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News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



Norman C. Francis Leadership Institute (NCFLI) Fundraiser

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Millennials Weigh In on Election Season



Regardless of the candidate, young African American voters list growing racism among White nationalist groups, the impacts of environmental and climate change on their communities, the need to curb gun violence, access to health care, and persistent income inequality as the issues they want to hear candidates address, regardless of their race.

Mark Veals Jr.
Data News Weekly Contributor

With statewide primary elections on Oct. 12th, and 2020 Presidential Elections already in full swing, political candidates have been making their case to young voters. One simple reason: Election Day 2020, millen-

nials (ages 24 to 39) and Generation Z voters (ages 18 to 23) will be a larger and more diverse share of America's electorate, according to Pew Research Center Data.

Yet despite their numbers, baby boomers and older voters cast about half of all ballots despite making up 43 percent of eligible voters. However, in a Tufts

University Civic Engagement Study on young voter turnout (ages 18 to 29) in the 2018 midterms, all states experienced significant increases in voting in this demographic by at least 8 percentage points, except one state: Louisiana. It is why Gov. John Bel Edwards has released direct to social media messages to college students, including those at Historically Black Univer-

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

sities, touting his administration's policies that young voters could find appealing.

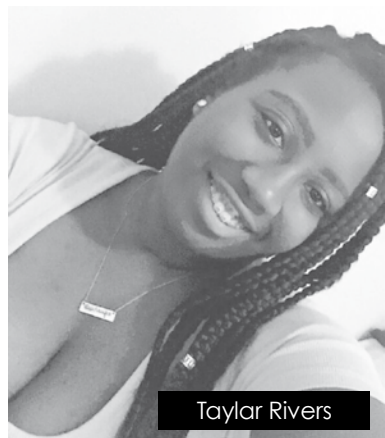
"The most important issue to me on the ballot is electing officials that are representing the best interest of their constituents," said Jamya Robinson, a Dillard University junior, who is a member of the university's Andrew Goodman Fellowship Chapter, a National Civic Engagement Group that empowers young voters. "This election period, we will be electing state representatives, governors, and judges. It is important that we research and question the candidates on different topics," Robinson said.

Regardless of local or national politics, Robinson added that the issues impacting young voters are nationwide.

"Although some college students may not be from Louisiana, they are still impacted by the leg-



In a Tufts University civic engagement study on young voter turnout (ages 18 to 29) in the 2018 midterms, all states experienced significant increases in voting in this demographic by at least 8 percentage points, except one state: Louisiana.



Taylor Rivers

"Another issue that's important to me is the talk about student loan forgiveness," said Taylor Rivers, a senior at Southern University at New Orleans.



Victor Nonato

"I am not an African American but Mexican American," said Victor Nonato, a sophomore, political science major at Xavier. "However, speaking from a standpoint that all minorities experience oppression, I put great value to any candidate who has a platform around treating all humans with humanity."



Jordan DeLoach

"Voter suppression is an obstacle in disguise because it discourages people from voting completely," said Jordan DeLoach, a Political Science Major at Xavier University.

islation passed in the state which means they too should be engaged in the election process," Robinson said. "Voting rights are in jeopardy and if we want to create a better future for ourselves, our children, and our world, we need to vote and vote smart."

Political observers often only look at obstacles to voting as being a challenge for older voters, or Af-



Jamya Robinson

"The most important issue to me on the ballot is electing officials that are representing the best interest of their constituents," said Jamya Robinson, a Dillard University junior, who is a member of the university's Andrew Goodman Fellowship chapter, a national civic engagement group that empowers young voters.

rican American voters. Young voters also experience obstacles that result in lower turnout. The Tufts University Report by its Center



Young people helping in a voters registration drive.



Young people are of growing importance as a voting block that can change the outcome of this and many upcoming elections.

for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement noted that 31 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 29 cast a ballot. This was out of a group that comprised 49 percent of the overall eligible voting population in the country.

"I'd say the most important issue is ensuring that all people are able to vote without difficulty," said Jordan DeLoach, a political science major at Xavier University, who is a senior. "Voter suppression is an obstacle in disguise because it discourages people from voting completely," DeLoach said.

