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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



Greater St. John Cotillion

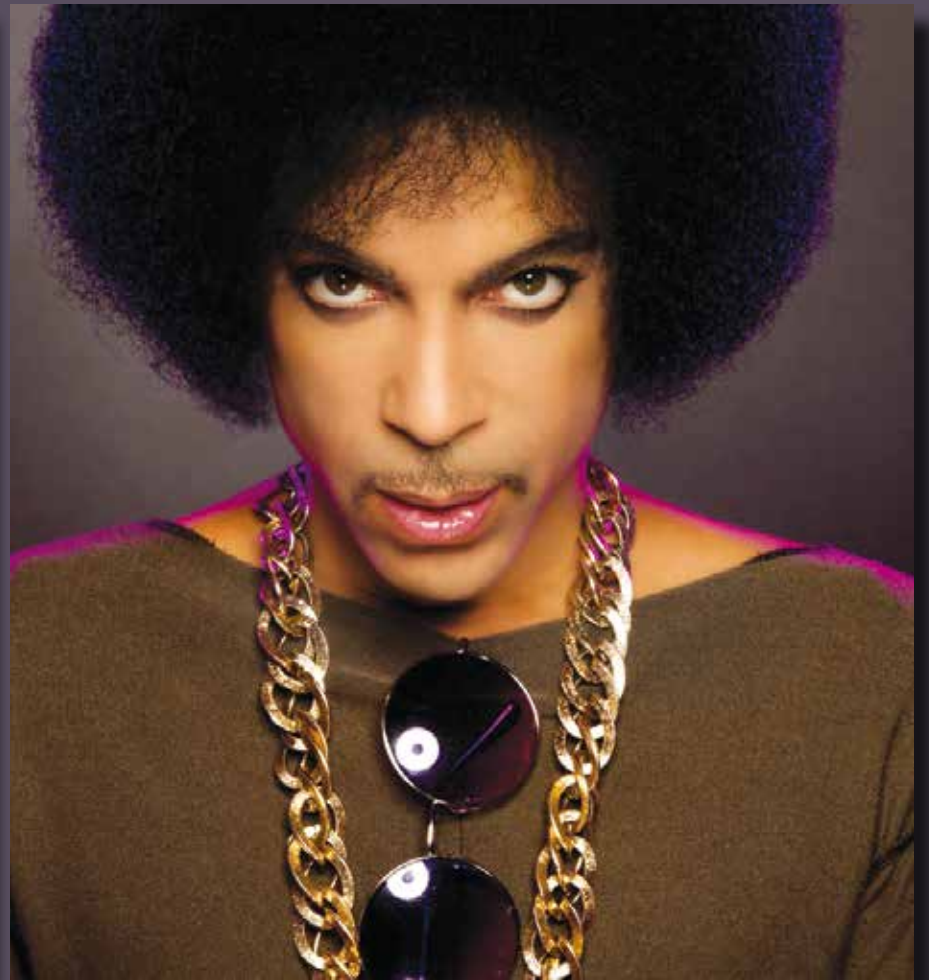
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July 5 - July 11, 2014 49th Year Volume 10 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

