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"The People's Paper"

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In Racially Inclusive Inaugural Ceremony: President Obama Expresses Hope to ‘Remake’ America



President Barack Obama is sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts. Credit: ewilfong/Flickr, NNPA

by Hazel Trice Edney
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Barack Hussein Obama - a Black man - was inaugurated the 44th President of the United States Jan. 20 before a historic crowd of at least 1.5 million people.
The first African-American to hold the office, considered the most powerful in the world, his inaugural address and overall ceremony included

strong and specific references to the historic and modern-day struggles of Black people; including the “lash of the whip.”
“Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted - for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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More than 1.5 Million gathered to celebrate the inaugural swearing in of President Barack Obama. Credit: The Houston Defender

been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom," he said, reflecting on the hard work - and pains - of building a nation. "For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West; endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth. For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sahn."

The "lash of the whip" and the plowing of the "hard earth" were obvious references to Black slaves, once considered only three-fifths of human beings and rarely credited for the work they did to build America. Descendants of those slaves converged by the hundreds of thousands on the U. S. Capitol this week to experience for themselves the historic moment. Their euphoric chants of "O-ba-ma! O-ba-ma!" were heard frequently during quiet moments of the inaugural ceremony as many without tickets packed in beyond the boundaries of the National Mall.

They punctuated Obama's speech with wild cheers as he used words such as "equal" and "free" that African-Americans often long to hear from people of power.

Obama consciously used the same Bible as his hero, Abraham Lincoln, signer of the Emancipation Proclamation that led to the end of American slavery, Jan. 1, 1863, only 146 years ago.

"We remain a young nation, but in the words of scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things," Obama said. "The time has come to reaffirm our endur-

ing spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness. In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned."

The historic inauguration comes amidst painful times for America. Obama - with his unique ability to inspire - is viewed as a transitional figure by people of many races and nationalities, particularly during this time of war and economic crisis. But, suffering is consistently greater for African-Americans. To have someone in the White House with a modicum of understanding of and identification with their problems appear to be a salve to many, bringing hope for ultimate equality that has yet to be realized.

"We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth," says Obama, the son of a Black man from Kenya and a White woman from Kansas. "Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America."

Significant parts of the inaugural ceremony sent strong messages that the Obama Administration will maintain its consciousness where Black people are concerned. The "Rosa Parks" bus rolled along in the motorcade before the Inaugural parade, symbolizing the struggle of African-Americans who were legally forced to sit in the backs of buses in the South until Parks took a stand in 1955. Also, among the 90 units participating in the Inaugural Parade were the Tuskegee Airmen, who flew in a segregated Army Air Corp during

World War II.

"I'm feeling ecstatic. There was never a time in my life that I would have thought there would be a Black president," said a chuckling Ed Tillman, one of the elite African-American pilots who flew heroically in the all-Black unit.

Most notable were the prayers of Revs. Rick Warren and Joseph Lowery, both of whom blatantly referred to the racial magnitude of the moment.

"We celebrate a hinge-point of history with the inauguration of our first African-American president of the United States," Warren prayed in his invocation. The crowd cheered. "We are so grateful to live in this land, a land of unequaled possibility, where a son of an African immigrant can rise to the highest level of our leadership. And we know today that Dr. King and a great cloud of witnesses are shouting in heaven."

The poem recited by Elizabeth Alexander was also straight to the point: "Sing the names of the dead who brought us here, who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges, picked the cotton and the lettuce, built brick by brick the glittering edifices they would then keep clean and work inside of."



President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama enjoy a dance at the Mid-Atlantic Ball. It one of 10 official inaugural balls that the couple attended. Credit: Monica Morgan



Then President-elect Barack Obama is interviewed by NNPA News Service Editor-in-Chief during a break in the "Whistle Stop" train tour after his final stop in Baltimore. Credit: NNPA

But, perhaps it was the benediction of civil rights icon, the Rev. Joseph Lowery, that hit closest to home. Starting with the final verse of "Lift Every Voice and Sing", the Black National Anthem, Lowery closed with an appeal that is yet to be realized:

"Lord, in the memory of all the saints who from their labors rest, and in the joy of a new beginning, we ask you to help us work for that day when Black will not be asked to get back, when brown can stick around, when yellow will be mellow, when the red man can get ahead, man, and when White will embrace what is right. Let all those who do justice and love mercy say amen."

Obamas Shatter Racial Stereotypes as America Struggles to Become 'One'

Vern E. Smith

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The over 500,000 Americans of all colors spread from the statue of Abraham Lincoln down to the Washington Monument for the "We Are One" opening concert on Sunday - two days before the historic swearing, was a visually striking mosaic of a nation long divided by race and class coming together on the eve of the inauguration of its first African-American president.

African-Americans, Whites, Hispanics, Asians, and other ethnicities stood side by side in the bitter cold, swaying to the sounds of a musical line-up that was just as diverse, ranging from Beyonce, Mary J. Blige and Stevie Wonder, to rocker Bruce Springsteen and country music star Garth Brooks in a star-laden event broadcast live on HBO. The crowd erupted in cheers as jumbo television screens flashed the image of Obama singing along with Brooks' rendition of Don McLean's "American Pie".

For many African-Americans in the crowd, the day was a mixture of joy and pride, tempered by feelings that for all of the remarkable implications in Obama's sweeping victory in November, the nation has yet to fully turn the corner on the matter of race.

"I think the theme of 'We Are One' is important. I just don't want us to overstate it," said Mike (who declined to give his last name), 34, a financial service worker who



President-elect and Michelle Obama arrive at the Sunday's opening "We are One" concert. Credit: Metropolis

took the Amtrak train down from New York for the concert event.

"A lot of people have talked today about the realization of Dr. (Martin Luther) King's dream as the end of racial inequality, but the reality is there is still great disparity in income for African-American communities and still a huge problem in the prison industrial complex."

The pre-inaugural event "is definitely a day to celebrate," Mike added. "Great progress has been made since Dr. King, but I think we still have a ways to go

before we reach full equality."

Across the mall, Willie Chester, a brake contractor from Albany, Georgia, his wife, Peggy, a nurse administrator, and owner of a health care service, stood with their 8-year-old son, Jerrell, basking in the fact that they are participants in an historic event.

"I'm glad to see everybody come together to be as one," Willie Chester said. "It's possible, and it's beginning to come, slowly, but it's coming." His wife agreed. "Have we

accomplished it all with this election? No, we haven't. But at least this is the beginning of us coming together," she said. "Looking around the mall I thought, 'you know. I see people of all different races, and if they bump into each other they're smiling. It gives you a feeling of love and unity and it's come about because of our President-elect Obama. He has given us a new sensation. What young folks saw when they were inspired by Dr. King, you see it again.'"

