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Sneak Peek into Fall

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

New Orleans on Martha's Vineyard



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New Orleans on Martha's Vineyard



Above: Deb Grant, (center), hosts her Dining with Deb event on the Vineyard.

Angela L. Young ALY Media Relations

This August, the rich culture and vibrant spirit of New Orleans made its mark on Martha's Vineyard, as a wave of New Orleanians joined the island's annual gathering. Known for its long-standing, cherished summer tradition as a vacation destination for Black travelers, Martha's Vineyard welcomed visitors from the Crescent City, who brought their unique blend of music, cuisine, and joie de vivre to the festivities.

Oak Bluffs, located on the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, has a rich history connected to African American culture and community. Here are some key points about this history:

Origins and Development

Oak Bluffs as a Resort Destination: In the late 19th Century, Oak Bluffs developed as a popular summer resort destination. Originally, it was part of Edgartown but became a separate town in 1880.

African American Involvement: African Americans began visiting Oak Bluffs in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. The area became a favorite summer destination for middle and upper-class African Americans, many of whom were excluded from other resorts due to segregation and racism.

The "Cottage City"

Architecture: Oak Bluffs is known for its "gingerbread cottages," which are

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.



Mixologist Eve Marie Haydel, great-granddaughter of Leah Chase served up unique cocktails on the island.

On the cover: Michelle Miller Morial & Angela L. Young attended Dee C. Marshall's YOUtopia event at the Harbor View Hotel located in Edgartown.

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part of the Martha's Vineyard Campground. This area initially attracted a predominantly White Methodist Community in the mid-19th Century. Over time, African Americans began purchasing and renting these cottages, creating a tight-knit community.

Cultural Significance: These cottages and the surrounding area became a symbol of African American success and a safe haven where African Americans could enjoy leisure and community without the overt racism found in other parts of the country.

Preservation of African American History

Organizations: The African American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard is an organization that preserves and educates the public about the African American History of the island, including Oak Bluffs.

Events: The town hosts various cultural events, including the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival, which celebrates African American contributions to film and culture.



New Orleans own Desiree Rogers, owner of Fashion Fair and Black Opal Cosmetics shows off her fashion at an event sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

Oak Bluffs remains an enduring symbol of African American community, resilience, and culture, continuing to attract visitors and residents who appreciate its unique history and significance.

In recent decades, Martha's Vineyard (and more specifically, Oak Bluffs) has also become known

as a preferred getaway for African Americans, with many prominent members of the community—from the late Maya Angelou and Oprah to Spike Lee and the Obamas—vacationing or buying homes there. Hollywood celebs attend the Annual Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival.



Carmen Randolph (Center) & the Women's Foundation of the South team up at their "Honor Her" Martha's Vineyard event.

Throughout the month, New Orleans natives participated in a variety of events, celebrating the shared heritage and community that binds the island's visitors. And New Orleanians added an extra layer of warmth and vibrancy to the

Vineyard's summer scene. As the month draws to a close, the lasting Impact of New Orleans on Martha's Vineyard is evident, with memories of this year's celebration sure to linger in the minds of all who experienced it.

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Sneak Peek into Fall



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

As the summer heat starts to wane, the New Orleans Fashion Aficionados South gears up for the rich, warm embrace of fall fashion. Southern style during this season is all about balancing tradition with contemporary trends, resulting in a unique blend that captures the essence of the region.

One of the standout pieces this fall is the maxi dress, a perennial favorite in the South. This year, expect to see them in rich autumnal hues like deep burgundy, olive green, and mustard yellow. Paired with a wide-brimmed hat and ankle boots, the maxi dress is perfect for transitioning from warm afternoons to cooler evenings.

Layering is another key element to a Southern flare style. Lightweight sweaters, often in soft knits, are ideal for layering over summer staples like sleeveless tops and sundresses. The trick is to mix textures—think cotton with cashmere or denim with silk scarves. This combination not only keeps you warm but adds depth and interest to your outfit.

Speaking of denim, jean jackets are staple in any Southern wardrobe, these jackets are being updated with distressed details, embroidered patches, and even personalized monograms, adding a touch of individuality to a classic piece.

Leading the charge in feet wear are cowboy boots. Get ready for more versatile styles, with options ranging from classic leather to more daring snake prints and metallic finishes. Whether paired with jeans or a skirt, cowboy boots add a rugged charm to any outfit.

When it comes to accessories, dainty is out, and statement pieces are back. Statement belts, oversized earrings, and vintage-inspired handbags adds the perfect finishing touch to your ensemble.