The Essence of New Orleans



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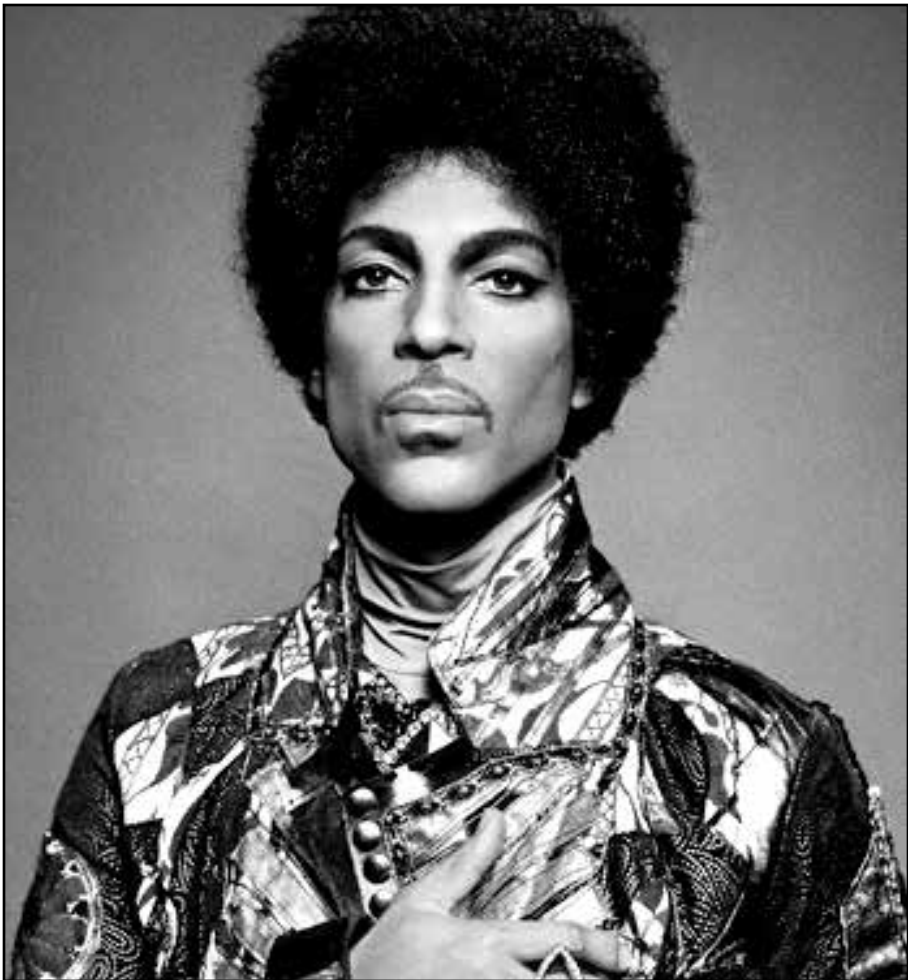


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The Essence of New Orleans



Alicia Keys



Prince

by Edwin Buggage

Again it is that time of the year where over a half a million people come to the city of New Orleans for the Essence Music Festival. On what is two decades this year of celebrating “The Party With a Purpose.” This year is one that Essence Magazine Editor-in-Chief Vanessa Bush told Data News that they anticipate this

year’s fest to be their biggest ever. This year as always during the 4th of July weekend where the days and nights are filled with daytime seminars and nights of amazing music from some of the music industry top performers. This year is no different, many of what has become staples at the fest are back to bless the stage. Mary J. Blige, Jill Scott, Ledisi and Erykah Badu representing the females and on the

male side you got Charlie Wilson and Lionel Richie for those who love the old school who will be joined by R&B sensation New Orleans Native August Alsina and many others; but what many are talking about is his royal badness, Prince hitting the Essence stage. Of course what makes Essence Fest so unique is that it is in fact a Party with a Purpose. And during the day there will be seminars at the Morial Conven-

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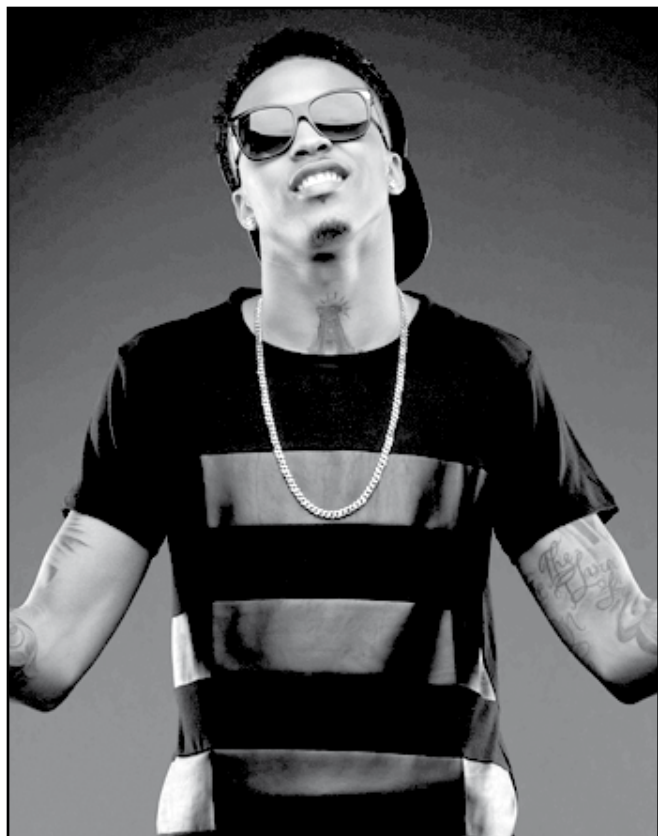
DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