There was the scent of change. "I think that the symbol of all

these people being in one place at one time tells a lot, that people really are looking forward to the transformation, some kind of hope," observed Annette Hawkins, a human resources director from Memphis. Hawkins, who traveled to Washington in a caravan of vans, said the excitement and energy over the coming inauguration was evident all along the trip in spite of the frigid weather. "The fact that everyone is looking for a solution is a positive. But in terms of the theme, I don't think racism is gone. I think that what we are doing is we're uncovering

the right thing, but we really don't know. It's a hope. The fact that we're united together to say,

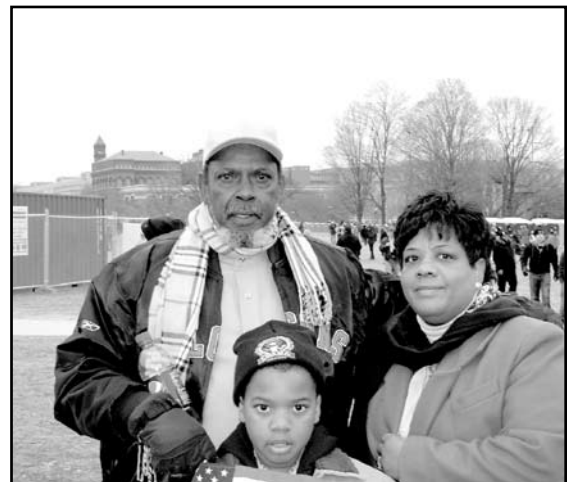
'Hey, let's make something happen positive that's a step in the right direction.'"

For his part, Obama sounded the same theme in his remarks to the crowd.

"Americans of every race and region and station who came here because you believe in what this country can be and because you wanted to help us get there," he said. "You have proved once more that people who love this country can change it," Obama told the cheering crowd. "

Little Rock, Ark. native Cedonial Robinson, an administrator with the Veterans Administration, made the trip to Washington in an RV with ten members of her family, and noted that her state, along with most of the Southern states, had not supported Obama's candidacy. Still, her optimism has not suf-

fered, she said. With the arrival of the Obamas, the shattering of racial stereotypes is just beginning, she said. "The country will be getting a very different look at the African-American family."



Caption: Youngsters gather in bitter cold in Wilmington, Del. to see President-elect Barack Obama. They wore sweatshirts that said, "Yes We Can." Credit: Hazel Trice Edney/NNPA

the layers of what the root problem is, kind of like peeling an onion."

A deeper, lasting change is something that won't be apparent for a decade, she believes. "We're hoping that Obama's going to do

Hope Abounded Aboard Obama's "Whistle Stop" Tour

Hazel Trice Edney

PHILADELPHIA (NNPA) - As the train lumbered slowly down the tracks, leaving Philadelphia, headed toward Wilmington, Del., one thing was abundantly clear through the windows.

That is that the excitement of President-elect Barack Obama's "Whistle Stop" tour had permeated the nation. People lined the streets, waving and holding signs, families stood waving and leaping for joy in back yards, groups gathered in parking lots - even leaned from parking decks, and some



President-elect Barack Obama, Michelle Obama; Vice President Elect Joe Biden, Jill Biden, arrive in the Baltimore War Memorial Plaza where 40,000 cheering, flag-waving people await them. Credit: J.D. Howard/Afro-American Newspapers

stood on roofs, just to wave to the passing train, carrying the then first Black president-elect of the United States.

But, it was the children of all ages who perhaps were the most impressive, hundreds of them, dressed in hats, gloves and thick coats, bouncing up and down in the streets, waving flags at the three rallies in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Del., and Baltimore. Then they swayed to Ray Charles' "America the Beautiful" at the end of the rallies, smiling for media cameras, trying to capture their innocence and glee.

"It's just so much excitement and history," said Sally Rice, a 10-year-old in Wilmington. "I want to have a lot of changes. I want to have more students in our school, more teachers, more supplies."

They may not know exactly what the presidency of the United States is all about. But, they know that this one has communicated hope for them and their parents. That was the key message of Obama and Vice President Joe Biden along the way, heavy with straight talk for children and common people.

Mayor Discusses Impact of 2009 Adopted Budget

Reduced Emergency Fund and Increased 2010 Budget Deficit Among City's Concerns

In response to the New Orleans City Council's approval of the 2009 operating budget last week, Mayor Nagin outlined the impact of the city's newly adopted budget on city services, departmental operations and the city's future financial position in 2010.

In December, Mayor C. Ray Nagin vetoed several budget items that included funding to third party agencies, cut spending for all departments except public safety, and issued an executive order that implements a hiring freeze for all departments, including public safety. Further, Mayor Nagin limited all garbage collection to basic collection, thereby cutting extra, enhanced services in the Vieux Carre (although twice a day collection was maintained).

Mayor Nagin stated during his November budget presentation that the 2009 budget would be one of the most challenging for the city due to increased expenditures, such as those related to health care administration, and other operating costs and the absence of new revenue streams in the city. He also maintains the guiding principles for the 2009 budget must be:

To secure sufficient reserves for possible disasters, emergencies and revenue shortfalls; and

To position for an improved credit rating to enhance the City's ability to sell bonds in 2009



Mayor Ray Nagin

for various capital improvement projects – especially street and road projects – and other critical needs.

The Mayor's budget adjustments reduced the city's expenditures by \$18 million in 2009. The reductions are necessary to fill a budget gap that began at \$24 million; the gap was reduced to \$18 million when President Bush reduced the City's required match for Hurricane Gustav recovery costs from 25 percent to 10 percent,

reducing expenditures by \$6 million. This budget gap also results from the addition of recurring costs in 2007 and 2008 without the addition of a correlating recurring source of revenue, a measure the Mayor does not sup-

port as a "sound financial practice."

On January 12th, the City Council passed the city's 2009 adopted budget. The Finance Department has reviewed these actions and adjusted the budget accordingly. The impact is as follows:

Community Disaster Loan Fund (CDL)

Purpose: The \$240 million Community Disaster Loan, which was received following Hurricane Katrina, was incorporated as a critical part of the city's five-year financial plan.

This plan was presented to the credit rating agencies as a demonstration of the city's efforts to become financially stable and to encourage confidence among the rating agencies in the city's ability to recover. Some of the credit rating agencies improved the city's investment grade to "stable," which allowed the city to sell bonds for millions of dollars that were used for street, road and other infrastructure projects. However, Standard & Poor's (S&P) still has the city's status at "junk bond." The five-year plan called for using \$25 million of the CDL in 2009 and the remaining \$10 million in 2010.

Result: The City Council's initial budget utilized the entire remaining the CDL, including the

\$10 million scheduled for 2010. The Council's January 12 budget modifications leave \$2.4 million of the CDL for 2010. \$7.6 million was used throughout the budget in areas such as funding the District Attorney's Office (\$900,000).

Impact:

The City's access to the bond market will be limited and street/roadway projects will be eliminated and/or limited for 2009.

Emergency Fund

Purpose: After Hurricane Katrina, Mayor Nagin established an emergency/contingency fund to be set aside for emergency needs. The goal has been to set aside 10 percent of the city's budget for this emergency fund, with a minimum set-aside of 8 percent, which is consistent with industry standards. Further, this emergency fund, coupled with the five-year financial plan, strengthened the city's position to sell bonds.

Result: As of January 12th, the newly adopted budget added \$475,000 in the emergency fund, bringing the fund to 6.6 percent of the adopted budget, below the minimum 8 percent. The 2009 emergency fund as reflected in the adopted budget is below the set aside from the previous year. In 2008, the city's impact from Hurricane Gustav was \$40 million.

Impact:

The city is not adequately prepared financially to handle emer-

gency events in 2009.

City Services

Under Executive Order CRN 08-08, a hiring freeze citywide has been implemented and all encumbered funds from 2008 will be returned to the General Fund. Further, Mayor Nagin announced in December that the budget for each department, except Public Safety, would be cut. The new adopted budget includes a 3 percent department reduction, which will lead to reductions in services in many departments.

