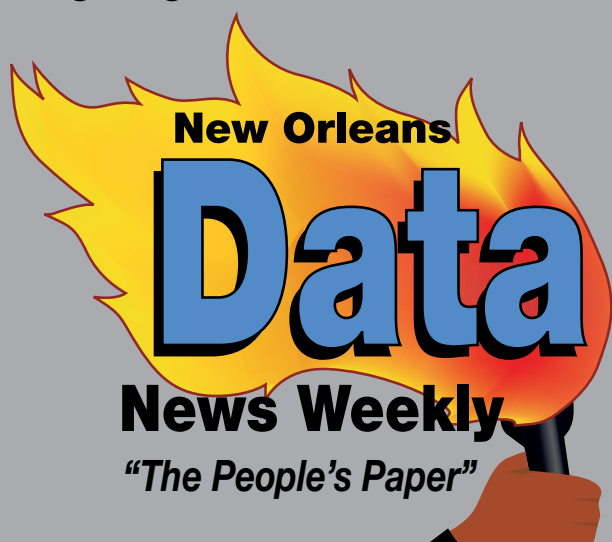


Lighting The Road To Freedom



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It Twisted.”

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October 22, 2005

39th Year

Volume 34

The Spirit of New Orleans

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COVER STORY

Millions More Movement

Expected to

Galvanize Blacks

by Hazel Trice Edney

NNPA Washington Correspondent



Photo: Stanley Rogouski-dc.indymedia.org

WASHINGTON(NNPA) –

An issues agenda that will transform into a movement and impact change in the Black community over the coming years is what organizers of the Millions More Movement are claiming was accomplished at the 10th Anniversary of the Million Man March.

“Saturday was just the beginning, that this will not just be a feel-good march, that in fact, the plan – I’d like to call it a mobilization plan – around these issues was articulated and respected,” says Ramona Edelin, co-chair of the issues agenda for the Oct. 15 march on the Washington Mall. “And that folks, when they left the march, will go back to where

they live and where they work and where they raise their children and embrace their families, that they will take these issues and begin to act on these, that there will be a discussion of the situation and a discussion of the problems.”

Organizers say although they do not have official numbers, the crowd was estimated at least 800,000 to a million people in attendance.

Issues that were espoused during Saturday’s rally are unity among African-Americans and other people of color; spiritual and ethical grounding; family strengthening; education; economic development; housing; political power; reparations; criminal justice; health care and

healthy living; artistic and cultural development; anti-war and peace in Black neighborhoods, Edelin says.

“No one has prioritized them individually. Among all the issues that we have prioritized, we have prioritized these,” says Edelin. “These are, in our view, the critical levers for the advancement of our group in the 21st Century.”

While the 1995 “Day of Atonement” march was mainly for Black men, the anniversary march was designed to draw a racially diverse and ecumenical crowd of men, women and children, says Vernon Hawkins, director of field operations and logistics for the march which was held on the west side of the U. S. Capitol.

Continued on next page.

DATA

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"We were planning to accommodate the same number that we had in 1995," says Hawkins. "We're talking about getting rid of the apathy that's been in our communities and recognizing the power that's within."

Pre-march activities in D. C. were held all day on Friday, some with overlapping times. They included a dialogue on spiritual unity at the Metropolitan Baptist Church; a summit on family strengthening at the Howard University College of Medicine; A community dialogue on unity at New Bethel Baptist Church; a conference on Black unity at the Scripture Cathedral Church; and a forum on achievement gaps at the Kellogg Center at Galludet University.

March activities began in the wee hours of Oct. 15, starting with a 5:30 A.M. opening prayer and gospel music; and a libation to honor the contribution of ancestors; the 9 A.M. opening of the unity program began with Melba Moore singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

National Urban League president and CEO Marc Morial lead the unity portion of the program, the first major part of the march. Other noted speakers will include union leader William Lucy, NAACP President and CEO Bruce Gordon, National Action Network President and CEO Al Sharpton and Rainbow/PUSH President and CEO Jesse Jackson.

Minister Farrakhan called the Oct. 16, 1995 march a "Day of Atonement" for Black men to make commitments to help heal themselves. This time, the march focused on the broader community, says Hawkins. "We're not talking about something that we can get from the government. We're talking about what we have to do in our own communities."

An "Anniversary Statement" posted on the informational Web site, www.Millionsmoremovement.org, concedes that social conditions for Black males have not improved over the past 10 years.

"Although many wonderful things have happened as a result of the march, 10 years later, the masses of our people are slipping further behind," says the statement. "We have a larger middle class, many more millionaires and a few billionaires, however, the overall condition of our people is worse. We have more entrepreneurs, more college graduates, more persons holding political office, more Black mayors, city councilors, aldermen, state representatives, city managers, more corporate executives, yet the masses have not been empowered or improved."

This year's program was also gender-balanced, Hawkins says. Among women speakers were poet Maya Angelou, and civil rights veteran Dorothy Height, president emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women. Each issue was addressed by a male and a female speaker, says Hawkins. The first half of the program will be moderated by TV and radio talk personality Tavis Smiley. Susan Taylor, editorial director for Essence magazine, will moderate the second half, he says.