Students are often away from

home, lack the means or understanding to register, and may work part-time jobs or have schedules that inhibit their turnout on Election Day, students said. Some states have also intimidated immigrant communities about voting, with charges of interrogation for voter fraud.

"I am not an African American but Mexican American," said Victor Nonato, a sophomore, political science major at Xavier. "However, speaking from a standpoint that all minorities experience oppression, I put great value to any candidate who has a platform around treating all humans with humanity without the whole America 'exceptionalism' and who can genuinely say they want to remove the barriers plaguing low-income minorities such as access to healthcare and education," Nonato said.

While the November 2020 Presidential Elections may seem far away, President Donald Trump still heavily weighs in on 2019 local and state races, as candidates' state-

wide position themselves in favor or against his policies. Statewide candidates have campaigned in response to Trump's positions on undocumented immigrants and deportations, background checks on assault rifles, and climate change policy.

A spring 2019 poll conducted by the Harvard University Kennedy School of Public Policy found that concern over the moral direction of the country rose since the last presidential campaign. At this stage of the 2016 presidential campaign, 52 percent of young Americans agreed with the statement that they were "concerned about the moral direction of the country," while 16 percent disagreed. Today, young people are 61 percent in agreement with that statement, and nine percent disagree. Among those likely to vote in the 2020 general election, concern was greater reaching 68 percent.

However, young voters also respond to different candidates based on the concerns of their communities, yet that does not necessarily mean they favor diverse candidates over White ones. In a GenForward Poll by the University of Chicago that tracks millennial political views, both former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders lead the candidate pack with 17 points each. Although, from the results, "the survey shows that across all racial groups, young voters favor former vice president and [the] Vermont senator over all other candidates. But the rankings of these two candidates is not consistent across all groups: While African Americans and Asian Americans rank Biden ahead of Sanders, Latino and White voters do the opposite."

Regardless of the candidate, young African American voters list growing racism among White nationalist groups, the impacts of environmental and climate change on their communities, the need to curb gun violence, access to health care, and persistent income inequality as the issues they want to hear candidates address, regardless of their race.

"[The presidential] candidates need to think about ways to fix what President Trump messed up; the wall, the ICE crackdowns... They're breaking up families and treating children like they are criminals," said Taylor Rivers, a senior at Southern University at New Orleans. "Another issue that's important to me is the talk about student loan forgiveness. As soon as you graduate the collectors are knocking at your door asking for payments when you haven't even been able to secure yourself financially yet," Rivers added.

Festival Heats Up America's Favorite Southern Dish: Fried Chicken

Story and Photos
Hannah Joy Shareef
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The tender, juicy, crunchy, and sometimes salty indulgence of fried chicken is an integral part of the culinary culture of African Americans across the south. In New Orleans, the love of fried chicken brought people from all around the world together to experience America's favorite Southern dish. At the fourth Annual National Fried Chicken Festival held three days this year from Sept. 20TH to 22nd, at the Woldenberg Riverfront Park, over 100 vendors and food trucks participated in this event to show the numerous ways of how fried chicken can be prepared.

"Although there are numerous ways to prepare chicken, we start with letting the chicken



Residents enjoy food and entertainment on the final day of the National Fried Chicken Festival on Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019 at Woldenberg Park.

marinate, then batter it with our seasoned flour, next you fry the chicken so it can be extra crispy, the best part is all of our sauces are in house," said Rebecca Elizabeth Hollingsworth, who with Stephen Maher, are the owners of Bonafried Food Truck.

The team said the festival allows them to set up stalls and cook outside of their food truck. They noted that despite rain on Saturday, the festival still had good turn out from tourists and residents. Festivalgoers estimated the festival attracted over 200,000. "Everyone stayed in line to get our best seller chicken sandwich," Hollingsworth said.

On the festival's last day, local stations broadcasted the Saints and Seahawks Game rallying the Who Dat Nation, turning the event into

**Newsmaker, Continued
on page 11.**

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Wednesday, October 16 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Tuesday, October 22 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
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Thursday, October 10	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
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Early Voting Begins for Oct. 12 Election

Data News Staff Edited Report

Election Season in Full Swing...Get Out and Vote

There are many races both at the local and state level with candidates running for office in several races.

