

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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Mardi Gras Parade Schedules

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February 10, 2007 40th Year Volume 36 www.ladatanews.com

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COVER STORY

Black to the Future:

African-Americans' efforts to build on a glorious past

By: Eddie Francis

It is another Black History Month; and speakers, historians and other noted community figures are gearing up address pockets of black folks across America. Churches, schools and community centers all over the country will reverberate with spirited renditions of old Negro spirituals, Martin Luther King, Jr. speeches and other staples of the African-American historical diet.

Black History Month 2007 has delivered a "twofer" to Black America. While African-Americans begin to celebrate one of the most recognized heritages in the history of the world, the biggest sports event of the year featured two African-American coaches for the first time. The bonus is that Tony Dungy's Indianapolis Colts will square off against a Chicago Bears team whose coach once worked under Dungy—Lovie Smith. This year seems to be an especially good time to be an African-American. Despite the major Pop Culture success of Dungy and Smith there are those who agree that there is much more to accomplish in Black America than having two black coaches featured in Super Bowl XLI.

Today's African-American is faced with the daunting task of honoring his or her history while battling the racial inequities often not visible to the common eye. In 21st Century America, African-Americans no longer have the pain of dealing with segregated water

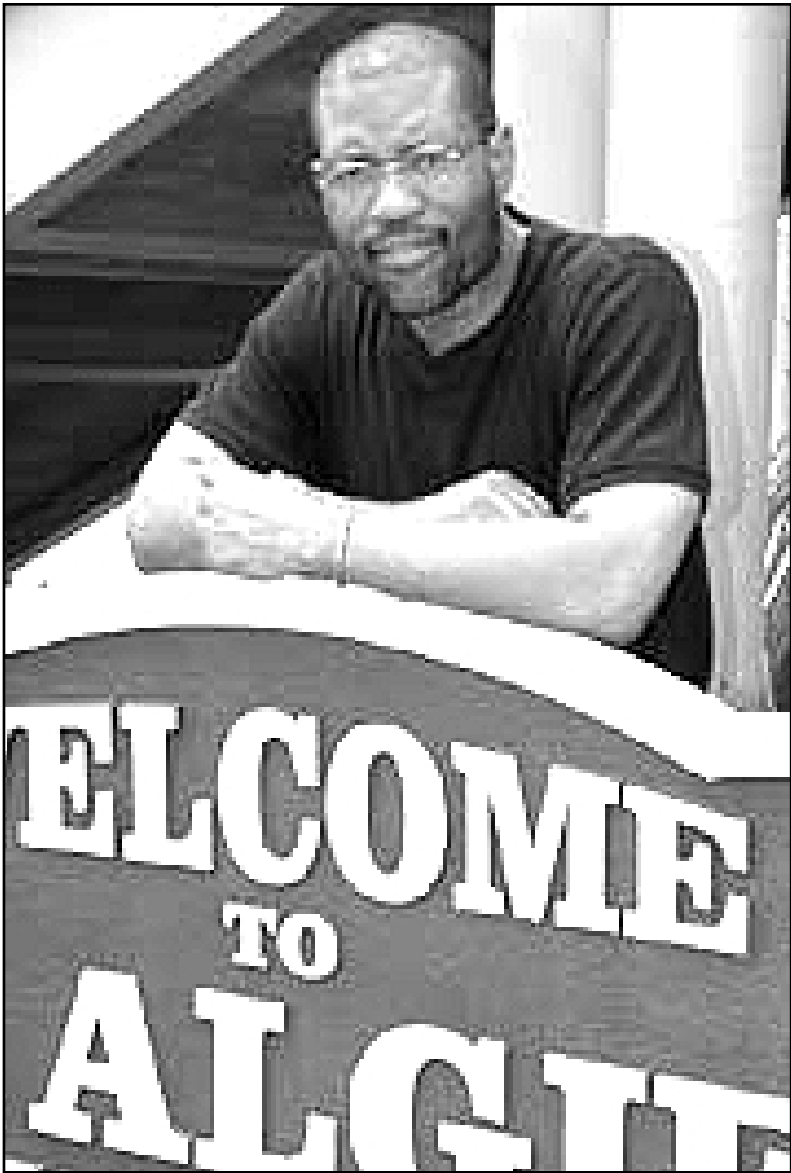
fountains, restaurants, restrooms and the like. Therefore, the fight is not the same. Whereas protests were once a surefire way to affect change, they are now looked at with cynicism by the descendants and beneficiaries of Civil Rights warriors.

Relevance

Perhaps the most argued point of African-American history is whether or not the current generation truly understands it relevance. Dr. Dorothy Smith, a professor of African History at Dillard University, lived the Civil Rights Movement. While she was a student at the Freedom School in McComb, Mississippi, she saw Malcolm X speak. She definitely feels that today's student needs a better understanding of the significance of African-Americans' achievements.

"As a teacher I'm far more radical than you are," she tells her students. Dr. Smith explains that she comes from a time that has taught her to question the issues put forth by mainstream society. She is concerned that today's youngster takes too much at face value. "For many of them, if it is written it is gospel," laments the professor.

That circumstance presents a quandary for Black America. Because African-American leaders achieved so much in the 20th Century, Black America has more opportunities. The irony is that more access to opportunities has created a generation of young African-Americans who are more trusting.



Local radio personality and author Hal Clark.

Continued next page.

On our Cover...
A few of our distinguished ancestors,
(l-r) Frederick Douglas, Mahalia Jackson,
Shirley Chisolm, Carter G. Woodson



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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call (404) 223-5958 for subscription information.
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing
or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

COVER STORY

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Trust is a good thing except when it comes to reading between the lines.

Dr. Smith believes that the key to progress in Black America is for adults to expose young people to several angles of every issue. "They should read books that are

through additional sources such as "Sunday Journal" on WYLD FM and endless web sites.

Created specifically to address issues in New Orleans' black community "Sunday Journal" has been an important part of the Crescent City's black information network. "Sunday Journal's" current host, Hal Clark, insists that black media has to do more to keep the progress of Black America in the front of listeners', viewers' and Internet users' minds.

"I believe it's imperative that black media promote Black History Month all year long," says Clark. He says that it is the responsibility of black media outlets

diametrically opposed," says Dr. Smith. She feels that is one way more young African-Americans will recognize institutional racism, namely in the critical areas of public education, housing and job equity for African-Americans. Dr. Smith maintains that the name of the game is still equality; therefore, Black America's strategies to gain equality must change.

This Is Not a Test

One of the major forces in uniting Black America throughout the 20th Century had been the maturation of black media. In lieu of Frederick Douglass's North Star African-American media had been nothing new but black voices in several avenues of media grew by leaps and bounds during the Civil Rights Movement.

The importance of black representation in the media had certainly been realized in New Orleans. Aside from three print publications, including Data News, black New Orleanians have been able to take in issues from the African-American perspective

to continue to introduce their audiences to black history facts and personalities. Like Dr. Smith, Clark believes that there has to be a balance in the information that people consume. In his case Clark looks for influential figures from both the past and present in order to provide that balance of views and accomplishments.

