



*Lighting The Road To The Future*

**New Orleans**

**Data**

**News Weekly**

*"The People's Paper"*

# Terry Steele Performs at Harrah's



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# The Year in Review

## Data Reflects on Monumental Events and Historical Moments of 2008

Shaniece B. Bickham and Edwin Buggage

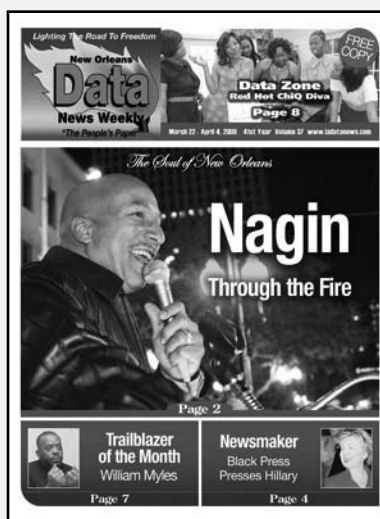
The year 2008 was filled with many triumphant moments that have changed history forever. On the local, state, and national levels, Data News Weekly covered news stories that unfolded and explained these events to its readers giving them insight on the issues that matter to them most. This week Data News will recap some of the most memorable stories of 2008.



### New Orleans Urban League Moving Forward

In the Feb. 23 Data News Weekly exclusive, Director of the New Orleans Urban League Nolan Rollins discussed his plans for the civil rights organization and its plans for addressing the issues that affect the African-American community in the

21st century. Rollins, who is not a New Orleans native, spoke of how he has come to love and appreciate the citizens of the city and their resilience after Hurricane Katrina. He talked about how the Nation Urban League under the leadership of National President and former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial will continue to be at the forefront of the struggle to ensure that in the rebuilding of the Crescent City African-Americans are empowered and continue to be a vital part of the city's cultural landscape.



### Nagin Through the Fire

In a Data News Weekly exclusive in March, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin discussed his second administration and some of the challenges that he has faced. In the article, Nagin talks about the trials and triumphs of a city as it works to rebuild. He explores

the issues of race, his sometimes adversarial relationship with the mainstream media, and the beleaguered Louisiana Road Home Program. Throughout the story the mayor continues to have a positive outlook on the city and how it is progressing in spite of the challenges it continues to face.

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## MLK: 40 Years After

Data News Weekly published a cover story in April commemorating the 40th Anniversary

of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. King was a man who dared to dream that one day people will be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. This drum major for justice fought for the rights of the dispossessed. And although today, many of the battles have been won, the road to complete freedom and equality still has not been reached as the struggles that M.L.K. and his lieutenants raised continues.



## Three Years After Hurricane Katrina

Data News Weekly had the unique opportunity to talk to Phyllis Montana LeBlanc who was featured in Spike Lee's powerful documentary, 'When the Levees Broke.' Three years later the lady who articulated the frustrations of so many during the horrendous days of Hurricane Katrina, penned a book telling her tale in 'Not Just the Levees Broke' where she recounted those dark days and what she and her family experienced when hope died for so many citizens of New Orleans. Her story evokes both laughter and tears of a people and a city whose life after Aug. 29, 2005 changed forever.

## Hurricane Gustav Evacuation

This year, New Orleans residents could not focus entirely on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina because they were all busy keeping a close eye on Hurricane Gustav, a storm Mayor Ray Nagin predicted to be the "mother of all storms." The city and state proved that it had in fact improved evacuation plans for those who needed assistance, though the evacuation did put financial strains on residents, many of whom left the state and spent money on hotels, gas, and other travel expenses. In addition, electricity was out for awhile causing many residents' food to spoil causing another unexpected expense.



## Data Celebrates 42nd Anniversary

Sponsors, readers, and other supporters of Data News Weekly gathered back in July to celebrate the continued success of the publication and to look ahead to many more successful years in the future. The Trailblazers recognized throughout the year were honored and the Trailblazer of the Year received a special award. The live entertainment included, but was not limited to, Kermit Ruffins, Michael Ward, Sharon Martin, and Al Ancar. Two college students were also awarded with scholarships from the JMJ Foundation. The Fine Arts Center served as the venue for the event.



## Race for 2nd Congressional District Heats Up

Several Democratic candidates threw their hats in the race for Congressman William Jefferson's 2nd Congressional District seat. The race drew a large interest from several Democratic contenders because Congressman Jefferson's legal troubles. Former TV reporter Helena Moreno beat out several candidates in the Democratic primary, forcing a runoff with Congressman Jefferson on Nov. 4. Though the congressman came out successful on Nov. 4, he eventually lost his seat to political newcomer Joseph Cao in December. Cao is an attorney and Loyola University New Orleans professor who will become the first Vietnamese-American member of the U.S. Congress.

## Problems on Wall Street Affects African-Americans

When talks of a Wall Street bailout by the government first emerged, the big question was: What about Main Street? Many people were not entirely against the \$700 billion bailout, but did want to know what the government's plans were in terms of assisting homeowners and small businesses owners. The problems on Wall Street have a trickle-down effect contributing greatly to the economy's downward spiral. Data News Weekly examined the economy's problems and their impact on the African-American community.



See Cover Story, Continued on page 7.



# New Orleans Native Named as Environmental Protection Agency Administrator

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.

The Environmental Protection Agency under President-elect Barack Obama's administration will be under the auspices of a New Orleans native. President-elect Obama named Lisa Jackson, who grew-up in the Lower Ninth Ward, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator on Monday, Dec. 15.

"I am both humbled and honored by President-elect Obama's selection to lead the Environmental Protection Agency."

Jackson will become the first African-American administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. She has extensive experience, having served as the head of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection. She currently serves as New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine's chief of staff.

"Lisa has spent a lifetime in public service at the local, state and federal level. As Commission-

er of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection, she has helped make her state a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing new sources of energy, and she has the talent and experience to continue this effort at the EPA," said President-elect Obama during the announcement of his Energy and Environment team. "Lisa also shares my commitment to restoring the EPA's robust role in protecting our air, water and abundant natural resources so that our environment is cleaner and our communities are safer."

Jackson, who is a professional engineer, received her master's degree in chemical engineering from Princeton University and her undergraduate degree from Tulane University. She was also the valedictorian at St. Mary's Dominican High School in New Orleans in 1979.

"For anyone who cares deeply, as I do, about our nation's environ-

ment and our citizens' quality of life, this appointment is a dream come true. From fighting climate change globally to preventing pollution locally, we face some of the most challenging and complex environmental issues of our time. The solutions may not be simple or easy, but on behalf of every American, I will work tirelessly to pursue them," said Jackson in her official statement regarding the appointment.

During her tenure at the New Jersey of Environmental Protection, Jackson helped develop the Northeastern states Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), serving as Vice President of its Executive Board. She has also focused on water issues, including expanding protections for surface waters that serve as sources of drinking water and habitat for endangered species.

"Lisa Jackson has a wealth of experience and a solid record of achievement in environmental



Lisa Jackson

service. As a former EPA executive, she is uniquely qualified to recognize the challenges facing the agency and lead from day one," said current EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. "This is an exciting time at EPA, and Lisa will direct an agency that is poised to build on the many environmental successes accomplished since 2001."

Jackson's past experience also includes management responsibilities at the Environmental Protection Agency's regional office in New York for the Superfund program, the federal program regulating hazardous waste clean-up projects; for enforcement programs at both EPA and DEP; and for New Jersey's Land Use Management Program.

"Looking ahead, I am confident that we will be ready to begin the journey towards a new energy frontier on Jan. 20. This will be a leading priority of my presidency, and a defining test of our time. We cannot afford complacency, nor accept any more broken promises," President-elect Obama said. "We won't create a new energy economy and protect our environment overnight, but we can begin that work right now if we think anew, and act anew. Now, we must have the will to act, and to act boldly."

## Bring Home Holiday Refreshment

**GIVE \* LIVE \* LOVE**



# Mayor Nagin Announces Budget Veto, Hiring Freeze, Spending Cuts and Reduced Sanitation Services

*New Orleans City Council Opposes Changes and Overrides Nagin's Vetoes*

In response to the New Orleans City Council's approval of a 2009 operating budget that does not include adequate recurring revenues to support recurring expenses, Mayor C. Ray Nagin vetoed several budget items, cut spending for all departments except public safety, and issued an executive order that implements a hiring freeze for all departments, including public safety.