Organizers were glad to see strong youth participation as hip-hop leaders are helped to galvanize the movement. They include Reverend Run, formerly of Run DMC; Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Kanye West, Ludacris, LL Cool J, Queen Latifah, Common, Missy Elliott, Snoop Dogg, Ice T, Jim Jones, Juelz Santana, Jha Jha of the Diplomats, Masta P, Juvenile, Erykah Badu, Kid Capri, Cassidy, the Wu Tang Clan, Xzibit, Tony Austin, Humpty Hump, the Ruff Ryders, Dead Prez and Russell Simmons, Chairman of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network.

The program will also include a pledge of remembrance for victims of Hurricane Katrina and honored the contributions of African-Americans to one another during that crisis and the continued efforts to help, Hawkins says. He says many of Katrina victims were in attendance.

"The Millions More Movement has challenged all of us to rise above the things that have kept us divided in the past by focusing us on the agenda of the Millions More Movement to see how all of us, with all of our varied differences can come together and direct our energy, not at each other, but at the condition of the reality of the suffering of our people," says Farrakhan in a statement.

"Unity, love of self and love for one another have always been my desire. We stand on

the threshold of the realization of our potential unity and the potential power that our unity can unleash to bring about a positive change today because of the Millions More Movement."

At the end of the day, it will be left up to communities, organizations and leaders to make a plan to take the unity agenda and run with it, organizers say.

"There is not at this time, a centralized structure for doing that," says Edelin. "No one organization can or should

be responsible for this. But all of the co-convenors, all of the representatives of the national organizations and the national bodies should take responsibility for what they do best...There will be solutions proffered and action steps to be taken and then we would like to develop a critical mass of our people throughout the country, acting on an agenda together, moving toward some agreed upon goal together in all of these areas."

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NEWSMAKER

Governor Blanco Appoints Board of Directors to Oversee Recovery



Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco swears in the Board of Directors for the Louisiana Recovery Authority.

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco this week announced the creation of the Louisiana Recovery Authority as the guiding agency to lead the state's rebuilding efforts. The authority will focus on key state issues such as housing, jobs, transportation, healthcare and education.

"The effort to restore our state requires a daring, yet realistic plan. A plan based on input from people in all walks of life. A plan created from the ground up. A plan driven by local needs. A plan inspired by innovation," said Governor Blanco. "We cannot simply re-create what the storms destroyed. We must make the new Louisiana smarter, safer and stronger."

Governor Blanco tapped her point-person on recovery, Chief of Staff, Andy Kopplin to head the agency.

Governor Blanco also appointed a distinguished 24-member Board of Directors to oversee the authority and to direct short and long term recovery plans. As advisors to the Governor, the board will seek public input and will set benchmarks to gauge progress.

Governor Blanco appointed long-time president of Xavier University and respected New Orleans leader Dr. Norman Francis to chair the board. For vice-chairman, Governor Blanco selected renowned journalist and author Walter Isaacson, president and CEO of the Aspen Institute and former chairman of CNN.

"I have charged these two distinguished leaders to harness the energy of the entire board and put forth strong, aggressive initiatives," says Governor Blanco. "The Louisiana Recovery Authority will help me bring the entire state together in the effort to rebuild Louisiana. It will be a unified voice with the single focus on rebuilding. It will show the nation that we can work across all of the old boundaries that once kept us apart."

The authority will also focus on issues such as infrastructure, economic and workforce development, family services and the environment.

It will be largely staffed by state employees on loan from cabinet agencies. Operating with unprecedented financial accountability, the authority will coordinate the rebuilding across all levels of government, and will support community recovery and resurgence.

The Governor today charged the board and the authority with specific tasks and has implemented a timeline for these tasks to be completed in increments as soon as within 7 days having key senior staff positions placed and benchmarks identified, to within 30 days, refining and presenting a comprehensive, unified State agenda for Congressional and State legislative actions.

Within 100 days the plan implements strategies necessary to reinstate critical infrastructures and work with federal partners to ensure that Congress and the Corps of Engineers deliver a plan for levee reconstruction and improvement so crucial investments and rebuilding decisions can be made. It will create and roll out a locally-driven, state-wide recovery plan to serve as the basis for prioritizing resources in the recovery period. Other priorities include crafting a plan to relocate into permanent

housing all residents currently in temporary lodging; restoring critical governmental functions in affected parishes as needed to serve returning populations, to include judicial systems, public safety, sanitation, healthcare, and education. The plan will also create a strategy for the establishment of permanent public institutions - such as schools, hospitals, and healthcare clinic - that, beyond restoration, achieve the highest standards of performance; They plan to complete an environmental evaluation of damages caused by the hurricanes, and develop preliminary recommendations on how to proceed and design neighborhoods that meet the comprehensive needs of our citizens while restoring and enhancing the cultural and historic fabric of the communities.



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www.aarp.org/la

STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Katrina Property Claims May Mount \$34.4 Billion



New York – Hurricane Katrina is likely to result in at least \$34.4 billion in personal and commercial property loss claims, according to the first publicly released survey of the nation's insurers.

