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The Soul of New Orleans

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The Dryades YMCA Re-emerges Stronger Than Ever

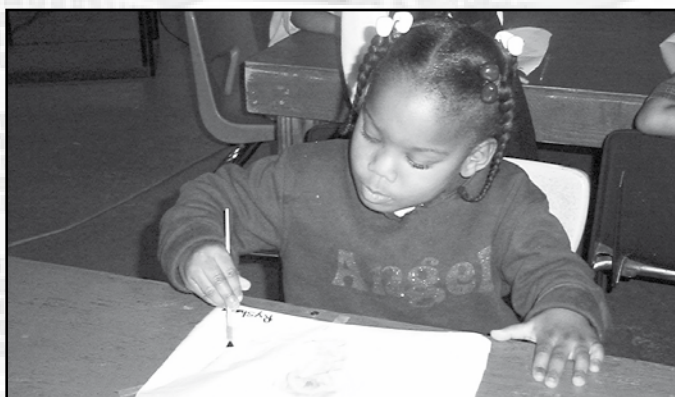
By Renetta Burrell Perry

September 2005 should have been a month filled with pomp and circumstance for the Dryades YMCA; for the community icon that has long been a crucial liaison linking the community to a bevy of vital educational and social services to children and families in New Orleans was poised to celebrate its 100th birthday. But fate would deal a different hand. Instead of celebrating, Dryades would find itself serving as life support to a venerable city scant with resources and fighting for its very life.

Upon his return to the city in early September, Dryades YMCA Director and C.E.O. Doug Evans was, as many citizens were, apprehensive about what he was returning to. He found the multi-million dollar facility on Ortha Castle Haley Blvd. in surprisingly good shape as it had sustained practically no damage. But even more surprising than that pristine condition of the building was the fact that many of the community residents were found living in the area that surrounded it.



Dryades YMCA provides a number of education options for children as well as continuing education for adults.



Dryades YMCA believes that through community service and by promoting the fundamental values of honesty, respect, responsibility and caring, they build strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

"I had come in town in early September. There were 100s of people in the city who had never left the city. A lady flagged me down and asked, 'what are you going to do with these kids?'" Evans recounts. He found the question startling, and allowed the woman to ride with him, literally bringing him to the River Garden area near Wal-Mart where he would be shocked to discover kids roaming around and playing in the streets. This was the "key motivator" for Evans to look at the Dryades YMCA as the crucial resource that it is. He immediately began to scramble to find staff and volunteers, many of whom were scattered throughout the Houston and Dallas areas.

The persistence of Evans and his staff proved to be both heroic and undeniably necessary. Though the Dryades YMCA opened soon after the storm as a makeshift relief center for other agencies like the United Way and various food distribution agencies, its focus was, as it has always been, to reconnect with the area's families, especially their children. The groundbreaking opening of the James

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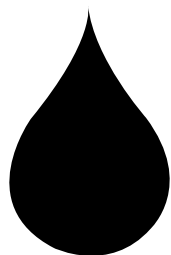
Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

M. Singleton Charter School on November 1st was the beginning of that reconnect. "On the first day, 300 to 400 kids showed up," says Evans with remnants of excitement still lingering in his voice. The school was the first public school to open on the East Bank. With the opening of the school and the existence of the relief agencies, the Dryades YMCA had again become a "major resource" in the community early on in the city's recovery. Now the agency is enjoying full scale operation with all of its programs operating and thriving. The feeling is overwhelming to Evans. He says it is a joy "just to be able to bring about 800 young people together in an educational environment and just to hear the voices of kids in the community."

Nationally the YMCA has won acclaim for the programs they bring to underserved communities. Locally, the acclaim could not be awarded to a better agency than to the Dryades "Y". Evans says that its programs are key to improving and sustaining a livable quality of life throughout the community. The "Y" he says, "represents a safe haven for young people to come and be nurtured educationally and offers a venue for adults to enhance their skill sets so they can become more marketable" He adds that just as the community saw a great need in 1905, the Dryades YMCA is even more needed in our area after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Partnering with the United Way, the City of New Orleans Recreation Department, the Recovery School District, Coca-Cola, and the Louisiana Family Recovery Corporation Foundation among others, the Dryades Y is continuing its commitment to solidify the current programs as well as look at other underserved community throughout the Greater New Orleans Area. Evans proudly announces the opening of seven aquatic facilities throughout the city and is thrilled with the Summer Camp for the area's youth as well as the Midnight Basketball Camp designed to deter males ages 17-24 from the crime that plagues our city. Prior to Katrina the School of Commerce was poised to present its LPN program, it is now slated to begin in September and the Certified Nurse's Assistant program has already celebrated its inaugural class. For a listing of programs and other information, log onto to Dryades YMCA web site at www.dryadesymca.com

In keeping with its mission and its unwavering commitment to the City of New Orleans, the Dryades YMCA reemerges as a beacon of light our citizens. In the future it will be expanding along with the needs of our community. The agency greatly appreciates and operates the generosity of its donors and sponsors. To become a donor, call toll-free at 1-866-569-6339.



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Barack Obama and Race Matters

By Edwin Buggage

Does Race Still Matter?