In addition, sanitation services will be limited to basic garbage pickup only throughout the city beginning Jan. 1. This means that enhancements such as street sweeping and power washing will be eliminated in the French Quarter and downtown areas. In addition, the Department of Finance will review each department's budget at the end of the year and recapture unspent allocations related to the freeze imposed after Hurricane Gustav.

Finally, the City Administration will not enforce a decision by the City Council to put funding into reserve. A legal opinion from a prior City Attorney indicates the Council has no legal authority to take such an action.

"As Chief Executive Officer of the City of New Orleans, I am committed to ensuring that the City will have the funds needed should we be hit by another hurricane or some other emergency," said Mayor Nagin. "In addition, it is critical that we remain true to the five-year financial plan we developed following Hurricane Katrina, which has helped us to re-gain credibility with Wall Street and is essential in order for us to issue bonds as necessary in 2009 to continue with our recovery rebuilding."

According to an official statement from the New Orleans City Council, the majority of the members chose to override Mayor Nagin's vetoes. The action to override would keep in place the budget the Council passed on Dec. 1 in an effort to retain funding for public safety needs and educational programs. The decision was made at a Dec. 17 Council meeting.

In his veto message, Mayor Nagin said the cuts are necessary "in order for the City of New Orleans to maintain sound financial practices; secure sufficient reserves for possible disasters,

emergencies and revenue shortfalls; and position for an improved credit rating to enhance the City's ability to sell bonds in 2009 for various capital improvement projects and other critical needs."

Mayor Nagin's budget alterations will reduce the city's expenditures by \$18 million in 2009. The reductions, which will lead to reduced services, are necessary to fill a budget gap that began at \$24 million and was reduced to \$18 million when President Bush reduced the City's match for Hurricane Gustav repairs from 25% to 10%. This budget gap results from a decision by the Council beginning in 2007 to add recurring costs without adding a correlating recurring source of revenue.

Council members in a Nov. 30, 2007 resolution acknowledged that they had included new expenditures without adding appropriate revenues and said they would consider either reducing expenditures or rolling forward millage in 2008 "in order to continue to provide municipal services while adhering to the Administration's five-year plan."

On Oct. 28, Mayor Nagin presented a sustainable budget in which recurring expenses matched recurring revenue. The Mayor's key budget objectives were to continue to improve city services, fuel recovery, maintain adequate funds for hurricane season and position the city to sell bonds to continue street repairs and other infrastructure upgrades.

Last month, Director of Finance Reginald Zeno sent a letter to the City Council in which he reiterated the importance of increased recurring revenue and outlined the cuts that would be likely if the Council failed to implement a revenue generating measure. Zeno also warned of another financial crisis anticipated for 2010: Pension bonds issued by a prior administration in 2000 have been unexpectedly called and the city may be required to repay the bonds over five years at an annual rate of \$26 million beginning in 2010. Zeno said at the time that the cumulative effect of the existing shortfall and the bond payments would total more than \$44 million per year.

However, the budget approved by the Council attempts to pay for



New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin

recurring expenses with one-time revenues. The Council used the final \$10 million of the \$240 million Community Disaster Loan, which would have been used in the 2010 budget under the five-year plan, to pay some increase expenditures. The Council's budget also eliminated the restoration of the reserve fund, which could leave the city inadequately prepared for the next hurricane season or other emergencies, and would greatly diminish the likelihood that the city could sell bonds needed for rebuilding projects and for other critical purposes.

"We are now in the position of making serious cuts. The majority of these cuts bring with them a reduction in services to be provided by the City; however, we are taking the actions necessary to live within our means and to ensure that our city remains in the best position for today and the future."

Specifically, Mayor Nagin has taken the following actions:

Issued Executive Order CRN 08-08 which accomplishes the following:

- o Institutes a freeze on the hiring of any new personnel for the City of New Orleans. Public safety departments will be capped at their December 31, 2008 levels. The freeze is effective immediately for all other departments.

As a result of this action, the

City will not be able to increase the number of officers in the New Orleans Police Department to 1,700 as planned. Instead, the department will be limited to approximately 1,575 officers.

The City also will not be able to fill open positions in the Fire Department or 24 open positions in the Office of Safety and Permits, including six building and electrical inspectors. This will have an adverse effect on the City's efforts to reduce the amount of time residents must wait in order to obtain necessary building and electrical inspections.

- o Maintains only basic sanitation collection services throughout the City. This will eliminate the enhanced services such as street sweeping and power washing within the Vieux Carre and downtown areas of the City.

Implemented a spending cut of at least 2 1/2 percent for all departments other than public safety.

Directed the Department of Finance to review each department's budget and recapture unspent allocations in all departments at the end of the year related to the freeze imposed after Hurricane Gustav.

Mayor Nagin also exercised his power as stipulated in the Home Rule Charter and vetoed the following appropriations that

the City Council designated to agencies outside New Orleans city government:

- \$1.7 million to the Indigent Defender Board. At the next meeting of the Council, Mayor Nagin will offer for introduction an ordinance that will add a \$5 fee to each ticket issued for violation of the red light camera ordinance, which would be earmarked for the Indigent Defender Board.

- \$379,391 to the Recovery School District for after-school programs.

- \$600,000 to the District Attorney's Office, leaving in place half of the Council's \$1.2 million appropriation to the office to replace an expiring grant. Mayor Nagin also has committed to work with the District Attorney to lobby other levels of government for additional grant funds to replace the dollars lost to expiring grants.

- \$100,000 to the New Orleans Recreation Department for Aquatics and after school programs

- \$97,000 to Juvenile Court for Law Clerk salaries

- \$25,000 for Crime Stoppers

- \$100,000 to LSU Cooperative Extension Service

- \$43,750 for Reserve Contingency.

"Many of these appropriations represented funding increases from the city to the organizations receiving them," Mayor Nagin said. "While many of these entities are very worthy of receiving additional funding, it is not feasible for the City to provide such funding when there remain so many unmet needs in sustaining of the City and its essential services. Unfortunately, these likely are not the last cuts that we will be required to make."

In addition to exercising his veto power, Mayor Nagin also said the Council's appropriation of various lump sums of funding into "Reserves" is of no effect and the City Administration will disregard the action. This position is based on Opinion Number 01-14, which was issued by former City Attorney Mavis Early on November 29, 2001. Early's opinion indicated that the Home Rule Charter does not give the City Council the authority to establish a "Reserve" class. Rather, the Council can make appropriations only to classes that are part of the budget the Mayor submits to the Council.

## Gospel Trio Trin-i-tee 5:7 Will Host Holiday Benefit Concert in New Orleans East

Spirit Rising Music's Trin-i-tee 5:7 will present "ATRIN-I-TEE 5:7 CHRISTMAS" concert on Sunday, Dec. 21 at The Upper Room Bible Church, 8600 Lake Forest Boulevard in New Orleans at 7 p.m. General admission tickets are \$12 plus one canned good, \$20 at door and are available online ([www.myspace.com/trinitee57](http://www.myspace.com/trinitee57)) and at the venue (504) 245-9060. Concert goers will be entertained by Corey Haynes, Praise In Motion dancers, and a Praise Ensemble comprised of choral singers from various local churches.

"This is our gift to the people of New Orleans," says Trin-i-tee 5:7. "We want to share from our hearts the celebration of what Christmas is about, the birth of Christ...love, joy and giving. Caring for one another and sharing in the love of a city that has so very much loved us. Come join us for it's truly a Merry Christmas."

Trin-i-tee 5:7, comprised of Chanelle Haynes, Angel Taylor and Adrian Anderson, decided to produce the event as a way to celebrate the holiday season, and specifically selected a church location in New Orleans East in an effort to bring energy and entertainment to one of the hardest hit areas in the city. Two of the group members (Angel and Chanelle) are natives of the Crescent City and know first-hand about facing difficult times. Both ladies, along with their families, friends and fellow residents, had to hold on to their collective faith following major losses they experienced when the city was submerged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. With the city still suffering from the storm's ravaging effects over three years later, Trin-i-tee 5:7 thought the holiday season was the perfect time to present an event focusing on love, joy and giving. A portion of the proceeds and donations collected will benefit various organizations including Feed The Children, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, New Orleans Mission, Samaritan's Purse, Covenant House, the USO, Bridge House, Oprah's Angel Network and TBN.