Clark, however, seeks to do that which is viewed as impractical nowadays. Commercial radio, in particular, tends to let its content be dictated by its audience. Clark says, "We should . . . make these facts come to life by encouraging our audiences to adopt and practice the principals that these accomplished individuals stood for."

Expressing Change

A major creative barometer of the trends of African-American history has been the music. Perhaps there is no lightning rod in the issue of African-American expression like the music of the late 20th Century. Where black music of the early to late 20th

Century is commonly regarded as the voice of a proud people, music since the '80's has been criticized for its lack of depth.

Lebron Joseph of "Old School 102.9" knows about these trends first hand. Although he is known for his work with "Old School

1970's black elected officials have reflected the tenacity of those citizens who followed through on the struggle for representation in local, state and the federal governments. However, black elected officials have been criticized in recent years for

of past leaders while constructing a progressive political paradigm in the need of black leadership. Senator Shepherd made history in Louisiana by becoming the first black state senator from Jefferson Parish and also through his work to push a bill for the State of Louisiana to recognize Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Whereas the role of the black elected official has traditionally been viewed as giving voice to underrepresented black folks, Senator Shepherd feels that the role of the black elected official has changed. "I feel that it is now our jobs to be the best elected official as opposed to (being recognized as) the first black elected official," says the senator. Like all African-American leaders in his position, Senator Shepherd shows reverence for the work of those who have come before him such as Avery Alexander and "Dutch" Morial. He continues, "We have to look at things from a global perspective so that we enfranchise all people. Vote for me not because I'm black but because I'm the best."

I feel that it is now
our jobs to be the
best elected official
as opposed to (being
recognized as) the first
black elected official

Joseph once worked at Hip Hop and R and B powerhouse, "Q93". A child of Soul Music from the '60's and '70's, Joseph has seen an attempt to return to music that positively expresses the motivating and progressive spirit of African-Americans.

Joseph introduced New Orleans to the Neo-Soul genre as a program director at WYLD FM. While local black radio basked in the rapture of the "Gangsta Rap" genre, Joseph took the initiative to serve those listeners who longed to hear the positive expression of Black America's spirit. Still he has been stuck with the difficult position of having to "give the people what they want."

"(Black music has) continued to make some pretty good stuff, and ironically some of it gets airplay. But on the whole most of the stuff has been garbage." Joseph points out that some of current artists who he feels have been positive influences include the likes of India.Arie, Outkast, John Legend and Mary J. Blige. At the same time Soul Music artists have made a comeback through tours and guest appearances on guest artists' projects. While their original fans have rejoiced their resurgence, new fans have used their music to make assessments of Black America's collective consciousness.

Building a New Army

While music has served as an indicator of African-Americans' hopes and dreams, Black America put its collective set of emotions to practical use by empowering elected officials. Ever since the

merely riding the coat tails of those who represented Black America's new found influence.

Senator Derrick Shepherd is one of scores of black elected officials, who sees the need to recognize the accomplishments

Senator Landrieu Celebrates Black History Month



From citizens quietly working each day to make a living and raise their families, to world-renowned religious, business, political and entertainment leaders, the contributions of African Americans to our city and state have been enormous in every way.

This legacy inspires us to do even greater things with our future. As we rebuild our great state and city from the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we join together in a new spirit of community, hope and renewal.

Senator
MARY LANDRIEU
Fighting for Louisiana

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Popular morning show host Lebron "LBJ" of KMEZ Old School 102.9 FM



Derrick Shepherd

NEWSMAKER

Spike Lee: Letting the voice of New Orleans be heard



Filmmaker Spike Lee and Dr. Calvin Mackie, PhD.

By: Edwin Buggage
Photos by Avery T. Brewton and Glenn Jones

An unidentified group of excited people shouted loudly, “Spike Lee, We love you!” from behind the tall bookshelves in the Barnes & Nobles West bank location. Hundreds of supportive fans toting Spike Lee books or movies stood and waited patiently to meet their beloved

filmmaker throughout the maze of books and dividers fashioned to accommodate the large crowd that even spilled out into the parking lot. The three-tiered line was abuzz with a multitude of conversations many centered on favorite scenes and quotes from When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts, personal accounts of rebuilding homes and maintaining sanity through the

stress, and proclamations of what would be said to Spike Lee when the opportunity was afforded to approach the signing table. New Orleanians have perfected the fine art of waiting in line for services, information, money, and help. It is the new place to be; a social gathering to check in with loved ones, make friends, and network. This line was no different. It was clear that upon arriving Lee was in the mood to meet and greet his fans and to continue to listen to their stories. “You don’t have to buy anything to get my signature... Lets get this party started and have a good time!” Spike laughed and joked with admirers asking for a hug, picture or signature. Lee believed this was his best project yet. “The response to this project has been very positive; people from all over are showing me lots of love. This project [When the Levees Broke] really moved people.” Nanette Matthews, native New Orleanian of the upper ninth ward, agreed. “Lee did an excellent job of telling what really happened.” Although Matthews really identified with the wrenching stories of pain and loss, after losing a brother who lived in the lower ninth ward, she believed the movie was well balanced with many comical antedotes that was characteristically New Orleans and the contagious music that has drawn many New Orleanians and many others back to the Crescent City. “I’m not a politician, I am a filmmaker. A storyteller.” Spike Lee declares to the media during a very brief meeting that occurred before he began signing an array of past films that depict the harsh truths of an unaccountable government system, the many rich contradictions of the human condition, and the resiliency of a marginalized sector of society. He may refute the

title of politician but he stood very comfortable in his position as a leader with conviction, and a man with great vision, respect, and compassion for those who survived the storm and are now fighting to rebuild their lives. His words along with his laid back demeanor spoke volumes about his opinion about the gulf coast’s snail pace recovery and our nation’s highest leader unfulfilled promises to “make New Orleans the greatest recovery in the history

needs. The Center is charged with training many of the mental healthcare professionals coming into the city, and will be using this film for background information for their program initiative. Lee’s second installment of the series will focus on the slow progress of the recovery effort and the stories of victims from all over the Gulf Coast. Lee was adamant about the fact that New Orleans was not back in full effect. He even believed the New Orleans



Local fans lined up for hours outside the book store prior to start of the event for the chance to greet Lee

of America.” He discounts Bush’s promises made in Jackson Square in the wake of the storm. Lee says President Bush has made it clear to the suffering people across the Gulf Coast, through his deafening silence about rebuilding efforts in his recent state of the nation speech, that they are on their own. Native New Orleanian and visual artist, Frank Lewis III, disagrees wholeheartedly with the idea that New Orleanians are on their own. Lewis insists When the Levees broke coupled with Lee’s commitment to seeing the ending of this story keeps New Orleans on the radar of the world’s consciousness. Tina Linden and Anthem Wingate of The Center for Mind- Body Medicine in Washington DC agree. Both have been visiting New Orleans since February 2006 surveying the mental health of the city and assessing their

Saints football team’s phenomenal season may lead outsiders to think because the Saints were winning and the Superdome was restored that New Orleans as a whole was back. Though that is definitely not true, the spirit and hope for a better city is here. Despite the 17 murders that have occurred in the first month of the New Year, the majority of New Orleanians are focused on bringing the life back to the many vacant neighborhoods. Overall, Spike Lee has essentially received the blessing of this crowd many because he allowed them to tell their own story. Stories that speak of a negligent and inept government and a long history of corruption. The dirty laundry has been aired for the world to see, and many of this city’s citizens feel that this is the first step toward progress.