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August Alsina



Jill Scott



Charlie Wilson

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Lionel Richie



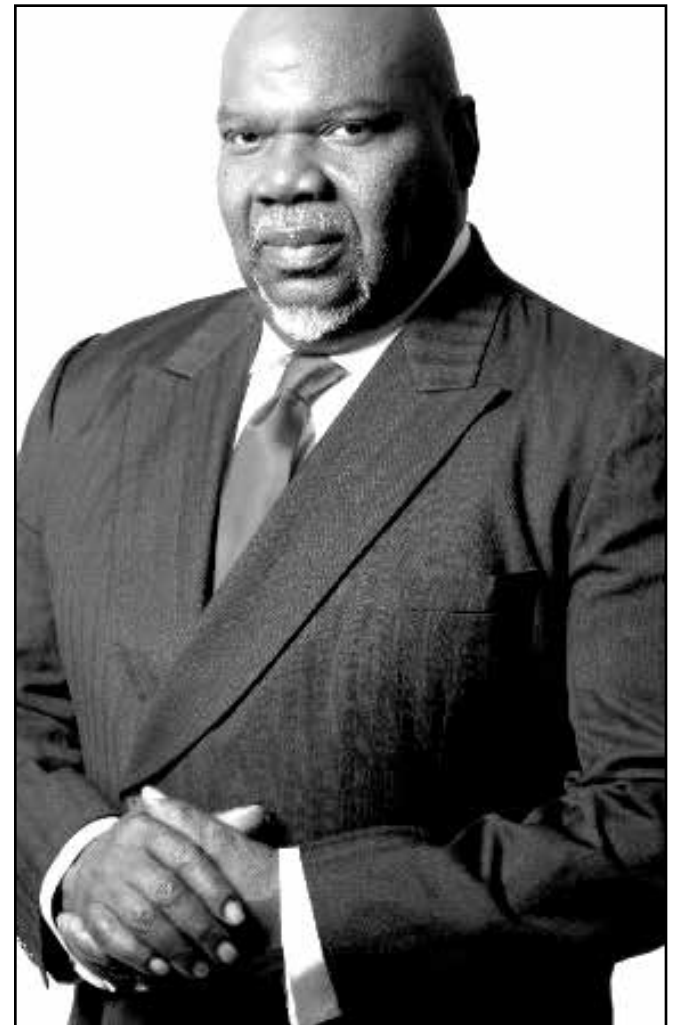
Tamar Braxton



Ilyana Vanzant



Congresswoman Maxine Waters



Bishop T.D. Jakes

tion Center that will have thought provoking conversations with leading voices in the African American community. This year is no different with something for the whole family to enjoy throughout the several days of the fest. Panelist and speakers will include Alicia Keys,

T.D. Jakes, Maxine Waters, Ilyana Vanzant, Nia Long, Rev. Al Sharpton, Roland Martin, Terri McMillan and many others and promises to be as always thought provoking and empowering.

With over a 200 million dollar impact over the what is two decades

on the city of New Orleans, Essence Fest continues to be something that stimulates the economy of the city. Additionally, it has become one of the premiere festivals in the country. What has grown from the 25th anniversary of a magazine dedicated to black women has evolved into

something that represent and symbolize African American excellence for the entire community. And New Orleans as that has birthed many of the great traditions from giving the world jazz, great cuisine and a rich culture people from around the world are intrigued by. Essence

Festival has seemingly added yet another. So we at Data New want to welcome you to New Orleans and hope that you enjoy this weekend we ask all to have fun in celebrating the 20th anniversary of "The Party with a Purpose."

The National Urban League Brings Focus on Jobs at the 2014 Essence Festival

The National Urban League, the nation's largest historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization, announced that as part of its ongoing Jobs Rebuild America initiative, it will run Career Connections during the 2014 Essence Festival in the Empower U Zone, taking place July 3-6 in New Orleans. In partnership with leading healthcare services provider Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), the National Urban League will continue its focus on job creation and career advancement via the Essence Festival Career Connections powered by the National Urban League.

