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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

**New Orleans
Garifunas Celebrate
Afro-Latino Culture**

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COPY

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November 16 - November 22, 2019 54th Year Volume 29 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Data News Weekly Says

GET OUT

AND

VOTE



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Data News Weekly Says Get Out and Vote



Many have fought, bled and died for African Americans to have the right to vote. In these historical times where the future of our Democracy is at stake and the gains of African Americans in jeopardy; it is important to get out and vote.

Terry Jones
Publisher Data News Weekly

We at Data News Weekly are excited to see that people are going out in high numbers during early voting and this shows a level of engagement that is important in letting your voices be heard.

While all that is going on with President Trump and his impeachment is getting much attention; it is our local races that will have the most impact on our way of life. So, it is important that we elect leaders that will fight to create policies that will better the lives of our citizens in the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana.

This as all elections are important, so we encourage all to get out and cast your ballot. On Nov. 16th there are several races that Data News Weekly are endorsing candidates that we feel are best qualified to fill these seats.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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**Governor:
John Bel Edwards**

This race has become contentious and taken on a national profile as both the President and Vice-President have come into the state in an effort to elect a Republican Governor in Louisiana.

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards is the only Democrat leading a Deep South state. His pragmatic approach to leadership has led to policies that's led to turn around in the State of Louisiana.

For example, Edwards inherited a 2-billion-dollar deficit from former Republican Governor Bobby Jindal; in his four years in office, he's worked with members of the state legislature from both parties and today there is a 500-million-dollar surplus.

In addition, he's also expanded Medicaid, something that helps make healthcare available to nearly 500,000 people of our state to get the care they need. He's also been on the frontline in the area of education. Getting teachers, a much-needed pay raise and investing in Early Child Education.

Over his four years in office, John Bel Edwards has shown that he can work across party lines and put people over political parties. For this and his record of excellence, we support John Bel Edwards.


**State Senate District 3:
Joe Bouie**

Dr. Joe Bouie brings a portfolio of leadership in many areas including academia, civic and more recently, as a member of the House of Representatives in District 97. He's shown that in the State Capital,

he is a voice and advocate of the people.

We at Data News Weekly believe Dr. Bouie is the best candidate to represent the citizens of State Senate of District 3. We at Data News Weekly support and endorse the candidacy of this proven experienced leader.


**State Representative 91:
Robert McKnight**

In a race in a district that is changing demographically, but still is a majority Black district at 55% there is a young man who is a bridge-builder running in the State House for District 91. We continue to support Robert's candidacy in the run-off because he is a fresh face that's poised to take the mantle of leadership of those who've come before him.

He's garnered support from elected, civic, business leaders and those at the grass roots level. In an age where we need local leaders who reflect our history and heritage but is a progressive and forward-thinking is McKnight. As a graduate of St. Augustine and Southern University Law Center. He is an example of our best and brightest standing up and heeding the call to leadership. In these changing times for our City, it is time is for someone who can bring all stakeholders together for the common good of the District and that person is Robert McKnight.


**State Representative
District 97:
Eugene Green**

Eugene Green has emerged from a crowded field as the most qualified candidate in the field to fill the seat for State Representative

in District 97. He has spent many years in public service and has the skills and ability to get things done.

For example, he's worked to secure funding and introduce legislation in his role as the leader of economic development and job creation in our state. He already has the necessary relationships to hit the ground running in Baton Rouge and begin working with the New Orleans Delegation in pushing through legislation that will benefit the citizens of his district and help move the City in a positive direction. Because of his experience and commitment to the people of New Orleans we at Data News Weekly, proudly endorse Eugene Green, for State Representative of District 97.


**State Representative
District 99:
Adonis Expose'**

In a district that spans parts of New Orleans East and the 9th Ward, it is time for a candidate who will work to rebuild these communities and bring the resources and investment that these communities deserve. The candidate Data News Weekly feels has the best approach is Adonis Expose'.

We believe Expose' is the best candidate and is armed with a resume that can get the job done. He's worked for many years helping disadvantaged business as the Compliance Manager and throughout his professional career, he's worked towards inclusion for all in many of his other positions at the Department of Transportation and Development, Sewerage and Water Board and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO).

Expose' is also civic-minded giving back to those in need and inspiring the next generation. As a former King of Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club in 2017, he continues to work on initiatives aimed at uplifting the community. He is competent, compassionate and has the ability to work with other leaders to accomplish the goals of District 99.



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Purple and Gold on a Roll

LSU Beats Alabama and is Now the Undisputed No.1 Team in College Football

E. Benjamin
Data News Weekly
Contributor

This week LSU Football Team is an overwhelming choice for the nation's No. 1 ranking according to the Associated Press college football poll after beating Alabama 46-41 in a No.1 vs. No. 2 matchup.