Sneak Peek in Fall (Pinterest)



Silver Metallic Boots (Getty Image)



Fur and Jeans (Getty Image)



Autumn Colours (Pinterest)



Calf-Length Print Dress and Ankle Boots- Macy's



Layered Up - (Pinterest)



I Max Tree



West London Btq - Ladybug Jumpsuit

Brigadier General Andree' G. Carter Receives Promotion

By June Hazeur
Data News Contributor
Photos by Tee Jay Photos

On Tuesday, August 13th, 2024, Major General Andree' "Ana" Carter was pinned with her second 2nd Star by the Commander-in-Chief, President Joe Biden at Air Force One.

There was a Promotion Ceremony in honor of Brigadier General Andree' G. Carter at the National World War II Museum, Louisiana Memorial Pavilion in New Orleans, LA where she was pinned by Lieutenant General Russel L. Honore'.

Lieutenant General (LTG) (Retired) Russel Honore' is a decorated 37-year veteran and a global authority on leadership, disaster management, and climate preparedness.

Brigadier General Carter assumed command of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) on July 13th, 2024.

Prior to her current assignment she served as Commander General in Pensacola, FL; Deputy Commander General (Airborne) in Fort Liberty, NC; Commander General in Fort McCoy, WI; Deputy Commander General in Mountain View, CA and dual hat-ted as Deputy Commander General in Fort Cavazos, TX.

Her deployment included OPERATION Joint Endeavor in Iraq and OPERATION Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

She is married to Congressman Troy Carter. She lives in New Orleans, LA.



The City of New Orleans Partners with Undue Medical Debt and Ochsner Health to Eliminate Medical Debt for Eligible Low-Income Patients

Data News Staff Edited Report

The City of New Orleans, New Orleans City Council, Ochsner Health and the National Nonprofit Undue Medical Debt (previously RIP Medical Debt) are pleased to announce an agreement that will help erase more than \$59 million worth of past medical debt for about 66,000 qualifying patients living in New Orleans.

Impacted residents do not need to apply, and there is no application process. Instead, residents who qualify for this debt relief will receive a branded letter from Undue Medical Debt indicating which debt or debts have been eliminated. Undue Medical Debt works with hospital systems and other providers across the country to purchase portfolios of past due medical debt belonging to those least able to pay and then erases the debt.

Under Undue Medical Debt guidelines, those who qualify for this Medical Debt Relief have medical debts that are 5% or more than their annual income or earn at or below four times poverty-level income. The current federal poverty level is an annual income of under \$31,200 for a family of four. Letters for residents who qualify for this



New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell.

one-time debt relief are arriving in the area now. Residents do not need to take any action, as the eligible medical debt will automatically be eliminated for those who qualify.

“We’re thrilled to be announcing this impactful medical debt abolishment in partnership with Ochsner Health, New Orleans City Council and the City of New Orleans,” said Undue Medical Debt CEO and President Allison Sesso. “Helping residents burdened by medical debt takes enormous collaboration and we’re extremely grateful to all our partners who have made this possible. We hope this program

provides financial and emotional relief to recipients and encourages them to continue engaging with the healthcare system.”

“This initiative will be transformational for our most vulnerable residents who have outstanding medical bills,” said Mayor LaToya Cantrell. “Medical debt is common in our state, especially following the COVID-19 Pandemic, which we know had a disproportionately hard effect on New Orleans. My administration continues to be intentional about partnering with health providers to provide this medical debt elimination so we can improve



Jim Molloy, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, Ochsner Health.

people’s lives. Working stronger together, Ochsner is a strong community partner, and we commend them for collaborating with us on this initiative.”

A December 2020 analysis of credit reports by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau found that about 22 percent of Louisiana’s population has medical debt. The Undue Medical Debt partnership helps further health equity efforts, as social risk factors exacerbate existing health disparities. Data shows communities of color are disproportionately impacted by medical debt.

“Medical debt can happen for many reasons,” said Council President Helena Moreno. “This initiative was created to help New Orleans residents who have past medical debt, especially those who have been disproportionately impacted financially and medically by COVID-19. This will provide a financial reset for families and is a tremendous way to spend one-time federal dollars. I appreciate Ochsner’s leadership and partnership on this important initiative.”

“Ochsner Health commends the New Orleans City Council and the City of New Orleans for collaborating with us and Undue Medical Debt to help eliminate medical debt for people in New Orleans. Ochsner is proud to have worked with Undue Medical Debt to enable the organization to acquire and cancel past one-time debts for eligible residents,” said Jim Molloy, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Treasurer for Ochsner Health. “In addition to our other longstanding practices that underscore our commitment to providing accessible healthcare – such as refraining from selling debt to secondary collectors – our partnership with Undue Medical Debt makes healthcare more equitable and affordable for our patients.”

Commentary

Can New Orleans Churches Lead the Way in Reparations?

Orissa Arend
Think504.com

Will churches in New Orleans step up to bridge the long-standing divide between Black and White communities?

A movement for reparations within New Orleans churches seems like the ideal starting point. Politics are too volatile to mention the word “reparations” in mixed company. We’ll need the Holy Spirit, Yahweh, Allah, and all their helpers to devise a plan. This plan should include communicating it within our circles, raising funds, and distributing them wisely. Can New Orleans churches lead the way in reparations?