ISO's Property Claim Services Unit said that the preliminary estimate of damages to homes and businesses in six states would make Katrina the most costly U.S. natural disaster

ever, surpassing the inflation-adjusted \$20.8 billion in losses from Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

Several risk assessment companies earlier released projections of insured losses from Katrina, with totals ranging from \$14 billion to \$60 billion.

The ISO's tally includes anticipated insurance industry losses for personal

and commercial property, including boats and vehicles, business interruption coverage and additional living expenses. Reported damage to offshore oil facilities is included, ISO officials said.

The estimates exclude losses to utilities, agriculture, aircraft, offshore drilling platforms and property insured under the federal flood insurance program.

Temporary Roofing for New Orleans Citizens

New Orleans – For Orleans Parish residents, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, signed a blanket right-of-entry on October 3. The executive order grants to the Corps of Engineers and its contractors a right-of-entry upon private property in the City of New Orleans, where it is clear that an imminent threat of damage to property exists and the homeowner is not available to sign a right of entry form to install the temporary protection on their roof. The Corps of

Engineers and its contractors are inspecting neighborhoods, leaving documentation at homes that have been inspected, indicating whether or not the home qualifies for the Blue Roof Program.

In the State of Louisiana, Operation Blue Roof provides a free temporary roof to residential structures, schools, daycare and all publicly owned facilities. These temporary roofs will provide relieve until the owner can make permanent repairs.

In order to install a temporary roof under the Blue Roof Program, buildings must have 50% or less of the roof decking damaged; Have 50% or less of the supporting structure damaged; Be structurally sound and safely accessed; Have trees removed from the structure.

The program does not install temporary roofs on metal, tile, slate asbestos slate or flat roofs. Operation Blue Roof toll free number is 1-888-ROOF-BLU.

African Americans Top Katrina Death Toll

An updated report released by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, shows African Americans have suffered the largest number of deaths due to Hurricane Katrina in the greater New Orleans area.

The official death toll of bodies recovered at the time of the report issued October 21, stands at 1056. This represents an increase from 1053 at the last report, with Orleans Parrish suffering the greatest number of casualties.

Post-mortem race statistics of all deceased victims identified to date show African American casualties greatest at 41.73 % with whites accounting for 37.30% of deaths. The report indicates that 17.54% of victims are still reported missing. As expected, elderly aged 75+ account for the largest group of deceased at 37.30 % with the population aged 61 to 75 second with 23.19% of those identified.

Dillard to Reopen at Tulane as Early as January

New Orleans – Dillard University will resume classes on Tulane University's campus as early as January while Dillard's campus undergoes extensive repairs needed because of Hurricane Katrina. Both universities were damaged by the floods.

Tulane, which had already announced plans to reopen in January for its spring semester, offered the space to Dillard. The schools worked together to bring Dillard back to New Orleans, Dillard president Marvalene Hughes said.

A news release said Dillard had considered several sites in Louisiana and in adjacent states.

"With the Tulane offer in New Orleans, it has been ensured that Dillard University will maintain its separate identity and heritage as a historically black university, reestablish its learning-centered community of students, faculty and staff and reclaim its legacy of 135 years in the city," it said.

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DATA ZONE Entertainment

DON'T GET IT TWISTED *Refugees, Evacuees, or More than Conquerors*

By Karen Arceneaux



We will not forget you. We will shine the light on the injustice. We will tell your stories were all promises that rang in unison from the voices of Essence Magazine co founder Ed Lewis to Editor Susan Taylor in Houston Texas Saturday September 17, 2005. The staff and friends of Essence Magazine held an empowerment session in honor of New Orleans evacuees from Household of Faith Family Worship Church International. The New Orleans ministry, pastored by Antoine Barriere is among many churches that have been displaced by the recent hurricane.

Host Pastor Cofield of the God Hope family opened their arms to the Household of Faith family and other evacuees by allowing them to have worship services in their gymnasium, assisting approximately 45 displaced families with housing, and providing food, clothing and household items.

In New Orleans, each Independence Weekend Essence hosts its annual Music Festival. It was no surprise that Essence officials seized this opportunity to give back to New Orleanians who have supported their efforts over the years.

The empowerment session featured psalmist Yolanda Adams who encouraged New Orleanians with songs such as "Great is Thy Faithfulness", "Just a Prayer Away", and "The Battle is not Yours, It's the Lords".

Reverend Marcia Dyson served as MC for the event. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, author of "Is Bill Cosby Right", commended attendees for what he called the untold stories that so many maintained dignity in the midst of adversity.

Among many nationally renowned guests was Author, Poet, and TV Personality Iyanla Vanzant. She told attendees, "Don't get It Twisted." Iyanla gave her explanation of the recent events explaining that this was not a time to get confused or depressed.

Iyanla stated, "This is not the first time that we as a people have been forced from our homeland. What we need is not the White House or FEMA, but we need to remember how we got over, we have to go back to what Big Mamma did and call on our God." She said, "New Orleans will be the modern day Moses that God will use to lead his people out of a deprived and decadent way of life into the abundant life that God has for us."