The Mayor will phase-in enhanced services in the Vieux Carre beginning February 1st. These services will include manual street cleaning, litter can patrols (twice weekly) and pressure washing. As the 2009 budget year proceeds, Mayor Nagin will make Vieux Carre enhanced sanitation services available as funding allows.

Future: Pension Bond


Situation: Pension bonds the city obtained in 2000, under a previous administration, 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.

Impact: The cumulative effect of the existing shortfall and the bond payments could total more than \$40 per year in 2010.

Celebrating Kim Krivjanick's Birthday at The Prime Example



Pictured left to right are: Julius Kimbrough, Kim Robinson, Charles Ricard, Kim Krivjanick, Dr. Robert Spears and Lana Turner Ancar



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Tammy Stewart Announces Candidacy for Judge of Juvenile Court Section B

Benjamin Bates

Local attorney Tammy Stewart has announced her candidacy for Judge of Juvenile Court Section B. During a speech to her supporters she said, "A juvenile court judge has one of the most important roles in the judicial system." Continuing she said, "They are the first step in the delivery of justice and the protection of our community."

Tammy Stewart is a native of New Orleans, graduating with honors from John F. Kennedy High School and Southern University at New Orleans, where she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. Stewart earned her Juris Doctorate Degree from The Ohio State University College of Law in Columbus, Ohio.

Stewart has years of legal experience. She has served as Judge Pro-Tempore for First City Court



Tammy Stewart

in New Orleans and has worked for several law firms including Spears & Spears, Casler, Bordelon, & McGinty, and Hailey, McNamara, Hall, Larmann, & Papale, L.L.P.

In addition, Stewart formerly

served as an Assistant District Attorney in Orleans Parish and a summer law clerk for the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation. Her legal affiliations include the Louisiana State Bar Association, American Bar Association and New Orleans Bar Association. She was recognized as an Honored Professional in the Nationwide Registry of Who's Who in Executives and Business. Stewart is a former board member of the Innocence Project New Orleans and a former adjunct professor of Criminal Justice at Southern University at New Orleans. She is a volunteer with the Louisiana SPCA, the Humane Society and the Louisiana State Bar Association's Secret Santa Project, where she has worked as a liaison with organizations such as Boys Hope Girls Hope and Head Start.

Stewart said that there are problems inside of the juvenile justice system that are broken

and in need of repair and reform and feels she is the candidate that fits the bill. "I have the experience on the bench serving as a judge pro tempore and I have the ability to lead the court in a new direction," she said.

In Juvenile Court, the role of the judge is to be tough but compassionate; Stewart said she has both of these qualities. "I will work to bring more resources that can divert our young people's attention away from criminal activities and give them the tools to turn their lives around and engage in more productive pursuits," said Stewart.

While an advocate of diversion and rehabilitation programs, Stewart said that violent juvenile offenders must be kept off the street, "We must do what we can to keep our streets safe and administer justice, so we must protect our citizens from those who may cause harm to them," she

said.

But Stewart also said that she feels that these individuals need rehabilitation as well. "We cannot afford to allow our young people to become career criminals, and we must also be advocates so that we can do what we can to ensure that we have things in place that can transform those negatives into positives," she said.

Throughout the years, Stewart has been active in her community and said as a native of the Crescent City, it is important that the court reaches out to organizations in the community to help young people before they get into a life of crime.

"It will take a cooperative effort to end the senseless violence and to stop the cycle of young men and women in our community who are throwing away their future and lives. That effort begins

Continued next page.



The two keys to the future? Technology, and the people who'll be using it.

It strengthens communities. And transforms lives. That's why AT&T is so committed to improving education, especially through the greater use and understanding of technology. In fact, more than half of our contribution dollars and volunteer hours benefit education in some way. Because who knows, the student we help today could be the scientist, doctor or business leader who helps someone else tomorrow.

Poet Maya Angelou to Speak at UNO on February 12

Angelou, hailed as one of the great voices of contemporary African American literature, has the ability to shatter the barriers of race and class between reader and subject through her poetry and autobiographical works. From *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* to her groundbreaking work in television and film, she has opened minds with her lyrical poetry and autobiographical works.

She lectures throughout the United States and abroad and is a lifetime professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Angelou has authored 12 bestselling books and numerous magazine articles and received Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award nominations. She was awarded a Grammy award for best spoken word for *On the Pulse of Morning* which she recited at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993.

Angelou, born Marguerite Johnson on April 4, 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri, was raised in



Maya Angelou

segregated rural Arkansas. In 1970, she became one of the first African American women to hit the bestseller's list with *I Know*

Why the Caged Bird Sings, which chronicles her life to age 16.

At the request of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Angelou became

the northern coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the 1960s. In 1975, she received the Ladies Home Journal Woman of the Year Award in communications. She has received several honorary degrees and was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to the National Commission on the Observance of International Woman's Year, and by President Gerald Ford to the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Advisory Council. She is on the board of the American Film Institute and is among the few women members of the Director's Guild.

Angelou, who speaks French, Spanish, Italian and West African Fanti, began her career in drama and dance. She married a South African freedom fighter and lived in Cairo where she was editor of *The Arab Observer*, a weekly newspaper published in the Middle East. In Ghana, she was feature editor of *The African Review* and taught at the University of Ghana.

Poet, playwright and actress **Maya Angelou** will speak at the University of New Orleans free speaker series UNO Horizons: Speakers Helping Us See Tomorrow Today on **Thursday, February 12 at 7 p.m.** at the **UNO Lakefront Arena**.

Free tickets are available at the UNO Lakefront Arena Box Office, 6801 Franklin Avenue at Leon C. Simon Boulevard. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

UNO Horizons: Speakers Helping Us See Tomorrow Today, which will continue to feature internationally known speakers, is part of UNO's 50th Anniversary celebration and marks the post-Katrina recovery of the UNO Lakefront Arena.

Stewart continued from previous page

with parents who must take responsibility and be accountable for the actions of their kids. Along with parents, grandparents, teachers, ministers, community leaders, police officers, social workers and all of us here tonight, we must join together and accept our roles as mentors and as advocates for our young people," said Stewart.

Since announcing her candidacy, Stewart has already received the support of several local elected officials including Orleans Parish District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro, Clerk of Criminal Court Arthur Morrell, State Senator J.P. Morrell, and State Representatives Girod Jackson, Juan Lafonta and Cedric Richmond. While she is excited about the early support she is receiving, Stewart realizes that it is up to the voters to decide.

"I am glad to receive these endorsements and they are important, but I will be working hard to gain the confidence and support of the voters who go to the polls," said Stewart. "It is time to bring fairness and a set of fresh ideas to the bench and as we rebuild our city, we need new leadership. I hope that the people of our great city support my candidacy."

New Orleans Public Library Celebrates Black History Month

From History to Health Care, Library Celebrates African-American Leadership

NEW ORLEANS: The New Orleans Public Library will host a series of events to celebrate black history month. Under the theme, "Rising Up: African American Leadership", branches around the city will host a variety of forums and workshops that will feature everything from history and healthcare to storytelling and genealogy programs. The library's Black history month committee in conjunction with the African American Resource Center will bring in historians, artists and other experts to tell the story of African American leadership from reconstruction to the present. The New Orleans Public Library has celebrated Black History month for over ten years. Previous themes included "Passing the Torch", "Our Roots are Our Strength", and last years theme the "Ties that Bind: Celebrating the African American Family", to name a few.