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When I go to school I remember the woman who started a college with \$5 and a dream.

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Application period for nonprofit organizations is **February 12 through March 22.**

For more information on the Small Rental Property program or to request an application:

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*Owners of three- or four-unit properties who lived in one unit and rented out the other two or three units are strongly urged to apply.

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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

We should emphasize not
Negro History,
but the Negro in history.
What we need is not a history of
selected races or nations,
but the history of the world
void of national bias, race hate,
and religious prejudice.

-- Carter Woodson
on founding Negro History Week, 1926



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Katrina/New Orleans
Recovery Drama In Effect:
*City's Black Businesses and Middle
Class Cite Neglect From Govt. &
Corporate America*



New Orleans Realtor Danette O'Neal, surrounded by supporters at recent press conference.

photo by: Glenn Summers

BlackEurweb.com NEW ORLEANS - A consortium of small business leaders in New Orleans are demanding an end to the relentless strong arm tactics being levied against them by some of America's biggest corporations.

During a recent gathering in support of local realtor Danette O'Neal's ongoing lawsuit with mortgage giant Coldwell Banker, elected officials, the NAACP and other prominent business people charged both the government and corporate America with creating barriers that have severely crippled their ability to reestablish their business in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

More than a year after the storm, recovery efforts for most of the city's small business community have been swallowed by a confluence of debt and bureaucratic red tape.

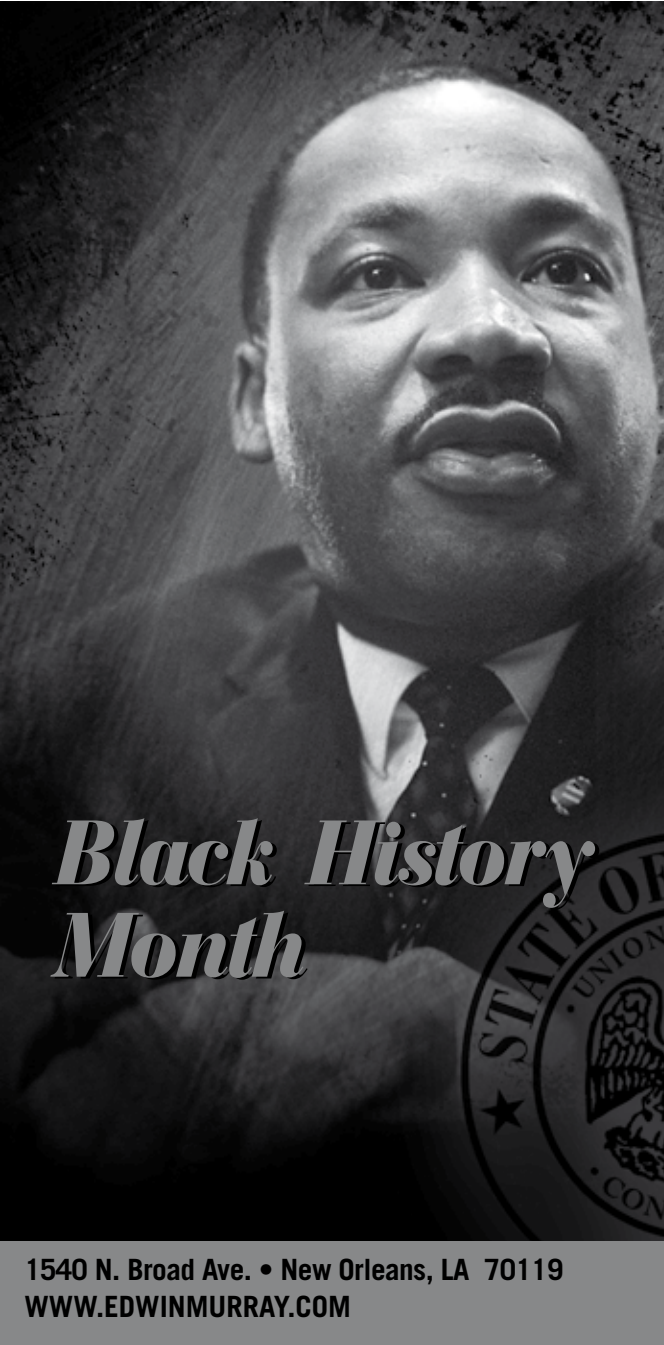
Bankruptcy filings have reached historic highs amongst the middle income class and the small business community, which has severely hampered New Orleans recovery.

Now more than 17 months after Katrina, entrepreneurs and homeowners are saying enough is enough and want to know why help is not forthcoming.

"We are not seeking a hand out, but a hand up," says Belinda Little-Wood of 10th Capital Small Business Advisors. "There is a nationwide lack of recognition of the challenges facing these companies from draconian insurance premiums to corporate owners who don't understand the market in New Orleans. Businesses aren't starting from zero; they're starting in the hole" and from the Small Business Administration to other agencies and programs, help is simply not coming fast enough," Little-Wood said.

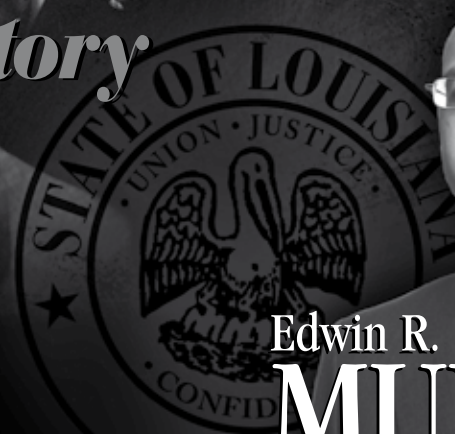
The Louisiana Chapter of the NAACP has also joined the growing nationwide outcry around Danette O'Neal and New Orleans recovery efforts. Chapter president Traci Washington announced that if it came to it, she would ask the national leadership of the NAACP to ask members to boycott Coldwell Banker franchises.

"The NAACP 100 years fighting Goliaths, and we're pretty good fighting some bullies," she said. Her sentiments were echoed by State Rep. Cedric Richmond who added that "if the NAACP says, 'Don't buy Coldwell Banker,' there won't be no buying... You can't mess with one of us without messing with all of us."



His Dream Lives On.

Black History Month



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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Louisiana Road Home Launches New Program to Assist Owners of Rental Properties

By: Edwin Buggage

The Louisiana Road Home Program recently launched a program aimed at the repairing, rebuilding, and putting back into commerce an estimated 82,000 rental housing units damaged by hurricane Katrina across the state of Louisiana. The owners of small rental properties are now able to apply for financial incentives which are aimed at helping to rehabilitate their properties. The program's Director Vanessa Brower announced its launch on January 29, 2007 and said the initial round for accepting applications will run through March 15, 2007 with ensuing rounds to follow. The program is designed as a multiyear program.