With so many spiritually uplifting messages Pastor Antoine Barriere closed the session echoing the remarks of Iyanla Vanzant saying, "Don't get it Twisted". "We are in no ways tired. Katrina is dead and God is alive."

Most New Orleanians evacuated with their families and some with their friends. For the members of Household of Faith they all seemed to have evacuated together. For the members and the pastor their church is their family. Like many New Orleans pastors, Barriere has remained in touch with his congregants and has proven to be more than just a Sunday morning pastor. The unprecedented kindness shown by host pastor Cofield and the Essence staff and friends is not surprising since Household of Faith is such a giving and caring ministry. During these times their name has been justified through their continued faithfulness and examples of love. They are a Household of Faith.

The members of Household of Faith are greatfull for the leadership of their pastor and the concern from their host ministry in Houston and the staff and friends of Essence Magazine.

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The People's Paper

DATA ZONE

This Man Cried

The Love Dr.

Being the “man of the house” sometimes doesn’t really mean much? until trouble comes. Hurricane Katrina was that kind of trouble. It tested everyone, but I felt a level of responsibility that I had never really experienced before, for not only does one have to figure out how to survive the immediate danger, but then one is faced with creating a vision and a plan that helps your women folk, in my case wife and mother, feel comfortable and secure about the future.

What’s interesting is that from time to time even my Boo will call me a “Chauvinist” for my strong views about a man’s responsibility to lead his family, but when tough times come all I get from her is appreciation for my acceptance and willingness to do what must be done. Before I go any further let me make it perfectly clear that my “leadership” doesn’t include making any decisions all by myself. Let’s not confuse “leadership” with “ruling” anyone or anything. I do not rule the women in my life, but I do serve them by using my mind to search out or figure out our options and come up with plans that I present for their consideration.

Not all of my ideas are acceptable, and sometimes it is frustrating to be vetoed, but that is the price I pay for having women who take excellent care of me, the major benefit of being a family man. I don’t do anything major without selling my vision and plan first, and now I understand that this process of me coming up with ideas and they judging them is what makes things work. I will admit that some of my ideas are workable, but not desirable to all, for after all, I am just a man, capable of powerful straight line logic, but sometimes missing the fine points or not being aware enough of other people’s preferences or comfort zones.

The reality is that I lead, like a horse leads a wagon, with strength and going forward, until someone tugs on the reins when they feel a need to change directions. The process insures that we get both creative new ideas and that they are well thought out before we bet our future. I’ve become wise enough to know that when we do reach agreement, the idea is solid, practical and will be supported by everyone involved

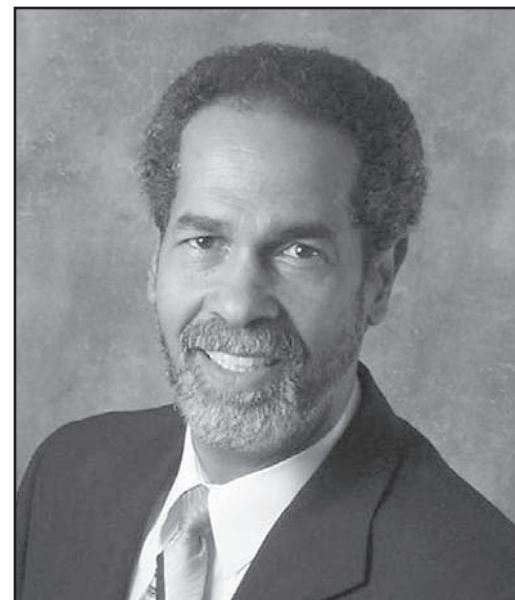
When I finally separated from my women folk, I cried. It wasn’t because I missed them or because I was heartbroken, or my feelings hurt; it was simply because I was finally alone and no one could see the tears, especially my women folk. I needed the release. It felt so good, seventy five miles an hour, Hendrix screaming over the six speaker sound system, and tears streaming down my face, out of control. But I knew that I had left behind a wife and mother who felt good about the near and far future because I had dreamed up new dreams that they could support and see themselves feeling safe and comfortable as we began our return to “normal life”.

So through those tears I felt the strength of manhood. They were not tears of weakness, but the withheld tears of strength. So yes men cry, but not in front of their women because to our women often tears mean breaking down even when they are nothing more than a deep breath between the battles, between the times when we need to be both real and symbolic pillars of strength and resourcefulness for those who

depend on us as they make life comfortable and worth living.

I’m absolutely sure that some of you are reading this with some resentment at what appears to be a “chauvinistic” attitude, and I’m sorry for you because your failure to recognize the different value of the different genders and stages in life causes you to feel like you have to do and be everything you need and desire for yourself. I’m so happy I have great women in my life. They take great care of me. One raised and nurtured me and one cares for me and nurtures me now, and all I have to do is look forward because since all my needs are met that is all I have to do. Thank God for women who are sure enough of themselves that they can trust their men to be men

Quite frankly, the only time I really learn new things about myself is when I am required to do something I have never done before and its is always exciting, so while I never look for trouble I have learned that it is when trouble comes that I am



most respected and appreciated as the man of the house. Part of the blessing of Katrina, for me and my family was a deeper appreciation for and trust in one another’s differences, the things we needed but don’t personally possess were there when we needed them, because we were together.

