

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone

Mardi Gras Highlights

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The Soul of New Orleans


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COVER STORY

Art is from the people
& is meant to be enjoyed by the people

By: Avery Brewton

If you happened to be an artist or lover of the arts looking to find an art gallery with the feel of home, chances are you would be referred to the charismatic and well known Sandra Berry or Joshua Walker, owners of The Neighborhood Gallery (TNG). Visitors and locals alike recount warm stories full of laughter, love, and memorable performances during their trips to the gallery. Many even belt out excerpts of their swinging theme song. “There’s a place that I like to go, where there’s things that I should know, about my culture, my heritage...and there’s events I don’t want to miss...” (Akil Shakir ‘93)

This lively couple of 31 years has dedicated their lives to creating change and fostering trust through the arts between communities in neighborhoods across New Orleans. The Savannah Georgia natives have maintained a love and vision for the Big Easy for the past 20 years. Being no strangers to the humid heat of the south, down home cooking, or rich blues and jazz, they fell right in step with the second line parades, and the infectious spirit of New Orleans.

With musicians and artists being the backbone of this city, the gallery has always been a home for those with a talent or skill that they themselves believed in, and were ready to promote. Artists of all races, backgrounds, and incomes have sauntered in looking to be represented by the gallery. With a reputation based largely on word of mouth and ingenuity, The Neighborhood Gallery has been there as the family that nurtures and encourages the greatness in us all, a must see treasure, and is known for quality art, performances and extending first chances to the “common folk” to explore their talents and step out as artists.



Josua Walker leading the Shades of Praise Gospel Choir

Networking artists, community leaders, and investors praise the support and guidance of this compassionate team. The couple’s work is based on the principles of social entrepreneurship and activism. Berry and her husband have strived to stay true to their goals of providing services and sharing the culture of the arts as a business, one that measures success based on the impact they have in the community. “Art is an expression of reality and hope interwoven with the dreams and

imagination that are unique to each artist. We value the contributions of our poets, storytellers, dancers, singers, writers, painters, and sculptors. They capture the essence of our humanity, our history, and future. We are proud to represent artists that speak and teach loudly through their art.”

In 1988, after moving to New Orleans and witnessing her brother Ronald Jones, a trained visual and performing artist, being turned away

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COVER STORY

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Jerome Holmes, Owner of Urban Cup & Ronald Jones - featured artist

again and again from traditional New Orleanian galleries in the French Quarter, Berry decided to have an exhibition of her brother's work in her home, a double shotgun house on Soniat Street. Berry says, "We refused to wait for someone to give us a chance. We created our own doors of opportunity and worked together to build an international network that supports one another." Blighted and void of arts exposure, the small gallery's

the prisons." TNG has produced many first time events in the arts community because they are not afraid to do something just because it has never been done before. "Artistic expression gives hope to the soul. Everybody needs that," she says.

Hundreds of visual, performing, and literary artists have been represented. Many of the artists have gone on to be successful entrepreneurs and effective advocates for themselves. "You have to be able to speak up for yourself, tell your own story! If you don't, I guarantee someone else will do it for you," says Berry. "Our main objectives are to expose the artist to investors and develop strong entrepreneurial artists that are confident and resourceful in marketing themselves." For years TNG has served as a connecting point for opportunities to flow between individual craft and arts networkers, the public, and the arts community, becoming a familiar presence at the table, know to represent community artisan and community needs. It is one of only a few of African American businesses in this city devoted to this kind of advocacy and promotion for New Orleans artists.

Since the storm, citizens of New Orleans miss The Neighborhood Gallery's presence in Central City on Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. After losing the roof of their huge building

located between Thalia and Martin Luther King Boulevard, Berry and Walker decided it was time to leave the space that also functioned as their home. "We are getting too old to maintain such a huge space," says Berry with a hearty laugh, "We want a smaller space in a new neighborhood that is in need of our presence and services." TNG is currently taking

advantage of this opportunity by touring the country with The Neighborhood Gatherings series, which is TNG's touring exhibition and showcase, which was relaunched in 2006. The touring exhibition has gone to such places as the illustrious Fine Arts Center in the Garden District, Bennett College in Greensboro, and the Urban Cup Cafe that is

located uptown on the corner of Magazine and Upperline Street. "It will be done," says Berry with conviction, "We have come back to this city and we will tough it out, because New Orleans will be restored and even better than it was before, especially if we work together. I believe that!"