The program has been funded by a block grant provided by the United States Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be used by the Louisiana Office of Community Development (OCD). The amount allocated for the program is eight-hundred and sixty-nine million dollars with nearly five hundred seventy-eight million dollars allotted to assisted rental property owners in Orleans Parish.

In recent months many critics have voiced concerns over issues such as affordable housing; this program according to its director Vanessa Brower has incentives in place that may help to provide more affordable housing units for present and returning citizens of New Orleans, "The program is designed as an incentive program, so if a property owner is willing to provide affordable rent they would get the largest amount of incentive, also the program will forgive the loan amount if the property owner agrees to keep

rents at an affordable rate for ten years."

The program also has other added incentives for those who provide housing for the elderly, or those who are affiliated with non-profit organizations. The program has set aside 10 million dollars in the first round of applications to assist those non-profits who house persons with special needs, which includes people with disabilities, the elderly, homeless families, or those who house at risk youth. As an additional incentive all persons who agree to provide housing for special needs persons will receive an additional fifteen percent bonus in the amount of their award for the usage of these units.

Brower, who is optimistic about the implementation and moving forward of this program says that while the amount allocated is a great amount it will only cover approximately 18,000 of the estimated 82,000 damaged units across the state. This coupled with other concerns about how will neighborhoods and /or properties figure into what those municipalities have in mind for those areas. Director Brower says it has some affects on the implementation of program and how and who applies, but encourages everyone who is eligible to apply, "We have invited the neighborhood plans in the parishes that have rebuilding plans, and the LRA has invited jurisdictions to participate in the program and to provide us with information about priority areas so we can do a better job of serving applicants." To apply to the program or get specific information and eligibility requirements go to their website: www.road2la.org or call 1-888-762-3252.

Mayor Nagin Continues ONE NEW ORLEANS Community meetings in 2007

(NEW ORLEANS, LA) January 31, 2007 -Mayor C. Ray Nagin continues his One New Orleans Conversations this year with citizens to discuss the status of

the city's recovery, as well as, listen to citizens' concerns on various issues.

This afternoon, Mayor Nagin held his 9th community

conversation with The Metro New Orleans Student Leadership Council which consists of 50 high school students from different schools around New Orleans to

Continued page 15.



Chicago, 1893

Black doctor performs first successful heart operation.



North Pole, 1909

A black man is on top of the world.



Harlem, 1920's

An American Renaissance.



Tuskegee, 1941

Pilots prove heroism has no color.



Brooklyn, 1947

Baseball shows us courage, its #42.



Montgomery, 1955

Woman remains seated. And stands for justice.



DC, 1963

A man inspires a nation to dream together.



Celebrates Black History

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DATA ZONE

WELCOME TO THE MARDI GRAS

Dear Mardi Gras Revelers,

As Mayor of New Orleans, I want to wish you a happy and safe Carnival season.

The French settlers of New Orleans brought with them the tradition of celebrating Mardi Gras. Fat Tuesday is one final chance to indulge before the sacrifices that come with Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent.

In the mid-1700, New Orleans Creoles celebrated carnival at masked balls. One hundred years later, the first organized carnival krewes began parading on the streets of New Orleans. That tradition has been going strong for more than 150 years.

I'm sure you will discover when the marching bands kick in you won't be able to keep your feet still. When float riders taunt you with beads you will be screaming 'Throw me something, Mister.'

Mardi Gras is just one of the many traditions that have contributed to the romance and lore of New Orleans. I hope you have a chance to visit New Orleans, to see our city and to taste our unique cultural heritage. On Mardi Gras day, New Orleans puts its lust for life on parade. But you will also find that every day is cause for celebration in a city that is imbued with the Carnival spirit.

Sincerely,

C. Ray Nagin

Mayor of New Orleans

Mardi Gras Parade Schedule

This 2007 parade schedule is subject to change pending the City of New Orleans Official determination of the exact dates and times of Mardi Gras 2007.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19
Pontchartrain Noon	Hermes 5:45 pm	Proteus 5:15 pm
Shangri-La follows Pontchartrain	D'Etat 6:30 pm	Orpheus 5:45 pm
Pygmalion follows Shangri-La		
Sparta follows Pygmalion	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17	MARDI GRAS, FEBRUARY 20
Pegasus follows Sparta	Iris 11:00 am	Zulu 8:00 am
	Tucks noon	Rex 10:00 am
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11	Endymion 3:30 pm	Elks Orleans will follow Rex
Carrollton Noon		Crescent City will follow Elks Orleans
King Arthur will follow Carrollton	SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18	
Bards of Bohemia will follow King Arthur	Okeanos 11:30 am	
	Thoth 11:30 am	
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15	Mid-City 1:30 pm	
Babylon 5:30 pm	Bacchus 5:15 pm	
Chaos 6:15 pm		
Muses 7:00 pm		

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Hot New Jazz Number

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Monday, February 12

5:30 ~ Amasa Miller
8:00 ~ Hot Club of New Orleans

Tuesday, February 13

5:30 ~ Amasa Miller
8:00 ~ Sharon Martin

Wednesday, February 14

5:30 ~ Joe Krown
8:00 ~ John Boutte

Thursday, February 15

5:30 ~ John Royen
8:00 ~ Anais St. John

Friday, February 16

7:00 ~ Fred Sanders
9:30 ~ Ingrid Lucia

Saturday, February 17

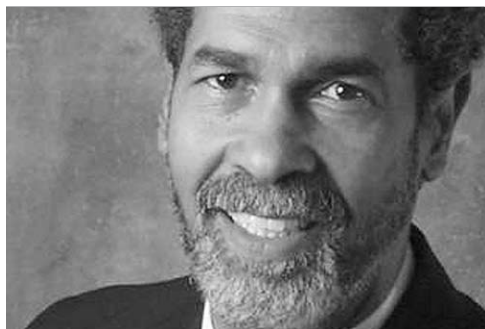
7:00 ~ John Royen
9:30 ~ Leah Chase

Sunday, February 18

5:30 ~ John Royen
8:00 ~ Sharon Martin

Entertainment subject to change.

“Value” Based Grants Discriminate



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

I'm on a mission, and that mission is to change the policy of the Road Home Program from using “value” to using repair/replacement cost as the basis for grants.

You may have never thought of it but basing a program to rebuild lives on the “value” of peoples homes is discriminatory based on race and class no mater whether the “values” are pre or post Katrina. Anyone who has ever purchased real estate learns really soon that homes in neighborhoods in which poorer people live cost less (have less market “value”) than even identical homes that are located in more affluent neighborhoods.

A broken down 1200 square foot shotgun house in Lakeview will sell for more than a well maintained home twice that size, but located in the lower ninth ward. With current policies the person in Lakeview can get more than enough to repair their home, but the person in the lower nine gets less simply because of the location of their property in a poorer and black neighborhood.

