

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone

**Usher Shows
His Support to
New Orleans!**

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June 17, 2006

40th Year

Volume 36

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COVER STORY

The Longest Road Home in America

Story and Photos by Eddie Francis



Ten months after Katrina did her damage New Orleanians still yearn for the comforts of home, but they have found that there is much discomfort in finding safe, affordable housing. Public housing residents, renters and homeowners, alike, voice a myriad of concerns and frustrations about everything from FEMA red tape to environmental concerns. Local, state and federal officials all lament that re-establishing housing in the Crescent City is an unprecedented work in progress, so the learning curve is steep.

One Voice, Many Sentiments

At the core of housing complications in New Orleans are residents' frustrations with returning home. One of those residents is Jonte Marcelin Cloud, 22, who lives in Houston. Cloud used to live in New Orleans East and intends to return home but her frustration with the housing situation is obvious. "I have to call FEMA every other day to keep my case active!" she exclaims.

After receiving a housing voucher for 18

months, Cloud felt that she would get all of the time she needed to get back on her feet. To her surprise, however, her rent has not been paid by FEMA since March. This has left in her in the position of having to choose which sacrifice she will have to make in order to keep a roof over her children's heads.

What complicates matters are the logistics of living in another city. Cloud is taking college classes and will graduate in August. If she had her way, she would return to "The East" as soon as she is done. Unfortunately the apartment complex where she lived and her place of employment were both heavily damaged. To make matters worse, clean-up had not begun in either place as of her May 20th visit to New Orleans. She has been looking for housing in other parts of the metropolitan area but the lowest price she could find in monthly rent was \$800 for a one-bedroom apartment. She got frustrated and has given up on her search for an apartment in the area, for now.

Ericka Lopez of FEMA's Texas Transitional Recovery Office says that despite public

perception, "FEMA has assisted over half-a-million victims" and that the agency "has programs to assist all disaster victims." Lopez stresses that FEMA cannot help victims unless they know who they are and the difficulties they may be facing. It is up to evacuees, like Cloud, to find out exactly whether they are under the 403 Emergency Sheltering Program, which provides rental assistance for up to 12 months or the 408 Program, which provides assistance up to 18 months. In Cloud's case the City of Houston could also be to blame for not disbursing funds to her apartment complex. In that case she would have to contact the Joint Hurricane Task Force.

One may think that it is as easy as finding a job in a citizen's temporary home but that is not always the case. Cloud cites that in order to take a job or go to school in Houston, businesses and institutions have asked some New Orleanians to change their identifications and permanent addresses from Louisiana to Texas. In order to live in her apartment without FEMA assistance, Cloud was told that she would have to register

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COVER STORY

Continued from previous page.

as a new tenant. That means that she would have to pay an application fee, security deposit

ventilation in their homes."

The concerns go beyond trailers. At any given time in parts



and utility deposit nearly to the tune of \$1,000.

Cloud, like many, believes that New Orleans is clearly the stepchild of America; and it is reflected in the bureaucratic nightmare that has characterized FEMA. "Every time I call, it's not consistent. They want proof of your lease. Well, my lease was in my apartment which is totaled! Then they want your leasing office contact. How can I give you that when I don't know where they are? They're not being realistic."

Toxic Welcome

While Cloud and thousands of other New Orleanians long to return home they have to think carefully about the environment they are re-entering. Only weeks ago, for example, the Sierra Club noticed that there were dangerous levels of formaldehyde in FEMA trailers throughout Mississippi and Louisiana.

FEMA declined the opportunity to speak to Data News Weekly more in depth about the issue but issued the following statement which, in part, says that they "are confident that there is no ongoing risk." They also advise trailer occupants to fully open windows and use air conditioning or exhaust fans to ensure "proper

of New Orleans residents who are back in New Orleans still endure the odors of garbage containing rotten food, chemicals, petroleum and other leftover flood debris. In many parts of the city there is high, dry rotten grass. During their drain clearing project on June 10th members of the newly formed "New Orleans Brain Trust" noticed a pool of oil next to a storm drain and tiles that contained asbestos near another storm drain. That was only on a seven-block stretch of one street.

Cloud echoes the concerns about living conditions through her concern for her two children. She explains that she does not like the idea of returning to a city where children are "constantly playing around trash" and where drivers can get nails in their tires on any street due to the demolitions. All of these concerns and there is still not enough housing for residents to return.

Whose House?

The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have taken a beating in the court of public opinion. Residents of the St. Bernard Housing Development have become nationally known for their peaceful protest against

the federal government's refusal to open the city's housing developments. Having setting up camp on the neutral ground across from the St. Bernard, residents have forced HUD to react.

U.S. Secretary of HUD, Alphonse Jackson, held a press conference last week to unveil the agency's plan to get housing residents back into the city. The plan calls for "rehabilitating and reopening about 1,000 public housing units in the next 60 days, raising the value of HUD Disaster Vouchers and redeveloping New Orleans public housing to bring better opportunities for families displaced by Hurricane Katrina." The plan also calls for the acceleration of clean-up and repair of the city's units.

Secretary Jackson also directed HANO to increase the Fair Market Rate (FMR) in New Orleans by 35 percent. The expectation is that increasing the rate will create more rental opportunities for displaced families. Secretary Jackson gave the example that the

FMR for a 2-bedroom apartment is set at \$696. The new payment standard would raise the voucher

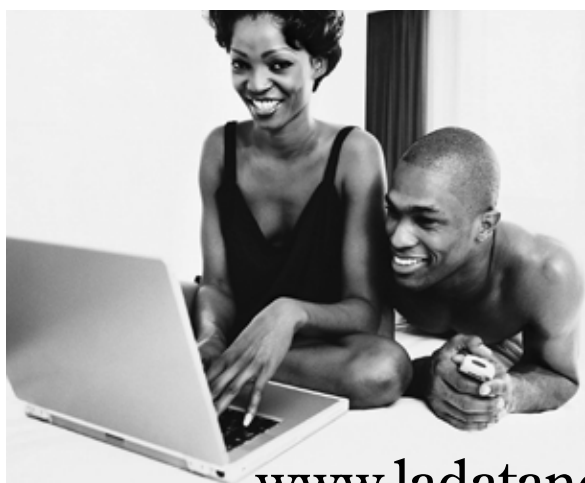
demolished to make way for a mixture of public housing, affordable rental housing and



to \$940, and the same would go for apartments ranging from 1- to 4-bedroom.