In 2022, a small group of White church elders discovered a Tulane Master’s Thesis from 2010.

This thesis documented the Episcopal Church’s Origins in New Orleans. These women had stud-

ied and meditated together for four years. Their group, a weekly Contemplative Justice Gathering, began after George Floyd’s murder. They educated themselves by reading Black authors, hearing Black speakers, and discussing anti-racism work.

Can New Orleans Churches Lead the Way in Reparations?

The thesis exposed that the Episcopal Church in New Orleans was established on the backs of enslaved Africans. The church founders justified this exploitation by citing the Gospels. By the early 1840s, slavery in the South was seen not as a necessary evil but as a means of civilization and salvation. White Christian slaveholders

believed they were uplifting a race through their efforts.

Bishop Leonidas Polk arrived in 1842 to lead the Episcopal Church in Louisiana. He owned more than 250 enslaved Africans on several plantations. Polk sought to save their souls while convincing them to accept their subservient positions. He encouraged them to “do their duty in that state of life, in which it has pleased God to call them.”

Many White people couldn’t imagine a heaven that included Blacks. The Episcopal Diocese brought the Gospel to enslaved people on the enslavers’ terms. Polk later fought in the Civil War as a Confederate general and died from Union artillery in 1864. Given this

Commentary, Continued on page 7.

Biden-Harris Administration Takes New Steps to Lower Housing Costs, Speed Up Construction

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Last week, the Biden administration announced a series of measures aimed at reducing housing costs by streamlining federal regulations and accelerating the construction of affordable homes. The new actions are part of President Joe Biden's broader strategy to address the nationwide housing shortage and ease the financial burden on American families.

The administration's Housing Supply Action Plan, launched last year, has led to more homes under construction than ever in the past five decades. The administration said it aims to build over 2 million new homes to alleviate pressure on the housing market, which has seen soaring prices and rents due to a lack of supply.

As part of the new measures, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that it's making \$100 million available through its Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) program. The grants will help communities identify and eliminate barriers to affordable housing development, such as restrictive zoning laws and lengthy permitting processes.



"We know that many people today can afford a monthly mortgage payment, but that securing the upfront costs of homeownership can be a significant challenge," said Richard Winter, the Vice President and Area Lending Manager for Bank of America's Baltimore region. (Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA)

The Treasury Department and HUD have also introduced changes to the Federal Financing Bank's Multifamily Risk Sharing Program to provide more significant interest rate predictability for state and local housing finance agencies. Administration officials said the improvement should lower the cost of financing new housing developments and make more projects financially viable.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has also issued new guidance to simplify the loan process for residential projects near transit hubs. This includes allowing certain projects to bypass detailed

environmental reviews, potentially reducing approval times by several months. Meanwhile, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) has proposed tools to expedite historic preservation reviews for federally funded housing projects, which could lower costs and speed up the delivery of affordable housing, especially in historically significant areas.

In another move, HUD is launching a Legacy Challenge to encourage communities to use up to \$250 million in low-cost loans through the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program for housing investments, including converting commercial buildings into residential units. In a fact sheet, the White House said the program offers flexible terms to attract more participants.

Finally, HUD is advancing updates to its Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards, allowing for the first time the construction of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes under the HUD Code. The change is intended to lower costs and increase housing density in urban areas.

According to the fact sheet, the administration has already facilitated nearly \$20 billion in housing investments through the American Rescue Plan and other federal programs. It pushes state and local governments to follow suit by repurposing land and easing regulatory constraints.

Commentary, Continued from page 6.

history, can New Orleans churches lead the way in reparations?

Appalled by these revelations, the group worked to publicize the thesis within church circles. They educated themselves about church history and efforts toward repair. Two women from the group pursued direct action. They tirelessly pushed for quick, meaningful steps. A subgroup formed to establish a reparations fund. The fund would be raised mainly from White churches and distributed by Black church members, community leaders, and historians. This new group, Repair the Breach NOLA, reviewed 40 Reparations Programs and selected one as a model for New Orleans. They quickly formed partnerships, acquired a fiscal agent, defined their structure, and created a mission and vision. They

also reached out to people of color, synagogues, mosques, and various Christian churches.

Why am I writing about this? Well, you know where the devil resides—in the details, right? I want to document our struggles as we move from our simple but brilliant idea into action. I'm also writing because I'm a writer with a small platform. In my White, controlling way, I like to imagine I can help shape the narrative in both the church and the larger community. I expect pushback from all sides, which I will chronicle. Perhaps the narrative of how New Orleans churches helped repair the racial breach will take on a life of its own.

Orissa Arend is a member of Trinity Episcopal Church, a pillar of Justice and Beyond, and Author of Showdown in Desire: The Black Panthers Take a Stand in New Orleans.

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