Trin-i-tee 5:7

## Urban League of Greater New Orleans Hosts Desire Community Fair

The smell of popcorn, hotdogs and red beans, and the sound of music and children laughing, filled the air as the Urban League of Greater New Orleans presented the Desire Community Fair on Saturday, Dec. 13.

The fair was held at Abundance Square, located at 2906 Desire Parkway. It was a day to celebrate continued revitalization in the Desire Community as the Urban League unveiled plans to begin construction next year on a new Early Head Start Center and multi-purpose complex funded in part by Total Community Action, Inc.

"We hope that our presence in the Desire community will be a symbol of positive change and that our programs will inspire stability and hope that creates change that comes from within," said Nolan V. Rollins, President & CEO of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans.

The fair offered several opportunities for fair attendees to win prizes including a computer and bicycles thanks to donations. Due to the largess of the New Orleans Saints Offensive Line, 15 lucky fair-goers won 20-inch bicycles, just in time for Christmas. Wellness services and information was made available through the Daughters of Charity, Excelth, and the Office of Public Health Region 1. The City of New Orleans Job 1 division was also on hand to assist individuals seeking employment.

Celebrating 70 years, the Urban League has served the New Orleans community providing advocacy, educational, workforce and economic development initiatives that are focused to create pathways to economic self-sufficiency. The mission of the Urban League is to empower communities and help change lives. The Urban League is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian, community based organization and a participating agency of the United Way of Greater New Orleans.

## Local Artist Commissioned to Design Christmas Ornament for White House

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.



Artist Amy Bryan visits the White House for the Artists' Reception.



Louisiana Congressman William Jefferson selected artist Amy Bryan to decorate the 2nd District's ornament for the 2008 White House Christmas Tree. White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian.

Amy Bryan's Ornament Represents the 2nd Congressional District

Amy Bryan, an artist and assistant professor of art, designed a Christmas ornament on behalf of the 2nd Congressional District for the White House Christmas Tree in Washington, DC. Congressman William Jefferson commissioned Bryan to design the district's ornament for the tree, which was unveiled on Dec. 4.

The White House Christmas theme this year is "A Red, White, and Blue Christmas." The theme exudes America's patriotic spirit and the freedoms of this country. U.S. Senators and U.S. Congress members were charged with the task of selecting artists who would design the ornaments that would adorn the tree for the 2008 holiday season.

"It was a wonderful feeling to visit the White House for the Holiday Open House/Artist's Reception because it is so historical and significant," said Bryan. "I was happy to contribute my artistic vision to the Christmas tree of one of our most significant

American homes and sites. I am grateful to Congressman William Jefferson for the commission and First Lady Laura Bush for the invitation."

Bryan is an assistant professor at Dillard University. Prior to her term at Dillard, she worked as an assistant professor of art at Tuskegee University in Alabama. Bryan's art has also been featured in several solo and collaborative exhibitions. She has an M.F.A. in printmaking from Howard University and a B.A. in Studio Art from Xavier University of Louisiana.

Bryan's ornament hangs on the official White House Christmas Tree in the Blue Room of the White House. This year's tree is a Fraser fir.



Cover Story, Continued from page 3.



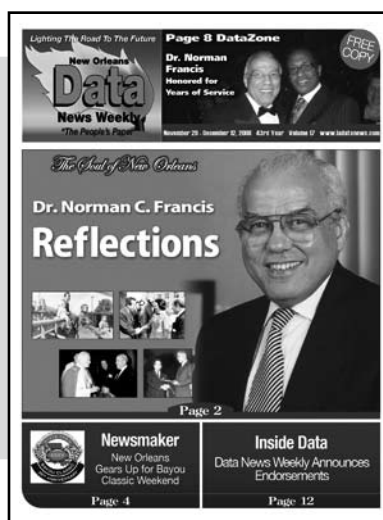
## Obama and the American Dream

History was made on Election Day on Nov. 4 as Barack Obama became the 44th U.S. President. It was a historic first for an African-American, as people around the globe celebrated this transformative moment in time. Data News Weekly dedicated its entire Nov. 15 issue to President-Elect Obama and shed light on the historic significance of his win, and the hope for a nation fulfilling its promise of the American Dream.

## Norman Francis: Reflections

He is a beacon light in the field of education, and a shining star in the realm of humanity. After celebrating 40 years as President of Xavier University of Louisiana, Dr. Norman C. Francis sat down and reflected on his life's journey with Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones and editor-in-chief Edwin Buggage, giving a walk down memory lane of a life where serving mankind and touching so many lives has been the hallmark of a man of great accomplishments. Dr. Francis is a very humble spirit of a man rooted in doing good and serving his fellow man.

As we embark upon 2009, Data News Weekly will continue to offer its readers solid news coverage and commentary.



## Snow in New Orleans



New Orleanians received a special treat last week when it snowed. New Orleans resident Shona McKinney takes an opportunity to enjoy the rare moment.

Photo: Shona McKinney

## FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR GROWN FOLKS

### Who Should Make Our Choices?

Recently, some self-appointed activists have proposed a legislative ban on menthol cigarettes in a misguided effort to force people to quit smoking by limiting their choices. So far, wiser heads have prevailed and the ban on menthol has not passed. It could come up again. It shouldn't.

When government "reforms" intrude into our lives to the point of restricting freedom of individual choices on what we can enjoy, our basic concept of liberty is threatened.

### How Should Our Choices Be Made?

In the American tradition, laws restricting freedom of choice must be based on sound reasoning, rational public policy and verifiable data while allowing for a minimum of governmental intrusion. Menthol is a matter of taste and preference. The body of scientific evidence does not support the conclusion that menthol

cigarettes increase the known risks from smoking. The effort to ban menthol is just another in a long series of attempts by the politically correct crowd to force Americans to give up their freedom to choose to smoke a cigarette.

**"Informed grown-ups who decide to smoke should have the freedom to choose menthol cigarettes"**

### Shouldn't People Keep Fighting For The Freedom Of Choice?

The history of African Americans in this country has been one of fighting against paternalistic limitations and for freedoms. We all agree that children should not smoke, but grown-ups who can and should assess the risks of smoking should have the freedom to choose whether

to smoke or not. If they choose to smoke, they should have the freedom to choose to smoke regular or menthol cigarettes. Please visit [www.mentholchoice.com](http://www.mentholchoice.com) and learn more about how you can help prevent this ban on menthol from being considered.

*Lorillard*  
TOBACCO COMPANY

[www.mentholchoice.com](http://www.mentholchoice.com)



# PIPELINE TO THE PEOPLE

by Benjamin Bates

This has been an interesting year filled with many ups and downs, and as 2008 comes to a close we asked people across the city what was the highlight for them this year and what they are looking forward to in 2009.

## Jean Baker



For me, it hasn't necessarily been a lot of things that has been going on in politics and things like that, but that doesn't not mean the first African-American President is not important for I feel it is, but has been more of a highlight for me has been that my daughter Brejean started pre-school. And knowing that she has come into the world where what was once unthinkable is now possible. To see her from

birth to where she is right now is such an amazing feeling as a father.

And for 2009 I see much of the same. I look forward to continuing to see my daughter grow and be there to provide the love, care and guidance that she needs in her journey through life.

## Nancy Hampton

"The highlight of the year was the U.S. Presidential Election. It was truly exciting to see a woman and an African-American running for the nation's highest office.

And as we move into to the coming year, I look forward to traveling abroad as a proud American not embarrassed to show my United States Passport. My friends abroad have assured me that with the election of Obama, Americans are once again considered to be a welcome portion of the global community."



Pipeline, continued on page 8.



## Make the holiday meal your crowning achievement.

The holiday meal is not a time to leave anything to chance, especially when serving a traditional favorite like Chitterlings. So go with the brand that has been a holiday favorite for over 40 years: Queenella. Our chitterlings are triple cleaned. And sure to satisfy all your party guests.