The plan calls for rehabilitation of complexes based on their damage, also. According to Secretary Jackson, "HUD intends to use a mix of federal public housing funding HANO receives annually, as well as bond funds and Low Income Housing Tax Credits to redevelop C.J. Peete, B.W. Cooper, Lafitte and St. Bernard. The units will be

single-family homes." Desire and Florida suffered severe damage. He said that HANO will continue to work with the developers of the Desire HOPE VI community. "Until these developments are finished," says Secretary Jackson, "HUD will assist families from communities with a continuum of Disaster Vouchers, Section 8 Vouchers, and Tenant Protection Vouchers that will continue to cover rent wherever they have relocated."



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NEWSMAKER

IN SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW

By Mark V. Clark

On Sunday May 28th, 2006 Peter W. "Champ" Clark died at the ripe old age of 92. The heart ache of Katrina hit hard like so many countless others but for dad he lived and breathed New Orleans with every fiber of his soul.

The list of dad's accomplishments could fill volumes but it was the personal loss of a lifetime of collecting personal memorabilia that truly broke his heart. Lost in the flood were photographs, tapes and personal notes of interviews with the likes of Joe Louis, Wilt Chamberlin, Bill Russell, Martin Luther King, Jesse Owens and Malcom X just to name a few. It was his personal collection of a walk through history and it was too much for a 92 old to handle.

In the last few weeks and months of his life, Dad really was concerned not about his legacy as much as the legacy of the pioneers of his era. You see my good friend told me that "if their was no him, their would be no me" The legacy of dad's generation was of men like Joseph "Scoop" Jones, Tex Stephens, Morris F. X. Sr. just to name a few. So the quotation could be changed



Champ Clark and Dr. Samuel Dubois Cook

They sacrificed much in order to see the progress that today's African Americans in the city, state and nation now travel.

What one must realize is that this era of pioneering African Americans had an un tiring zest and quest to improve our community and to overcome all obstacles and that was through personal sacrifice to ensure that their children

the children of the Greater Metropolitan Area because they understood the core principals of "it takes a village to raise a child".

This era of pioneers were visionaries and courageous in that they didn't wallow or waste time blaming the circumstances of the time for holding them back. Their was nothing on earth that would or could stop them from always striving to live their dreams and to give hope to others that their dreams were attainable or at the very least attainable in future generations of African Americans.

The names of this generation are famous like "Champ" and "Scoop" but it also includes a whose who of unknown heroes with last names like Brown, Williams, Robinson, Washington etc. You may wonder who these individuals are well its simple it's the men and women of this era. Your Grand father and Great Grandfather and all of the other countless Great Uncles and Cousins. The Bricklayers, Mail Carriers, Painters, Long Shore man, Carpenters, Seamstress, Maids, cooks etc. The men and women of an era that sacrificed in order for "us" (and I mean the collective us as African Americans

today) to enjoy the wonderful array of opportunities at our feet that we often overlook and take for granted. Many of this era would have been great surgeons or fortune five hundred CEO's but they were denied that opportunity. We have them all to thank but not just thank, but as my dad worried carry on the tradition.

Despite all of the accolades that my dad and men like Scoop Jones received it was the unknown parts of their life that brought them such pride and hope. My dad for the better part of twenty years paid out of his own pocket, the rent and utility bills for an entire block of strip malls on Claiborne Ave. This was not done for personal fame or fortune but it was done to take children off the street and teach them a better path in life. He taught them boxing at the cobra boxing club, and martial arts next door to the boxing club and next to that he taught the principals of journalism. Some would say that was crazy considering that he could not afford it but for him it was always about children and the hope for the community.

Champ Clark was a man of modest means who woke

up for four plus decades and drove a bread truck at 3am in the morning before he taught school and after school he delivered soft drinks on top of his own radio show daily and writing articles in the newspaper. On top of that he raised six children but it was his destiny and responsibility to give back to the community. Much has been said in today's modern era of the word "Role Model". Many rich and famous athletes and business and political people will say that "I'm not a role model" or they will say I contribute to various charitable functions so that makes me a role model". But they are wrong a role model gives and gives until he has nothing left and then he gives some more, but its not money its time. Children if they are to be saved in our community it will be through the blood, sweat and tears of timeless, selfless sacrifice of the men and women on that era.

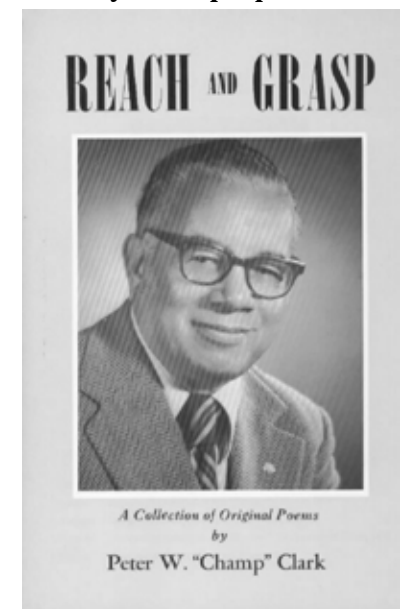
Today as a people we can



Champ and wife of 63 years Katherine

to "if no them, their would be no us". These are the men and the generation and era that walked a walk that was not paved. They didn't travel the path they created the path.

and their children's children would have the education, opportunity and courage to achieve in the future what they dared to dream. Now when I say children I mean



Reach And Grasp, A Collection of Original Poems by Champ Clark

ill afford to rest on the laurels of the true pioneering African American heroes of this era like "Champ" Clark. We have to honor that sacrifice by continuing to "walk the walk" and continue to "by any means necessary reach out to the children and give them the time, guidance, tough love, education and hope for a better day.