Ronald Jones - the featured artist

presence awakened the uptown neighborhood to its native arts, creative heritage and helped to restore pride to a once neglected neighborhood. The gallery began with two artists, Joshua Walker, a talented and accomplished opera singer with a deep melodic bass voice, and Ronald Jones. It then grew to include their many friends who were also interested in marketing their art works. "We had exhibitions in neighborhood playgrounds, schools, and even



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NEWSMAKER

Tornado Sweeps Through Orleans and Jefferson Parish



Annie Tyler 's daughter uptown home was nearly destroyed by the tornado with the roof collapsing.



Marisol Rodriguez and her son Axel



Linda Conerly came home to a damaged roof.



Stephany Turner, with sister Gabrielle and father Ivory Turner on of many families affected by the tornado.



New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin assessing damages and talking to residents.

By: Edwin Buggage

It was reminiscent of the Wizard of Oz, but this was no fairy tale. In the calm wee hours of the morning winds twisted and twirled at over one-hundred miles an hour from Westwego in Jefferson Parish to Pontchartrain Park in Orleans Parish leaving in its midst destruction adding to the devastation that many gulf coast residents have already suffered due to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

Gabrielle Turner, a recent college graduate stands outside of their family home in Hollygrove, a section of uptown New Orleans affected by the tornado with her sister Gabrielle Turner a graduate student at Southern University at New Orleans and her father Ivory Turner a small business owner and a former Chaplin at Orleans Parish Prison. As downed power lines lie on the ground among muck, mud and debris with electricity going out throughout the neighborhood causing traffic jams on major streets causing their quiet street to become a major thoroughfare for utility trucks and other vehicles. Gabrielle recounts what happened, "It was around three fifteen A.M. and I felt

something shaking, and then I saw lightning flashes that woke me up out of my sleep and it lasted about a minute and a half, and then my mother and I came out and we saw all the debris and shattered windows, and as we went to the back of the house our windows were busted out in the kitchen and bathroom."

During this tornado hundreds of homes would be damaged to the point where they were unlivable, only few blocks away Annie Tyler a life long resident of New Orleans who is presently residing in Florida recently came to visit her daughter who is raising a small family in their modest uptown home. She as many are trying to put the pieces of their lives back together repairing their home, as the winds came what was their roof lied in the middle of the street with part of it coming down smashing the windshield and hood of a car parked in front of their home. Ms. Tyler says of the night's events as a U-Haul truck stands in front their home as family members try to gather what keepsakes they have out of their home as the street reeks with the smell of what seems to be a gas leak. "It sounded like a train but it passed so fast, it was only a few minutes, but it did so much damage, we didn't know the roof collapsed until the next morning." Marisol Rodriguez is a young Latina woman who is new to the

city, and is a native of Honduras she came to New Orleans to seek a better life for herself and her young son Axel. She is a neighbor of the Tyler family and says she was awakened at about three in the morning by lightning flashes and shaking, hearing sounds of windows crashing and she says she immediately went to check on her son and sat in the bathtub until it passed.

Near South Claiborne and South Carrollton Avenue Mayor Ray Nagin was out talking to and consoling citizens about the damage to their homes and neighborhoods, assessing damage and assuring them he will do everything in his power to help them. He walked inside the home of Linda Conerly whose uptown home that was recently renovated had a projectile come through her roof damaging the second level of her home. "I was not home at the time, but as I got closer to my house I saw debris, and I didn't know what I would be facing, then I saw that their was damage to my roof and I was hoping their was no more damage on the inside." "As I got upstairs I noticed that the ceiling in my bathroom had been broken, and a brand new air conditioner."

With the amount of damage to the city and how it temporarily crippled the city, feelings about the city's capability to handle a

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News Orleans Data News Weekly

TRAIL BLAZERS



New Orleans Realtor Danette Oneal, press surrounded by supporters at recent conference.

By: Renetta B. Perry

To use the term super-teacher to describe Keith Turner, a New Orleans native and veteran educator, would be an understatement. After evacuating New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina like thousands of others in our area, he landed in Dallas, Texas where he would settle for more than a year. With a crumbled personal life lingering back home in New Orleans, Turner turned up the volume on his professional life, resulting in an outstanding year which won over his principal, earned him the honor of Teacher of the Year and helped him put a positive face on evacuees, showing the greatness of New Orleanians in a state where we have been negatively portrayed.