During the last decade of the last millennium the prominent African-American scholar Cornel West wrote a book entitled "Race Matters" where he dealt with issues regarding this historically thorny issue as America marched towards the twenty-first century. In the 1990's diversity and other buzz words had become part of the popular vernacular, suggesting that by century's end this country may be rid of its sordid history as a nation where race mattered.

Seven years into the new millennium Barack Obama has ascended to unprecedented heights. Previously, flying under the national radar hailing from the state of Illinois he has become an in-

ternational political celebrity and a viable, credible candidate for President of the United States; who is presently running second to in the polls to former first lady and U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. While he has become a candidate who has support from voters across racial lines, the issue of race has come to the forefront. Several national newsweeklies have dedicated stories to discussing this topic, and asking the question is America truly ready for a Black president. But one of the most pressing and constant questions surrounding Obama is, "Is he Black enough" recently he was asked to comment on this in a presidential primary debate, in which he responded by talking about how hard it is for him to get a cab in New York City. Although this garnered laughter, his tongue and cheek response masks some-

thing very poignant and important; that is still the unresolved issue of race and how important it continues to be in the infancy of this new century.

Perspectives in Black

Juan LaFonta, the newly elected chair of the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus and state representative of a racially diverse district feels race is still an issue across this country, "Race still does matter and it doesn't matter in the case of Obama what his voting record is he still is going to be viewed as a Black Man, and if you don't believe that it still is an issue in this country then you're living in a fantasy land."

While racial animus and hostility still exist in some of its extreme manifestations. As evidenced by Obama's campaign requesting



secret service protection because of death threats, the mainstream media has paid particular attention to Obama and this idea of racial authenticity. Zada Johnson, an anthropologist who lives in his home state of Illinois and teaches at the University of Chicago says, "I don't know where the origins of this discussion about Barack Obama being Black enough came from, but I suspect it was something that the white media cooked up to stir up Black people." As she questions the motives of the media, she thinks that Black racial identity is still important, "I think identifying with African-Americans is essential, but how do you measure degrees of Blackness." Continuing her thoughts speaking on questions of Obama and racial authenticity, "For some is he not Black enough because he has a white parent, is he not Black enough because he didn't grow up in the inner-city, I think it's shortsighted of some in our community to think you need to be from a working class background to understand the plight of poor and working people."

is it the way you walk, talk, dress, or is it your worldview." "Unfortunately, I think Black people have internalized the racism of whites and we have turned it on Zada Johnson feels that Obama being and whether or not he is authentically Black is a non-issue and is evident of the double standard the mainstream media uses when dealing with African-Americans and is used as a means to polarize them, "Why is this an issue when Blacks get to a certain level, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, and others have to be asked if they are Black enough, but you do not hear is Hillary Clinton female enough, or is a Latino candidate Latino enough, or an Asian candidate Asian enough, or was former vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman Jewish enough."

Chris Johnson, of New Orleans thinks the issue should not be about Obama being Black enough but whites being less prejudiced, "I think this whole thing about Barack Obama and is he Black enough should not be the issue, what should be the focus is there is a segment of the white population that has thrown off the yoke of prejudice and bigotry enough to vote for a Black candidate for the nation's highest office."

While the excitement around Barack Obama campaign mounts, some question how having an African-American President would effect public policy decisions, Jeffrey May, former Executive Director of the Fair Housing Action Center of New Orleans and presently a Project Director of Fair Housing Programs with DB Consulting Group says, "If we had an African-American President I feel

One Nation Divisible

Since the strides of the Civil Rights Era of the 1960's African-Americans today participate in every sector of society and represent every level of the social strata, so what is authentic Blackness? April Schenck, who has worked for the Public Housing Authority in Tampa, Florida feels African-Americans, should get past one dimensional images of one self, "What is the definition of being Black, is it stereotypical behavior,



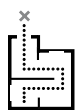
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that the condition of African-Americans and poor people would not change much given the present political climate." "The people who set the agenda for the country will not change even if the President of the United States is Black or a woman." "I



think he has excited people and he is charismatic, but that is what a politician is supposed to do if they want to get elected, but in terms of substantial changes in the way the government does things if he is elected I don't see that."

The Enemy Within

The Black community is a mosaic comprised of many different people, with many sectors of varying interest so who if any in the community can claim a monopoly on what is and what isn't considered authentic; State Representative Juan LaFonta

feels the days of one idea and ideology is passy©, "I don't think there is such a thing as someone doesn't vote Black because we run the gamut from the richest to the poorest, I don't think it's fair to label him not Black enough."