# Terry Steele: Here and Now... The Legacy of Luther Vandross

June Hazeur

The Terry Steele Concert at Harrah's on Friday, Dec. 12, 2008 was absolutely the best show I've attended in years. He is the best. What else can I say except he does Luther proud by singing his songs? He is a real showman; he works the audience well, shaking hands with as many as possible. Then he jokes



June Hazeur and Terry Steele

about wanting to see who is with whom.

He stated that he is not trying to impersonate Luther or be Luther Vandross; he could never be Luther; he says, "I am a fan and I love his songs; 'I am not a fool.'" Terry made these statements as an introduction to the song "I Don't Want to Be a Fool".

Terry spoke of many of his experiences such as speaking with Mary Ida Vandross, mother of the late superstar "Luther Vandross. Prior to her death in April 2008 he spoke with Mrs. Vandross about singing Luther's songs. She had no problem with him singing his songs and just asked him to keep his legacy alive. He told her that he did not want to be Luther; he loved his songs and only wanted to sing them. He then sang Mrs. Vandross' favorite song, "The

Impossible Dream." It was absolutely beautiful and a touching rendition of the song.

About twenty years ago his Godmother, Dionne Warwick, read a song he had written. The song was the Grammy Award winning song "Here and Now," which she took to Luther. He liked it and he said that he would record it and he did. Then in 1989 Luther contacted Terry

to advise him of the Grammy Nomination. Luther asked him, "What are you wearing to the Grammy's?" not knowing at the time. Luther gave him the number for his wardrobe designer, telling him to contact him. He made a beautiful white jacket with what looked like black embroidery and sequins, which Terry wore to the Grammy's. Terry wore the jacket on stage when he returned for the last set on Friday. He told us the story about the jacket. He stated that he loves the jacket although it was years ago so now it's a little tight, but he wore it just the same because he loves it and is proud to show it off.

Steele has written for such renowned artists as Dionne Warwick, Whitney Houston, Patti LaBelle, Diana Ross and others.

Mr. Steele polled the audience asking how long they have been married. There were several responses of 45, 50, 55 years and the least was two weeks, which brought a chuckle from the audience. When he sang "Here and

Now" he dedicated the song to all lovers and to those who love.

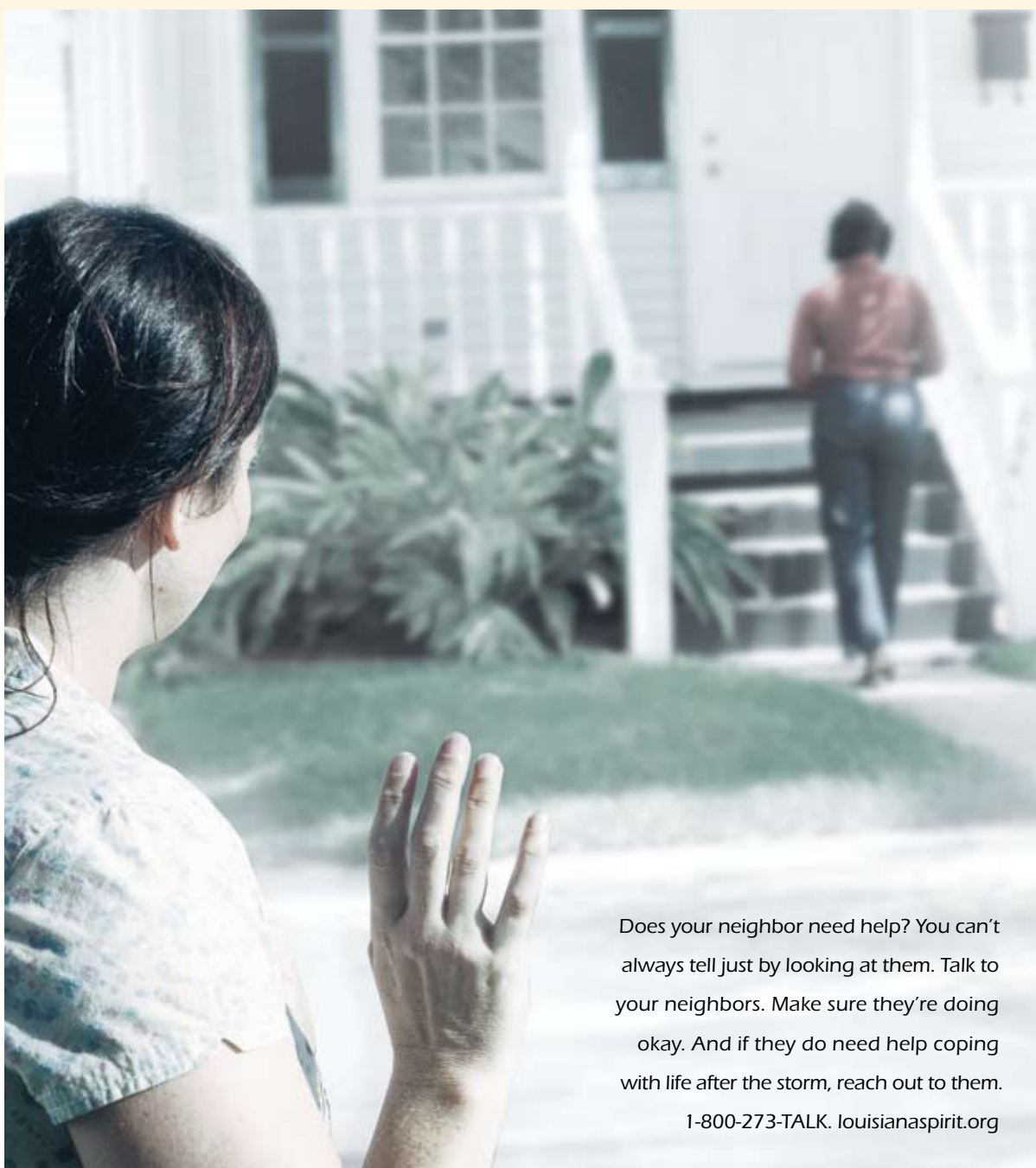
When the music began for "Dance With My Father" I began to scream out, 'Yes, yes, yes,' because this is one of the most touching songs I've ever heard. When I hear this song it brings tears to my eyes and I did shed tears. After the show I spoke with Terry and I told him

how it affects me. He said that it often bring tears to his eyes because he lost his father a few years ago.

He also performed Luther's signature song, "A House Is Not A Home." Though recorded by several others, it belongs to Luther. You would have thought that Luther himself was singing. It was a phenomenal per-

formance as were most of the songs he sang. His voice is so much like Luther.

He sang other songs like "Superstar", "Endless Love" and others, but to me these were the most memorable. The last song he sang was "The Power of Love". I thoroughly enjoyed the show and would not hesitate to attend any of his concerts.



Does your neighbor need help? You can't always tell just by looking at them. Talk to your neighbors. Make sure they're doing okay. And if they do need help coping with life after the storm, reach out to them.

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## A holiday experience like no other.

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Have your photo taken with Santa, see real reindeer and enjoy live entertainment every Friday, Saturday & Sunday, November 28 – January 3.

Take a walk through our winter wonderland, taste some of the city's most delectable treats and sip on the holiday's best beverages at Fulton Square.





# PIPELINE TO THE PEOPLE

Continued from page 8.



## Elliot Luv

"This year what stands out to me most is that I have been able to be back in the city I love, New Orleans. I can look around [and] in spite of all the things that haven't been done, I still see signs of progress that I feel good about. Also for this nation to move towards racial progress by electing Barack Obama President of the U.S.---with this I am hopeful and excited about the direction this nation is moving in.

In 2009 I am anticipating the release of my album. I hope it can inspire people to be all they can be and do whatever they can to make their dreams come true and to my city, which is already an amazing city, becoming an even greater city. I want to be able to contribute to that."