The New Orleans Public Library system has re-opened eleven of the twelve library branches that were damaged or destroyed as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Their long-term goal is not merely a "return to normal," but a model urban library system for New Orleans' 21st century.

For more information on Black History Month events please visit www.neworleanspubliclibrary.org or contact the African American Resource Center 596-2597.

The lists of events:

Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009, 10 am through 3 pm Latter Branch
Health Fair

Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009, 10 am - Main Branch 3rd floor
Storytelling

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009 10 am - Hubbell Library
Storytelling by Roscoe Reddix, Jr.

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009, 6:30pm - Mid-City Branch
The History of "Walkertown" by Diane Coleman

Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, 6:30 pm- Alvar Branch
Homer Plessey: The Man, The Movement, The Moment by Keith W. Medley

Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009- Main Branch
Genealogy Programs
Beginners' Workshop 10:30 am - 12:30 pm
Intermediate Work 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009, 10 am -MLK Branch
Leaders of Tomorrow

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2009, 6:30pm- Mid-City Branch
African American Leadership: The Civil Rights Era & Beyond
by Dr. John Penny

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2009, 10:00am - M L King Branch
Ivoire Spectacle - African Drum and Dance Program

Saturday, March 7, 2009, 1:00pm - Main Branch
Paul Robeson Acting Competition

America's Renewal... Yes We Can: A Photo Essay

Photos and text by Edwin Buggage

The Presidential Inauguration was a tapestry of faces of all colors, creeds and races, and a time when America attempted to become an oasis of unlimited possibilities for all. It is now in this time of renewal that Americans cry out "Yes, We Can." It is a time when this year we celebrate 200 years of a man who led a divided America and was a great emancipator. In this year of hope, we also celebrate 80 years of a man who dared to dream that one day all could enjoy the ever illusive American Dream. And today a man who had the Audacity of Hope is now in the White House. And as the nation celebrates, New Orleans Data News Weekly captured in photos the spirit of the moment in a photo essay entitled, "America's Renewal...Yes, We Can."



A Night of Spirituality in Song



Dionne Character
Data News Weekly Contributor

Irvin Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra featuring Yolanda Adams

It was once said that some singers just know how to sing and a few chosen singers really know how to “sang” and in New Orleans for one night at the Mahalia Jackson Theatre, we heard some “singing”!

Irvin Mayfield brought together guest contemporary gospel singer, the amazing, Yolanda Adams and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra for a heart-felt night of gospel and jazz music.

Opening the show was a host of the best New Orleans gospel singers who created the atmosphere allowing us to do just what Mayor Nagin suggested, to leave your troubles at the door because tonight we came to celebrate our resilience and God’s grace.

Last but not least, the beautiful and talented Yolanda Adams appeared on stage singing “Be Blessed.” This solo act did not come with background singers nor was there a band and a fierce production team, but because it was the incomparable Yolanda Adams who can “sang”, there was no need for further assistance other than the grace of God himself.

Irving Mayfield together with his handcrafted trumpet dedicated to all those who lost their lives during Hurricane Katrina, including his loving father, became one in song, playing a beautiful rendition of “Walk With Me.”

This night was a night of entertainment and healing as the people of New Orleans continue to pick up the pieces left in the wake of Katrina.

An Inauguration and Celebration to Remember

Washington D.C. was filled with people from all across the nation and world excited about the Inauguration of the first African-American President of the United States. There were several parties, special events and galas to celebrate the historic moment. New Orleans Data News Weekly was there to capture the spectacular events.



New Orleansians Arnold Baker and his wife enjoy the music of the New Stylistics.



Attendees at the Black Chamber of Commerce and NNPA Gala in Washington DC. Standing left to right are: Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Baker and Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Burns



Terry B. Jones, Publisher of Data News Weekly; daughter of Doris Ellis, Doris Ellis, Dorothy R. Leavell, Chair of the NNPA Foundation; Harry Alford, President of the National Chamber of Commerce; Linda F. Miller, Chicago Public Schools Counselor; Pluria Marshall, Secretary/Treasurer, NNPA Foundation; Kimberly McCommon, Continental Airlines Pilot and Michael House, Publisher of the Chicago Defender



Enjoying a party while attending the inauguration. Pictured left to right are: Tyra Sorapur, Karen Valteau Williams, Germaine Robottom, Sy Davis, Arment Guillaume and Holly Harris Monk



Taking time out from a hotel party to pose for Data. Left to right: Terry Williams, Karen Valteau-Williams, Germaine Robottom, and Byron Robottom



From left to right: Data News Weekly's Publisher Terry Jones, L.A. Sentinel's Publisher Danny Bakewell, Motown legends Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy, and President of the National Chamber of Commerce Harry Alford. Mr. Robinson and Mr. Gordy were special invited guests of Danny Bakewell.



Lovely ladies of Zulu including former queens, wives and family members attending the inauguration. Standing left to right: Sy Davis, Ashley J. Hill, Jaelyn A. Carr, Jacqueline H. Banks, Pat Hamilton, Donna Glapion, Wilneisha C. Harris, Lisa A. Crinal, and Artelia Bennett-Banks



Zulu members attending the inauguration standing in the National Mall in front of the United States Capitol. Standing left to right: Front row – Hon. Darren Mire, Charles E. Hamilton, Jr. – President, Jock Sterling and DeShannon Shebazz. Back row – Ryan J. Banks, Gerard Johnson, Michael Theard, Wilbert Thomas, Adonis C. Expose, David Belfield, Granville Hurley, Larry A. Hammond, Jay H. Banks, Hunter King, Galen B. Banks, and Derrick Rabb.

trailblazer

Dui Jarrod

Art from the Heart

by: Edwin Buggage



Dui Jarrod

He is a young man with a vision to use art as a tool to entertain as well as educate. Dui Jarrod has used his talents as a director, actor and writer to defy stereotypes and be a positive force for change onstage and in the community. "I feel that art is an important tool that can be used to educate people about who we are as African-Americans," said Jarrod.

Jarrod's plays and short films are uplifting, true to life and inspirational. They mirror the life of a young man who came to New Orleans from his native Arkansas and began using his art inside the church producing plays and where his spirituality still is at the center of it all.

"My spirituality is what guides me in this, and it shows in my art. Even [when] it's secular, I want to be able to touch someone's soul and regardless of where they are know that through believing in God's divinity they can change their circumstances."

Spirituality is something that has guided Jarrod to work with young people throughout the southeast region.

"This is something I feel passionate about and I feel that we must do a better job at preparing the youth for the future," he said.

Jarrod has taken his shows to schools and is also in the beginning stages of creating acting classes for inner-city youth. "I think that people can learn a lot about themselves through acting, so I wanted to provide an opportunity for kids to have an avenue to express themselves."

Working for worthy causes is something Jarrod continues to do while lending his time and talent to several worthy causes ranging from literacy to raising awareness about HIV.

"I believe literacy is important because the ability to read and write is the building blocks for all learning. And as far as HIV awareness in our community, one of the major things that is happening that makes this epidemic more problematic is a culture of silence," Jarrod said. "We don't talk about it enough, but that won't make the problems go away, so I decided to get involved because it is essential that we become more aware and responsible so that our loved ones who are infected can get the help they need and lead normal healthy lives because today that is possible."

Jarrod said that through hard work, dreams can come true. "A lot of people have dreams, but it is about sacrifice and perseverance and that is what I try to convey through my life and through my art." Continuing he said, "I hope what I do can inspire someone to aspire to be the best possible person they can be."