For the past two weeks of historically close voting at the top of the poll, LSU received 54 first-place votes in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank. Followed by Ohio State was No. 2 with five first-place votes and Clemson was third with three first-place votes. Alabama fell two spots to No. 4.

LSU showed who the best team was jumping out to an early lead with Alabama staging a late-game comeback. But the Tigers held off the Crimson Tide, knocking them



LSU Head Coach Ed Orgeron, celebrating with players after beating Alabama 46-41 and maintaining its spot as the number 1 ranked team in college football.

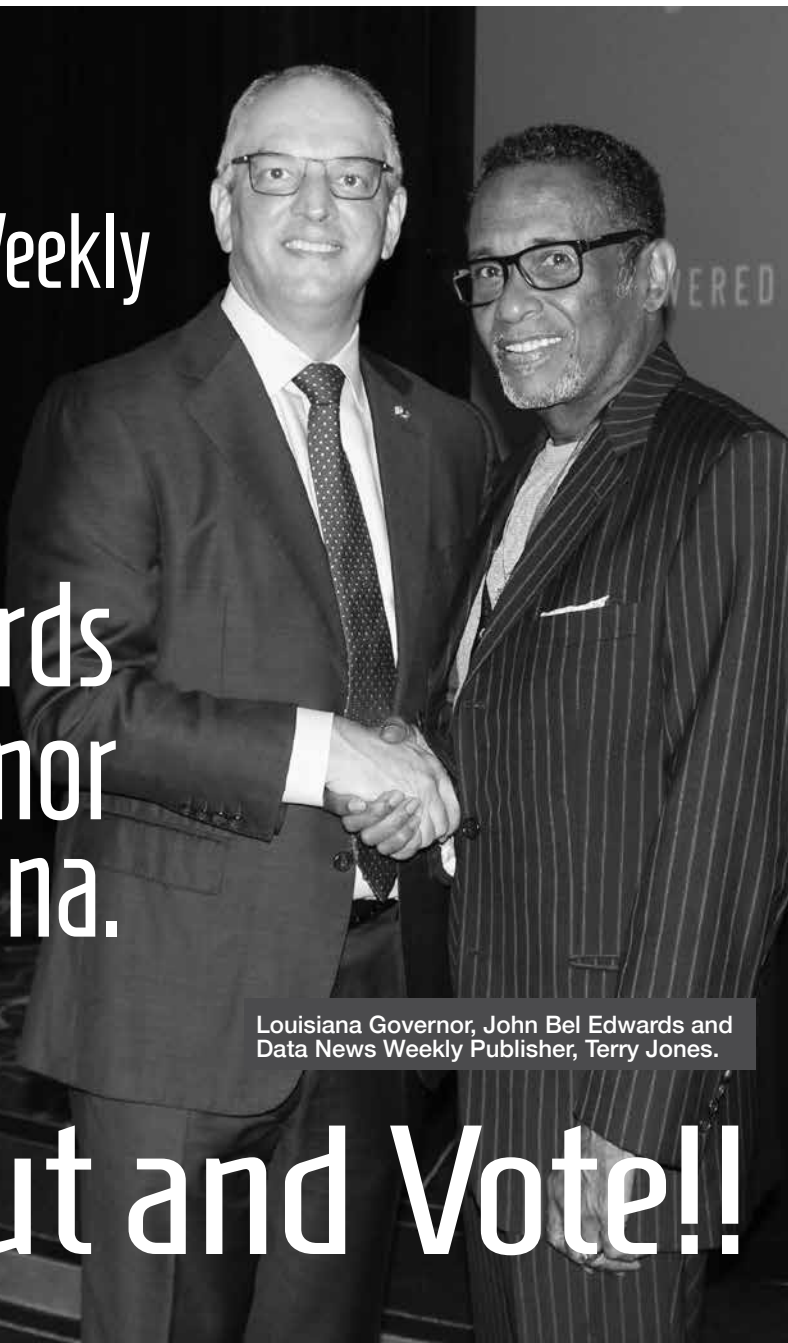
Trophy besting Alabama's Quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, throwing for 393 yards and running for 63 yards and throwing for three touchdowns in their victory knocking off the Crimson Tide, that's led by former LSU Coach Nick Saban.

LSU Coach, Ed Orgeron beat the legendary coach on this day with better play calling and execution from his team; leading to a victory in a game that was watched by people across the nation and attended by President Donald Trump.

This has been a great year for LSU Quarterback Joe Burrow, who if he wins the Heisman, he will be the first LSU player to win the coveted trophy since running back Billy Cannon won it in 1959.

Also, this year the Tigers are showing they are the best team in college football. As the fans of the Purple and Gold are excited to see

Data News Weekly
Endorses
John
Bel Edwards
for Governor
of Louisiana.



Louisiana Governor, John Bel Edwards and Data News Weekly Publisher, Terry Jones.

Get Out and Vote!!