As problems persist for Blacks in America encounter-

ing white racism, April Schenck feels that it is up to Blacks to get past the infighting among themselves and appreciating and understanding that their can be unity without uniformity and that is the key to progress, "Even though I understand that white racism is still a problem in this country, I don't think that is the most pressing issue facing our community, it is the enemy within." "It seems like the physical chains have been removed, but we continue to keep ourselves in bondage continuing bringing up the issue is someone Black enough." "We are a diverse community of people from all walks

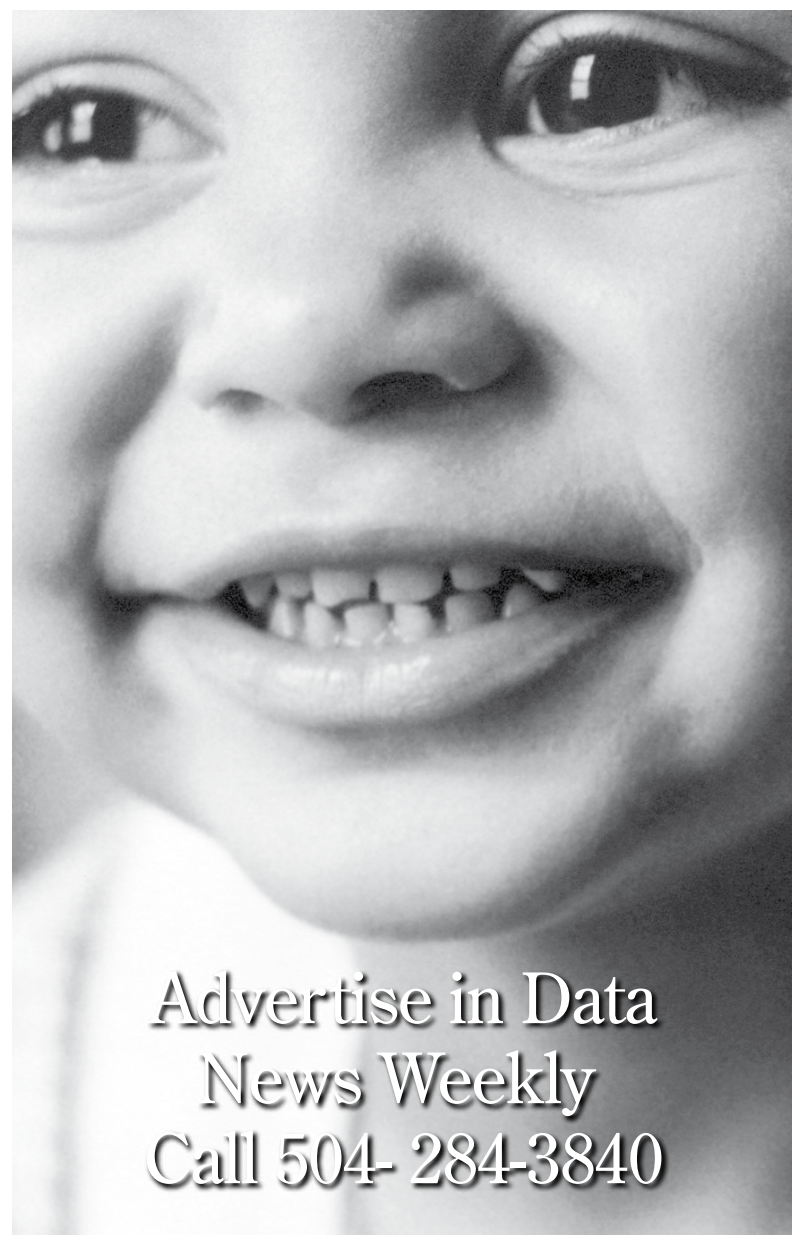
of life, so I don't feel there is one distinct way of being Black; we are a group with a lot of different types of individuals just like any other race of people."

Nation Building for the 21st Century

As this nation has moved into the new millennium some of the

centuries old baggage continues to hinder its progress. For some race still seems to matter, but when if ever will it end, and as questions mount is there such a thing as a Black, perspective, or is the idea of a monolithic perception of Blackness obsolete, or was it ever the case. Or conversely, is America at point where race matters less. And is the ascendance

of Barack Obama a watershed moment in race relations; where he serves as the torchbearer of a new age on the political horizon, where principles supplant prejudice at the polls and this country can truly becomes a democracy where people are judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin.



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The Learning Curve of Rebuilding New Orleans

Part 2 in a 3-part series about the progress of rebuilding New Orleans' public schools

By: Eddie Francis

The Teacher Crisis

Amid the return of New Orleans' public schools has lingered the issue of teachers' place in the rebuilding school system. From the termination of thousands of teachers from New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS) to the Orleans Parish School Board's (OPSB) voting to not renew the collective bargaining agreement with the United Teachers of New Orleans, the education landscape has been full of drama.

Unexpected move

As New Orleans public school teachers were scattered throughout the country, the OPSB made the controversial decision to terminate their employment. More than 7,500 educators were unexpectedly given their walking papers. Whereas many have sympathized with the collective plight of the teachers, others have understood that OPSB simply had its hands tied.

On March 24, 2006 a group of attorneys filed a lawsuit for wrongful termination. Headed by Willie Zanders, the attorneys filed Eddy Oliver Et. Al. versus Orleans Parish School Board Et. Al. Not only did the legal team target OPSB but they also made their claims against the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD) and the State of Louisiana. Other attorneys representing teachers are Suzette Bangeris, Larry Samuel, Clarence Roby, Walter Willard, Sandra Barnes, Juana Marine-Lombard and Alice Groomes.