## Tanya Linnegar



One of the biggest highlights of 2008 for me has to be the election of Barack Obama as our new president. The coverage of his victory brought tears to my eyes and made my heart soar with hope- I felt as though I was witnessing a very special, moving moment in history. As a white African, born and raised in South Africa, I witnessed the fall of Apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa on April 27th, 1994. For me, Obama's election feels just as historic and important, not because racism

will now magically disappear in America, but because a huge symbolic barrier has now been crossed. African -American children growing up in these next generations will grow up thinking there is absolutely nothing unusual about the fact that they can aspire and dream of becoming whatever their hearts desire and their talents and hard work dictate, including perhaps becoming the next president of the United States. This is beautiful and [shows] significant progress in the history of race relations and the pursuit of equality for all people in this country.

## Shedrick White



"The thing that stood out to me in 2008 is how the country as a whole answered the call for change. And in the process, race did not play the role of spoiler. In a country where race has

reared its ugly head and impeded progress before, the country showed great character and rose to the occasion.

In 2009, I want to see if the country will answer the call again as our new President-elect will call on us to be the agents change that he and Dr. King envisioned."

Happy Holidays  
from  
Data News Weekly



# Shayla De La Rose

## *Young, Gifted and Black*

by: Edwin Buggage

A play entitled "To be Young, Gifted and Black, a title taken from a Langston Hughes poem, was produced about the great American playwright Lorraine Hansberry after her death. The words from this title were also made into songs by the great female vocalist Nina Simone, and the Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin. These words embody the spirit of giving and of hope, and this month's Trailblazer is someone who epitomizes the hope and spirit of the future.

Shayla De La Rose is a young lady who has been diligent in her work to help people in her community through a variety of activities in her short life. This twenty-something has been actively serving in the community for years.

"I have been around educators all my life and people who gave back, so it just seemed so natural that I would be part of solutions to problems that people experience and be a positive force for change," said De La Rose. "That is what I have always seen and that is what my life's mission is all about."

De La Rose has followed in the footsteps of many her family and works in the field of education at a school that focuses on literacy.

"I think this is the one of the most important areas of education, because literacy is the key to open up the doors to knowledge and being able to obtain whatever you want out of life," she said. "I feel it is our job to prepare our young people for the future because if we don't, who will?"

De La Rose is a spiritually grounded young woman who has worked diligently with what was formerly called All Congregations Together (ACT) but is now called the Jeremiah Group, to help eradicate problems in her community in the Treme area of New Orleans.

"We have worked to fight crime, blight, and other vices that were nuisances in our community that affected our quality of life and we have worked with some of our elected officials on that including City Councilmembers James Carter and Shelly Midura," said De La Rose. "Things are much better, but we must continue because after Hurricane Katrina



we are still trying to rebuild our lives and our communities."

She believes that the next generation has to become more involved and build for the future of the city.

"Being from Treme, which is very important not just to the history of New Orleans but to the world, I think it is important for young people like myself and others to begin to take on lead roles and become more involved in the shaping of the city's future," said De La Rose. "We cannot just sit idly by. We must become part of the dialogue about what our city will become. Working in education as well as with community groups I feel what I and many others have done is important work, but a lot more young people have to become involved if we are to have a voice and make an impact on the city in the future."

With the election of President-Elect Obama, De La Rose is hopeful that change is on the way. "I believe that for people of my generation this is an inspiration that we can achieve anything if we get involved. And I think his victory was not just a victory for African-Americans, but a victory for humanity."

Shayla De La Rose is a shining example who is standing on the shoulders of many of those who came before her. She is a young woman who is working to change the perception that young people have become apathetic about social change.

"I am not unique. There are many young people who are out here that are working to better themselves and their communities, but sometimes there is too much focus on the negative and not on people doing positive things," she said.

She said she feels it is time for people to come together for the common good.

"I think it is important that we all—regardless of age, race and gender—must come together to understand that we are all in this together and we must work for the good of all people," said De La Rose.

Shayla De La Rose is part of a new vanguard of leadership in the city who is working inside the system as well as at the grassroots level to help citizens and communities as the city rebuilds. She is intelligent, talented, young, gifted and black and she is December's 2008 New Orleans Data News Weekly Trailblazer.

# JMJ

Joseph M. Jones  
Continuing Education Fund



# at&t



# U.S. Automakers Held to Double-Standard



George C. Curry  
NNPA

mind that they have traveled free on military jets, never mind that they enjoy health benefits and other perks far beyond the reach of most Americans.

It was the equivalent of Jesse James complaining about the crimes of Frank James.

Whether you believe that the U.S. auto industry should receive a loan or feel they should be forced into bankruptcy in order to reorganize, it should be noted that car manufacturers and Wall Street were seeking two markedly different forms of federal assistance. The Big Three were asking for a loan while Wall Street was seeking – and got – a handout.

The Bush administration, after being given a \$700 billion pot to pretty much spend as it wants, has evidently adopted the motto: No Bank Left Behind. Take the case of Citigroup, Inc. It recently received a \$20 billion infusion of cash from the feds and a guarantee of \$306 billion against its high-risk assets. That's on top of a previous \$25 billion the federal government had doled out to Citigroup. In exchange, the federal government will receive preferred stock shares with an 8 percent dividend.

We're in the middle of providing nearly \$1 trillion to Wall Street yet no one has talked about Wall Street executives' use of corporate jets, or their coming up with an acceptable plan before receiving the money or removing the inept leaders that plunged the industry into this morass.

The heated debate over helping the U.S. auto industry has not been advanced by sloppy news reporting.

As Media Matters, the watchdog group, notes: "Several media outlets have used data that combines the average cost of current wages and benefits and future benefits to falsely assert or suggest that autoworkers make \$70 or more per hour. But, as analysts and some media outlets have noted, the figure includes not only future retirement benefits for current workers, but also benefits paid to current retirees."

Dean Baker, co-director of Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, wrote on his blog, "The New York Times told readers that GM's autoworkers are paid \$70 an hour (including health care and pension). This is not true. The base pay is about \$28 an hour. If health care cost per worker average \$12,000 per year, that adds in another \$6 an hour. If the pension payment takes up 25 percent of base pay (an extremely high pension), that gets you another \$7 an hour, bringing the total to \$41 an hour. That's decent pay, but still a long way from \$70 an hour."

Most of those opposed to helping the Big Three supported the Wall Street bailout plan. That's the same group that railed against welfare for the needy but voted to support corporate welfare for the greedy.

Republican lawmakers have strongly objected to granting a loan to U.S. carmakers. Senators Richard Shelby of Alabama and Bob Corker of Tennessee have been helping lead that effort.

While they oppose loans to Detroit, they didn't object to taxpayers in their respective states subsidizing foreign automakers.

According to Good Jobs First, a non-profit group that monitors corporate subsidies, more than \$3.5 billion has been used to subsidize foreign manufacturers that built plants in the U.S.

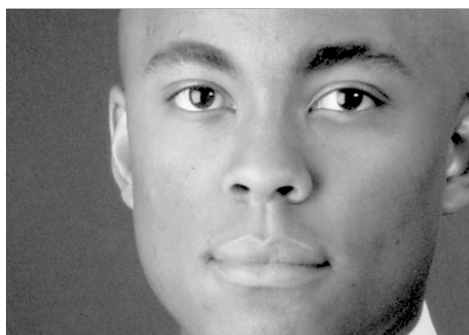
Alabama, for example, used \$258 million to subsidize the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance., \$252 million to support Hyundai in Montgomery, \$248 million help Honda in Lincoln. and \$30 million to assist Toyota in Huntsville.

Corker, the former mayor of Chattanooga, Tenn., neglected to point out that Tennessee gave up \$577 million in subsidies to encourage Volkswagen to build a plant in his hometown and \$233 million to Nissan in Smyrna and another \$200 million to them in Decherd, Tenn.

"As elected officials debate aid for the Big 3, taxpayers have the right to know the full extent of government involvement in America's auto industry," said Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First. "And while proposed federal aid to the Big 3 would take the form of a loan, the vast majority of subsidies to foreign auto plants were taxpayer gifts such as property and sales tax exemptions, income tax credits, infrastructure aid, land discounts, and training grants."

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of *Emerge* magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com).

## Don't Take it Personal! Take Control



Farrah Gray  
NNPA Columnist

ected. The final outcome is you constantly feel discontented, frustrated and dissatisfied with the blame sitting squarely on your shoulders or rather your body. We often let negative perceptions of our self-image last for years, sometimes our entire lives.