Of course the race that's getting the most attention is the for the State's highest elected officer, where Incumbent Governor Democrat John Bel Edwards is being challenged by several opponents who are trying to unseat him.

But there are several races of local interest that include State Senate and State Representative and in Education, BESE Board District 2 that covers New Orleans.

Also on the ballot are several constitutional amendments and local propositions. While all are important Proposition 4 that has to do with trying to bring more affordable housing online in New Orleans is getting a lot of attention in this election cycle.

Early voting begins Saturday, Sept. 28 and ends Oct. 5. Early ballots can be cast from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day except Sunday. Run-off elections, if necessary, will be held Nov. 16.

Early Voting Information

Important Dates for October 12, 2019 Election



- September 28-October 5, 2019: Early voting, 8:30am-6pm, excluding Sunday
- Voters who need help finding their polling location can call (504) 658-8300 or use the Louisiana Voter Portal

Important Dates for November 16, 2019 Election

- October 16, 2019: Last day to register to vote in person & by mail
- October 26, 2019: Last day to register to vote (online)

- November 2-9, 2019: Early voting, 8:30am-6pm, excluding Sunday

Early Voting Sites:

City Hall

1300 Perdido Street, Room 1W24
New Orleans, LA 70112

Algiers Courthouse

225 Morgan Street, Room 105
New Orleans, LA 70114

Chef Menteur Voting Machine Warehouse Site

8870 Chef Menteur Highway
New Orleans, LA 70126

Lake Vista Community Center

6500 Spanish Fort Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124

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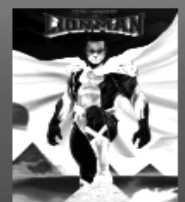
GrandMaster Eric O'Neal, Sr.

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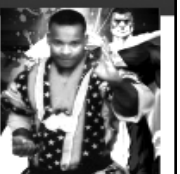
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International Karate Hall of Famer with Bruce Lee



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The Second Annual Norman C. Francis Leadership Institute (NCFLI) Fundraiser

The Norman C. Francis Leadership Institute's Second Annual Fundraiser was held at The New Orleans Jazz Market on September 21, 2019. Dr. Francis was instrumental in enhancing Xavier University of Louisiana National Reputation as an institution with dedicated leadership, a committed staff, and an outstanding faculty in a wide range of academic disciplines.

Guests enjoyed a special performance by Grammy-winning Artist Eric Benét. Honorees for the evening were Dean Banquet, Walter Isaacson, Monty Williams, and Tania Tetlow.

Inspired by the esteemed former president of Xavier University the Norman C. Francis' Leadership Institute since its founding in 2012 has provided leadership training to the region's most promising leaders as they make their impact on civic engagement and social responsibility in the Southeastern United States.

Having a stellar career, Dr. Francis was President of Xavier University of Louisiana, the nation's only Historically Black and Catholic University for close to 50 years and has built a lasting legacy of serving academia and communities with the highest principles that are non-partisan and directed toward advancing leadership skills that encompass cultural intelligence, spiritual enlightenment, and a steadfast moral compass.



L-R, Ron Carrere, Tania Tetlow, President of Loyola, Walter Isaacson, Dean Baquet, Dr. Norman C. Francis, Monty Williams and Tim Francis.



The Congregation Band

By Roderick Paulin

New Orleans is home to many great bands, musical and cultural icons. THE CONGREGATION is the brainchild of fourth-generation master educator/musician/arranger Roderick Paulin. His musical pedigree dates back to the 1950's- 1990's with his father Ernest 'Doc' Paulin spawning the musical careers of many local notable musical artists such as Dr. Michael White, Greg Stafford, and Tuba Fats to name a few. Roderick has been one of the 'behind-the-scenes' maestro for many groups on the New Orleans music scene as being a musical arranger for iconic groups and personalities such as the ReBirth Brass Band, Kermit Ruffins, Wanda Rouzan, Davell Crawford, George & Gerald French, Wendell Brunious, Allen Toussaint, Irma Thomas, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and many other local bands.



THE CONGREGATION is a 17-piece ensemble under the watchful eye and keen ears of its' conductor/arranger Roderick Paulin, this band is the epitome of musical excellence in its presentation of music for venues throughout the city.