I believe that was one of the reasons for my tears on Interstate fifty five, leaving that cocoon of care for days of having to take care of myself and knowing I would never do as well or feel as good for weeks? all by myself.

Go To LOVELOGISTICS.COM for more information. Lloyd Dennis is also available as a speaker; email him at LD@LLOYDDENNIS.COM, fax 504-368-1225.



Photo: Marquedda Waddell

Feels Like Home

By Edwin Buggage

As a native of America’s most interesting city, I like many have found myself in unfamiliar terrain longing for some of the things that reminds me of home. And although I have come to enjoy Los Angeles and its magnificent weather and beautiful people, I would still trade it in for the majestic old world charm of New Orleans.

The architecture, people, food, and music are like no other place in the world, but as I continuously longed for some semblance of the life I knew I was told of a place called Stevie’s Louisiana Creole Café. In my desire to have some reminder of home I ventured to go there, upon arriving I felt a bit of apprehension because like so many places that claim to have New Orleans style cooking usually doesn’t live up to the hype.

Continued on next page.

OPINION

After the Millions More March



George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist

By George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist

Thousands of people left Washington, D.C. after Saturday's Millions More Movement Rally — many by buses, planes, trains and cars — and headed back home while still pondering the question that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. posed in the title of one of his books: "Where do we go from here: Chaos or Community?"

That was an apt question when Dr. King posed it 38 years ago, and it is apt now.

It is easy to stand on the sidelines, as many do, and point to the shortcomings of the march organizers and to second-guess their agenda. However, if one does not propose and act on an alternative vision, their comments should fall on deaf ears. After all, opinions are like behinds — everyone has one.

One of the most frequent criticisms of Saturday's march was that it did not have the same energy or numbers as the Million Man March. That is true. It is also an unfair comparison. We shouldn't expect to replicate that historic event. It was a unique moment, organized around a narrow and emotional issue and participants will have a special memory to cherish for the rest of their lives. Those who passed up the event, for whatever reason, will just have to accept the fact that they missed out on a once in a lifetime experience.

It should be remembered that Black men came to the National Mall 10 years ago, in large part, as an act of defiance. Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League launched a relentless public assault on Minister Louis Farrakhan. The more Foxman attacked Farrakhan, the more African-American men rallied around the Nation of Islam leader. The fact that the NAACP, the National Urban League, Colin Powell and Bill Clinton had all denounced the march was of no consequence. Someone needed to stand up for Black men and Farrakhan led that charge.

This time, a broad range of issues were placed on the table. And as necessary as that was, it did not and cannot provide the same force of a single issue, i.e. Black males.

I was interviewed for a segment of "Good Morning America" that aired Saturday morning. I said what Farrakhan and other leaders would say at the rally — the measure of success is not how many people attended the rally or what was said. The test is what happens after people have gone home.

In a real sense, Minister Farrakhan, Rev. Willie Williams and other organizers have done their part: they brought us together to focus on important issues that continue to plague our community. The responsibility for what happens next shifts to us, individually and collectively.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is not coming back. We should not look for one national figure to lead us. We should realize that we never had one leader, even in King's heyday. Dr. King was successful because he was able to build on the work of local leaders. Once an issue became hot, then Dr. King was invited in to raise the visibility.

But make no mistake about it: the work of local leaders and everyday people provided the backbone for the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

One person can have an enormous impact on improving our community. There are so many ways to contribute — volunteering at a non-profit organization, starting a Scout troop, mentoring teens, helping out at school, visiting the elderly, helping reduce illiteracy, establishing computer labs at church and creating Saturday School to tutor students. The list of possibilities is endless.

Millions More Movement leaders plan to further address many of the issues raised Saturday in articles to be written for and published in Black newspapers. At the top of the agenda is how African-Americans can flex their economic clout. According to the University of Georgia Selig Center for Economic Growth, annual Black buying power will grow from \$318 billion in 1990 to \$921 billion in 2008.

Fortunately, Saturday's rally was not the only event planned. In March, there will be a National Black Peoples

Unity Convention in Gary, Ind. March 9-12 that will address economic and political issues facing Black America. Some of the Millions More organizers — such as University of Maryland Political Science Professor Ron Walters — are also involved in putting on the Gary convention. Perhaps between the two national events, a comprehensive Black Agenda will emerge. In the meantime, there is plenty that can be done.

If we take nothing else away from the Millions More Movement, we should know that we have a responsibility to look beyond ourselves. When we do, our entire community benefits.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. He appears on National Public Radio (NPR) three times a week as part of "News and Notes with Ed Gordon." To contact Curry or to book him for a speaking engagement, go to his Web site, www.georgecurry.com.