Currently attorneys for the educators cite "economic injury and/or mental anguish and emotional distress as a result of termination from employment" according to a memo Data News Weekly obtained from Bangeris. The war is far from over according to Bangeris. "(We have) recently filed a Fourth Amending and Supplemental Petition for Damages, with the permission of the Court, which requests class certification." She continues, "(This) would allow the common claims of all potential class members to be resolved in one legal proceeding, instead of thousands of former OPSB employees having to file and manage individual lawsuits against the same defendants." There will be a conference among the attorneys and the court regarding the class action status on June 15th.

There is no doubt that teachers and other educators who were terminated have an argument. One former NOPS employee, who asked not to be identified, feels that surely something could have been done to protect teachers in the weeks following Katrina. "They left us just hanging out there!" he emphatically states from his RSD school classroom. "People were homeless then found out later they were jobless . . . just like that."

A hard decision for everyone

As clear as the educators' collective case may seem, OPSB was in quite a bind, itself. Attorney Bill Aaron, who is defending OPSB, argues that the organization had no choice but to terminate the employees. Several things factor into that reasoning according to Aaron. First, schools were not



operational after Katrina; and secondly, OPSB lost the bulk of its schools to the state takeover.

"The state constitution prohibits paying people who are not legally working," says Aaron. Since the public school system had neither the administrative offices nor its schools running, no one was working. Therefore, the State of Louisiana's constitution would not allow for OPSB to pay its employees while facilities were not operating. Even though OPSB had to comply with state law, the organization still got permission to pay employees through a grace period, according to Aaron.

Part of the controversy is that employees received notices of their termination at their pre-Katrina addresses. "The school board was given a directive by the court to send notices to employees' houses despite the school board's objections," says Aaron. "This was a hard decision for everyone . . . the Orleans Parish School Board wasn't the only employer (in New Orleans) that had to make this kind of decision," he concludes.

As if things had not been difficult enough, matters were further complicated by OPSB's loss

of schools says Aaron. With the state taking over schools, OPSB was left with only a few. It was also with that, teachers were eliminated from the picture as employees of NOPS. Even so, according to Aaron, "A number of teachers have been able to find employment with RSD or charter schools."

Lost connection

With so many teachers gone as schools started to come back, the public was anxious to try on its redeveloping education system. As the '05 - '06 school year drew to a close, public schools did not seem the same without its cast of characters. Those characters provided much more stability than some thought.

As RSD sought to attract more out-of-state teachers, the organization did not factor in New Orleans' comfort with familiarity. The RSD employee, who asked for anonymity, cited his facility as a shining example of the breakdown among new New Orleans educators and traditional New Orleans relationships.

"At our school we have an out-of-town principal," he cites. "The guy came in and couldn't get along with the assistant principal, who's from New Orleans. So he gets rid of her and things fall apart around here, because she knows the culture," he relates. "Now they can't pay anybody from out of town enough money to come take on this kind of job. New Orleans is different and you really have to know these kids." It took the school three months to replace the assistant principal.

The situation has been complicated by area's failure to find qualified or certified teachers. Half of

the teachers hired failed a basic skills test and many others are uncertified according to numerous reports. Despite the challenges local organizations continue to recognize that part of the school system's success is heavily predicated on teachers' ability to connect with their students.

One organization that has attempted to give voice to teachers' concerns is the United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO). Headed by Dr. Brenda Mitchell, UTNO has served as one of the many community watch dogs for the redeveloping public school community. Despite a well-publicized battle with OPSB, UTNO is "still fighting for schools and children," according to Mitchell.

UTNO is taking on issues that go beyond their collective bargaining agreement. At the time of this interview Mitchell was preparing for a conference on health and safety issues in the school. A survey conducted by UTNO reveals that key problems in the schools are unsafe conditions and cold meals. "We are hoping to bring all of our schools up to code using EPA standards," says Mitchell.

Alive and well

After OPSB voted not to renew the collective bargaining agreement with UTNO an arbitrator ruled in favor of UTNO. Despite the obstacle, the organization has pushed forward. "We are alive and well," says Mitchell. Even with "a majority" of UTNO members in RSD and charter schools Mitchell continues to fight for the organization to stay together. She says, "There are those in power who wish to have a union-free community, not just from UTNO. Paul Vallas has a contract and others in power have contracts. Why not teachers?"

She contends that UTNO's presence is vital in New Orleans' public schools in order to maintain the relationships among teachers who have been in New Orleans for a long time and the students. Mitchell insists, "We don't discourage folks who come from outside of New Orleans but we need folks who have expertise in the community." The UTNO president concludes, "We would like to be partners with RSD and New Orleans Public Schools."

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'A Day Of Presence' In Support Of Gulf Coast Recovery: We Matter, We Care, We Act

Coalition Mobilizing Nationwide for Massive Demonstration in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (Aug. 1, 2007)—

Appalled by the lack of progress in the Gulf, a group of prominent business, civic and entertainment organizations have joined forces to mobilize Americans to converge upon New Orleans on August 29, the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The event, "8/29, A Day of Presence," will take place on August 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Ernest N. Morial Conventional Center and is intended to force the government to act swiftly to create a Marshall Plan to restore New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region.