NATIONAL NEWS

Some CBC Members Secretly Trying to Oust Jefferson from Committee Post

By. Hazel Trice Edney
NNPA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Although the Congressional Black Caucus has publicly presented a united front in its support of embattled U. S. Rep. Bill Jefferson's right to maintain his committee memberships, some CBC members – including civil rights icon John Lewis (D-Ga.) – have assumed behind-the-scenes roles in getting Jefferson ousted from his coveted position on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

"Mr. [Mel] Watt certainly ably and with great distinction, speaks for the Congressional Black Caucus," says House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who spearheaded the movement to force Jefferson from the committee after he refused to voluntarily step down. "But, quite frankly, a number of members of the Black Caucus have given me moral support on this."

Some have provided more than that.

Among Pelosi's chief allies in the attempted ousting is Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.). sources have confirmed. In a closed door meeting of the 50-member Democratic Caucus

Steering Committee last Thursday, sources say that Lewis made the motion to have Jefferson stripped from his seat on the House Ways and Means, which has oversight on key fiscal matters, such as tax hikes, the minimum wage and military spending.

Because the session was private, some of those present agreed to discuss the meeting with the NNPA News Service on condition that they be granted anonymity.

The sources say former CBC Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) also spoke against Jefferson in the committee meeting. In addition, they said, Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY), ranking member on the Ways and Means Committee, accepted an earlier assignment from Pelosi to try to talk Jefferson into stepping down on his own, an overture rejected by Jefferson.

Ironically, Rangel first won his seat in the House when he defeated the late U. S. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, who was under fire for alleged financial improprieties. The House leadership had stripped Powell of his powerful Education and Labor Committee chairmanship and Rangel defeated him in the 1970 Democratic Primary.

Lewis' motion, seconded by Pelosi, passed by secret ballot.

The motion stated: "The Committee moves that Congressman William Jefferson's appointment to the Committee on Ways & Means be suspended, with his seniority intact, until such time as a further recommendation to restore him to the Committee is made by the Steering and Policy Committee under the rules of the Democratic Caucus."

The entire 201-member caucus was set to vote on the issue June 15. If the Caucus passes the motion for the removal of Jefferson, the action will be taken to the floor for a full House vote.

Through their spokespersons, Lewis, Johnson and Rangel all declined to comment.

Conceding that some members have obviously defected, CBC Chairman Mel Watt (D-N.C.) vehemently defended the firmness of the CBC's position after the FBI raided Jefferson's congressional office two weeks ago, the first time in the nation's history that the executive branch has raided a legislative office.

"I think she is trying to refocus this," Watt says, referring to Pelosi. "This is for her, I guess - since we're out here - this is about divide



Civil Rights Icon Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) and other CBC members have assumed behind-the-scenes roles in getting Jefferson ousted from his coveted position on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Landrieu: Big Victory in Hurricane Funding Fight \$4.2 Billion Louisiana Housing Plan Fully Funded; *Significant Sums for Levees, Other Needs Also Included*

U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., a member of the conference committee negotiating the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill, announced this week that the final bill will make available the full \$4.2 billion needed to fund Louisiana's housing, infrastructure and economic

development rebuilding plan, and nearly \$4 billion in additional funds for levee repairs and reinforcement.

"The road to recovery led up a steep political hill, but today we made the climb," Sen. Landrieu said, reflecting on negotiations that extended well

past midnight last night and continued throughout the day Wednesday. "It was a tremendous victory for our state and for our delegation, whose united persistence proved essential to landing this vital funding for our housing plan and the critical levee

Continued on page xx.

City Enforces Residential Parking Permits In Uptown Area

The City of New Orleans, Department of Public Works, Parking Division will begin enforcing residential parking permits (RPP) in zones 1, 4, 6, 10 and 14 effective June 19, 2006.

Zone 1 represents the Coliseum Square area bounded by St. Charles, Jackson Avenue, Calliope, and the Mississippi River; Zone 4 represents the Tulane University area bounded by Broadway, Walnut Street, St. Charles Avenue, and Leake; Zone 6 represents the Newcomb College/Maple Street area bounded by St. Charles Avenue, Willow Street, Audubon Street, and Carrollton Avenue; Zone 10 represents the Audubon Park area bounded by State Street, Calhoun Street, St. Charles Avenue, and Willow Street; Zone 14 represents the Riverbend area which includes the 8100 and 8200 blocks of Freret, Burthe, and Maple Streets, and the 800, 900, and 1000 blocks of S. Carrollton, Dublin, and Dante Streets.

"Residential Parking Permit zones are designed to protect homeowners and tenants in neighborhoods with limited curbside parking. It helps identify abandoned vehicles, and prevents overflow parking from nearby commercial districts. We have attempted to contact existing permit holders over the past few weeks, but we know there are many new residents to these areas. We are encouraging residents to use these two weeks to renew their permits,"

said Robert Mendoza, Director of Public Works.

Residents requiring new RPP decals can apply at 400 N. Claiborne Avenue (side entrance) from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday. Citizens must present proper ID and Vehicle Registration. Residents new to these areas whose ID and Vehicle Registration are not with the RPP must also provide additional proof of residence (such as a lease or mortgage, or utility bill). RPP decals are \$15 per year (or \$5 per year with proof of student status).

Anyone with questions on Residential Parking Permits can call (504) 525-0088 or (504) 658-8100 for questions about enforcement.