Feels like home continued

As I sat looking at the menu, surveying the restaurant, I looked towards the bandstand, as a full jazz orchestra began to play, I felt as if I was inside the Cotton Club. The band's sound swing and swayed throughout the room, as the well dressed patrons watched intently waiting for the main attraction.

While I tasted what would be considered a passable bowl of gumbo, the stage lights went low and when they came up Tevin Campbell the young singing sensation of the 1990's and former Quincy Jones protégé was on the stage. No

longer the innocent introverted little boy we remembered, but a confident stage veteran that took charge of the stage, giving the crowd an amazing show from beginning to end.

His show encompassed the best of old and new in soul music. This young man with an old soul went inside the vault of classic R&B singing Eddie Floyd's "Knock On Wood" and the Stevie Wonder feel good anthem "I Wish." They were also treated to surprise performance by former teen singing sensation Shanice that brought the crowd to their

feet as she received a standing ovation after her amazing performance as her husband Flex Alexander of UPN's "One on One" looked on.

Tevin then spoke briefly about the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and how some of the proceeds from the show going to help the cause. In this moment of weakness I found myself transported back to the city I dearly love and the family and friends that I miss and will not see anytime soon. He then began to sing "Tomorrow" and this song under these set of circumstances found a new

meaning, and gave me hope that brighter days lie ahead. He closed the show with his monster hit "Can We Talk," by this time some members of the audience got up dancing and singing along with Tevin. All and all it was a tremendous show, and it gave me some reminders of New Orleans and the life I knew. And although briefly I found a bit of my beloved city in this place along the streets of the golden sunshine state, I sat there thinking to myself — there's no place like home.

New Orleans
DATA
News Weekly

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Open Letter to New Orleans Families and Leaders

October 14, 2005

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your families are doing well. As I write this letter, I sit in

Houston, Texas because my son and grandson are enrolled in Houston Schools. The HoustoncommunityandSchool District have been embracing and accommodating. We are very fortunate and well. Our children would rather be home in their city, but cannot because the New Orleans School Board and Administration have not yet opened any schools. I have discovered a few days ago by a friend that the district voted to charter Algiers Schools. The information was not posted on any public website or newspapers. I searched almost daily on the NOPS and DOE, BESE and City of New Orleans website for information.

On October 7, 2005 the NOPS approved chartering Algiers schools as a type 4 charter, with New Orleans Public School Board serving as the Board for the Charter this year; it also appears that the NOPS Board is also contracting the management to the newly organized (but not yet incorporated) Algiers Charter School Association. The Charter issue was not on the October 7th agenda which was posted on the website on October 7th. The Charter application is also dated October 7, 2005. This appears to be led by District 86 State Representative Jim Tucker. I am also, told that Representative Tucker hosted meetings Pre Katrina to organize an effort to make Algiers a separate independent school district.

There are many unanswered questions and a severe lack of transparency and access to information. I am increasingly

concerned about the motives, ethics, intent and the legality of such a move.

If the NOPS is approving and acting as the board for this organization why are they not adhering to Public Meeting/ Notice policies? If this is so good for Everyone...then why the need for all the secrecy... lack of available information and rush? How can a “ghost organization”, Algiers Charter Schools Association which as of today is not a registered corporation in the state of Louisiana, apply for a charter status? How is this organization qualified to run charter schools or any school? Who is going to be the board in 2006-07 school years? What is the address and phone number, contact person, registered agent of the organization? How did they calculate the projections for the MFP counts and funds? Specifically what types of State and Federal funding will they receive? In the long term how will this affect the New Orleans Public School System and its children?

I am sure others have more questions and concerns? Who do you address them to? How does the community get information regarding the Charter to even ask pertinent questions? An informed and engaged community is a empowered, strong and united community.

I understand the need to be innovative in such challenging and demanding times. I also understand the need to open schools as soon as possible. What are other options has the NOPS Board considered and explored? I also see the opportunity to learn from our previous errors and create a school system and community that is world class, cohesive and encourages all citizens to have a voice and participate;

a system that nurtures trust, credibility, transparency and integrity.

Do we really want to start over this way...spending a whole lot of

time defending...justifying... explaining....putting outfires... operating in a state of crisis and dissension. We already know nothing gets done when this happens and ultimately everyone loses!

I am saddened to say that I was a member of the District 4 Advisory Committee as were many District 4 citizens... this information was not communicated to me even though there is mass email list at the disposal of the group and the District 4 school board member, Lourdes Moran. This group is comprised of parents and PTO presidents, school staff, community members, etc. It certainly could have been used as a vehicle to distribute information and solicit input.

NOPS website could also have been a public posting point.

I hope that my suspicions about the motives of the Chartering Organization and NOPS Board and Leadership are wrong. I want to be trustful, supportive and a participant in rebuilding New Orleans Public Schools and our beautiful city. I encourage all community members to require answers and accountability of all Leadership and be fully engaged in your community. We can do this with dignity and mutual respect. Keep your HOPE alive! Peace...