Those being invited to speak include Susan L. Taylor, Essence magazine; Marc Morial, National Urban League; Thomas W. Dortch, Jr., 100 Black Men of America; Melanie L. Campbell, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation; author and professor Michael Eric Dyson; Rev. Al Sharpton, National Action Network; as well as all presidential candidates.

"Enough is enough!" said Taylor, during the Essence Music Festival in New Orleans. "It's the shame of the nation," she said before tens of thousands gathered in the Superdome, "that the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast have been abandoned and are suffering without the most basic necessary supports while our tax dollars are directed toward war."

"During the recent Essence Festival, a group of celebrities and national leaders talked to local elected officials, organizers and citizens about the challenges and struggles they are still facing two years after the devastation. A "8/29, A Day of Presence" was called to send a message to the world — and specifically to the federal government — that the priorities should be to rebuild homes and strengthen families in the Gulf Coast region.

Two years have passed since the deadliest disaster in modern American history hit the Gulf Coast. While New Orleans is seeing some signs of recovery — utilities have been restored to all areas of the city, businesses are reopening and residents are moving back home — New Orleans and the region yet face significant challenges. Fifty public schools remain closed. Too many people who want to return have not been able to do so. Emergency rooms

are overcrowded, and uninsured patients and poor people find it almost impossible to obtain specialty care. In addition, New Orleans has a dearth of public and affordable housing and an increasing number of homeless residents. Levees, although improved since Katrina, may not be able to protect residents and property in the future.

Determined not to allow the anniversary to come and go without action, a coalition has been formed to reach out to fraternities and sororities, civic and grassroots organizations and all faith-based communities to coordinate bus trips to New Orleans so that their constituencies can stand in unity for "A Day of Presence."

"We urgently need as many people as possible to stand united on August 29," said Tracie Washington, president and CEO of the Louisiana Justice Institute. "If you can drive or fly, get on the bus or sponsor a bus, we need you to join us in letting our leaders know that we want immediate action in the Gulf Coast region."

In addition to the march and rally on the actual day of the anniversary, August 28 has been designated a "Day of Public Policy and Community Service," when volunteers from around the country will help to conduct an environmental clean-up of an Eastern New Orleans neighborhood, the restoration of a historic African American church, the painting of a local public school and a visit to a senior citizens home. Discussions, health and wellness sessions and workshops will be held, including the Gulf Coast Collaborative Recovery and Renewal's Public Policy Forum at Dillard University and Black Women's Roundtable Wellness Journey and dinner recognizing women volunteers from the Gulf Coast, who have made a significant impact on rebuilding efforts.

Those unable to travel to New Orleans are being urged to participate by contacting their national and state representatives to demand the immediate restoration and betterment of the entire Gulf Coast region and by rallying 10 family members, friends and colleagues to do the same. The toll-free number for the congressional switchboard is (888) 226-0627 or visit www.house.gov and www.senate.gov to locate state representatives.

"We are soliciting all people of conscience to join us for 'A Day of Presence' to show the people of the Gulf that we do care and to let the world know that the condi-

tions in the Gulf Coast matter to all of us," said Melanie L. Campbell, executive director and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

For more information or to register, log on to www.louisianajusticeinstitute.org or call (504) 304-7947.

CELEBRATION
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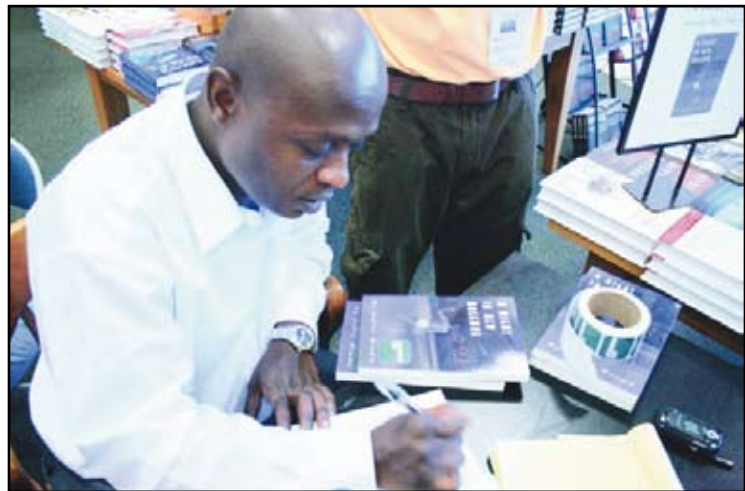
Summer reading you won't want to miss



Review and Photo by: Roderick Rideau

Sedric Brown had yet another successful book signing at the Barnes and Noble's in Metairie, Louisiana on July 28, 2007. This is the second book signing that Sedric Brown had his first book signing was May 19 2007 at the Barnes and Noble's in Harvey, Louisiana.

After having a television interview with Sally Ann Roberts of WWLTV-Channel 4 Morning News (a CBS affiliate) Thursday July 12, 2007, the sales of his book have increased tremendously and he has been gaining a legion of fans. Many of his friends, family members and avid readers came to his book signing which was held Saturday July 28, 2007 at the Barnes and Noble's book store including the re-



nown radio personality Tommy Tucker of WWL Radio.