"Last year at this time, the National Urban League announced a \$1.5 million Jobs Rebuild America grant to the Urban League of Greater New Orleans to help support



Powered by the National Urban League

programs targeting youth, entrepreneurs, and post-secondary education and training for work/adult re-entry programs," said Marc H. Morial, National Urban League President & CEO and Founding

Mayor of the Essence Music Festival. "This year, as we celebrate the milestone 20th anniversary of the Essence Festival, we could not be more proud to partner with Essence and HCA to provide attend-

ees with critical career advancement resources that start here, but that will continue to help them navigate a challenging jobs market and their own careers once they return home."

For more than 100 years, the National Urban League has been a leading resource for diverse professionals and job seekers. In addition to providing college preparation, skills training, a jobs network, entrepreneurship support, small business financing and other resources through Jobs Rebuild America, the National Urban League connects top talent with companies who incorporate diversity and inclusion into their recruitment, hiring, and retention practices.

Career Connections will provide an opportunity for Festival at-

tendees to meet industry leaders, network with entrepreneurs, get career advancement tips and attend recruitment sessions with some of the nation's top companies. It will take place daily from July 4-6, 10:00am - 6:00pm CT at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

As an employer of more than 200,000 people across 20 states and England, HCA is the lead recruiter at the Career Connections powered by the National Urban League and will also host a Virtual Career Fair and participate in the Career & Networking Fair at the National Urban League Annual Conference in Cincinnati, July 23-26.

In 2013, more than 540,000 people came to New Orleans for the

Urban League,
Continued on page 11.



**THANK YOU
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for
**20
GREAT YEARS
IN NEW ORLEANS**



**- U.S. SENATOR
MARY L. LANDRIEU**

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Essence of the Cookout



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Starring Gospel Recording Star **Kim Che're**

Also starring:
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Dwight E. Clay
Bobby Johnson
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Ronald Kennedy
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Michelle Briscoe-Long
Jessica Matthews

June 27-July 13
Friday -Saturday at 8:00 pm Sunday Matinee at 3:00 pm
(Special Note: There will not be a performance on the 4th of July.)
Tickets - \$20.00 Adults Students/Seniors \$18.00
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LMG Calla Victoria

This holiday weekend oh yes they will be throwing another shrimp on the barbie, or some ribs, veggies, hot dogs, and burgers. When thinking of grilling one rarely thinks of gardening or the plant world. But have you ever thought of where that delectable mesquite flavor comes from as you are savoring every bite, I mean originally? The mesquite extract used in barbequing comes from the wood of the mesquite tree. Serious grill masters also use other hardwoods like cherry, pecan, and hickory in their grills to achieve those wonderful flavors; all trees from the plant world. Different woods

add a different smoke flavor to the meats. being grilled. Experiment with different woods with different meats until you find the right combination for your taste. Also all

of the herbs and spices like rosemary, allspice, dill, cayenne, etc. used to season the grilled dishes comes from plants.

Of course every great cookout ends with mouthwatering desserts, and almost every dessert contain ingredients like sugar which comes from the sugarcane plant, flour which comes from the wheat plant, cinnamon which is the bark of Cinnamomum iners tree, and vanilla which comes from the beans of the vanilla orchid plant.

As gardening is an integral part of grilling, the grill returns the favor with fertilizer for the garden. Ashes from your grill forms potash which promotes plant growth. Wood ashes contain potassium, some phosphorus and magnesium. Ashes from such hardwoods as maple, elm, oak and beech contain a third more calcium plus more potash than the ashes from softwoods. So while you are complimenting the chef at the cookout remember to salute the plant world for all of its offerings!

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" at www.thegardeningdiva.com.

Remember, never get too busy to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers

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Greater St. John Missionary Baptist Church's Inaugural Christian Cotillion



Greater St. John Missionary Baptist Church hosted their inaugural Christian Cotillion on Sunday, June 30, 2014 at the 11am worship service. Each cotillion participant engaged in an intense full day retreat with nearly 17 presenters. The presenters included Dr. Stephanie Arnaud, Mrs. Katrena Ntang, Miss Katrena Njiki (of Dallas, Texas), Mrs. Cynthia Woods-Wheeler, CPA (of Atlanta, GA), Mrs.