Carolyn Carter
New Orleans Citizen
NOPS Parent

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TRAIL BLAZERS

Local Unsung Heroes of the Katrina Catastrophe

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the media came to New Orleans. In a sense the whole world came to New Orleans, and while gruesome scenes were continually shown, and a vision of chaos, and lawlessness was the predominant choice for coverage by the mainstream television and newspaper reporters, there were miraculous stories happening everyday, that went uncovered and unnoticed by the population of the nation at large. But for the people trapped in their homes, and those unable to leave, it was those stories that mattered, and those people who made the difference for them between life and death, hope and hunger. There were countless people who did extraordinary things, but will never be recognized, because they did it out of love, not for news footage.

This month's Trailblazers are a group of men who were such heroes. Going out before anyone, before people were paid to do it, working hard saving lives, our group of unsung heroes consists of Todd Higgins, an international business consultant, Gralen Banks, Director of Safety Loss Prevention for the Hyatt Regency, Paul Sylvester, Owner Sweet Lorraine's Nightclub, Renard Thomas, Owner of Fotograffiti Systems, Fred Johnson, Director of The New Orleans Development Foundation and Roland Doucette, who is a City of New Orleans Police Officer.

As a group, reunited for this interview, the men relay spellbinding accounts of the horror and chaos that ensued after the storm. The category 5 hurricane, the one everyone knew one day would come, but nobody could ever have imagined its devastation. When asked how the group came to be, and how these men could pull together at such a time, a heartwarming at times and chilling at others story emerged. The men recounted stories hope and strength, courage, and conviction.

The men sat down, prior to the storm, and put together a plan, to first get their families out, and then to be prepared to work and then they waited it out. "When the storm hit, it sounded a freight train coming right through the door, but we knew we were in God's hands, so it was meant for us to go out that way if necessary," recalls Renard Thomas.

After the storm, it took several days before the flood waters came in, and they were able to reconnect prior to that happening, not knowing if they would be forced to leave or stay, but after finding each other, they began to work, bringing people to places of safety.

When the group first began to go out they



This month's Trailblazers are pictured, (l to r) Todd Higgins, Paul Sylvester, Roland Doucette Sr., Gralen Banks, Renard Thomas, not pictured Fred Johnson.

were surveying the damaged city from the Hurricane. There was much to be done, and things were in a state of uncertainty. Power, water and telephones were not available in much of the city, but they were able to gather at the Hyatt Hotel and locate family members and get word on the welfare of those still in the city. But within days, chaos erupted as the levees began to give way, and the flood waters came. What started out as just going out looking for the people that they knew who were unaccounted for, soon turned into helping people, any people, anywhere in the city who were trapped in their homes amidst the flood waters and saving lives.

The men did what needed to be done, commandeering boats, and contacted people in the area who had boats, some of them were the Department of Wildlife and Fishing boats and began to go out and rescue people who had no way out. They saw a woman on a porch, and were able to rescue her, and her neighbors who would not leave as long as she remained in her home. The men rescued them, and brought them to the Hyatt Hotel.

"Gralen took care of us, he ran a very tight ship, I have never seen anyone in crisis, not wavering. The operations were well thought out, instructing us on what had to happen in the building at the Hyatt Hotel," recalls Todd Higgins. "We had to feed people three square meals, with no power, and no water." "We did what we had to do", said Gralen Banks. "We were just like everyone else. We had a lot of people here in the building about 4,000 in all, not full capacity, but full enough."

"I was over at the Superdome. I left and

That is the important part, we all had our moments of tears, fears, but nobody did it in front of anyone else. If you had to have your moments, you went away in private and did it by yourself. Nobody cracked up, no arguing no bickering, we followed the directions of each one who led, and the calvary followed. We were a group of brothers who in any crisis or emergency situation, I would do it again."

"We weren't here because we wanted to be, we were here because God put us here. He probably knew we were better here than someplace else, we could handle it," says Roland Doucette. "I am just thankful that God gave each person on my team, the strength, courage, capacity and faith in Him to have it in one another, because it takes that. You couldn't put a group of misfits like us together and not have one problem, but that's what happened."

When asked about the politicians, Gralen Banks had this to say; "They can say what they want about our Mayor, but our Mayor was here, hot, sweaty and funky just like the rest of us and he was handling his business. Now what happened prior to or after the storm, anybody who wasn't here, standing down there, hungry with and trying to make stuff happen when the whole city we love was flooded and underwater, and people are suffering everywhere I defy anybody, tell us who would have done better, because we would like to know if they would have done better, where the hell were they." Banks continued, "Don't listen to the media pundits, the Mayor was here, the man never left. If you want to know what happened, talk to somebody who was here. The rest of those with opinions were not here, on any level, federal, state, or local. But who was ready for Katrina, who had a plan?" he lamented. "I had a plan, but I tore it up because when the city is dark, flooded, no power, and people are drowning and starving and they've got gunshots out there, you wing it. I tore it up and threw it away. Some people just took advantage of the situation, you do the best that you can do at that time, solve one crisis and then move to the next."

It was a time for leadership, a gut check, and time to stand up. When the systems went down, heroes came up. These six men, are recognized as some of those heroes, and although you may not see their names and faces on the news, or logged in the halls of fame, they are heroes none the less, and countless citizens of New Orleans, have their lives to thank them for and will do so for the remaining days of their lives.