"A Night In New Orleans", involves three families which are relat-

ed through marriage. First there is the Baxter family, a well-to-do African-American family with "old money" and political power.

Judge Ansel Baxter is the patriarch of the Baxters. He makes a most unethical deal with a very powerful and notoriously dangerous drug lord.

The Valdensteins and Baxters were united by a forbidden marriage which ended in murder.

As a result of this unfortunate situation, the two families are now inseparable. Catherine Valdenstein, a world-renowned socialite/fashion designer and "grand dame of haute couture" is the elegant matriarch of the Valdenstein family. The Valdensteins are a very wealthy and unorthodox Jewish family which reigns supreme in the fashion, cosmetic and banking industries.

The third family in this Southern saga is the Renoir family, a lower middle class family of devout Roman Catholics. The Renoirs' ancestry is classified as one of the many definitions of Creole.

The Renoirs are of French and African parentage, and many members of this extremely light complexioned family appear to be of pure European descent. However, this family is legally considered to be African-American.

Judge Ansel Baxter's son, Alexander Baxter, former NBA star and President & CEO of A. Baxter

Advertising Agency Inc., is married to Dr. Elaine Renoir Baxter, a surgical oncologist.

Mary Evangeline Renoir, who is known to everyone as Cheeky Red, is the "Black Sheep" of the Renoir family. This drop-dead-gorgeous vixen is well-known for having many male companions and sometimes engaging in illegal scandals. This novel is as hot and spicy as the cuisine of the many fine restaurants in the City of New Orleans, a city which flows with awe-inspiring and mysteriously magical energy.



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Kurte Pellerin Turns 49



(Left to Right) Glen Jones – Data News Weekly, Erica Durosseau – CBS Survivor Fiji, Melissa White - Production Supervisor, Raghan Durosseau – Pellerin's Marketing Coordinator, Kurte Pellerin – Owner of Pellerin's / Ebony Square, Derrick Williams in Rear



Michelle Sciavico and Catherine Grose



(Left to Right) Bennie Sideboard, Derrick Williams, Kurte Pellerin, Clyde Brown



Cupid Shuffle

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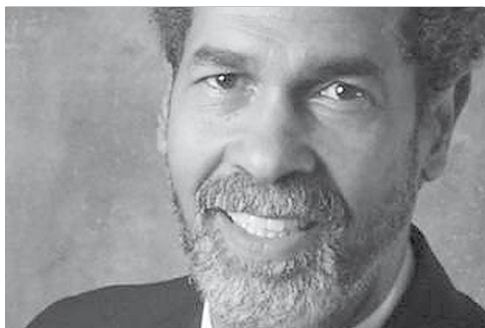
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Opinion

Making Bricks Without Straw



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

Its the oldest game in the Book, specifically, the Bible. When an independent leader arose from the enslaved Hebrews and began to work in their interest instead of the interest of Pharaoh, he pulled the oldest trick in the Book for marginalizing the leader of an oppressed people. Since you are their leader, Pharaoh said "have them make bricks without straw."

Oppressors have always known how to marginalize the leaders of oppressed people. Make them make bricks without straw. Give them a job to do but not the necessary resources. Increase the burdens on the people so they will turn on their own leaders, and blame them for the conditions created by the oppressor.

I was really disappointed when some black elected officials stood up with Pharaoh, like the Hebrew overseer in the Ten Commandments did, trying to save their own political butts, knowing full well that they also have been frustrated by having to make bricks without straw. They either seek the embrace of Pharaoh in their new demographics or are willing to dismiss the lack of "straw" as the real culprit.

Many people claim that the mayor "ain't doing nothing", but the wizened among us have stood up for him because we know he has been put in the position of having to make bricks without straw, as have all our displaced people, and those struggling to rebuild lives in a state where the governor would not trust homeowners to handle their own business.

It is time for all our black elected officials to understand that if you don't all address the fact that all of you have been asked to make bricks without straw, the public will blame each of you for what doesn't happen and you will be picked off one by one.

It is amazing how little some of our folk understand about the ways of oppression in a city that is formally organized to maintain the status quo. The ruthless wealth of New Orleans is organized into Mardi Gras Krewes, private clubs with exclusive memberships (working class white people aren't welcomed either). They meet constantly and if you really think the rich men of this city really care about debutant balls and parades, and that that is what sustains their interest in maintaining these very ex-

pensive organizations, you must be on really good drugs, or are simply blinded because nobody talks about the organization of wealth in this city.

Right now I want to challenge anyone who considers himself or herself to be qualified to lead and represent for our people to educate themselves in the ways of oppression. The Bible is a good start and two other books should be required reading. The first is "The Rise And Fall of the Third Reich" by William L. Shirer, a book which chronicles in great detail, how a civilized German people were turned into a genocidal mass, and how media and patriotism were used to convince good people that some people really weren't deserving of life and liberty. It has a four and one half star rating on Amazon.com. The book is about 900 pages long, so folk who got through college on Cliff notes might balk at absorbing that much information, but it provides a keen understanding of Hitler. How did a mediocre house painter get complete rule of a democracy and then turn the majority against a minority and commit genocide in the name of patriotism?