LSU Quarterback Joe Burrow continues to have a great year and for many is this year's favorite to win college football's highest honor, The Heisman Trophy.

off for the first time since 2011 in what was coined as the Game of the Century where LSU won 9-7.

In this game LSU's Joe Burrow seems to have become the front-runner in the race for the Heisman

them on a roll.

Many are anticipating that the Tigers will make it to the College Championship Game that will be held in the New Orleans Superdome on Jan. 13, 2020.

National Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones discusses Impact of the 1619 Project

Sydney Odom
Data News Weekly
Contributor

She received backlash from conservative voices online, but award-winning Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones said she knew that the 1619 Project was an important journalistic exercise to correct the History of African Americans in mainstream narratives.

"This piece had to force us to confront this living legacy, not write about just the past," said Hannah-Jones, who delivered the Sankofa Lecture at Xavier University of Louisiana on Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019, organized by The Center for Equity, Justice, and the Human Spirit. A day earlier on Nov. 8th, Hannah-Jones addressed a packed Ashe' Powerhouse Theater on Baronne Street, for "Conversations in Color" moderated by Dr. Selamawit D. Terreffe, an Assistant Professor of African American Literature and Culture at Tulane University.

The 1619 Project was published by The New York Times Magazine in August to observe the 400th Anniversary of the beginning of American slavery and the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to the present-day United States. The project originally started off as just an issue in the magazine but turned a collection covered digitally and in print. It immediately sold out and is now available through the Pulitzer Center as a teaching curriculum and as a free copy of the magazine that can be downloaded and printed. It includes essays, short fiction, poems, and a photo essay that all work to redefine the history of slavery and the arrival of enslaved people in America.

This project features the leading scholars in history, political science, economics and popular culture to challenge the original 1776 Founding Documents of the United States, raising critical questions about the country's principles of liberty for all. Hannah-Jones said she wanted African Americans to learn how fundamental they are to this nation's history and development



New York Times Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones (R) discusses the impact of the 1619 Project on Nov. 9th. Dr. Robin Vander (L), an Associate Professor of English and African American and Diaspora Studies moderated the Sankofa Lecture by Xavier's Center for Equity, Justice and the Human Spirit.

and she wanted all other Americans to recognize the debt owed to them.

"We should feel a lot of emotion on what this country has done, and the work had to be unflinching," Hannah-Jones said.


It was a project that Hannah-Jones first conceived when she was younger and took her first Black studies course in public school. She often wondered why African American History often jumped from slavery to civil rights but failed to showcase almost 100-years of resistance to institutional violence against Black Americans after slavery.

"No other country was founded on individual liberty and enslavement at the same time," Hannah-Jones said.

She shared that in reading books about African American History in high school made her feel whole. It allowed her to understand her people and the world around her. This inspired her to join her high school newspaper and start writing about people like her. From there she developed a love for history and journalism, which ultimately led to her covering racial injustice and civil rights issues for The New York Times. There she finally pitched the idea for the 1619 Project

and turned it into a major program contributed to by Black journalists, writers, and academics. She noted that everything in the 1619 Project is not new and that Black intellectuals, artists and leaders in the past had all left a record. However, she wanted this knowledge to become more mainstream and that The Times, as a place of national record, was an intentional space to do so.

"It made us realize the currency of art and the image and it made us realize the breadth and depth of this project, no stone was left unturned in the 1619 Project," said Dr. Robin Vander, an Associate Professor of African American and Diaspora Studies who moderated the event at Xavier. "This project gives so much to the institutionalization of disparities in the Black community," Vander said.




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New Orleans Garifunas Celebrate Afro-Latino Culture

Story and Photos
by Tykiera Haley
Data News Weekly Contributor

New Orleans is home to a vibrant population of Garifunas, which numbers around a total of 50,000 living in cities across the United States. The Afro-Latino community distinguishes itself with yearly traditions like the Annual Misa Garifuna or Garifuna Mass that took place on Nov. 3rd this year at the Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Church. These traditions are important more than a decade after Hurricane Katrina that displaced many of its community because it brings them together through celebration.

The Garifunas shared their culture in conjunction with the Fourth Annual Louisiana Folklife Month, organized by the Louisiana Folklife Society and the Louisiana Folklife Commission which



Author and artist Reina David.