It's rather perplexing how we end up creating a self-image that is so negative and unproductive!

Most of our self-perceptions result from our surroundings, from how our family, friends and peers, and the immediate society view us, and even the media.

These influences can be so harmful that we begin to equate our self image with what is expected of us or with what is being projected. However, reality is another ball game altogether.

A myriad of things that you can do nothing about can affect your circumstances. So don't let all the negativity hypnotize you. Take a hard look at yourself. You'd be surprised at the amazing potential housed within.

Firstly, stop punishing yourself! Whatever you're obsessing about; stop it right now, whether it is finances, debt or job loss.

Rediscover your personality. What gives you joy and motivates you to give your best. Everyone is endowed with some talent/apptitude that can be used productively to

overcome your negative mindset.

However, the most difficult thing to do is be able to cure that feeling of being out of control. Often, when you're out of sync with yourself, a nagging sense of something amiss or lacking engulfs you.

We periodically tend to get so preoccupied that we lose perspective of the real issue. Remedy the situation. Pay attention to how you are faring in life.

'Always wanted to, but never got around to doing it...' is the most common affliction. Be kind to yourself, just do it. Someone once said that 'the fear of suffering is greater than the suffering itself.' How true! Our perception of having to face any pain, embarrassment, hurt or suffering often an exaggeration of the end result.

Give up the excuse. You're just giving in to the urge of self-abuse. Or if you're becoming lazy, remember that you're shortening your life span by five minutes for every moment of laziness.

Maximize your life. Take every moment as it comes and cherish it. Adopt a positive attitude. Treat yourself to occasional spells of extravagance, buy yourself something nice, reestablish your ties with your family and friends, and refurbish your wardrobe. Focus on living a complete, fulfilling and wholesome life.

Take a reality check. Understand that we rate most people on the basis of their personality and not just their physical attributes. Revamp the way you function and adopt a healthier lifestyle. Stay in tune with your body's needs and celebrate the joy and freedom it gives you. Enrich your mind through reading and free your spirit through giving, help someone out or take-up a cause close to your heart.

Finally, pay attention to the important facts of life. Have realistic aspirations, adopt an attitude of gratitude, eat when you're hungry, take up some form of physical exercise or activity, believe that it is normal to have periodic fluctuations in weight gain/loss, learn to forgive, don't be embarrassed to ask for assistance from family, friends, peers or a professional helper, and ultimately, look at the whole picture. You'll find there's much to smile about now and in the future!

Farrah Gray is the author of *Get Real, Get Rich: Conquer the 7 Lies Blocking You from Success* and the international best-seller *Reallionaire: Nine Steps to Becoming Rich from the Inside Out*. He is chairman of the Farrah Gray Foundation. Gray can be reached via email at [fg@drfarrahgray.com](mailto:fg@drfarrahgray.com) or his web site at [www.drfarrahgray.com](http://www.drfarrahgray.com)

The horrendous report on job losses, the collapse of the financial markets, all fueling concerns of uncertainty about this country's and your own personal economic survival. Major things that give us a sense that we have lost control of our day-to-day means of survival. The end result is fear, anxiety, stress, depression and the development of poor self-image.

How often have you looked at yourself in the mirror feeling depressed? Did you also realize that you end up carrying over this feeling for days on end and that you go into a deeper slump? Even your health gets af-



# "Jesus Christ vs. Santa Claus"

## *Your Money Really Matters*



Michael Shinn  
NNPA Columnist

The Friday after Thanksgiving is referred to as "Black Friday" by many in the financial industry. This is the day when American shoppers rise early, flock to the stores and unleash a month of buying that is without precedent any other time of the year. It is called "Black Friday" because the financial bottom line for many retailers turns from red (loss) to black (profit).

The Christmas Season has become a consumer spectacular that is seemingly crucial to our nation's economy. Is that why Santa Claus, in many instances, is more revered than Jesus Christ?

Santa Claus' Gospel is a Lie

The Gospel of Santa Claus is a lie that I, like most parents, have helped to perpetuate. We have been aided, co-opted and brainwashed by the masters of imagery on Madison Avenue, Wall Street and Disneyland.

Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole and even Luther Vandross have helped to paint images of a White Christmas, red nosed reindeers and happy shoppers gleefully looking for that last minute gift. The gospel according to Santa Claus is about money - big money - and how big corporations can coax that money out of our pockets by turning "wants" into perceived "needs".

I have a couple of questions for you. Of the gifts you received or gave this Christmas, how many were really needed by you or the person you gave them to? What did

you give to the proverbial person "who has everything?" If they have everything, why did you even give them a gift?

During the Christmas Season, too many people buy things they don't need, with money they don't have, run up debts that they can't afford and all this for the wrong reasons.

The Holiday Season is supposed to be a religious observance, but that fact has been lost in the omnipresent marketing hype. The Christmas Spirit in modern day America is all about selling products! The social and psychological pressure to overspend is at its zenith during this time of the year.

Jesus Christ's Gospel is the Truth

"Advent is the four weeks preceding Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Each Sunday we light a candle symbolizing the four gifts that Christ brought to us— Love, Hope, Peace and Joy," states Reverend Paul H. Sadler, Sr., Pastor of Mt. Zion Congregational Church in Cleveland,

Ohio. "Santa Claus represents materialism. Material objects, fame, fortune and power are fleeting. We have to invest and believe in the Holy Spirit. Santa Claus can't take you to Heaven. Jesus Christ is the Truth and the Light."

As you read this, there is not much we can do about this year's Holiday Season. We've paid our dues to Santa Claus and the big business community for this season. However, let's think about next year's holiday season and how we can make it more meaningful in terms of celebrating the true spirit of the Season - the celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ and the gifts he brought to us. Happy Holidays and Peace be with you and your family.

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# 'Secretary of State' Hillary Clinton to Face High Challenges at State Department



Gloria Sawyer  
NNPA Columnist

The U.S. State Department is perhaps the eminent instrument of Global influence in U.S. foreign policy formulation. In the midst of questionable perceptions of American foreign policy standings in the community of nations, the State Department under the incoming Obama administration is poised to potentially change policy directives and redefine the U.S. role as a global manager in international affairs. The concerns of international interdependence and the subsequent global economic meltdown will warrant a new strategic course and policy paradigm, one that incorporates both intelligent foreign policy articulation coupled with cogent arguments in effective international coalition building and diplomacy. Established in 1789, headquartered in Washington D.C. and employing over 28,000 people, the U.S. State Department is the oldest U.S. Executive department with approximately 42 departments and bureaus, 260 U.S. embassies and consulates in various countries.

This hierarchical structure runs the

spectrum of Arms Control, African issues, refugee, immigration, Eastern, Pacific and South Asian Affairs as well as interventionism, foreign aid, sanctions, public diplomacy and covert activities.

The U.S. State Department will warrant a skilled policy framework that considers strategic options and viable measures for deterrence before employing military engagements. U.S. intelligent foreign policy management must engage new global initiatives to address matters of nation state conflict and rogue nations with or suspected of having nuclear capabilities.

This is especially evident given the increasing need for effective U.S. intervention and management of non-traditional global crisis such as sectarian genocide, human trafficking, global infectious disease, environmental degradation and sustainable development coupled with continued threat of global terrorism as in the case of Mumbai India, as well as matters of nuclear proliferation.

No one currently on the American political scene may be more prepared or suited for the complexities of this appointment than Junior Senator and former U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. A reasonable trajectory of Senator Clinton as Secretary of State is likely that of a Centrist (conventionally, a person who deals with facts and works in concert with others to determine solutions), in policy initiatives, yet also an advocate of U.S. Military strength. Reasonably, one may speculate that Senator Clinton has the intellectual path; depth and command of foreign policy issues as well as a respect for the ethics of law and its implications in successful international policy formulation and intervention.

As Secretary of State, and thus execu-

tor of U.S. Foreign policy, Senator Clinton is certain to be a significant instrument of global influence under the Obama administration.

This does not presuppose that Sen. Clinton's initiatives will not be challenged. Perhaps, most challenges will come from some National media and pundits, as well as political partisans and past opponents versed in the politics of divisiveness.