Nationally, Roderick Paulin was commissioned to arrange and perform music for alternative rock group, The Afghan Whigs. Touring with The ReBirth Brass Band as the opening act for Maceo Parker, saxophonist for funkateer James Brown, Roderick was introduced to the world of funk where he used that experience to contribute to expanding the sound of brass band musical concepts beyond The Dirty Dozen Brass Band role in resurrecting a newfound interest in New Orleans Brass Band music.

THE CONGREGATION BIG BAND is a 17-piece ensemble dedicated to performing not only classic New Orleans R&B music but iconic soul, jazz, traditional musical classics whose repertoire encompasses familiar songs from the 1920's up to present day tunes. Under the watchful eye and keen ears of its'

Band/Continued on page 8

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Andreanecia Morris
Executive Director,
HousingNOLA

formed a merger that will honor and continue the contributions and commitment of the Episcopal and Presbyterian faiths that responded in a time of great need for the residents of New Orleans.

As the recovery needs of the City have evolved over the past 14 years, both organizations have developed programs to serve the changing needs of low to moderate income homeowners and now focus on homeownership opportunities as well as home repair for vulnerable homeowners. In addition, both organizations have participated in planning around the development of Affordable Rental Housing.

On Wednesday, September 25, 2019, the first tangible results of the merger were recognized with a ribbon cutting celebrating the completion of the first two of a total of five new Affordable Homes in Gen-

tilly. The homes feature three bedrooms, two baths, spacious front and back yards, and are equipped with energy efficient and "aging in place" features. This is one of the first major projects for Jericho Road outside of the anchor neighborhood of Central City.

Post-Katrina, New Orleans has struggled to respond to the basic need for safe, healthy and Affordable Housing for its residents. Homeownership provides both financial and social benefits to families, but homeownership rates are now at their lowest in 50 years nationally, especially markets with a significantly higher share of minority residents, according to the Harvard Joint Center on Housing Studies. The gap nationally between White and Minority homeownership is about 30%. In Orleans Parish, there are 20-30%

fewer homeowners than in surrounding parishes. In the first few years after Katrina, the number of nonprofit housing organizations increased dramatically, but with recovery dollars all but gone and a massive need still unaddressed it is imperative that our Community Development Corporations (CDCs) look for new ways to cooperate.

Local nonprofits, including Jericho Road and Project Homecoming, have become the primary champions that deliver access for low and moderate income citizens to home repairs and opportunities to buy into the American Dream, but increased overhead costs and drastically reduced funding streams for Affordable Housing Development and repair in recent years have created sustainability challenges for these organiza-

tions. The HousingNOLA 10 Year Strategy and Implementation Plan recognized the need to not only secure new opportunities for our CDCs, but also prompt them to take steps to make sure that their organizations will be viable for the long-term if we are to end New Orleans' affordability crisis.

The vision of the partnership looks to combine the housing and community development expertise of Jericho Road with the construction and workforce development expertise of Project Homecoming to create a stronger merged organization with greater capacity and more opportunities to provide housing solutions to low income working families in the greater metropolitan New Orleans area and around the state. This partnership will create a strong future and #PutHousingFirst.

New Leadership, Real Experience, Insuring Louisiana's Future!

Tim Is Committed to:

- ★ Lowering auto rates
- ★ Attracting more insurance companies to Louisiana
- ★ Better communication with consumers and agents
- ★ More transparency within the office
- ★ Promoting legislation that positively impacts all of Louisiana
- ★ Simplifying the regulatory process

About Tim

Tim Temple is a native of DeRidder, Louisiana and is a successful insurance professional with over 20 years of experience in every facet of the insurance industry. He worked his way up in the industry from neighborhood insurance agent to insurance executive helping businesses recover from the BP oil spill. Presently, Tim serves as President of Temptan, a family owned business in Baton Rouge.

Additionally, Temple serves on the Louisiana Committee of 100 for Economic Development, working outside of government to provide leadership and resources. He has helped create real and positive change for Louisiana residents in government, education, and the economy.