The 2006 school year may have started out rocky for New Orleans native and veteran educator Keith Turner, but any uncertainty, on either the part of his administrators or his own, was quickly diminished as this super-teacher hit his stride and flexed his professional muscles - contributing an extraordinary performance as a 5th grade science

Keith Turner

“Super Teacher”:

teacher at Jerry R. Junkins Elementary School in Carrollton, Texas, just outside of Dallas. The stellar performance, against all odds, landed him the coveted title of Teacher of the Year, an accolade reserved for only the best and the brightest and a reward to Turner for persevering through what many deemed unimaginable - overachieving professionally while continuing to struggle personally.

At first glimpse, the fact that Turner would evacuate to Texas, work his heart out and receive one of the highest awards given to teachers reads like another five-o'clock-news headline, warmed up completely with all of the fuzzy details: Tragedy to Triumph, New Orleans evacuee is named Teacher of the Year in Texas... But in fact, Turner has in his 20-year-plus career, been twice named Teacher of the Year in his own hometown and has enjoyed the distinct honor of being named one of Who's Who among American Teachers multiple times. He has also served as principal of Henry C. Schaumburg Elementary School where he received the honor of Principal of the Month - all while working for the New Orleans Public Schools. So for Turner, as groundbreaking as this may seem, excellence did not come as a consequence of tragedy; it has for a long time been a part of the fabric that engulfs him. His philosophy on teaching may sound rhetorical, but it is the act of executing it that sets him apart from many of his constituents. “I inspire a love of learning in students of all backgrounds and levels of ability by modeling the love of learning. I simply love teaching and learning. I make sure that my students see on a daily basis that I truly enjoy all of the things we do. No matter how I’m feeling that day or whatever may be going on, when I arrive at school I have one mission. That mission is to educate the youngsters in my classes and to have fun. I believe that learning must be enjoyable. Therefore, I am certain to plan powerful learning experiences for my children at a perky pace everyday,” he passionately observes.

It is that same passion that inspired Turner’s principal Susan Walker to ultimately hire him for a 5th grade teaching position at her school. “During the interview, it was obvious the passion our Teacher of the Year had for children. There was a radiant smile, bounds of energy, and an enthusiasm for instruction. I knew instantly he was the right match, but I had to explain we were opening a new school so flexibility and hard work were qualities a team mate must possess. He soon proved to our team that he was a team player, leader, and an instructional wizard!,” Walker recalls, “He said he would put forth all of his effort to make sure the kids were successful.”

Turner’s effort to make sure the kids in his class were successful worked well and then some. Says Walker, by the second semester the students had scored the second highest in the Area for the last two benchmarks. “Not bad for the new school on the block! Our Teacher of the Year is the key to our success! He models lessons for other teachers in our area... He is also a mentor, provides science demonstrations, plans our Science Day, teaches the Science Club, tutors, and teaches CSI (Child Science Investigation),” she adds.

Through his ability to inspire his students through his own trials, Turner has inspired many at home and abroad. For now, Carrollton, Texas has gained a gem as New Orleans has lost a great asset. But in the long run, the winners are the children who are blessed to have this champion for education by their side each day. In teaching, Turner is often reminded of a poem from his youth. “My father used to always recite a poem to me when I was young. I don’t remember all of it, but I do recall the ending. The poet said, ‘Lives of great men, oft reminder, we can make our lives sublime, and in parting leave behind us, footprints in the sands of time.’ Teaching inspires me to try to have an impact on each of the students that I come across.”



at&t

DATA ZONE

Across Waters...

A response to Marcus Akinlana and Shakor



Marques Akinlana creates a masterpiece



Glenn Jones, Sunni Patterson, Marcus Akinlana and Shakor celebrate at the Royal Heritage Gallery Event



Akinlana's unveiled his new piece honoring Marie Labeaux at Royal Heritage



Shakor unveils his new work Buffalo Soulja at the event.

Poem for Marques Akinlana and Shakor

by Sunni Patterson

We have not always found
comfort in killers
We have not always found
solace being rocked
in the bosoms of those who
silently pray/prey &
openly destroy.
No...not always have we
mistaken
mimicry for mastery
pretending for knowing
enslavement for freedom
No!

Across my memory marches
millions...
bold, regal, resilient, confident,
victorious
unshackled feet stomping up
Spirits
to guide us through this fickle,
material World
praying our prayers
singing our songs
Esu, Ogun, Sango, Yemoja,
Osun, Obatala, Oya
Damballah, Aida Wedo, Ra,
Nkongo, Olodumare, Nyame...
We know all of you by name...