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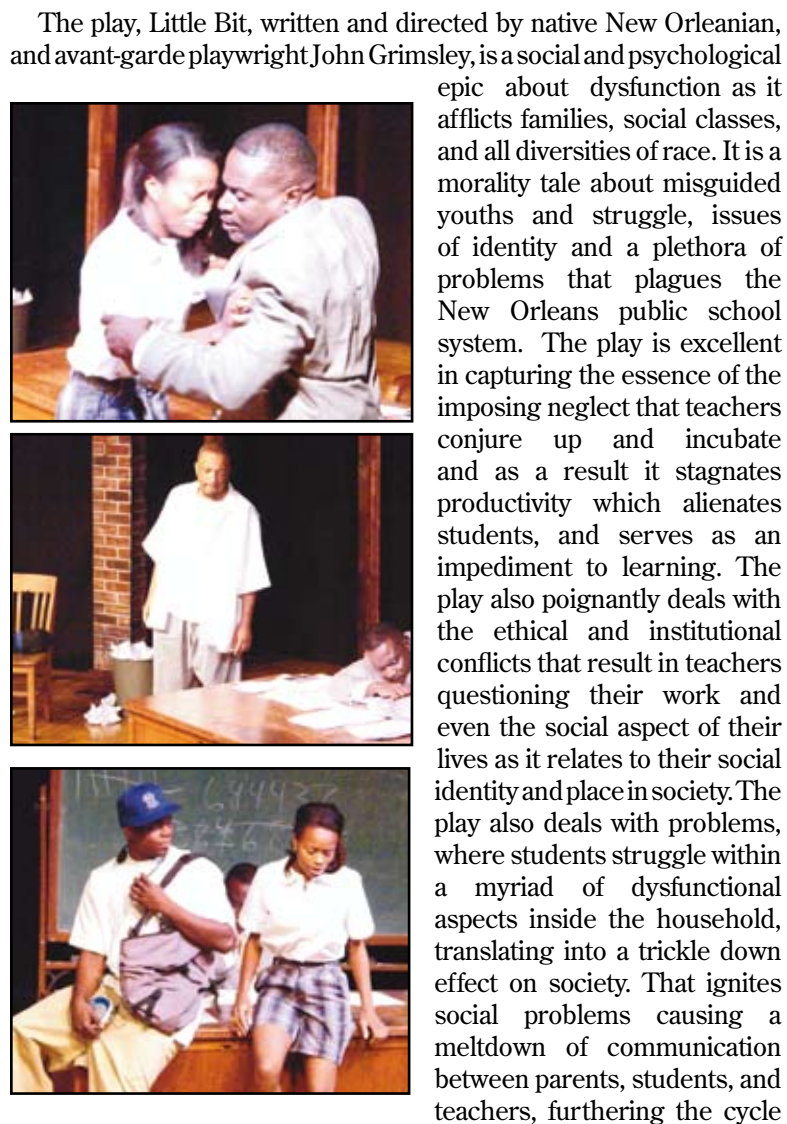
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DATA ZONE

A Little Bit of New Orleans

Story and Photos by: Glenn Summers



The play, *Little Bit*, written and directed by native New Orleanian, and avant-garde playwright John Grimsley, is a social and psychological epic about dysfunction as it afflicts families, social classes, and all diversities of race. It is a morality tale about misguided youths and struggle, issues of identity and a plethora of problems that plagues the New Orleans public school system. The play is excellent in capturing the essence of the imposing neglect that teachers conjure up and incubate and as a result it stagnates productivity which alienates students, and serves as an impediment to learning. The play also poignantly deals with the ethical and institutional conflicts that result in teachers questioning their work and even the social aspect of their lives as it relates to their social identity and place in society. The play also deals with problems, where students struggle within a myriad of dysfunctional aspects inside the household, translating into a trickle down effect on society. That ignites social problems causing a meltdown of communication between parents, students, and teachers, furthering the cycle

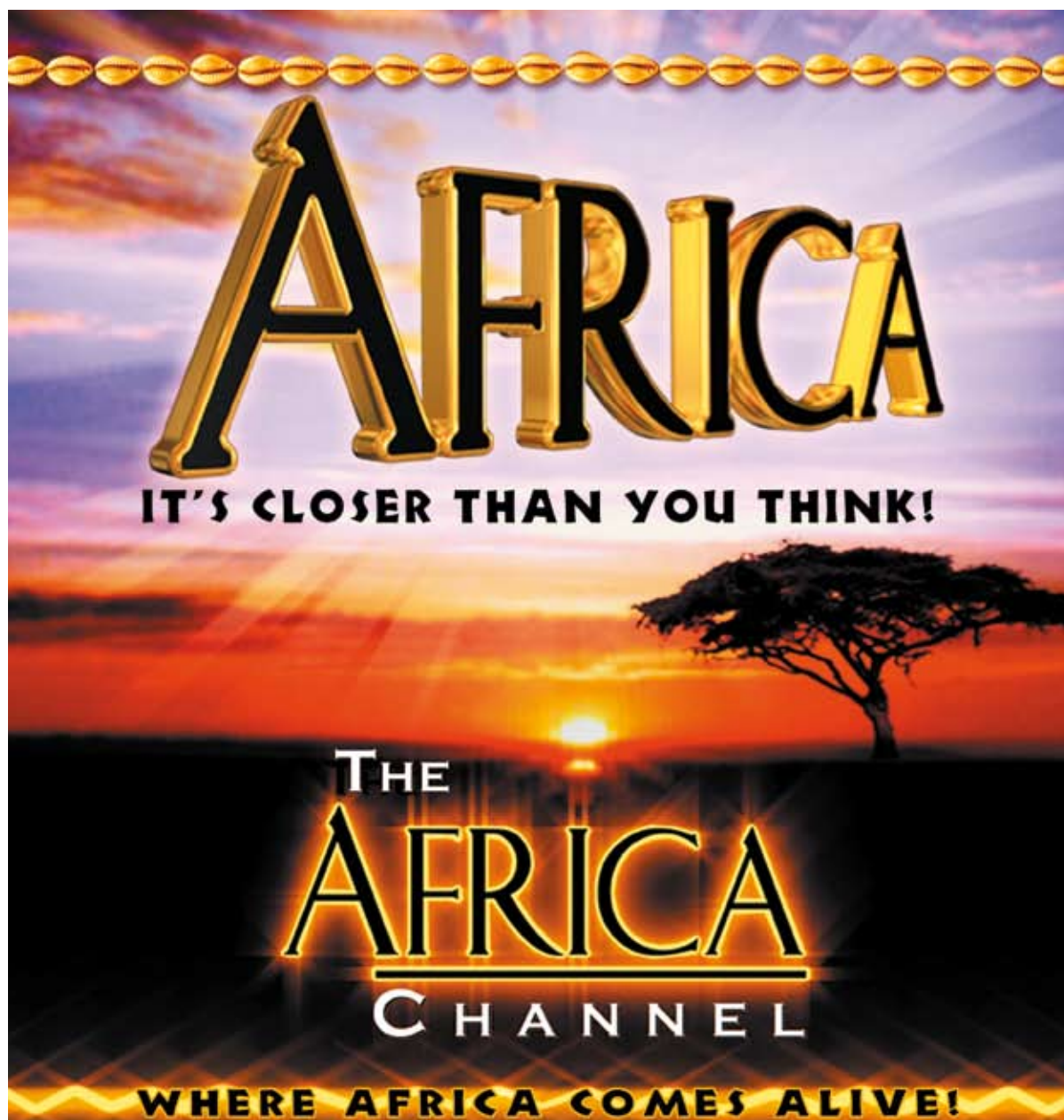
of apathy towards public education that continues to burden the city of New Orleans. This is more than simply a play, it is a psychological and sociological study of a system that has failed and its effects on the people who are its parts, parcels, and products.