Tim aims to use his experience and success as a businessman and community leader to bring an outsider's perspective to the job of Insurance Commissioner. He understands through his professional and civic background how important affordable insurance is for not just our government and businesses, but for families stretching a dollar. He is committed to lowering our insurance rates in order to provide a better quality of life for every citizen.

Tim grew up in the small southwest community of DeRidder and has lived in Shreveport, Dallas, TX as well as New Orleans. Tim and his wife Amy live in Baton Rouge with their two daughters, Aubrey (10) and Sophia (9).



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Early Voting: September 28-October 5th
Election Day: October 12

Band, Continued from page 7.



Carl LeBlanc at Prime Example on Sept. 19th with The Congregation Band.



Nayda Cojoe, a well-known local vocalist who also performed on Sept 19th.

conductor/arranger Roderick Paulin, this band is the epitome of musical excellence in its presentation of music for club attendees, conventioners, festivals globally showcasing their musical capability of being the perfect accent where 'professionalism' is required to not only satisfy those in attendance but to engage audiences with that New Orleans spirit that will have them up singing and dancing the night away.

Roderick's 40+ years musical career in virtually every musical setting imaginable has led to this moment in New Orleans to embrace a group of this magnitude to maintain and raise the level of musical know-how and personal character in the local entertainment industry. MUSIC is who they are. MUSIC is what they do. MUSIC is why THE CONGREGATION is one of the best New Orleans Big Bands to contract for your upcoming event.

ladatanews.com

Why is Suicide a Growing Problem in the Black Community?

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire
Correspondent

It's no secret that African Americans – particularly teens – are committing suicide at record levels. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide rates have increased by 30 percent since 1999 and nearly 45,000 lives were lost to suicide in 2016 alone.

A June 2019 study conducted by the Journal of Community Health revealed that suicide deaths among Black females aged 13 to 19 rose 182 percent between 2001 and 2017, while the rate among Black teen males rose 60 percent during that same period.

From 2015 to 2017, 52 percent of Black teen males who died from suicide used firearms, a method with a fatality rate of nearly 90 percent. Another 34 percent used strangulation or suffocation, which has a fatality rate of about 60 percent.

Among the 204 Black teen females who died by suicide from 2015 to 2017, 56 percent used strangulation or suffocation and 21 percent used firearms, according to the study.

Experts and others have tried to determine why African Americans increasingly are choosing to end their lives. Theories have run the gamut – from the lack of strong father-figures to racism and social media and even the increase in Black wealth.

Whatever the reason, the CDC said it's important to note that suicidal thoughts or behaviors are both damaging and dangerous and should be treated as a psychiatric emergency.

CDC officials also caution that those who have suicidal thoughts should understand that it doesn't make one weak or flawed.

"Why are we killing ourselves? The lack of treatment of mental illness is the key factor to why suicide is on the rise in the Black community," said Clarence McFerren, a mental health advocate and author who admits to previously having suicidal thoughts as a teenager.

"Throughout my life, I've been faced with difficult situations which festered into five mental illness di-



agnosis – ADHD, PTSD, severe depression, bipolar tendencies and anxieties – and I did not understand what was going on until I took the

A June 2019 study conducted by the Journal of Community Health revealed that suicide deaths among Black females aged 13 to 19 rose 182 percent between 2001 and 2017, while the rate among Black teen males rose 60 percent during that same period. From 2015 to 2017, 52 percent of Black teen males who died from suicide used firearms, a method with a fatality rate of nearly 90 percent. Another 34 percent used strangulation or suffocation, which has a fatality rate of about 60 percent.

steps to get help," McFerren said.

Famed Beverly Hills family and relationship psychotherapist and author, Dr. Fran Walfish said she's treated hundreds of thousands of children and teens each year and recently she's seen the number of troubled teenagers who are cutters and dealing with suicidal thoughts, feelings, ideas, plans, and even attempts of suicide.

"There is nothing glamorous about suicide. The one common denominator shared by all who cut, contemplate or attempt suicide is that they feel emotionally alone in their families," said Walfish, the author of "The Self-Aware Parent," and who appears regularly as an expert child psychologist on the CBS Television series, "The Doctors."

"They feel there is no one person they can talk to about their pain who will listen, validate, understand, and be a safe warmly attuned place for comfort," she said.