There is nothing in any law that requires that the grants be based on “value”, and the intent of the Congress was to replace and repair people's homes, but the way our state government has chosen to use market value means that all the discrimination of the past is now included in the official recovery policy of the State of Louisiana. I have found no one who disagrees with that statement.

In addition to being discriminatory, since “value” is simply based on what people are willing to pay, it is hard to determine, particularly when they are trying to determine what someone might have been willing to pay before Katrina, a hypothetical number, which is the source of confusion and probably the most difficult (and costly) part of the process for determining grants.

On the other hand, every contractor in town knows how much it cost to repair or replace homes in the various stages of destruction. Their estimates are based on square footage, the level of repairs needed and the real and present cost of materials and labor. The repair/replacement cost is relatively simple to arrive at because it is based on the clear and present reality.

Changing to repair/ replacement cost

does not discriminate. The broken down shotgun in Lakeview would be treated fairly as would any home, the race and class of the neighbors notwithstanding. The only time the market value of a property would be useful is in those situations where a person wants out of the property and is selling to the state.

How or why the state chose to base their policy on something that is so loaded with race and class distinction worries me. A part of me really wants to believe that it was simply people thinking “in the box”, people who are used to associating real-estate transactions with financing and the need for collateral that has a certain value. There is another part of me that believes that mean spirited individuals knew exactly what they were doing, creating an almost billion dollar opportunity for ICF and making sure that the affluent were made whole and the working classes and poor become poorer, simply because they live where they live.

Following my suggestion would open the doors to simpler solutions for everyone who is trying to repair or rebuild their homes and still reduce the likelihood of fraud, because the state can pay contractors directly. Imagine being able to signoff and have a converted Road Home Program repair and rebuild your home without having to come live in a dangerous trailer. What an opportunity this would create for so many of our elder homeowners.

I am doing my part. I'm pushing this policy change on our “Between The Lines” television show. I've dedicated this week's column to the same and I'm talking to every legislator and LRA official I can.

So I've laid it out for you to clearly understand. You must begin to spread this understanding, which is not very difficult; truth rings like a bell when people hear or read it. And since I am only one voter with one vote, the rest of you voters have to make noise with your elected officials, get them to understand that it got to be this way or, like they say, “the highway”.

This is about right and wrong, something that can work versus something that hasn't and its about not allowing housing and employment discrimination of the past to determine people's ability to have their homes repaired or rebuilt today.

Not everyone has my gift for words, so yes I would be deeply honored if you copy this column and mail it with your personal note to the Governor and your elected state representatives and senators. They still have an opportunity to claim that the “value” policy was a simple mistake and not a plot against the property owners who do not live in affluent neighbors.

However, failure to do so would prove that evil was intended, is being and will continue to be perpetrated against the folk who can afford it the least. Do what you have to do... and do it now!

The Great 28... The Making Of History



Edwin Buggage
Data Editor

February is upon us once again, and as we all know it is Black History Month. That time of year where we pay homage and acknowledge those figures that have helped shape America and the world. Initially conceived by Dr. Carter G. Woodson author of the classic book, ‘The Miseducation of the Negro,’ during the year of its inception 1926, this one week celebration occurred during the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass. This week was a time for reading, reflecting, and enlightening citizens of the struggles, triumphs and accomplishments of African-American people. In 1976 while the country was celebrating its bicentennial Black History Week was extended into an entire month.

Woodson's idea for observing these accomplishments were to refute the popular notion that posed as irrefutable truths at that time in this country's history that African-Americans contributed nothing to the advancement of mankind. Over the years this celebration has highlighted what Blacks have been able to achieve sometimes facing the most adverse of circumstances. And with courage, fortitude and perseverance; accomplishing great things in spite of the road blocks placed before them by those who attempted to impede their progress, but many blazed a trail for future generations forging ahead making their mark in many fields of endeavor.

As those who came before us toiled away breaking new ground, today we see the results of their struggles. In today's America there aren't many places in our society where Black people are not visible. African-Americans in 2007 are CEO's and high ranking executives in companies where fifty years ago they were either barred from employment, or worked performing the most menial tasks, in the world of politics African-Americans are reaching unprecedented highs; running and winning elected offices at the local, state and national levels. The dark days

of yesterday where legal barriers barred many Blacks to strive for excellence are a distant memory. Albeit America is not where it should be, it has moved from beyond the shadows of the times before the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Acts of the 1960's when a large number of Blacks could not exercise their most basic human rights in a country that at that time and still to this very day espouses the principle of democracy, fairness and equality to the rest of the world.

For some African-Americans today is a new frontier of opportunities: Blacks today own homes in places where they were once denied access through restrictive covenants, they own land today where their ancestors toiled tirelessly on land owned by others without adequate compensation or treated with basic human decency. Today many are teaching and being educated in institutions once closed to them, and today these places where they were once denied access provide them with the tools necessary to be competitive in the workforce. Today we see that there is possibly light at the end of this ‘Underground Railroad’ and that the efforts of our fore parents had not been in vain.

Yes the accomplishments of Blacks today are unprecedented, but we must remember today we are no smarter or better than those who came before us; we have just been provided with more opportunities and access. Today we are standing on the shoulders of giants. Whether it's well known historical figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Nat Turner, Mary McCloud Bethune and Harriet Tubman or everyday people who have sacrificed so that we can have a chance at a better life. Our personal heroes and mentors, the mothers, fathers, grandparents, coaches, friends, teachers and preachers who gave us words of encouragement and the love we needed when times got tough to persevere and keep our eyes on the prize.

Today we are a living testament of those who have come before us. In our actions we reflect the best and worse of our past. And we must remember that every one of us is a gatekeeper of our history; making a contribution to the beauty and ugliness of our existence in America. And today we must work together to emulate the best and goodness that's in all of us, realizing we will as any other people never be perfect, but hopefully, just better than we are presently, because as the days pass we are all part of history.

COMMENTARY

KEYS TO MENTORING OUR CHILDREN: Defining Mentoring!

Dr. Calvin Mackie, PhD.
Data Columnist

In New Orleans and across the country, Americans are struggling to understand and deal with the state of the community: senseless violence perpetrated by the youth, the exploitation and marginalization of women, and the general disinterest in the educational process and career development. Many of our youth resemble rudderless ships wandering amongst the abyss without direction or hope. On a daily basis in New Orleans and most urban areas, the evening news leads with a story about the police seeking or escorting a young black male with dreadlocks or twisted-hair dressed in baggy blue jeans and a white tee (shirt). It is painfully clear that our youth are caught in a complex battle for

their souls.

Our youth have challenges that are difficult to identify because increasingly those challenges are often presented by someone who looks like them and lives amongst them. They are bombarded by self-destructive images and words regularly. Our youth are not growing up in healthy environments and it is not their fault. In a healthy society, adults should nurture, protect and direct the most valuable asset: the youth. We are not healthy, our youth are suffering, and the behavior of our youth is bitter proof of our failure as a community.