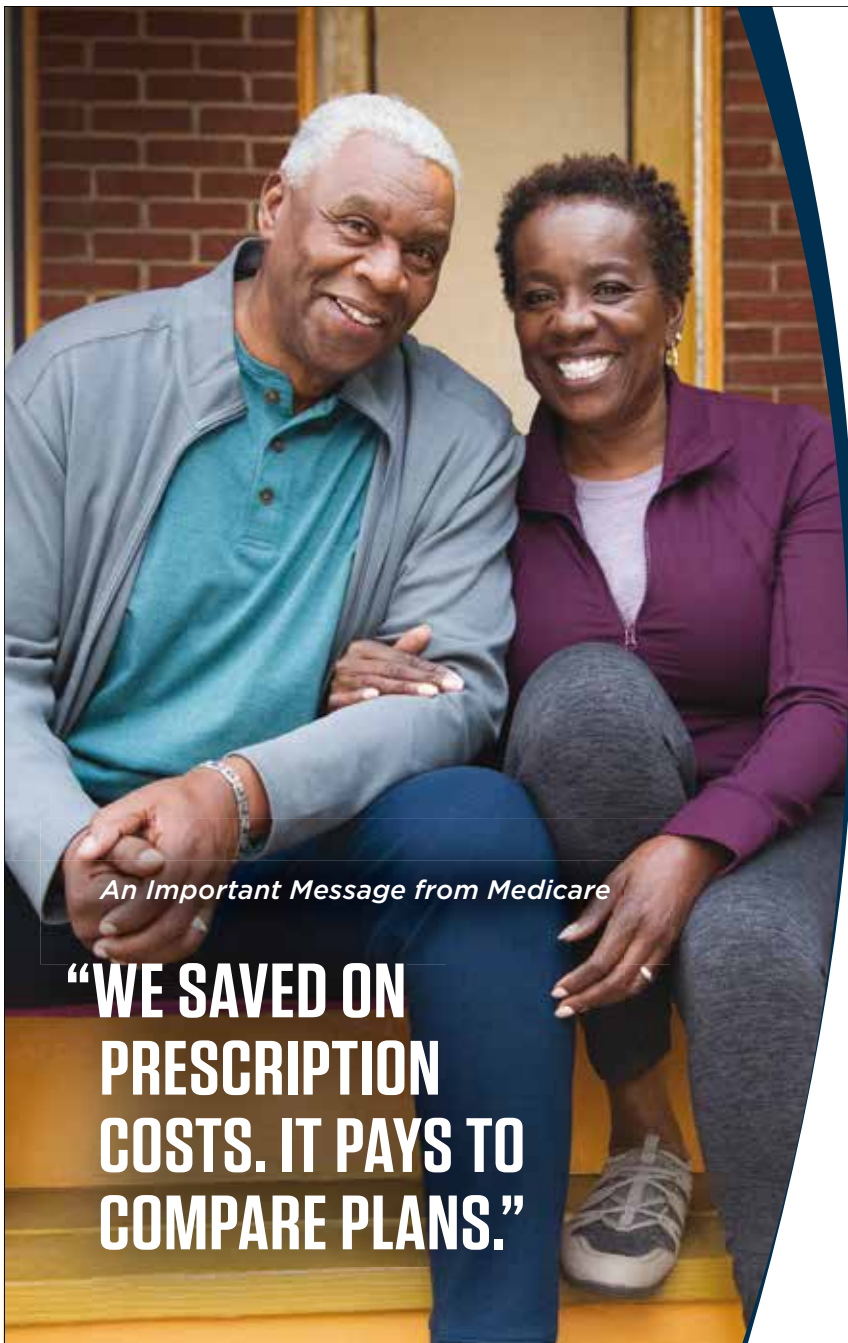


Garifuna woman performing a traditional dance.

recognizes the rich diversity of Louisiana's living traditions of tradition bearers.

"I take pride in my culture and I'm always creating from it. As a Garifuna woman, I share my culture with love. It's in everything I do: my art, my cooking, everything," said Reina David, a long-time New Orleans resident, artist, author, and member of the

Data Zone, Continued on page 7.



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Data Zone, Continued from page 6.

City's Garifuna Community.

Afro-Caribbean Garifuna Culture combines Caribbean fishing and farming traditions with a mixture of Latin American and African music, dance, and spirituality. These influences have helped to create a unique blend of food, music, religion, and customs still celebrated in New Orleans. Garifunas originated with the arrival of West African slaves who washed ashore on the Caribbean Island of St. Vincent around 1635 and eventually settled in four Central American countries: Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, and Nicaragua. Due to trade between New Orleans and Central America, Garifunas migrated to New Orleans around the 1960s.

"Afro-Latin Caribbean Culture is very rich, but you also realize how spiritual it is," said Susan Spillman, an Associate Professor of French at Xavier University, who organized a showcase of Garifuna Culture on Oct. 28th at the campus.

As a young girl, David and her family moved to the United States from Santa Fe, in Colon, Honduras, where the largest population



Afro-Latinos today are pushing back against centuries of colorism within their communities. Carmen Cosme, an Assistant Professor of Spanish and Afro-Latin American and Caribbean studies at Xavier identifies herself as an Afro-Dominican woman and studies experiences of Afro-Latinos. She encouraged the community to embrace both identity and ethnicity.

of Garifunas reside. During this time, dark-skinned Afro-Honduran people were easily confused for African Americans when they arrived in the U.S. David recalled she was often punished for speaking Spanish in school.