Sam Gertsman, the founder of

Opinion-Lounge, a website for discussing politics, said he's had extensive experience working suicide hotlines.

"While suicide is a complicated topic, it's clear that the rise of social media is one of the main causes of the recent jump in suicide rates," Gertsman said.

"Social media show users pictures and videos of everyone liv-

ing better lives than they are; even though these pictures are often staged and paint an inaccurate picture, the brain isn't able to differentiate and simply sees that everyone else is better off," he said.

"Social media also puts numbers on your popularity – your followers, your likes, your replies. And, no matter how many you have, you'll always want more," Gertsman said.

Kevin Darné, the author of "My Cat Won't Bark! (A Relationship Epiphany)," believes that the suicide rate among young African Americans is due to the growing list of Black millionaires and billionaires.

"Today, we have Oprah owning a TV network, Tyler Perry owning his own studios, Shonda Rhimes owning her night of television on ABC, Jaz-Z becoming a billionaire, Dr. Dre selling 'Beats' to Apple for \$3 billion, and a few Fortune 500 Black CEOs, Black doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs," Darné said.

"Although racism is still alive, it's impossible to deny the fact that the rise of a Black upper middle class and an increase in Black millionaires [contributes to others having lower self-esteem]," he said.

"The irony is the more Black success that someone sees in various industries could make a person start to wonder about what's wrong with themselves. Depression and lack of fulfillment can cause people in a rich country to consider suicide ... when there's a huge gap between one's expectations and their reality, life can seem miserable," Darné said.



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What You Know about Dat Black and Gold?

Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly Columnist

What's up Who Dat Nation, this is Fleur De Lis, I am here to discuss all things NOLA. Today, of course, everyone is talking about our Field Leader Drew Brees and his injury and it's potential impact on the Saints being able to win games in his absence.

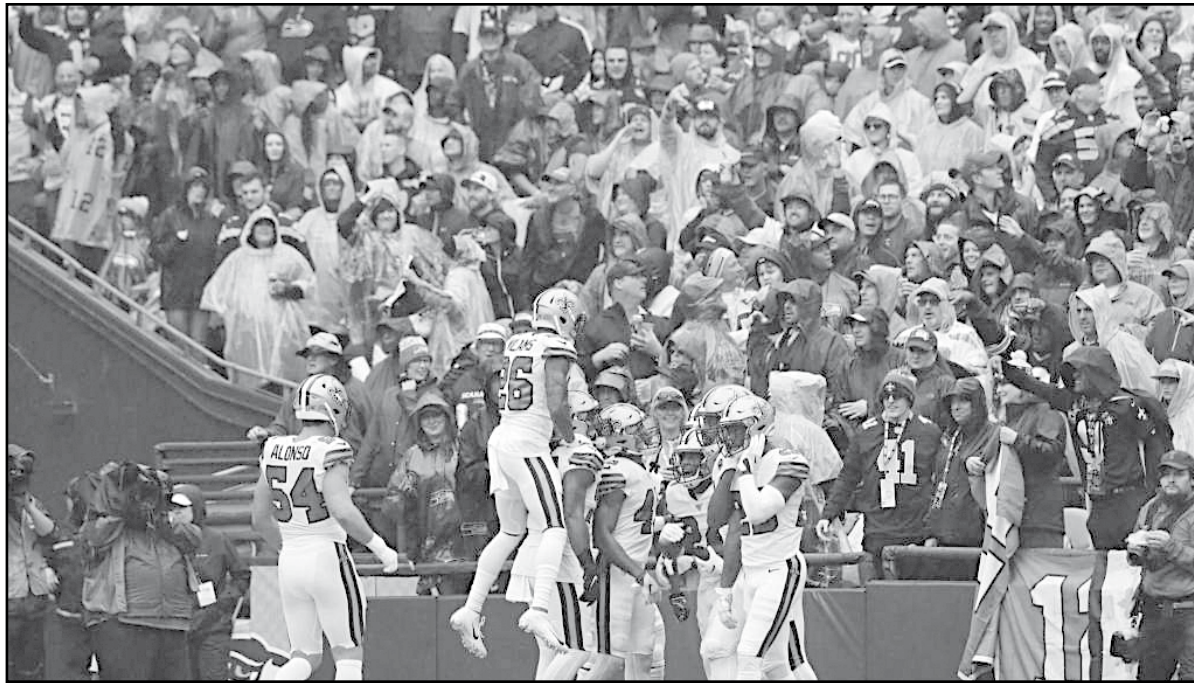
This is something that has many fans worried that the Black and Gold may not get to the Super Bowl this year. And while the Saints definitely need Brees on the field, let us not forget that the game of football is not just about one player, but a team sport with a 53-man roster and where coaching and strategy matters.