We...a people of beginnings
Creators and Creatresses of
time
Sun and moon folk, Universal
souls
Yes...we have always been a
people of culture
Even through our slumber
Even through our forced forget-
fulness &
deadly sojourn to these shores
We...disconnected, battered,
stranded, left for dead
in the height of daylight...
We are still a people of strength
Yes!

Across my memory marches
millions...
powerful, strategic, prepared,
steadfast
knowing that not only will we
fight...

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The Hennessy Privilege Award was created to honor those who have made extraordinary contributions to their communities. The award, a limited-edition sculpture, which was inspired by the Bras Armé design that appears on every Hennessy label, represents strength, achievement, quality and sophistication—ideals embodied by the House of Hennessy and shared by all award recipients.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Milton Sherrill, the designer of the Hennessy Privilege Award, is an accomplished sculptor who has shown his work from Harlem to Watts and from Madison Avenue to Rodeo Drive. Mr. Sherrill lives and works in Westchester County, New York.

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Royal heritage gallery is a new fine art venue featuring the works of local artists shakor and marcus akinlana. Opened in july 2006, this venue is the catalyst for rebirth and growth for these two dynamic artists who have served for over a decade as cultural ambassadors for new orleans. Shakor and marcus akinlana envision their creative space to serve as a cultural oasis that celebrates new orleans heritage and culture.

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Data on the Town

At the opening of the hot new club Prime Example, New Orleans showed up to give their support



New Orleans Favorite Kermit Ruffins performs to the delight of the crowd



City Councilman James Carter was in attendance to support the new business



Data News Weekly Publisher and friends have a great time at Prime Example.

DATA ZONE



a dream deferred...

...a dream yet possible



C. Ray Nagin
MAYOR



DATA ZONE

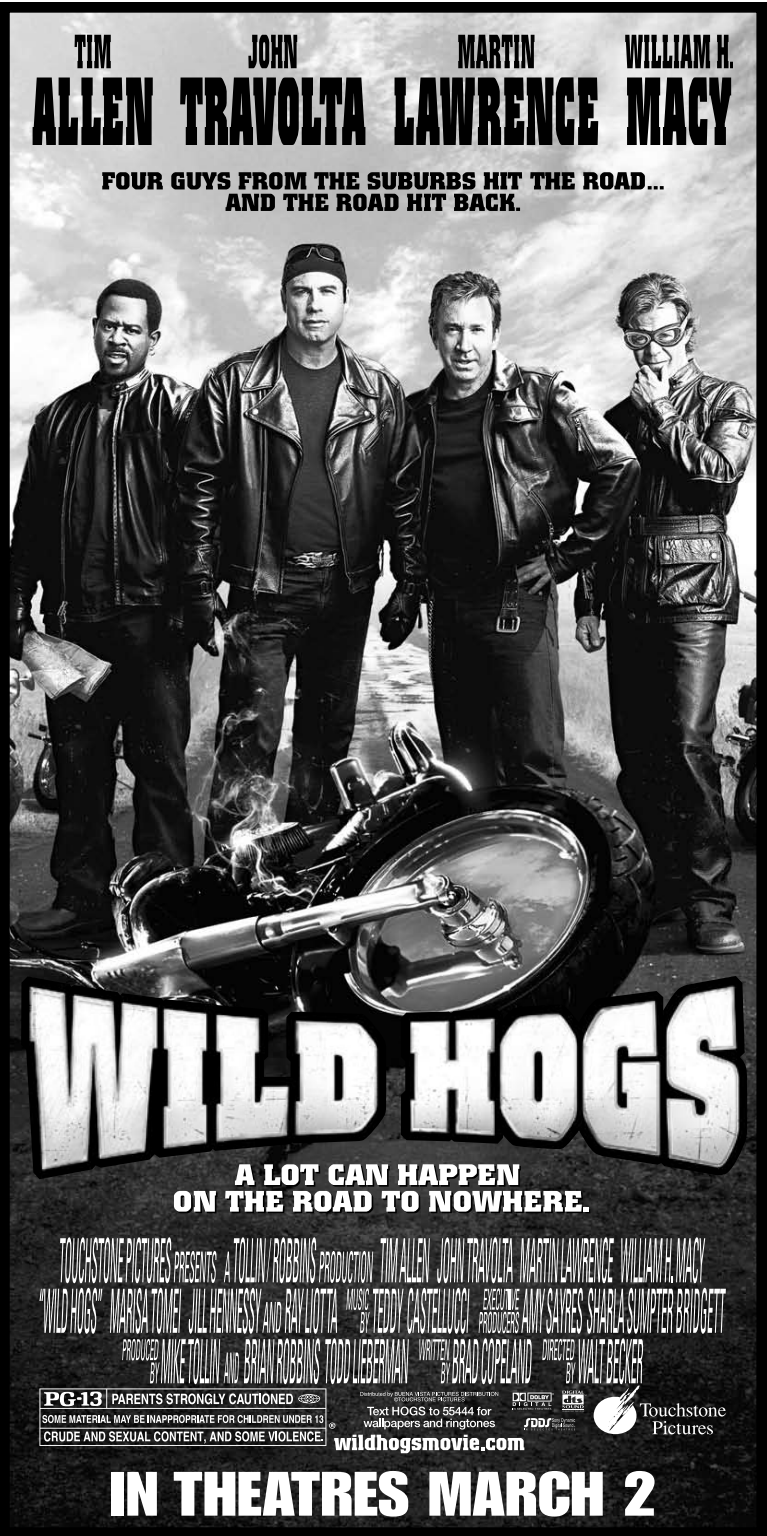
Michelle McBride Adams Selected Winner Of General Mills
“Serving Up Soul Diva” Contest