The wonderful cast members are Anthony Bean who plays Mr. Hutchins; Cherie Teamer and Amber Wilkinson as Lilly Beth, Brittany James as Mama Gert; Leo Jones as Uncle T; Kenneth Brown jr. as Kaleb; Will Williams as Mr. Larry; Harold X Evans as Kamahu; Tony Felix and Antonius Prader as Jerome.

Little Bit is an experimental avant-garde theater, but innovation sometimes has its shortcomings: the play seems as though it was written and directed for cinema rather than for theater. Also some scenes moved too slow and were difficult to follow and would have been more effective on the silver screen, particularly some of the flashback scenes, while others lacked rhythm and flow, but overall most of the play resonated with the audience. Additionally, the script and some of the characters could have been better developed; I think with a little tweaking here and there this good play can become a great play. It gets a grade of A for doing something outside of the box, particularly for African-American Theater, and it is admirable that the director attempts to create something different and innovative.

John Grimsley's staging of the play is effective and well executed, bringing the audience into the set by incorporating a box shape arena style seating so that the audience has a more close and personal encounter with the characters. Finally, this is a play that is an honest, heartfelt, and intellectual depiction of life in New Orleans using the lens of the public school system to witness the lives of the people of the city that despite all its ugliness and flaws there is a tragic beauty that is New Orleans. A city of tourted souls, but they are survivors and they endure; John Grimsley's intimate portrait of the dilemma of these characters in *Little Bit* is a captivating exploration inside their world, and is a must see.

For information about show times go to www.anthonybeantheater.com or call 504-862-7529



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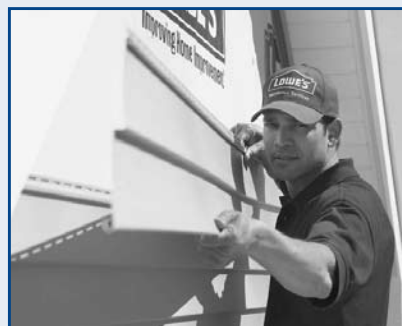
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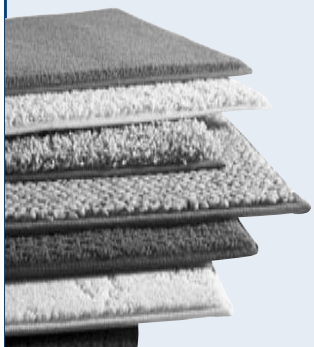
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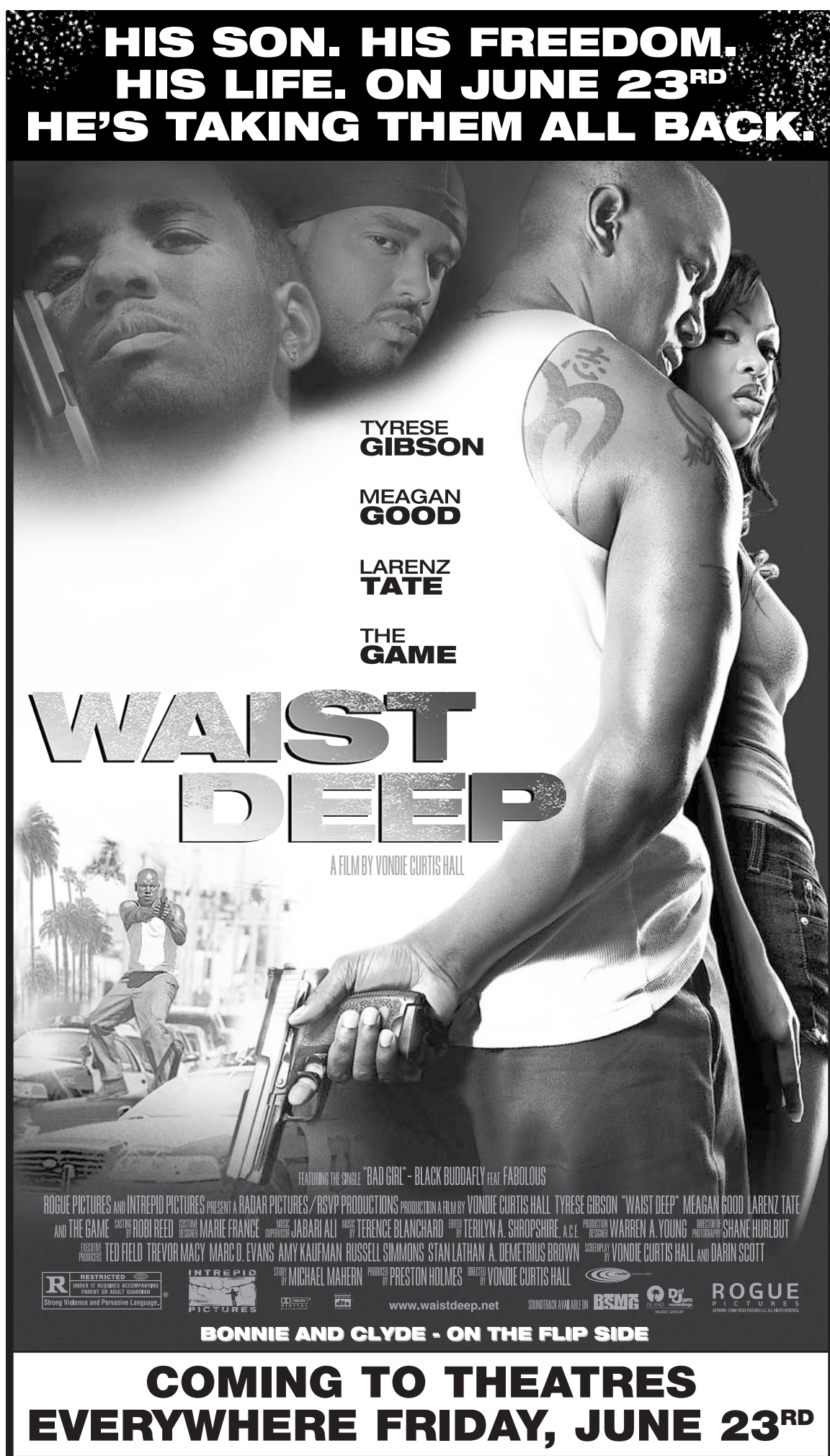
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DATA ZONE