The Saints exemplified this and more against the Seattle Seahawks who began the season at 2-0 and is considered one of the league's best teams. Our Saints went into their house, giving them a good spanking and showed what a true team victory looked like getting it done in every aspect.

In a 33-27 victory on Sunday over Seattle, the scoreboard did not reflect how dominant the Saints were throughout the game.

Teddy Bridgewater, of course, is not Drew Brees, but he showed poise and leadership on the field with the help of outstanding players such as the unstoppable Alvin Kamara and one of the league's top wide receivers in Michael Thomas.

On the defensive side of the ball,



Seattle Seahawks fans, background, in rain gear watch quietly as New Orleans Saints celebrate a touchdown on a fumble recovery by Vonn Bell, third right, during the first half of an NFL Football Game Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019, in Seattle. Photo: Ted S. Warren, AP



New Orleans Saints quarterback Teddy Bridgewater hands of the ball to Alvin Kamara against the Seattle Seahawks, where the Saints dominated the game on both sides of the ball leading to a 33-27 victory.



New Orleans Saints' Deonte Harris (11) celebrates his touchdown on a punt return against the Seattle Seahawks during the first half of an NFL Football Game Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019, in Seattle. Photo: Ted S. Warren, AP

a punt 53 yards for a touchdown to give the Saints their first score; from that point they did not look back handily winning the game.

The Saints are atop the NFC South with a record of 2-1. It is still early in the season and with the loss of Drew Brees for a few weeks there is still concern from members of the Who Dat Nation about the Saints ability to win without him.

But this performance showed if they play as a team they can win against the best teams in the league. Next week they will be tested as they play the Dallas Cowboys led by superstar quarterback Dak Prescott.

But we as part of the Who Dat Nation feel confident that our Saints have what it takes to win against any team in the league.

So, until Brees returns to the field of play; Go Peyton, Go Teddy,



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

On September 13, 2019 the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the provision of **Ferry Service Operations and Maintenance (O&M)**. The RTA is seeking to engage a qualified firm, or a joint venture of qualified firms, to provide the day-to-day O&M for the passenger and vehicular ferry services crossing the Mississippi River in New Orleans and the vicinity. The deadline for submissions is October 7, 2019. Visit driveRTAforward.com for more information and instructions to proposers.

the stats do not tell the whole story. The Saints gave up over 500 yards to the powerful Seattle offensive led by Russell Wilson, but the Saints defense showed up and made many big plays that changed the momentum of the game.

Eli Apple caused a Seattle fumble and Von Bell ran it in for a touch-

down. Guess what? This week it was not called back and from that point, the Saints dominated the game. They also stopped Seattle's powerful offense on three fourth-down attempts.

That was not all; the special teams did their thing as well. The speedster Deonte Harris returned

Go Kamara, Go Thomas, Go Cam, Go Saints!!

Let's continue to show the world when we play as a team, we have what it takes and this year it's Black and Gold all the way to the Super Bowl Baby!!!

Until Next Time...This is Fleur De Lis signing off.

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Five-Time Grammy Award Winner Terence Blanchard Tapped as First Black Composer at Metropolitan Opera in 136 Years

Karu F. Daniels
Writer, theroot.com

It's 2019 and Black folks are still making history with "first feats"—in entertainment of all places.

We've come a long way...but we still got a long way to go.

It's great news that Terence Blanchard has been tapped to compose the operatic adaptation of New York Times opinion columnist Charles Blow's gripping memoir *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* for an upcoming production by The Metropolitan Opera.

With the announcement also comes the distinction of the Grammy Award-winning jazz great being the first Black composer to do so in the hallowed hall's 136-year history.