Other areas of challenge may well be the lack of adequate racial and cultural diversity in the State Department.

In the fragile international balance of power, the immense importance of greater racial and cultural diversity as a strategic conduit to promote security and stability of U.S. foreign interest is an undeniable fact. To this end, there are likely to be structural and procedural changes to redefine policy that may well constitute an increase in diversity in the State Department.

The expressed concerns of former Secretary of State Colin Powell, current Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice and Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) notes the historical vacuum in diverse racial and cultural representation in the State Department and some, as Rangel, have taken an active role in fostering increased minority presence in U.S. foreign assignments. Congressman Rangel notes, "The absence of minorities in our embassies and official offices has been astounding". Programs such as the Ralph J. Bunch International Affairs Center housed at Howard University D.C. Campus, over seen by the Department of State is one of several emerging academic institutions fostering increased minority presence in foreign affairs by graduating African American and minority students and assigning them as Foreign Service Of-

ficers in Embassies in Honduras, Berlin, Morocco, Panama, Yemen, Burkina Faso, Peru, Burma and other nations. Such increased opportunities for racial and cultural diversity will likely open vast doors for African-American and other minorities not traditionally viewed as candidates for these new global territories and may indeed constitute a new policy manifesto for Sen. Clinton.

As to the question of the "seamlessness" between the newly selected Secretary of State and President Elect Obama, it is reasonable to project that Sen. Clinton will demonstrate the supportive role as evidenced in the surrogate position she assumed in the President Elect's campaign. Discarding the implications of the preventive paradigm where the end justifies the means, the newly emerging U.S. global strategic direction may well be inclusive of multilateralism, racial diversity, multiculturalism, "soft power", strategic militaristic, yet thematic ethical foreign policy management suggestive of a new age of American pragmatism. This pragmatism may well be characterized by policy morality in which the lives of innocent civilians (non-combatant women and children) are inherent and germane to U.S. strategic policy formulation.

The American public and the world may possibly anticipate fewer military engagements of discretion, which characterized the Bush administration's foreign policy agenda and subsequent erosion of American international relations.

Gloria Sawyer is a lecturer in the Department of History, Philosophy and Political Science at Chicago State University.



# Modern-Day Lynching? Activists Say Dragging Death of Black Man Was Murder

**Jesse Muhammad**

PARIS, Texas (NNPA) - Driven by a hurting mother's call for justice, nearly three hundred protesters from across the state and country converged last week on the lawn of the Lamar County courthouse to speak out against what they see as a corrupt judicial system aimed at covering up the fatal dragging of 24-year-old Brandon McClelland.

McClelland's death has drawn stirring parallels to the case of James Byrd Jr. who was brutally killed in Jasper, Tex., a decade ago after being chained to a truck by three White men and dragged over three miles.

Suspects Shannon Finley and Charles Crostley remain in the Lamar County Jail on murder charges and have not been indicted. A grand jury was scheduled to convene on Dec. 11 and a trial is not expected to take place until next spring.

"Based upon the stand that has been taken by the family and others to bring attention to this case, don't be surprised if the defendants now try to file for a change of venue," said Attorney Daryl Washington to The Final Call. He serves as counsel for the McClelland family.

Law officials originally declared that McClelland was the victim of a hit and run accident by an unidentified driver when his body was found around 4 a.m. on Sept. 16. Their investigative report was later changed to an accidental hit by Finley and Crostley. Several of McClelland's body parts were dismembered as a result of being dragged over 70 feet beneath the undercarriage of the Dodge truck up and down a Lamar County road.

Finley and Crostley are also being charged with tampering with evidence for washing blood off of the pickup truck and also pouring beer onto the body of McClelland

after the dragging. The pickup truck was found hidden behind the home of one of Finley's relatives. The incident has not been declared a hate crime.

According to a Texas crime report released in 2007 by the department of public safety, there were a total of 243 hate crimes in the state. Whites made up 44 percent of the hate crime offenders compared to 14 percent for Blacks. Highways, roads, streets, and alleys accounted for 22 percent of hate crime locations, second only to residential homes at 40 percent.

"Because the eyes of the nation are on this case, they (defendants) may say their clients now can't get a fair trial in Paris, Texas," said Washington. "My job is to make sure this entire process is transparent and that all charges against the suspects are pursued."

According to an autopsy report signed by 10 medical examiners of the Dallas Southwestern Institute of Forensic Science, the "initial investigation suggested that the blunt force injuries sustained were the result of an accidental hit-and-run. However, additional investigation and developments in the case indicate that the decedent was intentionally [run] over with a truck."

The report further states, "therefore based upon the autopsy findings and the history available to us, it is our opinion that Brandon Demon McClelland, a 24-year-old black male, died as a result of blunt force injuries." Also, the manner of death declared by the examiners was homicide.

"I had the opportunity to review the post mortem report on the body and the majority of his (Mr. McClelland) brain was absent from the body at the time it was examined," said Dr. Joye Carter, a forensic pathology consultant, to The Final Call.

Law officials said the two White suspects hit McClelland

following a late night beer run in mid-September. McClelland was dismembered as a result of being dragged over 70 feet beneath a pickup truck down a Lamar County road.

"These injuries are a combination of being run over by a motor vehicle as well as being dragged along the pavement. This is a horrific death and is rightly ruled a homicide. The Dallas County Medical Examiner office was courageous enough to rule this case a homicide after it was submitted as an accident," said Dr. Carter, who is based in Indiana.

The U.S. Department of Justice visited Paris on the same day as the rally and town hall meeting to meet privately with the mother of the victim and hear from residents.

"We came here to listen and show our support for the community," said Justice Dept. southwest regional director Carmelita Freeman. She could not disclose specifically how her department would help.

"Ms. Freeman told me that they are going to assist us however they can and that the new prosecutor wants to meet with me in person soon," said Jacqueline McClelland, the victim's mother.

Lamar County District Attorney Gary Young has come under fire from the McClelland family and supporters for saying the killing did not appear to be a hate crime due to friendship between the victim and the suspects. The family also wanted him removed from handling the case because he once was the court-appointed defense attorney for Mr. Finley.

Five-years-ago, Finley was charged with murder for the fatal shooting of a friend. That was the same case in which McClelland was charged with perjury for providing a false alibi for Finley's whereabouts. Both served time in prison.

Recently, Young removed him-

self from the McClelland case, citing his past association with Finley. Former Dallas County assistant district attorney Toby Shook has been appointed special prosecutor. Shook is known for trying the "Texas 7," a group of offenders who escaped from a South Texas maximum security complex in 2000.

"I definitely had deep concerns about Gary Young being on the case," said Washington. "I hope that with Shook on the case he will make sure justice is done and that everything will be transparent."

A Nov. 17 rally was led by members of the New Black Panther Party, the Nation of Islam and a lone Paris-based pastor who challenged local preachers on their decision to not attend the rally.

"Don't sit up and talk about me in your churches because I am here with groups you don't like," said Rev. Fred Stovall III of Kingdom Harvest church. "The death of Brandon McClelland was the catalyst for this, but there are a lot of issues in Lamar County and Red River County that must be addressed."

An ailing McClelland told the chanting crowd, "This is not just about my son. I just want justice to be done right for my child and for everybody's child."

Among the rally onlookers from an adjacent parking lot were several dozen Whites, including a Bible-waving heckler who attempted to drown out the speakers. "This is not a racist town!" he yelled.

"To the White people that are here, don't get angry with us," said Hashim Nzinga of the New Black Panther Party. "If you do get angry, go home and look at yourself in the mirror. We are here because on some highway in Texas a body of a Black man was found with blood dripping from it. Bones dripping from it."

Deric Muhammad, of the Na-

tion of Islam in Houston, warned prosecutors that "if you want to rewrite some of the history of Paris and Lamar County, handle this case properly."

Local activist Brenda Cherry, co-founder of Citizens for Racial Equality, and Jim Blackwell, of the Tarrant County Local Organizing Committee, were among the other speakers.

The protest at the county courthouse ended with hundreds jam-packing Rev. Stovall's nearby church for a community strategy meeting that included a panel of speakers from the rally, dialogue, the gathering of database information and the exposure of other cases from surrounding counties.