"I was not allowed to speak in my first language which made learning English a little easier. I did not want to erase my Garifuna identity, so I was punished for being who I am in school," David said.

Identifying as an Afro-Honduran, David said she faced many prejudices from both the Black and Spanish communities.

"You know they're going to hate you," said one of her co-workers on the first day of her first job. "The Spanish are going to hate you because you're Black and Black people are going to hate you because you're Spanish," he continued.

That didn't intimidate her despite the harsh words. "I always



had that little fire and discrimination throughout my life even far back in Honduras," David said.

In the Latino Community, there is hostility, intolerance, and discrimination against Black people due to a long history of racism and colorism, according to David. Unfortunately, blackness is often demonized and deemed inferior.

"There's always discrimination, especially among children. My mother when she had her first child, who is very light-skinned

and my mother is dark-skinned, she was often accused of possibly kidnapping [her]," David said.

Afro-Latinos today are pushing back against centuries of colorism within their communities. Carmen Cosme, an Assistant Professor of Spanish and Afro-Latin American and Caribbean studies at Xavier identifies herself as an Afro-Dominican woman and studies experiences of Afro-Latinos. She encouraged the community to embrace both identity and ethnicity.

"Being here in this room is a privilege. Because once you go outside as a professional, as an artist, as a professor, as students of the world you face some difficult situations and we have to teach you that because of who you are," Cosme said.

Despite the challenges she faces, David said she is proud to be a Garifuna woman. Celebrating the community's rich heritage is part of keeping the culture alive.

"The Black experience that Afro-descendants experience is almost the same everywhere in the world. There's always that struggle to be counted," David said.



AUDUBON NATURE INSTITUTE EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

DARRIELL JOHNSON HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST

As a human resources generalist, Darriell "DJ" Johnson has found Audubon to be the perfect place to hone the service skills she developed in the hotel industry. She loves nature and enjoys contributing to Audubon's warm employee culture. DJ finds having opportunities to mentor young professionals and helping to develop a vibrant New Orleans workforce to be the most rewarding parts of her job. She also gives back by helping recent grads with career readiness and volunteering for Habitat for Humanity New Orleans.

Celebrating the Wonders of Nature

Be a part of the Audubon Team: AudubonNatureInstitute.org/Careers



On November 16th Make sure you Vote to #PutHousingFirst



Andreanecia Morris
Executive Director,
HousingNOLA

Despite the clear need to #PutHousingFirst, we are failing, particularly when it comes to improving housing quality for renters. While there have been victo-

ries, they have been hard-fought and have taken far too long. The HousingNOLA 10-Year Plan has long called for strategic tax relief in addition to policy reform. If it had passed, Proposition #4 would have let New Orleans create a tax relief program for small landlords (15 units or less) and homeowners for whom a tax increase would just be too much to bear.

But Proposition #4 did not pass and given the warning thousands received when they received their tax bill in July of this year, we must be mindful of what this

means for those households. We know that many homeowners may not have the savings or income to avoid further hardship. Even for those households earning a stable salary, the rate of cost burden shows that tax relief is needed in Orleans Parish because too many homeowners entered the market unable to anticipate this unwelcome spike in taxes and insurance rates. Unfortunately, last year's homeownership phase-in program provides no help to small landlords who will have no choice but to pass the tax increase on to

their renters—who are already overwhelmingly rent stressed.

With this in mind, we need to review the key points around the three parish-wide propositions on the ballot this weekend. Last year we saw 1800 first time homeless people and UNITY has asked the Mayor and City Council to provide \$1.5 million in this year's budget to expand their rapid rehousing program. Only 5% of the half-a-billion dollars proposed ballot initiative will go towards affordable housing—more money will go to the airport and jail expansion.

It also will take years to sell the bonds and raise the funding. Mayor Cantrell has asked the Council to roll forward taxes 50% despite the potentially catastrophic property tax increases we are expecting once the assessments are finalized. Earlier this year, the City Council announced a plan to use short term rental revenue to create an annual fund for affordable housing. Those plans have been shelved because the legislature passed a bill directing short term rental revenue to tourism and infrastructure.

Commentary

'Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools'



Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Correspondent

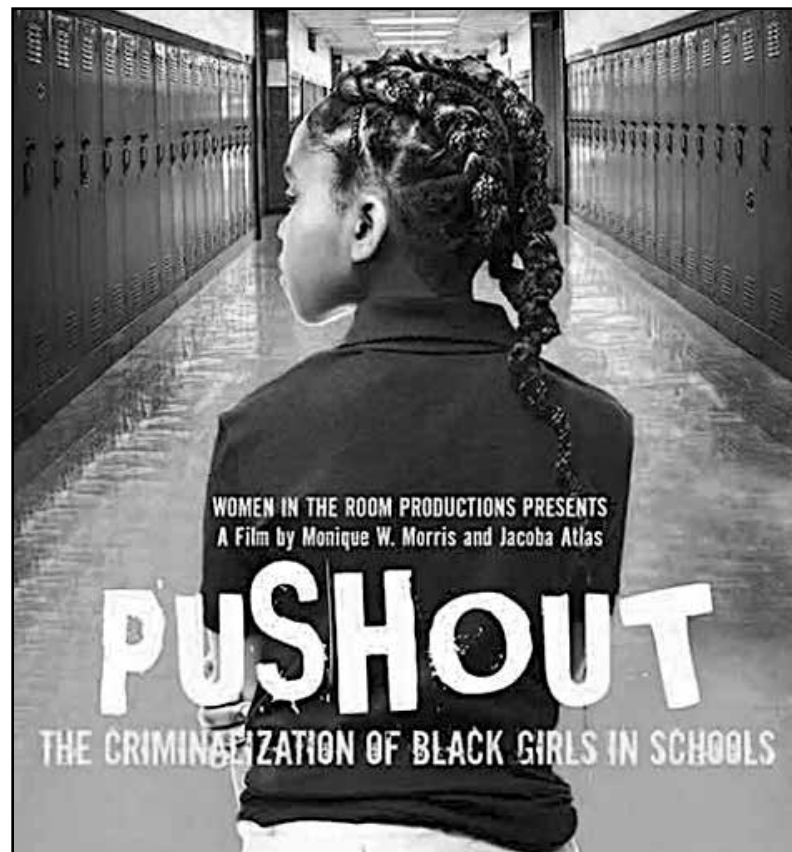
Black girls who have been subject to punitive school policies and practices are at an increased risk of coming into contact with the juvenile and criminal courts and leaving school altogether, ultimately impeding their ability to achieve future success and lead successful and healthy lives, according to a new documentary, "Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools."

The film presents a number of these stories in heartbreaking detail and further explores a topic that was originally presented in the 2016 book of the same name by Monique W. Morris.

"Why not go to heaven now? I don't want to be here," Samaya, one of the girls featured in the film, says at one point.

At 12, Samaya is now an honor student. It has taken years of therapy and a change of school for her to recover from the traumatic incident that led her to a bridge above a highway contemplating suicide at the age of 7.

The event: One of her teachers, Mr. Rodriguez, gave Samaya



"Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools" is a documentary film that's being shown around the country giving voice to this important issue that is affecting young Black girls across America.

a warning after a minor disagreement with another child.

Then, after Samaya accidentally knocked over a glass of water, Rodriguez punished Samaya by dragging her and her chair outdoors "in a fit of frightening rage."

The teacher pulled Samaya out of her classroom on a cold 46-degree December morning. She did not have on a coat or jacket. She was wearing only a pink and gray

sweatshirt and blue jeans.

Coping with the death of her beloved father, the destruction by fire of the only home she knew, and facing constant bullying, Ariana, another story shared by the filmmakers, found herself at a breaking point. "There is so much rage building in me," the teen shares in the film.

Now, 16, Ariana said she didn't know how to deal with the adversity she faced at home and school.

“Black girls, and other girls of color, experience discriminatory, disparate, punitive, and unfair treatment in school, including suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement and arrests on school campuses, at rates that exceed the public school population in aggregate — and far exceed those experienced by their white female peers.”

She was suspended multiple times as classmates would pick on her because “I don’t look the way they look or dress the way they dress.”

Fortunately, a change in schools altered the trajectory of her life. Ariana, now a drummer in her school band at the Columbus City Preparatory School for Girls, has been able to turn her life around with the help of teachers, whom she credits with guiding her toward a positive response to the challenges she faces.

Some Black girls, like Samaya and Ariana, face educational, judicial, and societal disparities.

Black girls, and other girls of color, experience discriminatory, disparate, punitive, and unfair treatment in school, including suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement and arrests on school campuses, at rates that exceed the public school population in aggregate — and far exceed those experi-

enced by their White female peers.

“This has to change. Our girls deserve more,” the filmmakers write on their website.

According to the most recent U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights data, Black girls are seven times more likely to be suspended from school, and four times more likely to be arrested on a school campus than their White peers.

Punitive practices and policies in schools fuel systemic inequities and result in negative outcomes based on race and gender. They have profound consequences for Black girls: rather than promote safety and well-being, these practices disproportionately push Black girls out of school and further into the margins.

“Pushout,” is being screened in several cities. For more information, or to host a screening, visit www.pushoutfilm.com.