Over the last ten years, several organizations at the national and local level have provided positive guidance that youth may not get at home, in their community or at school. In New Orleans, the

100 Black Men, Each One Teach One, Boys and Girls Club and other organizations continue to offer individual and/or group activities for youth. Unfortunately, these organizations only reach a small portion of the youth who need mentoring. Given the depth and breadth of problems in New Orleans, it seems as if mentor-focused organizations should be and are forming everyday.

I have committed my life to the mentoring of youth and for the past twenty years, I have been involved in mentoring programs either as a 'mentee' or mentor. Thus I am very concerned, informed, and engaged in the mentoring process. If we are going to help our youth via mentoring, then we must know what it means to mentor and, more importantly, what mentoring is not. We

must ensure that mentoring relationships do not reinforce any negative perception our youth may have of adults.

Mentoring is not a new term, and the process is more than just physically "being" in the life of a youth. The term is over three thousand years old and has its origins in Greek mythology. When Odysseus went off to fight in the Trojan War, he left his trusted friend Mentor in charge of his household and his son's (Telemachus) education. Mentor's name has since been attached to the process of education and care by an older, experienced person. In time, the word Mentor became synonymous with trusted advisor, friend, and teacher. History offers many examples of helpful mentoring relationships - Socrates to Plato, Hayden to

Beethoven, Dr. Benjamin Mays to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Charles Houston to Thurgood Marshall.

Understanding what a mentor is lays a foundation to develop better mentoring programs and recruit more adults, especially men, as mentors. There are three common misconceptions about mentoring and to better define what mentoring is, let us identify what it is not:

- Mentoring is not paternalism.
- Mentoring is not a marriage.
- Mentoring is not servitude.

Mentoring is not paternalism, marriage, or servitude because each of the inherent equality or inequality of the relationships. As a parent, the relationship is typically unequal. A "parent" imposes his or her will on the "child" in the name of what is in

Continued page 15.

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IN THE SPIRIT

"I Love You Mean More Than Words Can Say"



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Many of us will be celebrating Valentine's Day all across the nation. Some of us are going to go to the extreme to express our feelings towards the one or ones that we say we love. In most cases, it's easy to say I love you with your mouth, because it really doesn't take too much to tell someone verbally that you love them. But when you truly love a spouse, your child or children, friends, family members, or couples who have been dating for a period of time, true love means more than words can say.

True love is giving of oneself without looking for something in return. It means loving someone with your heart, your mind, and with all of the strength that is inside of you. Some people give, but they give without the presence of love in their hearts. However, you cannot love without giving. Love shows in so many ways, because those who love always see it.

Love in the spiritual sense, or in the eyes of the Creator, is greater than any kind of love. In Luke Chapter 10 verses 30-37, Jesus is teaching in a parable. He is trying to show a lawyer who was present along with his disciples the true meaning of love towards your neighbor. He talks about a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed of his clothes by thieves. They also wounded him severely leaving him almost dead.

There were others who saw this man who desperately needed help because he was dying in the road. The men looked at the man and the condition he was in, but they kept going. On the other hand, a Samaritan who was not like the other two men took the time out to go to the extreme to help this man. This is what love truly is. When we take the time to show those persons who are close to our hearts

and even those who are neighbors true love, God will smile upon these actions. My brothers and sisters God is love. He demonstrated his love towards us by giving of himself. God told us that in John 3-16, "For God so love the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever should believe in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

God also shows his love through others such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who fought for freedom and civil rights, and Mother Teresa who labored to help the poor for many years. When you were a child your mother stayed up through the night to take care of you. This represents a mother's unconditional love for her child. God's love speaks in many voices and those who love him will always hear it. Look at what David says in the 23rd Psalm; "The Lord is my Shepherd and I shall not want." This means that God's love will take care of you and me to the point that we don't have to worry about tomorrow's problems.

Love is also not being afraid to love, even when you have been hurt in relationships in the past or present. God loves you and me unconditionally, which means even when we have made huge mistakes in our lives, he still will forgive us. Therefore, if God still can love us no matter what, we need to act on our love toward each other by not just saying I love you through words, but with selfless acts of kindness, because "I love you mean more than words can say." Let's not reserve one or several days to give to one and other in the spirit of love, but let's treat each other as if every day is a holiday and give of oneself in the spirit of love to your fellow man and woman, and in closing let me say Happy Valentine's Day and may God always Bless You.

Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries.

To contact Dr. Harold with your comments or suggested topics you can e-mail him at rharold@cox.net or call (504) 813-5767



DOLLARS & SENSE

AXA Achievement



Donald Smith

GE-31651 (03/05) (exp. 03/07)

With the cost of college tuition rising faster than inflation, paying for college can be an obstacle for many families.

Families can help offset tuition bills by identifying and accessing scholarships and other resources. To help students and their families, AXA Foundation, the philanthropic arm of AXA Financial, has created AXA Achievement. AXA Achievement is a philanthropic program dedicated to providing the advice and access to help youth succeed in college and beyond. Through AXA Achievement, AXA is one of the nation's largest corporate providers of scholarships and a comprehensive resource for students and their parents to pursue their dreams of college. AXA Achievement provides:

Advice, including:

- materials and resources for students and parents on how to financially prepare and pay for college
- increasing national awareness of the need for scholarship support and higher education, such as by sponsoring National Scholarship Month

Access, including:

- national and local scholarship programs awarding scholarships ranging from \$2,000 to \$25,000
 - support for local scholarship foundations in communities across the country
- To learn more, visit www.axaonline.com/axafoundation.

AXA Achievement also wants to help students and their families find scholarships that are right for them. Here are some tips that students can use before they apply for scholarships:

- Ask yourself what am I involved in—music, athletics? Your answers will help select scholarships that fit well,

and identify skills and talents you can incorporate into your scholarship and college application essays.

- Plan ahead –students should research scholarships for the first year of college in their junior year of high school
- Keep an open mind and take the time to review all scholarship descriptions and qualifications.
- Seek out academic counseling because counselors have resources and can recommend the most appropriate scholarships
- Be sure to select valid scholarships and be wary of scholarships that are "guaranteed" or require fees upfront.
- Be sure to look to employers, labor unions and associations –they often offer scholarships to children
- Explore community resources such as local foundations, service clubs, and religious organizations that may sponsor scholarships for which membership is not a requirement.
- Contact Dollars for Scholars which is a network of scholarship foundations based in communities throughout the United States. Chapters often coordinate local scholarships via a single application process. For more information visit www.dollarsforscholars.com for local community listings
- Start logging onto Web sites that provide scholarship guidance. To start:
 - Scholarship Americasm (www.scholarshipamerica.org)
 - National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators' Website (www.nasfaa.org)
 - FinAidSmartStudent Guide (www.finaid.org)
- Visit local libraries and bookstores where you will find a vast quantity of resources on scholarships that can help you find ones that are applicable.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Blacks March Against War



Congresswoman Maxine Waters, (D-CA) addresses press during a recent Anti-war rally in Washington DC.