Reality Entertaining Challenge, Judged by Lifestyle Expert B. Smith &
Essence Food Editor Jonell Nash, Crowns New Entertaining Maven

ST. LOUIS NATIVE TAKES TOP HONORS IN “SERVING UP SOUL DIVA” CONTEST – NEW YORK, NY – Michelle McBride Adams (top photo, standing), a St. Louis native and claims examiner with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, recently won first place in the national Serving Up Soul Diva contest sponsored by General Mills. During the reality entertainment challenge, the culmination of the competition, Adams and the other finalists were flown to New York City, and given less than 24 hours to plan, shop, prepare and present a memorable birthday brunch for six. In the photo above, Adams is

serving a field greens salad with raspberry vinaigrette, caramelized walnuts and edible flowers; chicken breast stuffed with spinach, feta cheese and garlic; shrimp scampi over pasta parmesan, and brioche rolls, to a panel of judges that included celebrated restaurateur and lifestyle expert B. Smith (far left), Essence magazine food editor Jonell Nash (left, foreground) and Shirley Dolland (seated right), manager of the Betty Crocker Kitchens. Below, B. Smith (2nd right) is pictured congratulating Adams along with 2nd-place winner Cynthia Miller (far left) and Rolanda Wade (far right) who took home 3rd-place honors.

General Mills sponsored the Serving Up Soul Diva contest to celebrate the signature style everyday people bring to the art of entertaining family and friends. “This was such an amazing experience,” Adams said after being crowned the contest winner. “I had the opportunity to do something I love, use all of the talents that I’ve acquired over the years and win! It doesn’t get much better than this!”



If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you to go on in spite of all. And so today I still have a dream.

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

Celebrating 2007 Black History Month

Jon D. Johnson



OPINION

Just call me Mr. Clean



Eddie Francis
Data Columnist

their own neighborhood grew into a group that has gotten assistance from folks all over America and parts of Canada. Not only that this group has made a few appearances on Ellen DeGeneres' show and has received help from celebrities such as New Orleans Saint Deuce McAllister and actress Paula Patton (co-star of "Déjà vu").

In fact the Katrina Krewe (and keep in mind that these are mostly white home makers) even found their way to the 'hood. They hit the 7th Ward during Jazz Fest '06 and the original site of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology. All in the name of simply helping folks to feel better about their city.

In a "Sunday Journal" interview in November of 2005 I asked Dr. Charles Burchell, of the Southern University counseling center, about the importance of cleaning up New Orleans. He responded that citizens' returning to even a relatively clean city would be a good mental and emotional lift. Unfortunately we missed that opportunity.

This is why when folks from outside of the New Orleans area ask me how things are going, I quickly point to citizen-run efforts. The spirit of folks in the East should serve as a constant reminder that New Orleans' re-growth now depends on the spirit of those who are perceived as the city's weakest collective link—black folks.

Can we envision a day that the efforts of black organizations overshadow the "heroic" efforts of our white counterparts? If we can, let's grab some brooms, rakes, gloves and bags; and get to cleanin'. I promise that it will make you feel better.