The second book is Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America by John M. Barry. It also has a four and one half out of five reader rating and is also pretty hefty reading. Two hundred pages of Rising Tide have references to New Orleans. And much of the book is about how the flood of 1927 changed all of America and how resulted in a powerful Army Corps of Engineering that has since attempted to control the Mississippi River but Rising Tide captures the still evident social structuring mechanisms that work constantly and with organization to maintain the status quo by keeping the working poor, working and poor.

Now, to me, as a member of an oppressed group of people, that would be the minimum I would ask for you to be effective representing my interest or leading me, to have an understanding of the history and systems of oppression and the social structures in place in New Orleans. I address this to any person who would lead or represent me, or claim to not understand racism.

In addition to these which give a good understanding of oppression, I would require black people who would lead or represent my interest to read one more. Yes, we always have to do a little bit more, and there is a higher expectation, but this one is fairly short and to the point. The Miseducation of the Negro, by Carter G. Woodson, so you can check yourself.

And while I used Amazon.com's ratings you ought to get them (order if necessary) from Community Books or Afro-American Book Shop, or ASHE Cultural Arts Center. Every dollar counts!

In The Spirit

New Orleans

"Entering back into the Promise Land" pt.II



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

By: Dr. Aaron E. Harold

Folks, everyone of us should be proud to be part of this great city we call New Orleans. We know that there is still much work to be done in this city, and the rest of the surrounding parishes. Two years after Katrina, many are still struggling to decide what to do. Many of us are still facing some challenges and problems while trying to recover and rebuild for tomorrow.

However, many homeowners have not started to repair their homes and business owners are still waiting on loans and grant money to restart their business. Even in these difficult times, there are still opportunities like never before. As I said, you have to be able to recognize them, and seize the chance for a new beginning and a new life for you and for your family. There are so many opportunities in real estate for those who are serious in investing. This is a chance of a lifetime to prosper greatly.

For those who have never owned a home, there are great deals out there for you. Many of our businesses have been destroyed by Katrina, but this is a great time for those who have been wanting to go in their own business and become an entrepreneur. New Orleans and our Gulf Coast Region will be back and better than before. Many experts have come to a conclusion that this region is the land of many great opportunities to be successful.

For those who are not sure about the future and what to do, look at those

who are still migrating into the city to live. These are the same ones that are looking to take advantage of the opportunities that are here, in spite of all of the homes and businesses that are still down. Do they see something that some of us don't see? Yet, often living in New Orleans, some of us have been living here for all of our lives. We need to approach this rebuilding process with faith and confidence in God.

Everyone of us have some form of faith whether we know it or not. We need to learn how to exercise our faith more often. In the Bible, it speaks about having faith in God in Hebrews Chapter 11 Verse 1 and Verse 6-13. Many of you are looking at the promise in the word of God. God promise those that believe, that he will not leave us in our difficult seasons (Matthew chap. 28 v 20). I believe with all of my heart and soul that New Orleans is one of the modern day promise lands in this new millennium and in the 21st century.

Friends we must possess this region with our whole heart, and confidence with our faith in God. In the Bible, God promise Moses that he will deliver his people into a land flowing with "milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). This city will be better with new infrastructure, new and better schools for our children, a new Charity Hospital, new community parks for our older citizens to enjoy a walk in the park, and let's not forget the poor in the rebuilding process, because no one should be left behind.

New Orleans and the rest of the region will be the promise land for generations to come. God have made many promises in his word; He's not like us. Sometimes we break promises to each other, but God never breaks his promises to us. You can truly trust him for his word, because it will never fail us.

Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries. To contact him with your comments or suggestions you can e-mail him at rharold1@cox.net or call (504) 813-5767.



The Road Home Corporation Announces The Selection of Dr. Nadine Jarmon As It's First Executive Director

The Road Home Corporation has named Dr. Nadine Jarmon as their Chief Executive Officer. The publicly chartered nonprofit Road Home Corporation is the body that was formed to take title to properties purchased by The Road Home Homeowner Assistance Program. It was given specific powers by the Louisiana legislature to assist in the redevelopment of the properties.

"The Road Corporation is very fortunate to have Dr. Jarmon's en-

ergy and commitment dedicated to our very challenging mission. Her 13 years of housing related experience will be a tremendous asset to our organization. While her educational background as a Yale Fellow and PHD in Urban and Public Affairs is impressive, her desire to help those impacted by both Hurricane Katrina and Rita is what made her the right choice for the job ahead," said Jerry Reaux, Chairman of the Road Home Corporation.

The Road Home Corporation conducted a nationwide search for the Executive Director's position. The position was advertised locally and online with NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials), APA (American Planning Association), and NCDA (National Career Development Associa-

tion). A total of 22 resumes were received by the Corporation as a result of the search with only 2 qualified candidates being interviewed for the position.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to help the citizens of Louisiana that were impacted by both Katrina and Rita move to the next phase of redeveloping our com-

munities," said Dr. Nadine Jarmon, Executive Director, Road Home Corporation. "I have a very diverse and professional board and together we look forward to strategically working with local parishes as they rebuild their respective communities"

Lower 9th Ward Health Clinic To Receive Medical Supplies During The Links, Inc. Back-to-school Family Health Fair

Members of The Links, Incorporated, during its annual governance team meeting, will use this opportunity to present hospital and medical supplies to the Lower 9th Ward Health Clinic. This presentation will spearhead a back-to-school family health fair at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School, 1617 Caffin Avenue on Saturday, August 11, from 9am to 3pm. Dr. Gwendolyn B. Lee, national president of The Links, Inc., will make an additional monetary donation to the health clinic at 10:30 a.m. while presenting the supplies from the United Community Hospital in Detroit, MI. A special gift will be presented to the Touro Hospital, as well.