Dui Jarrod is an artist that has given the gift of his work to help his community and city. It is truly art with and from the heart. With his gift, his goal has been to uplift, and Data News Weekly is proud to honor him as our Trailblazer for January 2009.

JMJ

Joseph M. Jones
Continuing Education Fund



at&t

Relationships: "How to keep your happiness alive"



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Dr. Aaron E. Harold

We all need to be spiritually healthy. One of the most important ways to a better life is for us to keep ourselves happy, rather than satisfy everybody around us. Many times we take on a false sense of responsibility because we feel we are required to make sure that others are happy and we are not putting enough time and effort into our own happiness. There is nothing wrong

when we are caring and concerned about others we know. It's wonderful to reach out to others in need, but we can't forget about our own spiritual well being.

Our spiritual health is very important just like our physical health. When we exercise our physical muscles to stay healthy, we must also exercise our spiritual inner person. Family, our Creator wants us to be spiritually happy and energized. Stop trying to sacrifice your happiness to keep someone else happy. However, that's not being selfish; it's about being real about you as a complete person. Our number one goal is to take care of ourselves.

In order to do that, we must keep in mind that some people are still not going to be happy no matter what we do for them; no matter how kind we are; no matter how much time and energy we give to them. Family, people have their own issues and things on the inside of them that they too need to resolve. We can't take responsibility for other folks' mistakes in life. If we do, those people will start to control and manipulate you, and eventually you will

become spiritually unbalanced and sick. Spiritual wellness is very important to you and me.

Spiritual Wellness can also determine the quality of happiness in our lives. Stop letting everybody interfere with your spiritual happiness. Family, let me tell you this story. There was a couple that I grew up with who got married, and their marriage was fine for a little while, but soon their marriage was miserable. Shelly came from an extremely negative family environment where she had endured many unfair hardships growing up. She brought unhappiness and negativity right into her marriage with John.

You see Shelly didn't get her way like she wanted to, so she would pout and cut up. Shelly would do that for days sometimes weeks. She was always having some kind of crisis where she needed attention.

She was always miserable and always snapping people up, if you know what I mean. We all know people like that. Folks, she did her best to make everyone around her spiritually miserable. John was a good,

loving man to Shelly; a good husband; I mean one of the best.

He went out of his way to keep Shelly happy. He would always build her up, trying to solve her problems, and letting her know that she would be fine. John did this for five years. He gave up his own happiness, but that didn't keep her happy and satisfied. John made up his mind that his wife was never going to change. He was spiritually miserable and exhausted. He went to Shelly and said to her "I love you, but no matter what I do for you, you're not going to be happy. So I'm finished trying."

She never heard John say that and mean it. Folks, he forced her to look within herself and deal with her problems for a change. That previous remark from John woke Shelly up, and now she is spiritually happy and loving it. Family, our Creator wants you and me to be spiritually happy and have his peace in us. God said, "Peace I give to you, not as the world gives it." Family, don't let no one or anything rob you from your joy. God Bless You, and remember, be happy because you deserve it.

America's Hope

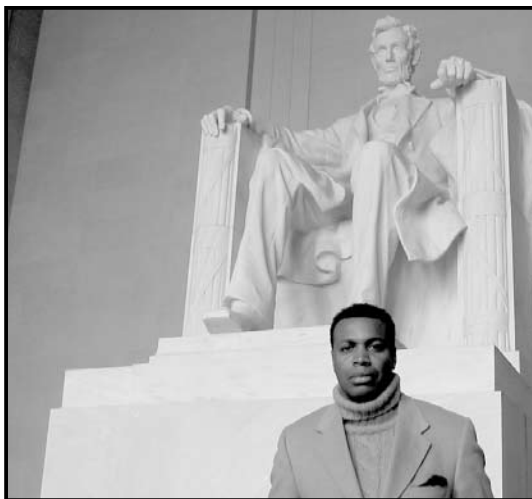
Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

As I looked around and saw all the people who came from all over America and the globe to witness President Barack Obama being sworn in as Commander-in-Chief, I was overcome with joy. It was in this moment that I thought that the day may have finally come in our nation when we can move beyond the divisions that have kept people in the country bickering over things that in today's climate of a world that is global seem irrelevant.

It is on this day I felt—as I watched tears stream down the cheeks of countless Americans—that I believed "Yes, We Can" become a nation where the hope that we can become the country the forefathers envisioned. I began to believe, while watching Americans in this moment as they celebrated their collective accomplishment of putting Barack Obama into the Oval Office, that the Liberty Bell is ringing louder and Lady Liberty's light is shining brighter as the nation forges ahead.

It is on this day that we can believe that Americans can aspire to new heights and depths of the imagination. That on this day we

can sail to a place called the sea of freedom, liberty and justice. That this nation can put behind it the dark days of its unfortunate past and march towards the sunlight arms interlocked believing in the



Edwin Buggage

brotherhood of humanity, to a day where we can see ourselves as family.

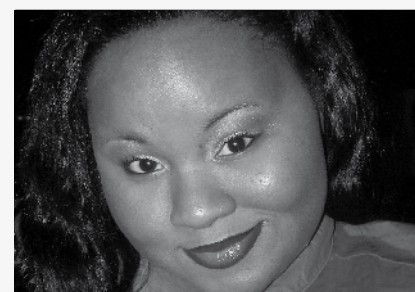
It is in the spirit of this moment in the Nation's Capitol the faces of the people I witnessed and spoke to during the storied historic time that perhaps this is the dawning of a new day for America. That the stars and stripes that lined the landscape in this spirit of unity, that tomorrow may be a brighter day where all people who make up this great

nation can dream and believe in the American Dream.

It is in the spirit of these historic times, I find that America is in a moment of renewal of the hope that we can in this century become the nation we were destined to be. And show the world that America is ready to lead and partner with nations of the world to solve the problems that afflict nations across the globe. That for yes on this day when millions came to the National Mall, hope for America was reborn.

And as we move forward in the days to come, it is my hope that what has gotten us to this historic moment will not be forgotten, that this will be the beginning of a new day for this country. That people will bring back to their communities a renewed spirit of what America can be. And as we celebrate the accomplishment of a man who gave us the Audacity of Hope, now it is up to us the people with whose votes help make history to continue on this journey down the road renewing the hope for this nation and for the world. For in this day we are the architects that will build a better tomorrow, and we have begun laying a new foundation today.

The Return of Pissed Off Weekly



Thais Mills
Pissed Off Data Contributor

HeIIIIIIIIIIo New Orleans!!!! I've missed you like hot seasoned crawfish! I guess you're like, who is this girl and why is her crawfish tail all up in my Data News INK space!

My name is Thais Mills and if you were a die-hard Data News Weekly fan before Hurricane Katrina we've met many times before. I was the thick spicy chick who'd find out each week what had pissed you off. Well guys, I'm here to do it once again. So grind your gears, embrace all fears all while you get ready Freddy for new topics, exclusive celebrity interviews, hot tips, fly tricks and much more!

Oh yeah don't get pissed off about my column's title, "Pissed Off Weekly." I created it only because no matter who you are each week I'm more than sure something will manage to piss you all the way off. Now when it does, you have somewhere to come and spill your INK!!! So thanks again for welcoming me back into your homes, offices, shops, art galleries, clubs, dorm rooms and more!!!