When I arrived back in New Orleans from my Katrina evacuation I found myself spending nights at my brother's home. The first thing I did was clean the debris from the front yard and sidewalk so that we could at least see a clean environment every time we returned to House of Francis. I considered it our oasis in the desert of destruction. Apparently the leadership of New Orleans was not on the same page.

I watch with other New Orleanians as work crews bust their tails to clean up after Mardi Gras parades. Of course New Orleans' ability to make the streets look like nothing like a parade ever rolled through them is phenomenal. Even in these hard post-Katrina days the cleaning crews get the job like no one else.

One question. Where was this effort when folks first started returning to New Orleans after Katrina?

Ironically the most well-known cleaning crew is headed by an Uptown home maker. Becky Zaheri got with friends who were tired of seeing debris all over their beloved Crescent City and they formed the Katrina Krewe. In fairness the first group that attempted to make noise about cleaning New Orleans was a group called The New Orleans Revolution.

Amazingly what started as a group that just wanted to clean

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BIZ IN THE BLACK

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Terry B. Jones
Publisher

The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) awarded EC advertising with both a Silver and a Bronze Award for advertising excellence.

EC advertising won the Silver Award for its campaign to advertise the Great American Seafood Cook-Off event and the Bronze Award for a recovery and restoration public relations campaign for the Louisiana Seafood Promotion & Marketing Board. In a separate contest, EC advertising also won a Merit Award at the Service Industry Association Awards for work on the Great American Seafood Cook-Off.

“While our drive to get results for our clients always fuels our work, it’s certainly gratifying when our peers in the advertising industry recognize our achievements,” said EC advertising’s Creative and Managing Director Trellis Smith. Smith added that

these campaigns did indeed get results: EC’s promotion of the Cook-Off grabbed it an hour-long slot on the Food Network and made it the biggest Cook-Off in the event’s history in terms of attendance, media exposure, website visitors, public relations inquiries, and other measurements.

“We are always pleased with the marketing EC does for us,” said Ewell Smith, executive director of Louisiana Seafood. “The materials they develop are consistently high quality, and the campaigns’ executions are effective. We’re very glad, of course, but not surprised that our campaigns have won these awards.”

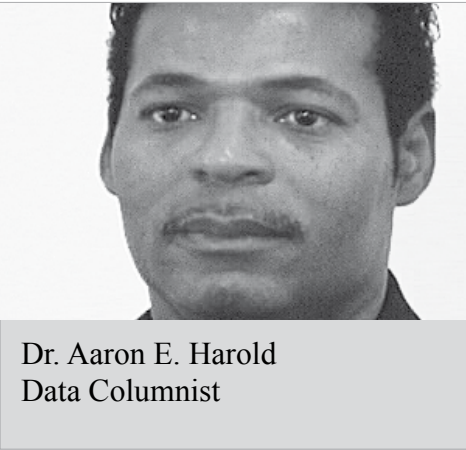
EC advertising is a full-service agency whose expertise includes branding strategies, advertising campaigns, print design, website creation, multicultural marketing, public relations, as well as other marketing services. Owned by Smith, who is African-American, EC advertising is one of the few minority-run ad agencies in the state of Louisiana. The company is also a member of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, a prestigious national trade organization.

Founded in 1927, HSMAI is an organization of sales and marketing professionals representing all segments of the hospitality industry. This year’s annual contest, now in its 50th year, attracted more than 1,200 entries from 36 countries around the world, with entries judged by teams of experts from all sectors of the industry.

The Service Industry Advertising Awards, which recognizes the work of

IN THE SPIRIT

The Lent Season,
A spiritual connection



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Many of us will be making a sacrifice of some kind during this Lent season. As we look forward toward the Easter Holiday, some of you may not understand what Lent is. Here is a short summary of the meaning of Lent. First of all, Lent is a season which Christians come together to fast and pray. It is giving up certain foods, getting rid of fleshly habits, evil thoughts, and bringing us closer to God, and our Savior Jesus Christ.

The season of Lent is also a reminder to us who are Christians and have a relationship with God, that there is always room to be a better person than we were the previous year. Even in the difficult times we may experience, we all can be better if we chose to. However, even when our plans don’t always go our way, we should not get bitter. In Philippians Chapter 4 verses 11-12, Apostle Paul, who sacrificed his life went through lots of hard times for the cause of the Gospel.

One of Paul’s famous quotes in respect to making sacrifices says, “I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content; I know both how to be abased or in need, and I know to abound or have plenty, every where and in all things I am instructed by

God’s word to be full and to be hungry.” Paul was a man who was close to God, and he sacrificed his life even though he knew that he could be killed.