Giselle Battley (of Baton Rouge, LA), Mrs. Sharon Partman, Miss Shelby Partman, Assistant District Attorney Alicia Bennett, Mrs. Trina H. Malone, Dr. Lola Johnson and Ms. Toyin Idewu with her co-presenters: Ms. Stacey Knockum-Robertson, Ms. Trenice Jupiter, Ms. Tonya Washington-Nash, Mrs. Tania Monterio-Vignaud, Ms. Kristal Gould. The retreat include sessions on health and nutrition,

post-secondary preparedness, finances, job search skills, social media, domestic violence, healthy hair, dressing for success, dinner table etiquette, and women in the Bible. The participants were required to participate in a day of service at John Hainkel Nursing Home. They created father's day cards for 52 men at the facility Father's Day weekend.

Each young lady was presented

wearing appropriate church attire and adorned with a coordinating hat. Cotillion participants were presented their awards and recognized by Judge Terry Love of the 4th Circuit of Appeals. The event was coordinated by First Lady, Sister Adrann Mitchell with the assistance of Sister Mable Woods. Greater St. John Missionary Baptist Church is under the stewardship of Pastor Curtis O. Mitchell.

A Most Impressive Lineup.

Entergy extends sincere admiration and respect to the entrepreneurs participating in the July 4-5 PowerMoves.NOLA business pitch competitions.

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Emerging as the best among the best is not easy. The talent showcased here is exceptional, diverse and real. These participants inspire others and understand that hard work, great ideas and mutual support can make a real difference.

Entergy is proud to be a sponsor of this important event and believes that the ongoing development and growth of minority-owned business enterprises is key to a progressive and dynamic business culture.

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The Black Press

*The Voice of Black America
(Part I)*



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

Amidst last week's annual convention of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon, I was reminded repeatedly that Black Americans have had a long, storied tradition of newspaper publishing. Since the first publication of Freedom's Journal in 1827, Black American publishers have worked heroically to earn the title "Voice of Black America." From the east coast to the west coast, in big cities and in small towns, NNPA publishers continue have a sustainable economic development impact within the heart of the Black American community.

For more than 187 years, the Black Press in America has stood

courageously to articulate and print the news interests of Black America. But please do not take this history lightly or for granted. We must never forget how the long struggle to attain the right to vote was "blood soaked" by the sacrifices and sufferings of civil rights leaders and activists.

Similarly, the historic struggle of Black Americans to engage in the enterprise of freedom of press has been also soaked with sacrificial blood, facing down lynch mobs, and enormous economic inequality challenges. There is a long list of Black newspapers in the U.S. that have been dynamited, deliberated destroyed and the target of successive arsons.

During the 1898, race massacre in Wilmington, N.C, the Daily Record was burned to the ground by 1,500 racist vigilantes who were angry at the audacity of Alexander Manly, the Black American publisher of the newspaper. Manly had written a bold editorial opposing the brutal and wanton patterns of unjust lynching of Black men and women in the state.

Sixty-five years later, the Wilm-

ington Journal, published by Thomas C. Jervay, Sr. and family, was bombed with sticks of dynamite by a paramilitary group known as the Rights of White People (ROWP). Still, the Wilmington Journal never missed a week publishing. The Jervay family of Black-owned newspapers in Raleigh and in Wilmington emerged over the years to epitomize the history of moral integrity and high value of NNPA member publishers.

Some ask why it is necessary to be reminded of the history of the Black Press. It is necessary because we cannot afford to be ignorant of our past if we intend to have a better future for generations to come. The Black Press is one of the most valuable assets that we have in our communities.

I wrote of series of columns recently on the "Civil Rights Movement and Hip-Hop." We received positive responses from readers across generations. For the next few weeks, I will write a series of columns on "The Black Press: The Voice of Black America."

Today, there are numerous

vexing challenges facing Black America. At the same time, there are enormous opportunities to advance the cause of freedom, justice and equality for Black America and for all people who yearn and struggle for a better quality of life.

One of the most crucial recognized international human rights is the universal right to "self-determination." Self-expression is key to self-determination. The NNPA is the epitome of self-expression of Black America. We live in a global media age. The print media is the bedrock of multimedia and social media. Digital media augments – and not supplant – the printed word. That is especially true among African Americans who over index on technology.

Thus, we intend to strengthen the #VoiceofBlackAmerica @ NNPA BlackPress every second, hour, day, week, month and year. Next year will mark the 75th anniversary of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. I am excited and passionate about helping to enhance and advance the significant interests of the

Black Press in the U.S., in the Caribbean, in Brazil, across Africa and throughout the world. Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 75th Anniversary of NNPA: The Voice of Black America.