By. James Wright
Special to the NNPA from the
Afro-American Newspapers

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Blacks were active participants in the anti-war demonstration that took place on Jan. 27 at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. An estimated 100,000 people from across the country came to Washington to protest the Bush administration's escalation of the war in Iraq. The protestors said that the war was wrong, the troops should come home and if the troops do not come home, Congress should cut off funding. The march was facilitated by the New York-based United for Peace and Justice. Its mission is to educate the American people about the war and to demonstrate how social change can take place within the context of democracy through protest, education and activism. "Bring home the troops," the Rev. Graylon Hagler told the crowd. "We aim to be heard by the Congress of the United States and by George Bush. "We are going to push to end this war." Hagler, a candidate for the Ward 4 position on the D.C. City Council and the pastor of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, said that people are outraged by the loss of life and the administration's casual attitude toward the death of Americans and the Iraqi people. Felicia Eaves, president of Black Voices for Peace, said that Bush has shown little regard for life in the past. "When Bush gave his "State of the Union," he did not mention Katrina at all," Eaves said. "That should tell you that George Bush does not care for Black people. "We have to stop this war. We have to." Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) said that the Congress needs to be pressed to cut off funding for the war. "We are going to push, push, and push to keep the debate going," Waters said. Speaking to the protestors, she said, "You have come here to save your country and you are the real patriots." Waters made

it clear that she is not afraid to speak out against the war. "My name is Maxine Waters and I am not afraid of George Bush," she said. "I am not intimidated by Dick Cheney. I worked to get rid of Donald Rumsfeld. "Condi Rice (Black secretary of state) is a neo-con and she does not represent me. George Bush said that he was the decider. "He is not the decider, he is a liar." Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) said that a group of progressive Democrats in the Congress will attempt to stop the funding of the war in the Congress. Conyers said that the president is off track. "Bush fired his military leaders when they told him he was wrong," Conyers said. "Cheney said that we cannot do anything about the war. That's not true, we can fire Bush and we need to remember that." The Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of the Rainbow-Push Coalition, said that "peace is possible" and "peace is imperative." "Today we march for the soul of our nation, to preserve our nation's honor," he said. "The war in Iraq is causing a war on the poor at home. "Money needed for the working poor, the aged and the young, are being sacrificed for this misadventure." Jackson said that the war in Iraq is part of a larger problem in the country. "We need more than new leaders; we need new direction, new priorities, and a new way for a new day," he said. The speakers throughout the rally encouraged the protestors to support the bill, Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act of 2007 sponsored by Waters, Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.). The bill calls for an immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq and mandates that the administration allow the Iraq government to function by itself. On Jan. 29, the protestors took their case to the members of Congress on Capitol Hill. They lobbied the lawmakers to stop the war by cutting off funding by visiting their offices and talking to the members or high ranking staff members.

Katrina Recovery in Major Need of National Summit

by Marc Morial
NNPA

This year's State of the Union Address by President George W. Bush offered little hope for the thousands of New Orleanians who fled the city in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and never returned and those who did return home. Not a reference to the tragedy that halved the population and left in the region in ruins was made.

What a difference over one and one-half years make after the president vowed to restore New Orleans to its former and greater glory in a poignant speech in historic Jackson Square with much of the city under water and the National Guard patrolling around.

But Capitol Hill Democrats are hardly great saviors of New Orleans. They also failed to reference Katrina in their response to the president's State of the Union. They put nothing in their first 100 hours agenda that addressed the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast Region.

Not until the press and activists noted the glaring absence of Katrina in the two parties' recent addresses did they begin to do anything. But better late than never, I guess. Still, how interesting that Senate Democrats would hold a field hearing on the rebuilding efforts in New Orleans not too long after the hubbub, and that a presidential candidate would be present. CNN even suggested that the road to the White House in 2008 may very well go through my hometown.

I can only hope and pray that that's not true. And that lawmakers are casting attention to the debacle that is the Katrina recovery because they want to do something about it – and not just reacting for fear it'll hurt their political prospects. They should be there because it's the right thing to do. The victims of Katrina cannot be forgotten and should never be used as some kind of political football being tossed about to win elections.

By most accounts, the rebuilding of New Orleans has been a slow and tortuous

process marked by insufficient coordination, unnecessary political infighting, and a great deal of both human and institutional suffering that continues to this day.

President Bush appointed a rebuilding czar in Donald Powell but he failed to give him any power. Powell is merely a diplomat assigned to ensuring that the local, state and federal governments play nice with each other. There is little coordination between the various federal, state and local agencies charged with cleaning up the city. Mississippi is entitled to as much federal aid as Louisiana even though it wasn't as hard-hit because Congress decided to cap aid a single state could get. How illogical is that? And state and local officials – Gov. Kathleen Blanco and Mayor Ray Nagin – have hardly risen to the occasion and taken the reins of the recovery. Any wonder why New Orleans is still a wreck and its current and former residents are still suffering? Does anyone really care about losing one of our nation's greatest cities?

In a New York Times column from January, Bob Herbert summed up the situation perfectly. "If you talk to public officials, you will hear about billions of dollars in aid being funneled through this program or that. The maze of bureaucratic initiatives is dizzying. But when you talk to the people most in need of help – the poor, the elderly, the disabled, the children – you will find in most cases that the help is not reaching them. There is no massive effort, no master plan, to bring back the people who were driven from the city and left destitute by Katrina," he wrote.

Back in July during our 2006 annual conference, I suggested that our nation's leaders convene a national summit on rebuilding the Gulf Coast. I stand by that suggestion and reiterated it in a recent letter to our nation's leaders.

It's time to assemble America's greatest minds with its most powerful leaders and resolve to get the job done. I'm asking for the development of a 12- to 24-month action plan to reinvigorate

recovery and rebuilding as well as ensure greater coordination and collaboration going forward than there has been in the past.

I must say that I am encouraged that the Congressional Black Caucus called upon U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to create a select House committee on Katrina. Maybe this will light a fire in Washington under efforts to bring New Orleans back to life.

I am making a call for the collective leadership on the federal, state and local levels to ensure the survival of one of our nation's greatest cities. Instead of finding fault and pointing fingers, I'd rather get our collective wits around the table to address this debacle before it becomes our nation's greatest shame. As Sen. Joseph Lieberman, who chaired the recent Katrina hearing, said, the days of playing "gotcha" over the Katrina recovery are over.

The wealthiest nation in the world can spend unprecedented amounts of money to rebuild Iraq but cannot save one of its greatest and most colorful cities? That's downright pathetic. In a recent editorial, The New York Times observed that the current state of New Orleans is a "sad monument to impotence" of the world's last surviving superpower. We've got plenty of resources for a war in Iraq but when it comes to helping our own people. They're off the radar screen. What does that say about our nation's priorities? We must act now or risk allowing New Orleans to become an ugly footnote in history.

Shudder to think that in a decade from now when assessing the Katrina tragedy, we realize, that as the Times notes in its recent editorial, "our grand plans were never laid, our brightest minds were never assembled, our nation's muscle and ingenuity were never brought to bear in any concerted way to overcome the crisis of the Gulf."

Marc C. Morial is president and CEO, National Urban League

NEWS

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the best interest of the child. The relationship between mentor and 'mentee' is a voluntary one. Thus either party can disengage at any time; unlike the parent-child relationship.