Lent is not to starve us, or kill us, or to make us sick. It simply focuses on how we can improve our physical and spiritual self. Lent also reminds us that Jesus fasted himself for the spiritual battle that he was going to encounter with Satan which is in Luke Chapter 4, beginning at verse 1. In addition, Lent is more spiritual than anything else. It brings our heart closer to God’s heart and our mind closer to God’s mind. Lent can definitely prepare us for future tasks, success, and even guide us back on track when we fail in certain areas in our lives.

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of humanity, giving up his own life so that we could have a life of more abundance (St. John 10:10). Lent is more than just a religious tradition or a religious ritual going through the motions. It is a time for fasting and praying. It is a time to repent and tell God that I’m sorry for the things that I’ve done that wasn’t right. God is always willing to forgive us no matter what we’ve done. It is a time for cleansing of the soul and spirit.

Lent is also a time to reconnect oneself back to the power source that cannot fail us. Entergy shuts down in our city of New Orleans from time to time when there is an overload, but God will never shut down because he is almighty (Rev.1:8). Let us be sure that this Lent season will get the attention from God. May you have a Happy and Blessed Lent Season.

Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries. To contact him with your comments or suggestions you can e-mail him at rharold1@cox.net or call (504)813-5767

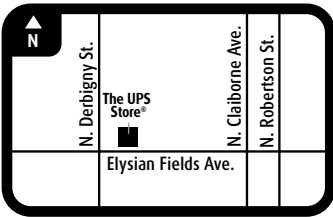
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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

AFL-CIO Endorses Tiffany Gautier Chase

New Orleans—The AFL-CIO has endorsed Tiffany Gautier Chase for the position of Judge, Civil District Court Division A - Orleans Parish. Chase, who received a dual endorsement Friday among the seven candidates that qualified for the seat says, "I'm very encouraged to have received this endorsement. I believe the members of the AFL-CIO understand that I have great respect for the support this organization offers to our workers and their rights. Protecting New Orleans' workers means protecting our families, children and elderly. I have taken an active role in serving the people of this city, not just as an attorney, but through extensive involvement in community organizations. As Judge, I will strive everyday to work as hard for them as they have for us, by upholding the high ethical standards we expect from our judges and holding people accountable for their responsibilities to our citizens." Tiffany Gautier Chase is a local attorney with the prominent law firm of Martzell and Bickford. She has a decade of experience as both a plaintiff and defense attorney in state and federal courts in Orleans Parish, and for six years, Chase worked as an attorney for the Louisiana Supreme Court. Chase earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from Loyola University of New Orleans and her Juris Doctor from Loyola University School of Law. She was admitted to the Louisiana State Bar Association in 1996.



Child Care Collaborative accepting grant applications Funds available to restore child care centers in Greater New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS—The Greater New Orleans Rebuild Child Care Collaborative is now accepting applications to award grants to previously or currently licensed Class A child care centers in the six parish Greater New Orleans area for assistance with repairing, rebuilding, and refurbishing child care centers that were damaged during Hurricane Katrina.

Child care providers from Orleans, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany parishes are eligible to apply for the grants. Centers will be awarded grants based on the need for child care in the location of the center, the quality of the program, the center's commitment to best practices in child care, and the cost to repair/rebuild.

In exchange for assistance with rebuilding, the child care center must be willing to participate in the state's new Quality Rating System (QRS) and agree to work towards providing high quality child care. Grant recipients will receive financial assistance that will be paid directly to contractors and vendors. Each center will receive individualized training and technical assistance.

Interested child care providers may pick up grant applications at the United Way for the Greater New Orleans area (first floor lobby) at 2515 Canal Street and at the headquarters for Agenda for Children at 1720 St. Charles Avenue. Applications can also be downloaded from the Rebuild Child Care Louisiana Website at www.rebuildchildcare.org. Grant applications must be submitted to the United Way no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 16th.

Potential applicants are invited to participate in one of three grant writing workshops at the United Way for the Greater New Orleans area on Saturday, February 24, 2007. The one hour workshops will be held in the United Way's fourth floor conference room at 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. respectively. For more information contact Agenda for Children at 1-800-486-1712.