Our struggle for freedom, justice and equality continues. I am optimistic about the future. We have been given the baton of history at a time when have some of best newspaper publishers, freedom-fighting journalists, business leaders, teachers, preachers, lawyers and other professionals, along with the most talented and gifted generation of youth that we have ever been blessed to witness. Nothing can hold us back from winning but ourselves.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the Interim President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached for national advertisement sales and partnership proposals at: dr.bchavis@nnpa.org; and for lectures and other professional consultations at: <http://drbenjaminfchavisjr.wix.com/drbcf>

Ikea and the Gap Fill the Wage Gap



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

President Obama would like the national minimum wage to rise to \$10.10 an hour. By executive order, he has already raised the minimum wage for federal contractors. House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) has threatened to sue President Obama for his use of executive order, which he says circumvents Congressional authority.

Ikea said it will raise the average minimum wage to \$10.76 an hour, which is an increase of 17 percent. Ikea says its goal is to offer their workers a living wage, regardless of whether their competitors offer it. Half of Ikea employees will get a raise, while those who already earn a living wage will not. The chain now provides other benefits, such as a 401-k match. Ikea has just 38 stores in the United States, which may minimize the impact their wage increase has on its competitors. Still, Ikea has done the right thing and earned a competitive advantage in the areas where they have stores.

The Gap, too, has increased its wage to \$9 an hour, which will rise to \$10 an hour next year. Seattle has raised its minimum wage to \$15,

and dozens of municipalities have also increase their minimum wage. When employers and municipalities fail to offer a living wage, they shift a wage burden to the rest of us because those who earn the minimum wage are subsidized by federal benefits to the poor, which we all pay.

This is also true when states refuse to expand the base for Medicaid for the purposes of the Affordable Care Act (ACA, or Obamacare). In more than 20 states, people have to earn less than \$11,000, or \$23,000 for a family of four. With Medicaid expansion, people can earn as much as \$15,000 to qualify for Medicaid, and as much as \$32,000 for a family of four. Without the Medicaid expansion, some states are saying that poverty and poor health are

acceptable for some of its citizens.

The moves by Ikea and the Gap put some wage pressure on their competitors. It also makes it clear that these companies understand that raising wages will not significantly affect their profits. These companies also understand that better paid employees are also productive employees. Memo to fast food and big box stores set on paying the minimum wage or little more – pay your workers a living wage.

Ikea gets it, so does the Gap. What's wrong with the Congress? Whether they are Democrats or Republicans, they have constituents who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage. Why are they resisting? Might it be because President Obama has pushed for an increase in the minimum wage? If

our President pushed for blue skies it is likely that some obstructionist members of Congress would oppose it.

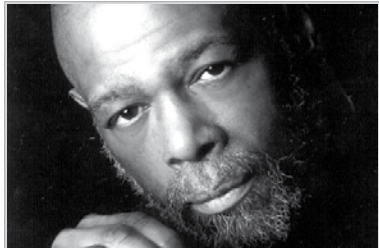
If the minimum wage kept pace with inflation, it would be \$10.90 by now, a bit higher than the amount President Obama has proposed. The same Congress that opposes an increase in the minimum wage gets an automatic increase in their pay. This is the kind of hypocrisy that engenders indifference and contempt for our elected representatives.

Some members of Congress have insisted that only young people earn the minimum wage. But at least 12 percent of the labor force

earns the minimum wage. One
Commentary, Continued
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Spiritually Speaking...

Ready or Not, You're a Preacher



James Washington
Guest Columnist

Ever since I began this journey of mine, I have heard minister after minister talk about their and their church's individual ministries. Many have put their mission statements before their congregations for a vote of approval and then a commitment in action and activities to be pursued. Some describe themselves as urban

ministries, while others serve the homeless. Still others prioritize prison ministries, while others focus, depending on size and resources, on Christina education. Some are simple. Some are varied, if not complex. Maybe you've been told, like me, that everyone has a ministry. Where you see a need, you can probably find a calling.