Now Is the Time to Bail Our Poor Children and Families Out of Poverty



Marian Wright Edelman
NNPA Columnist

As the current recession has turned into what may be the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, we all witnessed televised coverage of the CEOs of big banks, investment houses, mortgage companies and auto makers testify before Congress and plead for financial bailouts.

They argued that bankruptcy of these

corporate behemoths would result in a national economic catastrophe. So American taxpayers got strapped with bailing them out to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. Never mind that many of those corporate executives presided over colossal business failures while receiving multi-million dollar compensation packages.

President Barack Obama and Congress are preparing economic stimulus legislation to jump start the economy, a desperately needed measure to help the millions of American families heading for the jagged shoals of financial disaster as a result of job and home loss.

Even before the dramatic growth in unemployment, now at 7.2 percent, more than 37 million low-income Americans scrambled to survive one day at a time, including about 13.3 million children—one in six. Among poor children, 5.8 million live in extreme poverty—in families with incomes below half the poverty line (in 2008, that was \$10,600 a year for a family of four).

These are households struggling to hold

on to the basics, from a minimally adequate diet to keeping a roof over their heads.

Working poor families are among the hardest hit by the current recession. But working families did not start losing economic ground with the onset of the recession. Median family incomes in the United States have declined for several years since 2000. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has projected that between 2.6 and 3.3 million children will fall into poverty during the recession—and 1.5 to 2.0 million children will be counted among those pushed into extreme poverty. Research from CDF's new State of America's Children 2008® Report, reveals that Black children are more than three times as likely to be poor as White children.

How deeply poverty poisons the lives of children varies widely from state to state. A Black child is two and a half times as likely to be poor in Louisiana as in Maryland. A White child is three times as likely to be poor in West Virginia as in Connecticut. The ten states with the highest pov-

erty rates are Mississippi (29.3 percent), Louisiana (26.8 percent), Arkansas (25.8 percent), New Mexico (25.5 percent), Alabama (24.3 percent), Kentucky (23.9 percent), Texas (23.2 percent), Tennessee (23 percent), West Virginia (22.8 percent) and Oklahoma (22.5 percent). The rate for the District of Columbia was (22.7 percent).

Isn't it time to end the lottery of geography on child survival and provide every child a national safety net of decency? Isn't it time to end child poverty in America, which costs our country hundreds of billions in lost productivity every year? Sadly, our nation's poor children don't have a team of bank presidents or investment house CEOs to plead for an economic bailout for their families in the corridors of power in Washington.

Marian Wright Edelman, whose latest book is *The Sea Is So Wide And My Boat Is So Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation*, is president of the Children's Defense Fund. For more information about the Children's Defense Fund, go to www.childrensdefense.org.

A Bailout for our Students



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Why do banks and businesses get breaks when college students do not? While some are getting multi-billion dollar bailouts, the students who so enthusiastically supported Barack Obama are being offered scant relief from the effects of our broken economy.

Much attention has been focused on keeping people in the middle class. What about those who are attempting to claw their way into the middle class through education? We need a broad-based stimulus package, and college students need special help.

Thanks to a federal government bailout, General Motors will be offering cars to the public with zero percent interest loans. Banks, too, are getting subsidized loans.

Through federal programs, students pay between 5 and 9 percent for government

loans. When their parents cannot qualify for federal programs, they go to private lenders, and pay as much as 15 percent for loans to cover college education.

Some pay for college on their credit cards, paying between 18 and 24 percent for their children to go to college. If we can offer cars at zero percent, and give banks subsidized loans, why not offer students college loans at one percent.

Rev. Jesse Jackson calls it the one percent solution, and he is right on time. One percent money for students helps them with better repayment terms, and helps their parents as well. And it helps colleges maintain enrollment, because there are students who are dropping out of school because they can't afford to pay.

When college students have federally subsidized loans, they are required to begin paying them back within six months of graduation. In this economy? We need a reality check. As long as the unemployment rate exceeds six percent, students should have eighteen months to begin paying back their loans. Otherwise, students are pressured to pay their loans back by whatever means necessary. Some use credit cards, at 18 percent, to pay loans back. Others struggle and find that if they do not pay their credit scores, or their lifetime of opportunities, are affected.

Student credit rating is not the only thing affected by failure to repay. Colleges are judged on the loan repayment rates of their students, and accrediting agencies penalize colleges who have repayment rates

over 25 percent.

But in a rotten economy, it is understandable that some students have difficulty repaying their loans. An economic stimulus package that helps students and colleges might suspend sanctions for those colleges with high loan repayment rates until the economy is more stable.

Thirty years ago, students were more likely to get grants than loans for college. Indeed the equation was that students paid for college with one-third loans and two-thirds grants. Now the equation has been reversed. The Pell grant, our need-based grant program, provides students with \$4750 a year toward their costs.

Bennett College costs \$22,000 for tuition room and board, so where does the other \$17,500 come from. Further, the Pell grant is granted fully to students with the lowest incomes, phasing out when parent income is about \$55,000 a year.

President Obama proposes raising the Pell Grant to \$5350 a year. That's help, but it isn't enough. The Pell grant ought to be \$10,000 per year. It helps us train the next generation, it helps maintain college enrollment, and while it is high enough to make a difference, it does not fully cover the cost of education, forcing students, too, to invest in their futures.

Already Republicans are carping that they don't want the Pell Grant to go up. But young people need help with their tuitions. The average student graduates the \$20,000 in student loans, and the average African American student graduates with \$26,000

in loans. Our young people are shackled before they begin their lives, their loan status dictating some career decisions.

The Obama Administration has also offered a \$4,000 tuition grant for students who do community service. That grant program is also a step in the right direction. I do hope that as the regulations for this program are developed, the Obama Administration seeks input from college presidents, and also from students, about ways the requirements for service will be measured.

At Bennett College, far too many of our students are struggling with the effects of this economy. When parents lose jobs, students struggle to stay in school. When parent credit scores change, the ability to qualify for some loans changes, and again students struggle to stay in school. Good students, dean's list students, students with stellar GPAs are beginning the spring semester worried sick about whether they can graduate with the balances they carry. The data is compelling, but the challenges that some of our young women face are all the more challenging.

Students need a bailout! They need one percent money for loans, more time to begin to repay their loans, and higher Pell Grants. If we can find \$138 billion for Bank of America, and offer car loans at zero percent, can't we provide a bailout for college students?

Julianne Malveaux is president of Bennett College for Women. She can be reached at presoffice@bennett.edu.

From Prophet King to President Obama in 40 Years



Marc Morial
NNPA Columnist

To Be Equal

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Martin Luther King, Jr.

On behalf of the National Urban League and its affiliates, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Barack Obama and Joe Biden as they officially assume their roles as President and Vice President of the United States.

For millions of Americans and freedom-loving people all over the world, the inauguration of President Barack Obama breathed new life into our nation's oldest and highest values. Watching the ceremony at the U.S. Capitol with the Lincoln Memorial in the background, I was reminded of the 1963 March on Washington.

Then as now, the nation was on the brink of dissolution and despair. And then, as now a visionary leader stepped forth with a message of hope onto the stage of history.

In one of those rare acts of divine timing, President Obama was sworn-in one day after the nation celebrated what would have been the 80th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It is amazing to think that the moral arc of the universe has given us a prophet and a president in the span of 40 years. With the inauguration of President Obama, we have moved closer to realizing Dr. King's dream. The forces of inequality, injustice, and division are clearly on the run, but as long as those forces hold sway in any corner, our work is not yet done.