African Americans Behind on Environmental Issues

Part 2

Learning About Green Infrastructure

Muhammad Yungai
Data News Weekly
Contributor

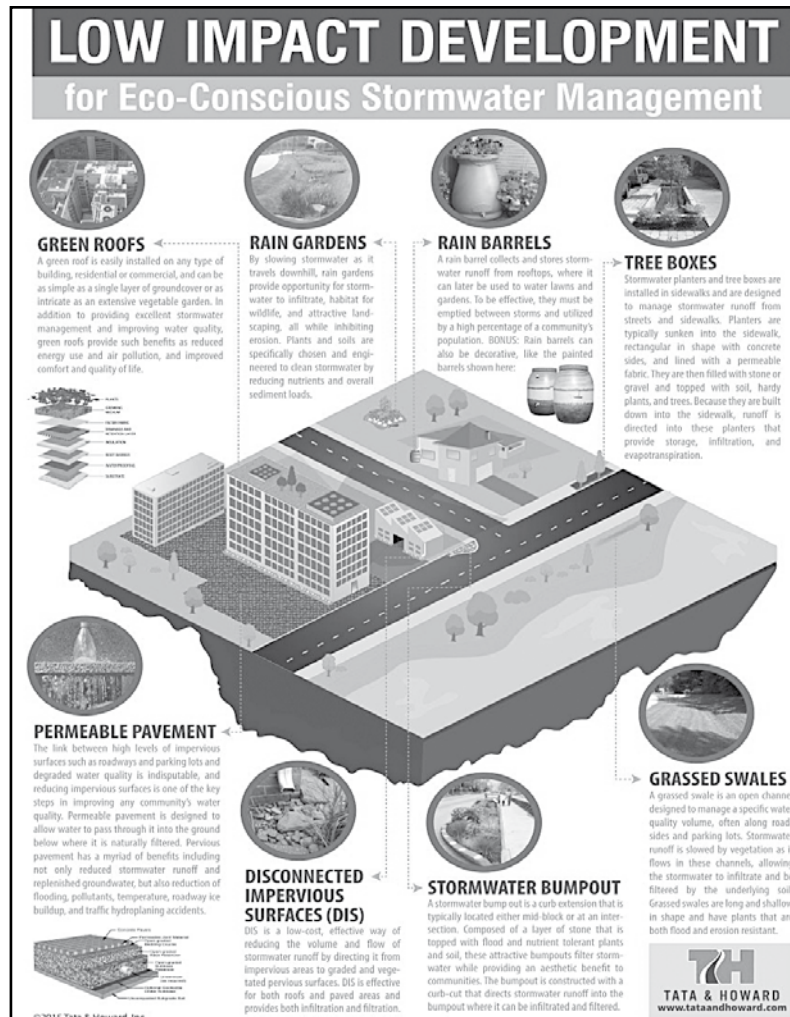
So, if we are not very concerned about the basics, how then can we get into the more esoteric aspects of environmental stewardship? Yes, “green infrastructure” is a fancy term for building different drainage structures focused more on natural features such as trees and grasses which soak up some of the water or running water through a soil type media to filter some of the particulate matter and other pollutants.

L.I.D. stands for Low Impact Development, meaning that certain building projects are designed to minimize the deleterious impacts on the environment.

F.O.G. simply means Fats, Oils and Grease, which is a much bigger and more costly problem in our sewer system than one might suspect. And of course, any type of oil in untreated.

Stormwater can harm creatures, flora, and fauna.

MS4 means Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System such as we have here in New Orleans. It's not really a sewer at all but our drainage system which is separate from our sewer system. It is untreated and discharges to Lake Pontchartrain.



Practices. These are guidelines for mainly commercial and industrial establishments used to minimize the potential for intentional or even accidental despoliation of the environment such as spills.

One example would be for a company with an oil tank to build barriers around it to prevent any leaks or spills from making it to the storm drain system.

L.E.E.D. means Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. There are awards and incentives given to architects and designers, companies and corporations, who create office buildings and residential spaces which use energy conservation, renewable energy, green infrastructure, Stormwater management, and other quality of life-enhancing features.

All of these things are the waves of the future. Millions upon millions of dollars are being spent to bring these concepts to life. In fact, during the past year or so, the City of New Orleans has received \$143 million in federal funds just for “green infrastructure”.

My position is that African Americans should have more knowledge

about and be more invested in environmental issues. Because of realities such as “environmental racism”, where it is more profitable for certain companies to put pollutants in African American, Native American and other “underserved” communities rather than clean them up; our communities oftentimes are more environmentally debilitated than others.

As a result, we suffer from more environmentally induced diseases such as cancer, infectious diseases and respiratory problems such as acute asthma. Personally, I'd just like to start with the simple “low hanging fruit” of litter abatement, if only because then, I could walk down the street and admire the beauty of our neighborhoods.

Where is our pride? But if these things still don't move you, we should at least be motivated by some of the serious money which is being thrown around on various environmental projects as I mentioned. Because once again we risk being seriously marginalized by not being informed and engaged.

Some cities have combined systems, so they are not MS4s. B.M.P. means Best Management



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New Louis Armstrong International Airport Opens



New Orleans Trumpeter James Andrews leads a brass band at a ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the newly built main terminal of the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.