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LEGACY



Remembering Rosa Parks

1913 – 2005

The history of the human race was altered by this small but very significant woman.

Rosa Parks, though a warrior she was, was so unassuming in nature that she said in her autobiography, that she didn't fully realize what she was starting when she decided not to give up her seat on the bus after completing a long day's work, on December 1, 1955. But it was that simple refusal, and her subsequent arrest and the resulting protests, which began the complex cultural struggle to legally guarantee equal rights to Americans of all races.

Within days, her arrest sparked the 380-day Montgomery Bus Boycott, which led to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that desegregated her city's public transportation. The arrest also was the trigger for mass demonstrations and change through the nation,

and brought to the forefront Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and was the impetus for transformation in schools, housing, industry, retail and workplaces and the end of the Jim Crow laws and era.

Mrs. Parks who sparked all of this change, and transformation, had never been anything but poor, and suffered financially in the immediate aftermath of her arrest. "In fact, if I had let myself think too deeply about what might happen to me, I might have gotten off the bus," she is quoted as saying in her autobiography. Repercussions for her included, she and Mr. Parks losing their jobs, and telephone firebomb and death threats.

Subsequently she chose to relocate near a brother to Detroit in 1957, where she eventually became a staff assistant for Congressman John Conyers and remained

employed until her retirement in 1988. In 1987, Parks founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Improvement, a youth assistance organization in Detroit.

A museum and library facility on the Montgomery corner where she boarded the bus is named for her. Streets, avenues, and boulevards across the country, bear witness to her gentle greatness, and Mrs. Rosa Parks was awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest award that the U.S. Government bestows, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, and she was awarded over 40 honorary doctorates from colleges and universities across the nation. But to Americans, Mrs. Rosa Parks, holds the highest place of honor in the hearts and is a representative of the best the our best and is synonymous with the very soul of this nation. May she rest in peace.

The 24th of October, 2005, while the winds of late autumn blew, ushering in the coming winter months and many Americans scurried about unnoticed, the heart of the world skipped a beat, as the great lady took her final curtain call, and today the world takes time out to remember and pay homage a pioneer, a queen, the Mother of the Civil Rights movement, Rosa Parks.

While taking an evening nap, Mrs. Parks, quietly drifted

off into her eternal and well deserved rest, in her home in Detroit, Michigan, surrounded by a small group of friends and family. And while the world will mourn her passing, it will also remember, and offer up it's great debt to this brave little warrior, who's words and actions one day on a bus in Montgomery, sparked a movement that has forever changed the face of human relations not only in the United States, but across the world.

Pioneer C. DeLores Tucker Dies

By. Zenitha Prince
Special to the NNPA from
AFRO Newspaper

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Political and social activist Cynthia DeLores Tucker, 78, died Oct. 12 of an undisclosed cause at the Suburban Woods Health and Rehabilitation Center in Norristown, Pa., leaving behind a legacy of firsts and intrepid advocacy.

The Pennsylvania native spent her lifetime in dogged pursuit of civil rights, often lending an elegant presence to many protests. But her well-turned heels, impeccable suits and matching turbans belied Tucker's ability to deliver scorching speeches in booming tones reminiscent of

her father, the Rev. Whitfield Nottage of the old Ebenezer Community Tabernacle in North Philadelphia.

Tucker first lent her voice to the Civil Rights Movement at age 16 when she protested outside the old Bellevue Stratford Hotel because of their failure to admit Black athletes. By 1965, she was marching arm-in-arm with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during a civil rights protest in Selma, Ala.

"The cause of civil rights was a lifelong crusade for C. DeLores Tucker," said Philadelphia Mayor John P. Street in a phillynews.com article. "Whether it was marching arm-in-arm with Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. or advising presidents on race relations, she never gave up the struggle for justice. Her life was dedicated to equality for all."

In 1971, Pennsylvania Gov. Milton J. Shapp appointed Tucker as the secretary of the commonwealth, making her the first Black and first woman to assume the role.

Tucker used her position to lead Pennsylvania toward becoming one of the first states to enact the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.



C DeLores Tucker

Tucker ignited public attention when she launched a vociferous protest against obscene lyrics in rap music. She picketed in front of music stores and even picketed the NAACP in 1994 when it nominated rapper Tupac Shakur for one of its Image Awards. Shakur and other rappers retaliated by taunting and ridiculing Tucker in their songs, leading to a legal maelstrom involving Tucker, artists, song labels and news publications.

She is survived by her husband of more than 50 years, real estate agent William Tucker.

Rebuilding A Greater New Orleans

After 25 years of serving New Orleans, Cox Communications is committed to rebuilding the Greater New Orleans area better than ever.

Cox has already given a \$10 million gift to help our citizens recover from this tragedy. The American Red Cross, United Way, Habitat For Humanity and Boys & Girls Clubs have received these donations to help begin to rebuild our community.

This city is our home too and we are looking forward to the next twenty five years... and beyond.



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