In the time of legal segregation and denial of the right to vote, Dr. King's extraordinary moral authority helped lead us to a better day. In these times of unprecedented domestic and foreign upheaval, we now have a President who possesses both the moral and political authority to get this country back on track.

But democracy has never been a solo act or spectator sport. If we are to regain our economic and moral standing in the world, all of us are going to have to get in the game.

The National Urban League is already working with the new President and Congress to pass a major stimulus package designed to create new jobs and put our people back to work.

We will continue to be a strong advocate for the urban communities we serve. We will give the new President our support when we think he's right and we will not hesitate to tell him when we think he's wrong.

With so many challenges facing this nation, within the next four years we could very well reach a tipping point that will determine what kind of America we leave to our children. Will it be an America that works only for the wealthy and connected or will it be an America where everyone who is willing to work

and contribute has an equal chance to live out their dreams? In the words of President Obama, "Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin

again the work of remaking America."

Marc H. Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League.



All of us at Airware are inspired by the inauguration of our new president. His platform of "change-now" for the better has become one of the core values of our company.

—Terry Williams, President



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The Economy: Whites are Hurting, But Blacks are...

James Wright

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Barely a week in office as president of the United States, Barack Obama is facing one of the worst economic downturns since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The nation's economic woes top the new president's agenda even as the war in Iraq continues and the conflict in Afghanistan heats up.

For African-Americans like Carl Gray, a D.C.-based freelance videographer and entertainer, with a wife and two children, things always seem bad. Gray suspects that because he is Black, he will suffer economic discrimination, much of it subtle at times.

"I voted for Obama because I wanted someone in the White House who understood what I was going through," Gray said. "I know he does but the question is does he know the answer?"

When it comes to Blacks and the economy, two old sayings seem to sum up the struggle: "last hired, first fired" and "when Whites are in a recession, Blacks are in a depression."

The income disparity among Blacks and Whites is striking. For every one dollar a White man makes, a Black man generates 70

cents, followed by White women with 68 cents and Black women with 59, according to a book by Claud Anderson, "Black Labor, White Wealth: The Search for Power and Economic Justice."

A 2007 study conducted by researcher Julia Isaacs of the Brookings Institution showed that a typical Black family had only 58 percent of the income and assets of a typical White family. Blacks lag behind Whites in two wealth-producing instruments, homeownership and owning a business.

A 2006 U.S. Census Bureau survey showed that while 75 percent of White families owned their homes, only 47 percent of Blacks did so. A 2005 U.S. Department of Commerce survey showed that barely 5 percent of the nation's businesses are Black-owned.

Algernon Austin, an economist and director of the Race, Ethnicity and Economy Program at the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute, said that recessions are hurtful, particularly to the "poor and socially marginalized populations."

He said in an essay, "As we face the second recession of the decade and consider the merits of various stimulus packages, it is useful to examine what a recession would mean for Black America...What a recession means for Black America."

He added, "In the best of times, many African-American communities are forced to tolerate levels of unemployment unseen in most White communities...For example, the 2002 recession pushed the White annual unemployment rate up from a low of 3.4 percent in 2000 to a high of 5.2 percent in 2003. During the same period, the Black unemployment rate shot up from 7.6 percent to 10.8 percent."

Austin said that national recessions take African-Americans from a bad situation to a worse one.

"In 2007, the Black unemployment rate was 8.3 percent...This figure is still above the pre-recession low and more than twice the White unemployment rate. Goldman Sachs estimates that a new recession would increase the national unemployment rate to 6.4 percent by 2009."

The Black unemployment rate has already passed 11 percent.

To combat those numbers for all Americans, the Obama administration has designed a stimulus package to fuel the economy by building thousands of quality schools, lower electricity bills and increase health coverage for mil-

lions who lose insurance.

"National recessions take African-Americans from a bad situation to a worse one...Our economy could fall \$1 trillion short of its full capacity, which translates into more than \$12,000 in lost income for a family of four," he said in his five-minute Jan. 25 radio address. "And we could lose a generation of potential, as more young Americans are forced to forgo college dreams or the chance to train for the jobs of the future. In short, if we do not act boldly and swiftly, a bad situation could become dramatically worse."

Daunting statistics faced by Obama include:

*The United States lost 2.6 million jobs last year, the most in any single year since World War II.

*Manufacturing is at a 28-year low.

*The potential for unemployment could top 10 percent before the recession ends.

*One in 10 homeowners is at risk of foreclosure and the dollar continues its slide in value.

Corporations continue to suffer. Circuit City is closing and Microsoft announced recently it will lay off 5,000 workers nationwide. Most governors are asking for help in the stimulus package

as they face staggering deficits because of lack of revenue from faltering local economies and the growing need of Medicaid and children's health insurance programs.

Obama said that his plan would create 3 to 4 million jobs over the next few years by emphasizing public works projects, increasing the federal portion of public assistance programs that states manage, some tax cuts and taking on some uninsured Americans through a new, comprehensive health care plan.

"There are millions of Americans trying to find work even as, all around the country, there's so much work to be done," he said.

But Obama cautioned again against expecting instant results: "No one policy or program will solve the challenges we face right now, nor will this crisis recede in a short period of time."

Gray, the videographer, said he understands that things will take time and he will be patient.

"At least I know that Obama is trying," he said. "That is the important thing - that somebody high in the government understands that people are hurting and trying to do something about it."

Dell Agrees To Refund Consumers Under Settlement With 34 States

Special to the NNPA from the Seattle Medium

SEATTLE (NNPA) - Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna has announced an agreement between the Attorneys General of 34 states and Dell under which Dell will provide restitution to customers who experienced problems with the company's financing promotions, rebate offers, technical support and repair policies.

"It's time for a reboot of Dell's customer service system," McKenna said. "Our agreement requires disclosures to prevent future communication breakdowns and ensures that customers who are owed money are promptly paid."

Under the agreement, Texas-based Dell, Inc., and its subsidiary, Dell Financial Services, LLC, admit no wrongdoing but agree

to pay \$1.5 million in restitution to eligible consumers who file claims postmarked by April 13, 2009. Dell cooperated fully with the attorneys general during their investigation.

Dell will pay an additional \$1.85 million to the states for reimbursement of legal costs and other expenses. Washington will receive \$200,000 of that amount.

Assistant Attorney General Katherine Tassi of the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division said Washington and Connecticut jointly led an investigation into Dell's sales practices after customers complained about an array issues.

Some applied for zero-percent financing then were charged higher interest rates. Others had trouble obtaining warranty service on their Dell computers. Many said they never received promised rebates.

"The deals Dell made and the terms computer buyers thought they agreed to didn't always compute," Tassi said.

One consumer said she made a purchase with zero-percent financing for 18 months and made her payments on time. But the last payment was applied late. The customer was then billed \$668 interest for the entire financing period.

Under the settlement, Dell agreed to the following:

FINANCING AND CREDIT OFFERS

- Disclose in advertisements for promotional credit offers that the majority of consumers who apply won't qualify for the best annual percentage rate (APR), and disclose the range of initial APRs that consumers who are not considered the "most qualified borrowers" are likely to

receive.