Usher In New Orleans to Support Rebuilding

By: Skye Hofler

Grammy Award winning recording artist/actor Usher was in New Orleans vowing his support in the rebuilding of the region. He spoke to a capacity crowd at Xavier University kicking off his two-day tour of the city. This tour was facilitated by Louisiana State Representative Juan Lafonta. Usher spoke of his one year goal of placing 1000 families in new homes that were affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. He has vowed to achieve this goal through partnering with several corporate sponsors and the non-profit Project Restart.

Usher stood intently as survivors told their stories of courage and tragedy recounting how they weathered the storm. Some of these sad tales had members of the audience in tears. In the months following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; Usher has given of his time, talent, and resources in assisting the recovery effort. Last year he headlined the Project Restart concert in his home city of Atlanta Georgia with proceeds going toward providing service for survivors of the two deadly storms. Also through his own non-profit organization called Usher's New Look, he has already raised money that has aided many displaced residents from the gulf region that are presently living in the Greater Atlanta area.



NEWS

City Commercial and Residential Construction Permits Valued At \$1 Billion

Technology Streamlines Safety and Permits Department

Mayor C. Ray Nagin today acknowledged the work of the City's Department of Safety and Permits and Director Mike Centineo for issuing commercial and residential permits valued at more than 1 Billion dollars in construction rebuilding activity.

"We are very excited about the number of permits issued daily to our citizens so that they can start the process of rebuilding our neighborhoods.

This department has performed extremely well under adverse conditions, including a significant decrease in the number of employees due to Hurricane Katrina. This is a giant step for our citizens and for the revitalization of our City," said Mayor Nagin.

Post-Katrina, the Department of Safety and Permits has implemented leading edge technology solutions, such as online applications and self-service kiosks to streamline and accelerate the permitting process.

"We've issued more than 10 times the number of residential permits since September than were issued in all of 2004. Over the last 9 months, the Department of Safety and Permits has successfully issued what would normally take us up to 5 years. This is significant for all citizens of New Orleans and will assist residents in their rebuilding process," said Mike Centineo, director of Safety and Permits.

To date, approximately 70,000 permits have been issued to New Orleans Residents since September 1, 2005. The department is issuing permits 500 percent faster than pre-Katrina due to online and kiosk access.

Legislature Approves Smoking Ban in All La. Restaurants

BATON ROUGE, La. – The Legislature approved a ban Friday on smoking in all Louisiana restaurants, sending the proposal to Gov. Kathleen Blanco.

The governor has not said whether she will sign the measure, which won approval despite strong opposition from the state's restaurant industry. Restaurant owners had objected to exemptions in the bill that would still allow smoking in bars and casinos.

The Senate voted 30-4 to pass the bill, which was proposed by Sen. Rob Marionneaux of Livonia. The vote marked the approval of a change made by the House, which toughened the measure by removing a loophole that would have allowed smoking in restaurant bars that were walled off from the dining area.

Voting against passage were Sen. Robert Adley, D-Benton; Heulette "Clo" Fontenot, R-Livingston; Max Malone, R-Shreveport; and Ed Murray, D-New Orleans.

Absent or not voting were senators James David Cain, R-Dry Creek; Don Cravins, D-Opelousas; Noble Ellington, D-Winnaboro; Mike Michot, R-Lafayette; and Tom Schedler, R-Mandeville.

OPINION

Tearful Journey



Edwin Budgage
Data Columnist

In Douglas Brinkley's recent book about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, caused a stir during the election campaign receiving a firestorm of attention from the mainstream media. And while I question the motives of the publisher, the mainstream media, as well as the author there is something mentioned in his book that kept running across my mind. This one thing that kept sticking out was Mayor Nagin and his supposedly tearful episode during the hectic days following the storm, and the breaching of the levees.

This story went through the spin cycle for days during the election. The tone of it by many of the pundits made it seem that it was not prudent for a leader to shed tears during this crucial time. The city was in a state of desperation and anarchy was more the norm than the exception. People were struggling to survive.

My comment is if in fact this happened then he is in the majority. So many of us have shed tears during these past months, as we have seen our lives turned upside down, and ripped apart. And as I've traveled in different parts of the country and spoken with people some still cannot grasp the severity of what happened. Many have said to me, "Some people may have lost all their belongings, but those things can be reacquired." In response to those people I say the life of a New Orleanian is not about having material things. It's about enjoying and experiencing life. It's about family, food, fun and a multitude of things that

may not have any value in the marketplace, but is an essential part of the lives of the residents of the Crescent City. We love to live and celebrate life, and New Orleans for better or worse prior to Katrina had the richest poor people in the U.S. for our city had the enviable distinction as being one of the cultural jewels of this country.

Since I've re-entered the city I have been covering events which have affected many of our city's residents, and in lieu of that I have from a safe distance, possibly suppressed some of the emotional baggage I may have been carrying around with me since the aftermath of the storm. I would soon discover I had baggage, when it all came to a head on a recent Saturday as my brother Kevin Buggage and I were collecting, preserving and chronicling our family's history.

On a recent expedition we went inside the home of my grandmother, we entered the house we were greeted by a horrific smell. So much mold had grown along the walls you would think it was a new type of wallpaper. As we searched through the wreckage for remnants of our past, among the mountains of debris, we were looking for the hidden treasures which lay beneath the moldy shards that remained inside her home. We like so many New Orleanians merely wanted to see if there was something, even if it was just one thing, a faded out picture, a piece of clothing, or any type of artifacts that connected us to our past.