The National Black Mba Association, New Orleans Chapter Presents Business After Hours



March Business After Hours networking reception to feature internationally acclaimed Broadway and recording star Lady B.J. Crosby performing live at the March 2nd event to be held at Pellerin's, 3717 Tulane Ave., 6:30 PM until 10:00 PM Broadway Star and New Orleans' Native Lady BJ will be a special invited

guest at the Next New Orleans' MBA sponsored, "Business After Hours" Scheduled for March 2, 2007 at Pellerin's 3717 Tulane Avenue. Ms BJ will perform her New CD entitled "BJ Crosby, best of your Heart " and will sign copies of her new release which will be on sale that night. BJ Crosby most recently played "Matron 'Mama' Morton" in the Broadway production of Chicago. Prior to that she starred in George C. Wolfe's Harlem Song at New York's Apollo Theater. Other Broadway credits include One Mo' Time and Smokey Joe's Café for which she received Tony and NAACP nominations for Best Actress in a Musical, an Olivier Award nomination for the London Premier and a Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album. National tours: The Civil War , Dreamgirls (Effie). Television: "Ally McBeal", "The

Rosie O'Donnell Show", "Law & Order", "Mad About You", "The Life of Romare Beardon", "The Bill Cosby Show", "Family Matters", "Victoria's Secret", and "Smokey Joe's Café: Live From Broadway". Other stage credits: Best Little Whorehouse in Texas , Ain't Misbehavin', Lady BJ Sings Lady Day. Concerts: New Jersey Symphony (guest soloist), Disney World with Dynamite National Talent and Stepp Stewart. Recordings: A Tribute to Billie Holiday with Ellis Marsalis (Ace Award), He's Right on Time (Rev Daryl Coley, Sparrow Records). The NMBAA, Data News Weekly and Corporate Project Management schedules LDED SmallBusinessServicesExecutive Director John Matthews to make an exclusive presentation to entrepreneurs and small business owners at a business networking reception.

"We did not hesitate to call our movement an army. But it was a special army, with no supplies but its sincerity, no uniform but its determination, no arsenal except its faith, no currency but its conscience."

~Martin Luther King, Jr.



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NATIONAL NEWS

Farra Khan stresses unity in farewell

By JEFF KAROUB
Associated Press Writer

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan stressed religious unity Sunday during his final major speech, saying the world is at war because Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths are divided. The 73-year-old Farrakhan told the thousands at Detroit's Ford Field that Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad would embrace each other with love if they were on the stage behind him. "Our lips are full of praise, but our hearts are far removed from the prophets we all claim," he said. "That's why the world is in the shape that it's in." The fiery orator spoke for the first time since ceding leadership of the movement last year because of illness. The speech at the home of the National Football League's Detroit Lions capped the Nation's three-day convention in the city where it was founded in



Minister Louis Farrakhan addresses the Saviours' Day gathering in Detroit, Sunday, Feb. 25, 2007. Heading into what is being billed as Farrakhan's final major address, some are saying the charismatic and often fiery orator has his eye on repairing the decade of division between his movement and mainstream Islam. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

1930. "My time is up," Farrakhan said in describing his exit from the leadership stage. "The Final

Call can't last forever." The controversial figure said that he is leaving at a time of great conflict in the world and that he believes God is angry with leaders who are putting politics and greed above serving their fellow man. The downtown venue was not filled to capacity, but seats on the field and in the lower levels were packed. There were empty seats in the upper levels of the stadium. Anita Baker performed two songs before Farrakhan took the stage and speakers from various religious groups welcomed him. Nation founder Wallace D. Fard attracted black Detroiters on the margins of society with a message of self-improvement and separation from whites, who he said were inherently evil because of their enslavement of blacks. The Nation of Islam, which promotes black empowerment and nationalism, was rebuilt by Farrakhan in the late 1970s after W.D. Mohammed,



An attendee sheds a tear as Minister Louis Farrakhan addresses the Saviours' Day gathering in Detroit on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2007. Heading into what is being billed as Farrakhan's final major address, some are saying the charismatic and often fiery orator has his eye on repairing the decade of division between his movement and mainstream Islam. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

the son of longtime leader Elijah Mohammed, moved his followers toward mainstream Islam. Farrakhan, who embraced W.D. Mohammed on stage in 2000 after years of discord, has credited his steps toward reconciliation to what he called a "near death" experience related to prostate cancer, which he began battling

in 1991. Wayne Bryant of Chicago has been attending Nation of Islam gatherings for the past 20 years. "I think the minister delivers a very powerful message about self-determination," he said before Farrakhan spoke. "I really wanted to enjoy the moment, the magnetism the minister brings to me personally and the crowd."



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