Some of you have even suggested that this column represents my ministry, even as I have tried to deny this. I have been known to start many a column with the caveat, "...even though I am not an ordained minister." It is my way of saying, 'take what I say with a personal grain of salt.' This drives many who read and support this

work up a wall because they recognize when I don't that perhaps this column does indeed minister to many. Maybe my rather public statements of faith could be interpreted as ministry. Their point always has been that ministering doesn't necessarily only come from ministers. We all have an obligation to spread the Word, preach the gospel, proclaim Christ as Lord.

In private moments of contemplation I've often wondered, what Jesus' ministry was. I mean if you want to emulate someone's ministry, it would be His. Aside from miracles and the like, it seems God came amongst us and simply served where needed. He taught (teacher). He communicated

(motivational speaker). He converted (recruiter). He harvested the fruits of His labor (salesman). Simple man, simple ministry...service, service, service. The point being, that we can all minister. The question is will you choose to? Will you accept the obvious role God has chosen for you? For the confused or the reluctant, this is an easy task. All one has to do is use the gift(s) God has blessed you with for His purposes rather than your own. I write and have made a conscious decision to write something for the Lord. What do you do as lawyer, accountant, cook, salesman, banker, day laborer, mother, father or mechanic, employed or not? Jesus proved you have no excuse because each

gift has a spiritual manifestation, if we choose to view it as ministry.

"We have different gifts according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." Romans 12:6-8. Stop for a moment and take inventory of the many gifts God has blessed you with. Use them wisely or perish in worldly wealth and spiritual poverty.

May God bless and keep you always.

Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

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1960s Freedom Riders to Commemorate 50th Anniversary of Civil Rights Act of 1964 with Civil Rights Bus Ride

A half-century ago, courageous civil rights activists rode Greyhound and Trailways buses into the segregated South, enduring brutal beatings by the Ku Klux Klan, fire bombings and the wrath of Birmingham (Alabama) Public Safety Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor. They came to be known as "Freedom Riders."

On Wednesday, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, some of those same Freedom Riders will board buses in front the Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building for a symbolic and celebratory returning freedom ride.

Following a 9 a.m. ET ceremony at the LBJ Building, they will join 49 student leaders in departing the Education Department, driving past the U.S. Supreme Court, Lincoln Memorial and on to Richmond, Virginia, the one-time capital of the Confederacy.

There, they will be greeted not by hatred, but by the welcoming handshakes of Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe and U.S. Sen. Mark Warner. Catherine E. Lhamon, the Department's assistant secretary for civil rights, will deliver the keynote remarks in a 1 p.m. ET observance in the Old House Chamber at the Virginia State Capitol.

"As we celebrate the gains we as a nation have made in the 50 years



The Freedom Riders (pictured above) were civil rights activists who rode interstate buses into the segregated South in 1961 and subsequent years to test U.S. Supreme Court decisions banning segregation laws. The Freedom Rides followed lunch counter sit-ins and boycotts of retail establishments that maintained segregated facilities. The court's decision in *Boynton v. Virginia* supported the right of interstate travelers to disregard local segregation ordinances. *Boynton* outlawed racial segregation in waiting rooms, restaurants and bus terminals serving buses that crossed state lines.

that have passed since President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, I hope that all of us – on and off this bus – will recommit ourselves to delivering the full promise of the law to all our nation's students," said Lhamon. "By uniting

civil rights luminaries and student leaders, we collectively renew our commitment to advancing this important work."

Among the Freedom Riders expected to join the bus ride are Dion Diamond, Rev. Reginald Green,

John Moody, Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, Charles Person and Hank Thomas. They will ride with the 49 student leaders from around the country who were selected through a competitive process. The young people come from diverse back-

grounds and include high school, undergraduate, doctoral and law students. Each is committed to enhancing civil rights enforcement so that all people, regardless of background, may have equal access to participation in every facet of community life.

The students reside in 18 states and the District of Columbia, including: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin.

The landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The measure ushered in a whole new era of change for millions of Americans to whom equality had been elusive for far too long. The law's biggest impact came in promoting equality in voting, public accommodations, education and practically all federally funded programs and activities. An offshoot of the act was the creation in 1966 of the Office for Civil Rights, enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination in education. Wednesday's bus ride will serve as a unique event to take the message of equality and justice on the road. It will be a mobile classroom offering an opportunity for the student leaders to interact with some of the pioneers of America's civil rights movement.

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NNPA Presents Willie Brown with Legacy Award

PORTLAND, Oregon (NNPA) – Former San Francisco mayor and Democratic powerbroker Willie Brown received the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) prestigious Legacy Award last week for his distinguished public service.