We eventually found something. My brother soon discovered photos of my family spanning six generations from my great-great grandmother, to our own children. Also the photo's showed so much of what the city was, in its timeless slightly aged facade, but still having a quaint type of splendor

serving as a backdrop for my grandmother's full life. In these photos were many things which were fixtures in New Orleans, the Second Line Parades, Mardi Gras Indians, poloroid pictures inside hole in the wall bars that are so ubiquitous in New Orleans, along with countless photos of family members during various stages of their lives.

As I stood there looking at some of the photos, I felt a stinging sensation in my eyes, I felt the tears welling up filling my eyes that I could no longer hold back. While they streamed down my cheeks, the reality finally set in my life would never be the same. My family and friends like so many affected by the storm are scattered across the country. And in that moment of eerie silence I thought of a city that was so full of life, which now lays in a ruinous state. It is a sort of no man's land that feels like a ghost town. I thought how it was a place filled with camaraderie and an esprit de corps that spanned generations.

Suddenly, I saw a single sole sitting on a stoop, It was Arnold Jackson, who had witnessed me growing up and is now nearing his twilight years. I went over and we reminisced, and in his face I saw what so many residents are feeling, the distress in seeing everything you worked for gone. He sat outside the hollow shell that is his modest home, empty and presently uninhabitable. I thought about the two of us among the wreckage and it felt surreal. It was like something from a science fiction movie, but yet it was real. As I walked away, I thought about my city and the culture and the people that made up this great city and how it stands today as an unfamiliar and lonely place. And on this day, after nine months, finally I reflected on my past, present and future life in New Orleans, and uncontrollably, I wept.

New Orleans
DATA
News Weekly

COMMENTARY

The Art of Marriage



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

Succeeding in marriage is an art and a great marriage is the artistic creation of two people who will settle for nothing less. One of the tragic realities about life in modern civilization is that too many people either do not understand or are unwilling to accept this reality about the ancient cultural construct which forms the very foundation of civilization.

That a happy fulfilling marriage is an intentional achievement escapes all to many who mistakenly believe that everything will come naturally once vows are given and received. Nothing is further from the truth as much of succeeding in marriage involves denying what comes "naturally".

Just as clothing is an adaptation to changing climate, and language is an extension of primal mating and danger calls, much of what we humans do as "civilized" creatures is "unnatural", different from what we would do if left as babies to grow and develop as wild creatures in a wild environment. As we have created larger and larger societies, our individual success and survival is less and less dependent on us following "natural" paths and more and more dependent on following paths defined by cultures, customs and rules that make our individual lives fit and work within the "civilized" (highly coordinated and very interdependent) world we have created for ourselves over the millennia.

While in a "natural" state the larger stronger male could and would force himself sexually on smaller weaker females and thereby insure reproductive success by brute force, such behavior is now called "rape"

and is considered criminal and punishable (sometimes by death) in most parts of the world. In the same light, men who would physically attack and kill or injure other men as competitors for sex with a particular woman would also find themselves incarcerated or running as fugitives.

Some believe and I agree that what we call "civilization" is only possible because men have been able to overcome and control such "natural" tendencies to physically compete for the opportunity to mate, and marriage is the cultural device that allowed that to happen. For in its crudest form marriage was the agreement among men not to fight over women and as soon as that happened, men could find common ground and cooperate. At that point human beings could build more and bigger than one family could create and could also organize and cooperate to protect and maintain a village, then cities and states and then nations. Now as civilized human beings, fighting between individual men is outlawed, except as sport, and fighting between organized cooperating groups of men is called war.

Once established marriage not only made civilization possible, but made it more productive by stabilizing and increasing the resources available to children. Well cared for and well trained children are the survival mechanism for any civilization and it may be this aspect of society that is most threatened by the growing lack of skill in and commitment to the art of marriage. To the extent that marriage is ignored or fails the legs are pulled out from under civilization and the results are evident today, babies having babies, criminals who for the most part are boys who became men without the benefit of a father in their lives, and young people who have never been exposed to how a successful marriage works, thereby having little opportunity for successful family living.

A decade and a half ago I refocused my community effort into what has become my "love

doctor" persona, beginning with a weekly column about love and family relationships with the same name, then a radio show with the same name and most recently as the "love doctor" on access television. After years of trying to fix teen pregnancy and youth crime by working with "at risk" teens and young criminals, I finally understood that what I was trying to do was like correcting a leaky pipe with a sump pump to remove the puddle of water, instead of repairing the pipe.

So here we are with what I have learned from my own happy marriage of thirty five years and what I have observed about and been told about good and bad marriages of friends and family. For whatever reason, people have opened up to me over the years, especially the last fifteen as the "love doctor" of New Orleans, and now I bring this collective experience to those who need access to techniques for successful family living. The Art of Marriage will be to the point, easy to read and totally based on real life examples, all in an effort to help those who want to be happily married navigate the complexities and nuances of playing parts in the duet of life that we call marriage.

It is my hope that in helping individuals "fix" their marriages and begin to enjoy married life, that future generations will be healed as the art of marriage is easily passed from happily married couples to their children who learn from lifetimes spent observing how their parents successfully deal with one another. More stable families mean a more stable, more productive and less dangerous and crime ridden world, so in the final analysis, the art of marriage is also the art of peace and prosperity in a civilized world.

Good luck and God bless you. I hope you enjoy my new book and hope it plays some small part in your enjoyment of a successful marriage.

For more from the "Love Doctor" of New Orleans, visit LLOYDDENNIS.COM

Talk Back!

Data News Weekly wants to know what you think!

Each week, Data News Weekly brings you the information we think you want to know. In an effort to better reflect the thoughts of the community, we are offering you Talk Back. Take this opportunity to let your community, government officials and our editor know what your opinions are on the subject. Selected submissions will be published in the Data News Weekly Talk Back section and a compilation version will be sent to the candidates for Mayor for the City of New Orleans.

This week's question:

**Is the August 29
Deadline to declare
your intentions
to Return to New
Orleans Enough
Time? If not, how
much time do you
think is enough?**

Send your comments to:

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For more of their story, as well as reasons to grow your business, visit LouisianaForward.com/roll.

NEWS

Continued from page 7.



U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., announced this week that the final bill will make available the full \$4.2 billion needed to fund rebuilding plans, and nearly \$4 billion in additional funds for levee repairs and reinforcement.

throughout the day Wednesday. "It was a tremendous victory for our state and for our delegation, whose united persistence proved essential to landing this vital funding for our housing plan and the critical levee protection our state needs."