- Inform consumers considering applying for promotional financing that the application is for a revolving open credit account, that minimum monthly payments are required and that approval of the account does not guarantee that the consumer will also qualify for conditional financing promotions (such as zero-percent interest for 90 days). Explain how finance charges are calculated, disclose any penalties and inform the consumer whether subsequent purchases made using the credit account will be subject to the same or different financing terms.
- At the time of credit acceptance, disclose whether the applicant has qualified for any conditional financing promotion.

WARRANTIES AND SERVICES

- Fulfill its warranty obligations

within 30 days from the date of notification or receipt of a defective product.

- Disclose whether phone-based troubleshooting or remote diagnosis is required before Dell will provide on-site repair or warranty-related service.

REBATES

- If a rebate is available, provide the necessary rebate documentation at the time product is delivered or the service is provided.
- Mail rebates within the specified timeframe, or within 30 days if no date is specified.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Implement written policies to ensure compliance with the settlement, including procedures that address issues such as:

- Informing consumers of their

Continued on next page.

Change Celebrated at Star-studded Black Press Gala

**Brandon Dejoie Hall and
Gordon Jackson**

(NNPA) When credits are ultimately given for the historic rise of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States, the Black Press will be among those on the list.

That was the sentiment expressed by Corey Ealons, who served as director of African-American Media on now President Obama's Transition Team as he applauded the Black Press during a glitzy, star-studded Inaugural Gala, themed "Salute to Change" at the elegant La Madison Embas-



NNPA Foundation Chair Dorothy Leavell congratulates Motown celebrities Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy on the 50th anniversary of the R & B giant. She is joined by New Orleans Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones (left) and Los Angeles Sentinel Publisher Danny Bakewell (center). Credit: Roy Lewis



Danny Bakewell, publisher of the Los Angeles Sentinel, and Sheila Burns of New Orleans pose with renowned artist Ted Ellis. Credit: Roy Lewis



Phill Wilson, president of the Black AIDS Institute; Jannette Dates, dean of the Howard University School of Communications; Dorothy Leavell, chair of the NNPA Foundation; Jeff Burns, vice chair of the Howard board of visitors; and Hazel Trice Edney, editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service. Credit: Margot Jordan

sy of France on Jan. 19.

"This is a victory for President Barack Obama. This is a victory for Black America and also a victory for members of this organization," Ealons said to the audience during the fund-raiser for an NNPA News Service wing in the new Howard University School of Communications.

Ealons then told the crowd at the black-tie optional ball, co-sponsored by NNPA, Howard and the National Black Chamber of Commerce: "What we saw during this past election cycle was record turnout in the African-American community. That wasn't just because Barack Obama is an

African-American. It's because they had an opportunity to learn about who he is, where he's from, what his values are and [how] he plans to improve their lives and the lives of their children. He appreciates that that could not have happened in the Black community but for the work and diligence of the Black Press."

The big party drew more than 600 guests to the embassy in Washington's Georgetown. They danced to live music by Russell Thompkins Jr. and The New Stylistics, who charmed the audience with such notable classics as "You are Everything" and "Betcha by Golly Wow." The Stylistics was an

R&B group known for these classic hits during the 1970s.

Attending were Glynn Turman, who is most notably known for his role as Clarence V. Royce in HBO's hit series 'The Wire'. The audience was also wowed by an unexpected appearance by Rhythm & Blues legends Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy, who were both in town to attend inaugural festivities. They dropped in with award-winning Los Angeles Sentinel publisher Danny Bakewell. Also in the crowd were former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb and Chloe Mortaud, who reigns as Miss France 2009, the first Black woman to hold the title.

The Gala also featured performances by brother-sister duo Phredley and Howard University's Dance Ensemble as well as a silent auction from the collection of artist Ted Ellis, who unveiled his latest piece "Obama, the 44th President, an abstract depiction of Obama's signature 'hope' pose. Ellis is among the most celebrated artists of the 21st Century.

Gordy, founder of Motown Records, spoke about the importance of Obama's presidency as a hallmark of the sacrifices of past African-Americans as well as the hopeful prospects of a brighter future for generations to come. He also paid tribute to Robinson's renowned achievements in music and pop-culture in Motown's 50th year anniversary.

Despite all the star-power, it was actually the celebration of change that was most distinct in the atmosphere at the gala, primed by now-President Obama's agenda for a new and revitalized America. More than 600 dignitaries and professionals converged from around the country and several nations, serving the two-fold purpose of supporting NNPA and celebrating the historic election.

"It's truly a blessing in my lifetime to be able to see the first African-American president," said Dirck Hargraves, vice president of Vox Global Mandate, a Washington D.C. financial services and communications firm and one of the event's sponsors.

Howard's communication school, named after John H. Johnson, the late legendary founder of Ebony and JET Magazines, is embarking on the \$75 million capital campaign to build a new state-of-the-art facility. A wing of the new building would serve as offices for the NNPA Foundation and its news service. Other gala sponsors were Hennessy, ISRI, Sa-Tech, Inc., Areva, EGM Ser-

vices Inc., Christine's Coffee and Talkhouse Magazine.

"The Black Press of America is going to have a permanent presence in the city," said Dorothy Leavell, chair of the NNPA Foundation. "This is just our first fundraiser. We could not let this occasion pass without the Black Press taking its rightful place in welcoming our own president. So we decided to throw our own party, and a party it is!"

Jannette Dates, dean of the School of Communications, said she is working alongside the new school president, Sydney Ribeau, to push the fundraising efforts.

"We're working with the president and administration and getting more details on how to proceed under the new leadership," Dates said. The NNPA News Service, led by Editor-in-Chief Hazel Trice Edney, is currently housed in the School of Communications and assists in the development of students into professional journalists in a Microsoft-sponsored laboratory.

"It's very important. With the Black Press, it's power," says Harry Alford, president and CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, who serves as a member of the NNPA Foundation board and an NNPA columnist. "Power is information and information is power."

It's very important to hear the Black point of view and the real story. Telling our perspective is very vital to our culture, civilization and our future."

The NNPA gala was one of dozens of major events throughout the Inaugural weekend that welcomed millions to the nation's capital to witness what now President Obama once called, "the moment that we have been waiting for."

Continued from previous page.

- right to cancel orders made with the Dell Credit Account within three days after receiving final credit approval and the written terms and conditions.
- Communication between Dell and Dell Financial Services when a consumer returns a product purchased with credit.
- Removing consumer accounts from collection agencies and providing accurate information to credit-reporting bureaus.

- Substantiate any claims Dell makes about the quality of its customer service. Dell can use the term "award-winning" to describe its customer service only if the company received such an award within the past 18 months.

The following states participated in the settlement: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Mon-

tana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

CONSUMER REFUND REQUESTS:

It's not yet known how many consumers in Washington or nationwide may be entitled to refunds under the settlement. Consumers may be eligible for

restitution if 1) They have a valid complaint concerning a product that was purchased between April 1, 2005, and April 13, 2009, and is addressed by the agreement and 2) Dell owes them money.

Consumers can also call 1-800-551-4636 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays to request a form by mail. The deadline to submit claims is April 13, 2009.

Eligible consumers who previously filed complaints with the Attorney General's Office on or after April 1, 2005, will be mailed

claim forms. If you believe you are eligible and do not receive a claim form within two weeks of today's date, download one from our website or contact the Attorney General's Office for a claim form.

Consumers in participating states should contact their Attorney General's Office.

The amount of money issued to individual consumers depends on the number of eligible recipients and the total amount claimed.

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TO THE COUNTRY
TO THE PLANET



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