is Founder & CEO SoulOfAmerica.com and Soul of America Travel, Inc.

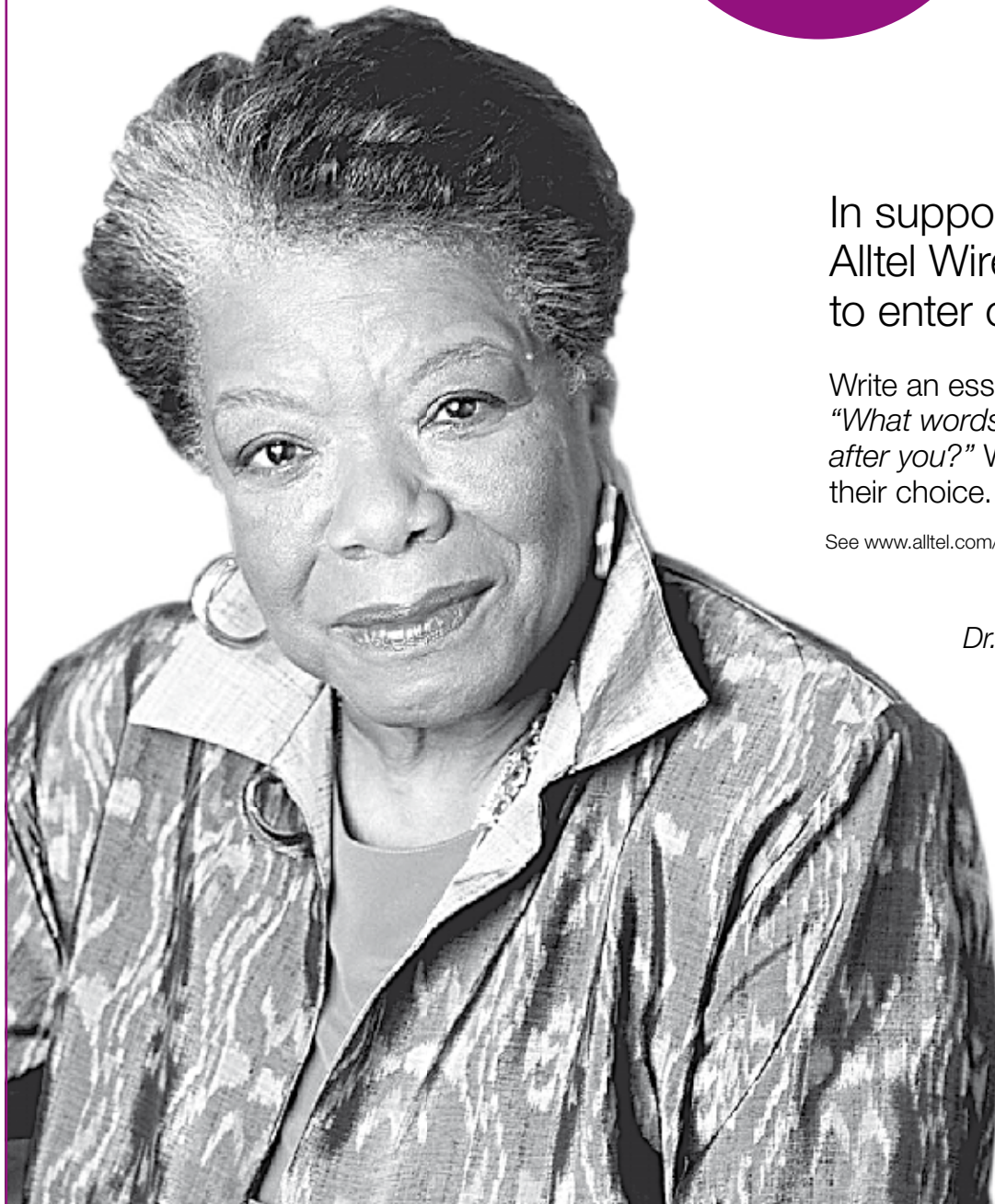


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