Sen. Landrieu also announced that significant funding will be included to rebuild the Veterans Hospital in New Orleans; provide grants to hurricane-affected elementary and secondary schools and colleges and universities; fund historic preservation in the region; pilot alternative housing plans; and assist farmers and fishers adversely impacted by the storms.

"I am particularly grateful to Chairman Cochran and Senator Byrd, without whose leadership we would not have been able to end the conference on such a high note," Sen. Landrieu said. "Gulf Coast Recovery Coordinator Don Powell also really stepped up and fought for this funding, bringing his significant influence to bear."

Sen. Landrieu said the final conference report is expected to include:

- \$5.2 billion in Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs), with \$4.2 billion available to fund Louisiana's housing recovery program;
- \$3.7 billion in funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair and armor hurricane protection levees in southeast Louisiana, relocate flood pumps to the Lake Pontchartrain waterfront, and begin critical wetlands restoration work;
- \$550 million for the reconstruction of the Veterans Administration (VA) hospital

in New Orleans, and \$142.3 million for repairs at the Louisiana National Guard's Jackson Barracks;

- \$400 million for the establishment of alternative housing pilot programs, which may help displaced Louisianians rebuild at a lower cost and identify more practical housing solutions for future hurricanes; (This funding could be used to pilot the use of so-called "Katrina cottages," for example.)
- \$235 million in grants to hurricane-affected elementary and secondary schools along the Gulf Coast, and \$50 million in grants to colleges and universities;
- \$409 million in agriculture assistance and \$118 million for fisheries recovery;
- \$40 million in grants for historic preservation, up from only \$3 million in the President's request;
- \$25 million for Rural Development Community facility grants; and
- \$16 million for Job Corps Center reconstruction.

*No funding included in the President's original request.

In total, Louisiana stands to receive in the bill between \$9 and \$10 billion in additional hurricane recovery funds, marking a nearly 50 percent increase over the original request transmitted to Congress. Negotiators were still working out final details on the legislation Wednesday night, and hope to present it for final passage in each chamber of Congress by the end of the week.

By Whitney James Special to the NNPA from the Baltimore Afro

BALTIMORE (NNPA) —It is not every day that we pay tribute to those who have had a huge role in African-American history. However, on June 6, Maryland unveiled a special tribute to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall at the newly-renamed Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

"This is a great day for Maryland as we proudly celebrate the life and the accomplishments of one of our state's greatest icons," said Gov. Robert Ehrlich Jr. "I am proud, as well as, Marylanders should be, that the airport has put together this permanent tribute to celebrate and help educate generations of visitors about his life."

The exhibit, located at the center of the airport terminal, displays the many events of Marshall's life. It includes a

bust, compliments of Maryland artist Toby Mendez; more than 60 photographs and images and allows viewers to actually hear Marshall argue a case before the Supreme Court. The exhibit is so intricate that it even displays the origin of the name Thurgood.

Larry S. Gibson, professor of law at the University of Maryland School of Law, an authority on the history of African-Americans in the legal profession in Maryland whose research and advocacy made this tribute possible, said he was pleased by the location of the exhibit in such a prominent position.

"It is not off in a corner," he said. "No, it is right here front and center so that daily hundreds of travelers will learn about Thurgood Marshall and his contributions to our nation."

Gibson said he continues to be amazed by the cooperation he received from officials, legislators, media outlets, sponsors and other supporters in making this dream a reality.



June 6, The State of Maryland unveiled a special tribute to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall at the newly-renamed Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

"Many things that would be fitting and worthwhile never actually come to fruition," he said.

But thankfully, he said, the state recognized the importance of paying tribute to the life of a man who, in the words of Sen. Patrick Moynihan, "contributed more to the quality of American life and the integrity of jurisprudence" than any other.

Continued from page 4.

and conquer, as it always is, rather than about the substance of what is being proposed. And you know, I'm trying to talk about the substance of what they're proposing to do and the truth of the matter is there is no precedent for that."

Watt continues, "We are neither condoning, nor forgiving anything. All we're trying to do is have a consistent set of rules that will apply to everybody so that we can go home and articulate what the standards are. I'd be just as concerned if he was a none-CBC member."

Democrats have much at stake this election year. To win at least 15 House seats, a simple majority, could mean historic committee chairmanships for several members of the CBC, including Rangel, who would likely chair Ways and Means.

Jefferson says the eagerness for that power is one of the reasons behind the move to oust him.

"Nancy is overcome by this desire to be speaker so much until she's getting close to losing her soul over these matters," Jefferson says in an interview with the NNPA News Service. "Whatever she thinks is going

to help to get there, she's just stepping over it to get there."

Pelosi insists that her only motive is to uphold high ethical standards for the House. She says she has joined in Jefferson's federal suit requesting his papers back from the FBI. President Bush has temporarily sealed the documents.

But Jefferson says the only fair way to oust him from the committee would be if the House would conduct its own investigation and find wrongdoing.

"There's been no investigation by the House or by Nancy. She's basing her conclusions on news reports and collected pieces of information. We have an ethics process around here that should be under way that could take testimony and look at issues that decide them according to ethical rules and due process," Jefferson explains. "That's what you would expect of the highest deliberative body in the world. That's certainly what you would expect from Democrats who always tout themselves as the champions of fairness and non-discrimination."

For Pelosi and some others, the evidence reported by the FBI appears to be damaging enough,

including admissions by former staff and business associates that they assisted in bribing the Congressman and \$90,000 in marked bills found in his home freezer.

"Giving him the benefit of the doubt for a long time, our Caucus had chosen not to take any action," Pelosi says. "Then, it became clear that perhaps for temporary arrangements anyway, Mr. Jefferson should step off the Ways and Means Committee, deal with his issues, then come back with his full seniority in tack. Every step of the way we were trying to be protective of Mr. Jefferson's rights."

Watt is not persuaded.

"We need a standard. That's what this is about. It's not about whether Bill Jefferson is guilty or innocent. It's about the fact that there is no historic precedent," he says. "There is no existing rule in fairness regarding a consistent rule that everybody knows will be applied to everybody in the same circumstance...If you don't have that, then the majority will always make up the rules as they go along."

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