"He's a brilliant composer," the Met's General Manager Peter Gelb told the New York Times about the New Orleans native who has scored the music for every Spike Lee film since 1992's *Jungle Fever*.

Blanchard, who composed music for the Stephen Byrd-produced all Black 2012 Broadway revival of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, was nominated for his very first Academy Award in the Original Score for Lee's *BlackKlansman* earlier this year. (Black Panther won.)

"I wish my father was alive," Blanchard said with Thursday's announcement. "He was an avid opera fanatic."

Fire Shut Up In My Bones premiered at the Opera Theater of St. Louis earlier this year, scripted by



New Orleans Native Terence Blanchard making history as first Black Composer at the famed Metropolitan Opera.

Eve's Bayou Writer/Director Kasi Lemmons — the director of the upcoming Debra Martin Chase-produced *Harriet Tubman* biopic.

Blanchard previously composed the opera *Champion*, based on the real-life story of bisexual boxing champion Emile Griffith, who end-

ed up killing his opponent — after he made homophobic remarks and sexually harassed him during the weigh-in before the fight.

Originally published in 2014, the *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* has been described — by Kirkus Review — as "a hardscrabble memoir about

growing up poor and Black in rural Louisiana."

"But this memoir isn't about his professional development as much as the psychosexual and emotional roller-coaster ride of his upbringing."

In its review, the Chicago Tribune praised *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* as "an honest reflection of a life," in which "Blow has taken the time to describe — often in loving detail — what people and places look like, giving the reader's visual imagination plenty to work with as he contemplates crucial life questions that this story so eloquently articulates."

Blow, also a popular subject matter expert and CNN commentator was thrilled to share the news with his 534,000 plus Twitter followers.

Gelb said that he hopes "there will be many more African-American composers whose work we feature."

Let's hope. In 1974, Labelle—the soaring songbirds also known as Patti LaBelle, Nona Hendryx, and Sarah Dash—made history as the first pop act to play at the veritable venue, considered one of the most prestigious in the world.

In the meantime, all-Black opera-loving eyes (and ears) are on the Met this season—with its new production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* starting performances on Sept. 23. The James Robinson-helmed production—featuring choreography by Tony Award nominee Camille A. Brown—marks the first Met performances of the classic American opera in nearly 30 years

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a cause for celebration. As festivalgoers watched the game and ate fried chicken, a crowd in the Crown Royal Tent began to show off their best dance moves to "We Are One" by Maze and Frankie Beverly.

"Watching people come out to dance, eat and enjoy life was good to see," said Tia Dorest, the daughter of Chef Jeffery Heard who founded the Heard Dat Kitchen in Central City. "My father worked in a fine dining restaurant with no culinary background. But, every time he met tourists, they wanted a good family style restaurant to eat at. My father believes his cooking has blessed others and it's truly his God given talent," Dorest said of



the family business.

The preparation of the fried chicken at the festival showed the versatility of chefs and restaurateurs as they baked, barbecued, fried, and smoked different cuts of chicken. Some tents allowed festivalgoers to observe the chefs and crew as they marinated and dropped chicken cuts into the

grease. The first, hot bites of fried chicken were what customers said they came out to the festival for, and the mix of sauces and sides that had them licking their fingers, with each dip.

"The Fried Chicken Festival is about community," said Marissa Scott, who attended the festival. "People coming from all around the world to enjoy the same dish, fried chicken. Back home when I would fry chicken for my 6-year-old, he would take a bite, lick his fingers and say chick'n lick'n and that meant that the chicken was exceptionally good. Today, I must say chick'n lick'n and lick my fingers because that's how I feel about the food today," Scott said.

As the day came to an end, Gus's

Fried Chicken was crowned the winner of the Best Fried Chicken at the festival. The ability to serve the chicken straight out the grease impressed customers and the comfort food made people feel as if they were back home.

"When I took that first bite, it felt like heaven on earth," said Renee Brown, from Dallas, Texas, who said she sampled the winning fried chicken. "It's been years since I smacked that hard on a piece of chicken. It felt like my mama's chicken, hard and crunchy. I guess, I had to travel all the way to New Orleans to feel this good. My soul felt warm, that's the meaning of comfort food.... you feel good from your head to your toes," Brown said.

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