The award was presented to Brown at the NNPA's annual convention here.

After recounting his days as a paperboy for the Bay area's Sun-Reporter, Brown said, "Your role in the African American community is unparalleled."

He said today, as in the past, Black readers rely on the Black Press more than White-owned publications. He said discussions in local barber and beauty shops center on what was published in that week's Black newspapers.

"They don't read the other papers first – they don't believe them," said Brown, who served 15 years as speaker of the California Assembly before serving as mayor. "You represent the source of inspiration, the sense of accuracy."

Even though he is out of office, Brown is helping avert a transit strike in San Francisco and returned there shortly after accepting the award.

"Mayor Willie Brown's name is synonymous with excellence," NNPA Chairman Cloves Campbell, publisher of the Arizona Informant, said prior to the ceremony. "He



Sun-Reporter Publisher Amelia Ashley-Ward shares a laugh with Brown as NNPA Chairman Cloves Campbell looks on (Photo by Worsom Robinson)

spent three decades in the California State Assembly – half of that time as speaker – forging coalitions and working tirelessly on behalf of Blacks and other disadvantaged groups."

Born in the small East Texas town of Mineola in 1934 during the Jim Crow era, Brown moved to California at the age of 17 to live with an uncle. He worked his way through San Francisco State University, graduating with a degree in liberal studies and earned a law degree from the University of California. Along the way, he held a variety of jobs, including working as a janitor

and as a doorman to pay for his education.

He was elected to the California Assembly in 1964 and rose to speaker in 1980, a position he maintained until 1995. No speaker served as long before Brown and thanks to a 1990 term limitations law, none are likely to serve as long in the future. In 1996, Brown won the first of two terms as mayor of San Francisco.

Brown was one of the most powerful speakers in the history of California, nicknaming himself the "Ayatollah of the Assembly." But even the "Ayatolla" was not invincible. While a state lawmaker, he was diagnosed with retinitis pig-

mentosa, a heredity disease characterized by a gradual loss of peripheral vision, sometimes resulting in blindness.

He has not let the disease limit his activities, working as a radio host and making several cameo movie appearances. His reputation extended far beyond California. He was as well-known for his flamboyant style of dress as his political clout. Some days he would change clothes three or four times. Many of his tailored suits were made in Europe and he capped off his fastidious dress with hats. He was a target of several FBI stings, none of them successful.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

in four of them are over 20. Sixty percent are women. One in four of those who earn the minimum wage are parents, supporting children on wages so low that they qualify for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps).

One in six African Americans and one in five Latinos earn the minimum wage. Nearly 35 percent of minimum wage workers have graduate from high school; another 23 percent have attended college. Some would say that minimum wage workers are mostly youth who are "training" for later work. These workers are not only young people who don't need to get paid. These are adults with education and training, parents, and people who work in key industries, health and education.

During the Great Recession, six-figure executives who needed an income stream accepted the minimum wage or just a little more. There were teachers, laid off, who took a pay cut to shelve books in libraries. They were folks who put their pride aside to earn a little money, money they said was better than the nothing they earned when laid off.

It is overtime for our congress to offer working people the same wages they get automatically. It is overtime for our Congress to embrace a living wage, or at least a higher minimum wage. Ikea gets it, why doesn't Congress?

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

Urban League, Continued from page 5.

Essence Festival with an estimated \$100 million impact. In addition to the Festival's significant economic contribution over the years, it has played a significant role in the rebuilding of post-Katrina New Orleans and brings much more than music to the city. The Essence Empowerment Experience, featuring some of the most influential thought-leaders in America, has become a high-point of the Festival, which offers free workshops, lectures and seminars.

"As mayor of New Orleans at the time, I served as founding mayor of the Essence Festival and was here when it began in 1995 as a one-time event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Essence Magazine – and I have regularly participated since," said Morial. "After the first year, I said that New Orleans didn't want a one-night stand or an affair with Essence – we wanted a marriage. I am thrilled to see how this 'marriage' has blossomed into more than any of us ever imagined – the largest, most exciting and purposeful gathering of African-Americans anywhere in the U.S. – and how it continues to serve as an example for other cities of the tremendous economic impact of the Black consumer. Twenty years later and counting, this 'party' continues to fulfill its purpose."

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