Holding back tears, the victim's father, Bobby McCleary, described how he has been receiving threatening phone calls from Whites.

"I have been getting a lot of death threats for speaking up but I don't care because they took away my son," said McCleary. "He was a good kid and we going to keep fighting. I just long to hear him say the word 'Pops' one more time."

McClelland has been brought into the DA's office and questioned as to why she is calling the dragging a hate crime and why she has spoken to media outlets, like The Final Call.

"I told them I spoke to The Final Call because I wanted to get the word out. See, they have been trying to intimidate me but my only baby is gone so I don't have anything to lose," she said. "This is a hate crime. Friends wouldn't do this. I will not be intimidated. This is not over because I want justice."

Said Washington, the lawyer for the victim's family:

"The family is planning to file a couple of lawsuits. No mother should have to bury her child. Brandon's death will not be in vain."

**DATA**  
New Orleans  
News Weekly

# ADVERTISE



# Financial Expert Encourages Shoppers to Get Creative

Ayana Jones

PHILADELPHIA (NNPA) - Personal finance expert Lynette Khalfani-Cox wants to help people navigate holiday shopping during these tough economic times.

"The Money Coach," is encouraging consumers to be judicious in their spending and to shop smarter.

"I don't want to be the person who is going to be the killjoy. I certainly don't want to suggest to people that you should not spend at all this holiday season," she said during a recent stop in Philadelphia.

"If you are going to be out there shopping, just be real smart about how you're spending your dollars this holiday season," said Khalfani-Cox, who has offered her financial wisdom on CNN and television shows such as "Good

Morning America" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

With that in mind, she encourages women to forgo high-end specialty stores and opt for frugal fashions at retail chains like Fashion Bug or Lane Bryant.

"I'm a total recessionista," Khalfani Cox admitted. "I'm that girl who likes to look great but I'm budget conscious."

For those who are heading out to the malls, she suggests that they use a stopwatch to keep track of time and bring along a budget-minded friend. She also suggested that shoppers utilize layaway plans instead of credit cards.

"It's okay to get small things with a big impact," said Khalfani-Cox, noting that accessories such as belts or cosmetic jewelry, beauty and cosmetic products make inexpensive gifts for women.

When it comes to shopping for



Lynette Khalfani-Cox

children, she encourages parents to use the holiday season as a teachable moment.

"Parents should not feel guilty about not splurging on their kids, especially during this downturn. If anything we should use this as an opportunity to talk to them about the true meaning of the season and about the reality of

(their) finances," said the mother of three.

For instance, one of her favorite gifts for children is the Money Savvy Pig — a piggy bank that has four chambers in it: one for saving, one for spending, one for donations and one for investing.

These days, tech-savvy teenagers are hoping for Christmas gifts such as the latest cell phone on the market. Instead of splurging for a fancy phone, Khalfani recommends purchasing a pre-paid inexpensive model as a possible alternative.

"It's teaching them a little bit about delayed gratification and it's helping them to appreciate lower priced products," Khalfani-Cox said.

Last Christmas, she set a limit of \$100 to spend on gifts for her three children.

"I don't want the kids to think

of the holidays as shopping galore," she said.

As someone who was \$100,000 in credit card debt, Khalfani-Cox has been down the road of overspending on gifts, presents and things that she didn't need. After paying off credit cards in three years, she wrote the New York Times bestseller "Zero Debt: The Ultimate Guide to Financial Freedom."

For those who are striving not to open their wallets during the season, Cox suggested tapping into your creative side and making something artistic such as a scrapbook or taking a collection of baseball cards and cataloging them in a nice display.

She concludes, "Get creative this holiday season. Nobody is going to bat an eye if you make something for them as opposed to buying something for them."

## Dick Gregory Keynote Speaker for MLK Week for Peace

Dick Gregory will be the keynote speaker for the 22nd Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Week for Peace, Jan. 16-23, 2009.

The Martin Luther King Week for Peace is presented by Xavier, Tulane, Loyola and Dillard Universities. "The Dream Fulfilled in the Midst of the Storm" is the theme for the 2009 celebration.

"This year we've changed our schedule," said Carolyn Pierre, committee chair. "The week will start on the Friday before with a kick-off on each campus and we will have an evening event on Martin Luther King Day."

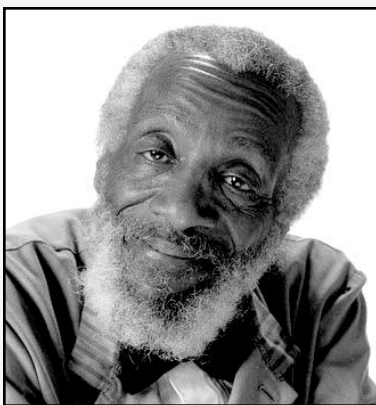
On Saturday Jan. 17, students will participate in a community service day. On the holiday Monday Jan 19 the schools will host a candlelight vigil and interfaith service on the Dillard campus at the Lawless Memorial Chapel. The Candlelight Vigil will be at 4 pm followed by the interfaith service at 4:30 pm.

Dick Gregory will speak on Wednesday Jan. 21 at the MLK Convocation held on the Xavier University campus in the University Center Ballroom. The Lifetime Achievement award and the Student Community Service awards will be presented at this time.

Finally, the week closes with the Expressions of Unity on the Loyola campus in Nunemaker Auditorium at 7 pm, Friday, Jan. 23.

Dick Gregory was on the frontline in the sixties during the Civil Rights Era; today he continues to be a "drum major for justice and equality."

Gregory, was one of the first African-American comedians to cross over to mainstream white audiences, he was also one of the fiercest sociopolitical satirists of his day; using the nightclub stage as his soapbox African-American comedian, civil rights activist, and spokesman for health issues, who became nationally



Dick Gregory

recognized in the 1960s for a biting brand of comedy that attacked racial prejudice.

His comedy career breakthrough came in 1961, when a one-nighter at the Chicago Playboy Club turned into a six-week stint that earned him a profile in Time magazine and a television appearance on "The Jack Paar Show." In his numerous subsequent television, nightclub, and concert routines, he targeted poverty, segregation, and racial discrimination.

Active in the Civil Rights Movement, he participated in numerous demonstrations and was arrested for civil disobedience several times; in 1963 he was jailed in Birmingham, Ala. His activism spurred him to run for mayor of Chicago in 1966 and for president of the United States in 1968.

In the early 1970s Gregory abandoned comedy to focus on his political interests, which widened from race relations to include such issues as violence, world hunger, capital punishment, drug abuse, and poor health care. He generated particular attention for

his many hunger fasts. At this time he became a vegetarian, a marathon runner, and an expert on nutrition. He soon began a successful business venture with his nutritional product, the "Bahamian Diet," around which he built Dick Gregory Health Enterprises, Inc. Through his company, he targeted the lower life expectancy of Black Americans, which he attributed to poor nutrition and drug and alcohol abuse.

For more information on the Xavier/Tulane/Loyola/Dillard Martin Luther King Week for Peace events, call 504-520-5450 or 865-5181.

## Obamas Denied Early Move-In

Special to the NNPA from the Afro-American Newspapers

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The Obamas will have to find other living quarters for their family if they still plan to move to Washington before the official guest house for the president-elect is available.

Quoting anonymous sources, the Washington Post and Associated Press report the Obamas had asked White House officials about moving into Blair House about two weeks before the traditional date so their two daughters could start their new school when classes resume Jan. 5.

President-elect Obama's two daughters — Malia, a fifth grader and Sasha, a second grader — will attend Sidwell Friends School, a private school with a campus in northwest Washington and another in suburban Bethesda, Md. Classes start more than a week before the incoming first family could stay at Blair House.

Aides say the White House told the Obamas that the request cannot be met because the Bush administration still has plans for the historic government home across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House. An Obama aide said the family was told there were previously scheduled events at Blair House and guests could not be displaced.

Sally McDonough, first lady Laura Bush's press secretary, declined to comment on the transition conversations, but said Blair House would be available on Jan. 15, the traditional date it becomes available for new presidents and their families.



Blair House, the official state guest house for the President of the United States. Credit: Wikipedia.org



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