Only in NOLA: New Orleans Aviation Board President Michael Bagneris, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell and Kevin Dolliole, Director of Aviation at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport celebrating the ribbon-cutting for the new airport terminal.

Data News Weekly Staff Edited Report

NEW ORLEANS — Recently, the City cut the ribbon beginning a new chapter at the new Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport that's officially open.

State and City officials cut the ribbon on November 5th on the City's new \$1.3 billion airport terminal, which opened to the public on November 6th.

The new airport is much larger and modern than the old airport that was built in 1959. The 927,000-square-foot (86,100-square-meter) facility features music venues, three rooms for mothers to bring small children, and other amenities such as charging locations for electronic devices at 50 percent of the seats at the gates. There are also 8,000 available parking spaces.

The terminal opened this month after being slated to open in May of this year.

A number of New Orleans restaurants are featured at the new terminal, and the City's Mayor, LaToya

Cantrell, said local musicians will perform daily at the airport.

"You can come early and enjoy New Orleans right here in our terminal," the mayor said at Tuesday's ceremony.

The new airport should help attract even more people to the City that already attracts people from around the world.

The airport welcomed a record-breaking 13.1 million passengers in 2018, an airport spokeswoman said.

The City of New Orleans also hosted more than 18.5 million visitors in 2018, a 4.3 percent increase in visitors compared to 2017, according to a study commissioned by New Orleans & Company and the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation.

One of the biggest improvements is that passengers traveling through the city-owned airport will actually get a real sample of New Orleans — one of the United States' most distinctive and beloved cities.

Among the more than 40 post-security concessions, travelers can choose from classic beignets at Café du Monde, a drink at Bar Saz-



New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell participates in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with other dignitaries for the opening of the newly built main terminal of the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport in Kenner, Louisiana, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2019. Gerald Herbert, AP

erac, creole food at Leah's Kitchen, Angelo Brocato's Ice Cream and live music at Heritage School of Music Wine Bar.

In addition, the city's restaurants, bars, and cultural attractions stand to benefit from the modern new terminal.

This impact is echoed by National WWII Museum President & CEO Stephen J. Watson, who says the museum has welcomed nearly 8 million people since opening in 2000.

"The addition of a new, world-class airport will allow for even

more visitation to the Greater Metropolitan Area and will also be a significant economic driver to businesses and cultural attractions that depend on corporate and family travel," Watson remarked. "We're thrilled to see the new MSY (the airport's code) open."



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New Orleans Native Desirée Glapion Rogers and Business Partner Purchase Fashion Fair Beauty Line

Fashion Fair Was Once Considered The Largest Black-Owned Cosmetics Company In The World

Taylor A. Sylvain
New Orleans Agenda

NEW ORLEANS – According to published reports, New Orleans native Desirée Glapion Rogers and her business partner, Cheryl Mayberry McKissack will purchase the Iconic Fashion Fair Beauty Line from Johnson Publishing Company; the former Publisher of Ebony and Jet Magazines for \$1.85 million. On Thursday, November 7, 2019, a bankruptcy judge approved the sale of Fashion Fair to Winnetka, Ill.-based Fair Acquisition LLC, a holding company formed for the acquisition.

Founded in 1973 as the first makeup line created for women of color, Fashion Fair was once considered the largest Black-owned cosmetics company in the world. At its peak in 2003, the brand sold \$56 million in total sales.

"Fashion Fair is just too valuable for our community to lose," Ms. Rogers said in an interview with Aisha Al-Muslim. "We plan to modernize the brand and products, but will remain true to the company's roots, which was to create prestige products focused on women of color."

In addition to having served as the White House Social Secretary under former President Barack Obama, Rogers once served as



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CEO of Johnson Publishing Company, overseeing the publication of Ebony and Jet Magazines while McKissack served as Chief Operating Officer and President of Digital. Magnetar Capital LLC founder and Chief Executive Alec Litowitz is reportedly also backing the deal in his personal capacity.

This is Rogers and McKissack's second foray as cosmetic business owners, earlier this year the two became co-owners of Black Opal LLC, a skincare and color cosmetics line founded in 1994 for women of color. Black Opal offers everything from concealer to mascara. Ms. Rogers is Black Opal's CEO and Ms. Mayberry McKissack serves as its President, while Mr. Litowitz is a key investor.

Black Opal Products are available mainly at drug and grocery stores, including CVS and Walmart, while Fashion Fair Products were sold mainly at high-end department stores such as Macy's and Dillard's outlets.

To revive the Fashion FairB-brand, Ms. Rogers and Ms. Mayberry McKissack are considering creating a new community-driven capsule collection paying homage to the original product line in 2020.

"We want to know which of our products favorites amongst members of our community are and what other products they would like to see from the brand," said Ms. Mayberry McKissack. "This conversation will be important as we breathe new life into this iconic brand."

Aisha Al-Muslim contributed to the writing of this article

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