Ideally, marriage refers to a relationship between equal parties with shared responsibilities because both parties have committed to the couple as a unit and the marriage as an entity. Similar to the parent-child relationship, marriage is not a proper description because the parties in the mentoring relationship do not enter as equals. At the same time, the relationship in and of itself is not exclusive – either the mentor can have other mentees or the mentee can multiple mentors.

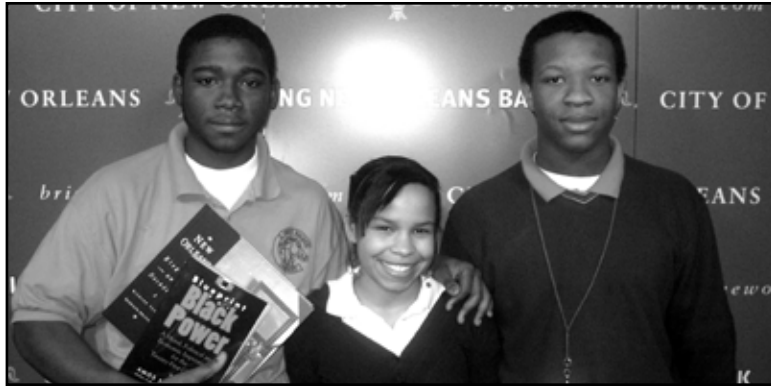
Servitude typically refers to a relationship between completely unequal parties where a "master" has total control over the activities of a so-called "slave". Mentoring is not servitude because the parties in the relationship exist in the relationship voluntarily. Finally, the mentee is not there to "serve" the mentor.

Mentoring is a process of building a mutually beneficial partnership between experienced persons (mentors) and less experienced persons (mentees) to help develop the skills, behaviors and insights necessary to reach the partnership's goals. The mentor has four roles:

- Advisor who shares and gives advice regarding career and personal development within an organization.
- Net-worker who helps the mentee build internal and external relationships and resource networks.
- Facilitator who teaches the mentee how to solve problems more independently and confidently.
- Coach who guides the mentee toward delivering the expected performance by encouraging and giving feedback.

Anyone interested in mentoring youth should be committed to the mentoring relationship. The last thing our youth need to see, witness or experience again is an adult abdicating their responsibility and commitment and walking out of their life as soon as things get tough. Mentoring is a process and a relationship which should be entered into by committed individuals. We must demonstrate the characteristics that we want to exist in our youth, because they are truly watching US.

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Three members of the Mayor's Young Leadership Council

engage them on topics such as education, housing and crime. Following his meeting with the student council, Mayor Nagin hosted a small press briefing.

"Our meeting was very helpful. Mayor Nagin gave us his support and encouraged us to lead our educational system forward. In order for us to have a good education, we must seize all opportunities," said Ashleigh Joplin, an 11th grader at The Math and Science School.

The One New Orleans Conversations are a combination of citizen gatherings based on organization and/or professional affiliations, meetings are also coordinated in small groups by citizens in neighborhoods throughout the city. In addition, OneNewOrleansdistrictmeetings are organized in conjunction with City Council members. There are at least two (2) One New Orleans Conversations with Mayor Nagin each month.

"The Mayor's Office has been very helpful with assisting the New Orleans Council on Aging in helping bring Seniors back to New Orleans. These One New Orleans Conversation meetings are very helpful because we can

get some dialogue going on about some of our city's challenges post-Katrina," said Howard Rodgers, Executive Director of the New Orleans Council on Aging.

On January 13, the Mayor along with Councilwoman Cynthia Hedge-Morrell hosted the Seventh One New Orleans Conversation with District D constituents. The meeting was attended by State Senator Derrick Sheppard, State Representatives Juan LaFonta and J.P. Morrell. Nearly 200 citizens filled the University of New Orleans (UNO) Business auditorium to hear the latest information about the city's recovery and news specifically affecting

their community. Key issues were addressed such as education and condition

of schools in New Orleans and the restoration of key retail outlets in the area.

On August 21, 2006, Mayor C. Ray Nagin hosted the first One New Orleans Conversation hosting small, minority owned business owners. Seven months later, Mayor Nagin continues to engage the community with One New Orleans Conversations.



ATLANTA (NNPA) - Clark Atlanta University emerged as the winner of the fifth annual Honda Battle of the Bands. Ten of America's top Historically Black College and University (HBCU) marching bands participated in the competition. The event took place before a sold-out Georgia Dome on Jan. 27.

Black Publishers Told to Keep Pleading Causes Amidst Change

By: Hazel Trice Edney
NNPA

PHOENIX (NNPA) – Nearly two centuries since the founding of the first Black Newspaper, Freedom's Journal, publishers of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the Black Press of America, kicked off their 180th anniversary year hearing exhortations to continue pleading their "own cause" even though the battles have significantly changed.

"When we look at NNPA and all of the publishers, you're our number one resource for finding out the real truth in our community and you are important to us," says Thomas W. Dortch, president of the Atlanta-based 100 Black Men of America, Inc., among a string of noted speakers at the organization's annual Winter Conference held in Phoenix, Ariz. "Unless they're shooting somebody, stabbing somebody, cutting somebody, stealing from somebody, that's the only time the other major press wants to write something about us. At least we can come to the Black Press and we can read about good things that are happening in our community...I want to say to you, Thank you. I want to also say to you, good is good but good means there's room to be better and better means you need to be best."

With that, Dortch exhorted NNPA, the nation's largest membership of Black-owned newspapers with more than 200 publishers, to resist separatism among Blacks by closing ranks, fighting against ills within the community and remembering the global struggle.

"We will trust everybody else who doesn't look like us, who doesn't sound like us, who doesn't have the historical perspective in life and the background that comes from the environment that we do. We will trust everybody else before we are willing to trust ourselves," says Dortch.

A die-hard civil rights and economic justice advocate, who is a recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award, Dortch says social and political separatism in the Black community has become detrimental to progress.

"It is amazing how we get hung up on, 'I'm not going to deal with him or her because they're Republican or they're Democrat or I'm not going to deal with him or her because she's a member of Delta and I'm a member of Alpha and he's Omega and there's an AKA over here or whether they're an Alpha or a Kappa.' We let little stupid stuff separate us. In fact, the one common denominator that we all have is that we're all Black and we aren't like the rainbow. We come in different hues and all, but it's not the color of your skin, but it's what's in here and what's up here and how you use it," says Dortch, pointing to his heart and his head.

When Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm founded the Freedom's Journal in New York City in 1827, Black people were still in slavery. Therefore, when its inaugural article stated, "We wish to plead our own cause," the paper was declaring its own First Amendment right to free speech.

Dortch, also known for his stance along side Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson for significant Black economic participation in the construction and vending at the now Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, challenge the publishers to not back down from justice.

"I challenge you to be courageous. Write the truth even if the truth hurts. But, do it professionally, make it hard-hitting because it's you and only you that we can depend on to get the news and get it right," he says. "And the minute that you sell your soul for the all mighty dollar is the minute and the very day that you really should pack your bags, close your operations and go off and find something else to do."

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