Children attending public schools in the Ninth Ward are invited to this health fair that will offer free physical examinations, immunizations, lead poison testing and other health and safety screenings. School supplies and other items will be given to children. Refreshments will also be served.

Post Katrina there was no health care facility in the Ninth Ward. The Methodist Hospital previously served residents in this community, but has not reopened. Alice Craft-Kerney, RN-

BSN, executive director of the Lower 9th Ward Health Clinic, commented on the donations. She said, "We are eternally grateful for all of the assistance from The Links, Inc. and we look forward to a continued relationship because there is a tremendous need for health care in this community."

The health fair concept for the Lower 9th Ward was presented by the Links national program team, led by Alma Dodd, coordinator for national programs of The Links, Inc. Contributing corporate sponsors for the project include Allstate Insurance, Federal Express (Fed-X), Key Bank, Walgreens and Burger King, with assistance from the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office, city officials of New Orleans, and other local sponsors. The Links, Incorporated is the lead host sponsor for the event; other sponsors hosting the event include the city of New Orleans Health Department, the Coalition of 100 Black Women and Healthy Start New Orleans. The fair is also open to the public at no cost.

The Links, Inc. is an international organization of over 12,000 professional women of color in 273 chapters in 42 states and

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Was the N-word Buried too Late?

By Eric Paul

The greatly publicized "burial" of the N-word by the NAACP in Detroit, Michigan, was a noble gesture to attempt to eradicate a racial epithet. Sadly, the funeral comes too late to have any real meaning. The act is as empty as the coffin laid to rest. There were no bones to cover with earth, no flesh to rot in the cold ground. That word is very much alive and well, springing from the lips of black and white alike. This is not to suggest that the N-word may not one day reap the grave, but I truly believe its demise will be a long time in coming.

That word, the N-word, has followed African Americans through generations, like gum on the heel of a boot, or a scar that refuses to scab over and heal. To quote Richard Pryor, the word was used as a weapon, used to describe

our wretchedness as slaves, our 'otherness' in the land of the free. There was the N-word and there was everyone else.

I visited a web site that had a message board for comments regarding the so-called burial of the N-word. Some of the posts were laughable. Numerous white people asked, in seriousness, why not the abolition (pardon the pun) of the word "cracker" or "oakie". The absurdity of it was too great for me to leave a counter comment of my own, but had I it would be simply this; those curses are regional. The N-word is international. A German, or Frenchman, or Russian may be totally clueless to what an "oakie" is, but like a memory burned into the mind, all of them know what the N-word is and what it means.

Many years ago when I was 15, I worked a summer job in New Orleans organized by a youth

organization that worked with urban teens. We were required to attend orientation meetings once a week, which were designed to trace our progress on the job and how we interacted with each other. Our supervisor was in his mid thirties. The oldest in our group was 17. Before the meeting we were hanging around outside the building, acting cool and cocky and full of ourselves. As our supervisor walked up one of our number, seeing a friend of his walk by shouted, "What's happenin my N-word!" The "super" caught this and glared at the boy, not so much in anger as disbelief.

We didn't have our ordinary meeting that afternoon. The supervisor wanted to discuss use of the N-word. I remember we were rather embarrassed that he felt so compelled to do this. In short, by discussing it so openly with an adult we were made very self

conscious about the word. He didn't single out the boy who had used the word but he addressed us all directly. He said the N-word was a curse, that no black person should address another with that word. He went so far as to say that use of the word among black people was not unlike a form of brainwashing; using a word created by white oppressors as a way of degrading black people, violating us by naming us.

After hearing the supervisor's statement, the teen who had used the word gave his reasoning for use of the word. He said that even though the N-word came from the twisted mind of white racists to name us, we took it back, and molded it to suit our uses. He said that we made it a term of endearment, casting off the original vile meaning and making of it something different, something loving. At hearing this, the supervisor

shook his head in resignation. That was 1971.

The N-word should have been laid to rest 40 years ago, during the Civil Rights Movement. The act would have had more impact and immediacy then as opposed to now. If MLK and or Malcolm X had demanded the word's demise, it may have stuck in the minds of over two generations of black people, myself included. Of course, in those days there were more pressing matters than usage of the N-word.

To bury the N-word forever will take diligence, self awareness, and the tutoring of those yet to be born. For now, the funeral shroud is transparent, and the corpse is animated (not unlike a zombie). The N-word's true demise is an event many of us may not live to see, but its arrival will be a blessing.

With Limited Resources, the Red Cross Continues to Help Hurricane Victims

By Mark Smith

Special to the NNPA from the American Red Cross

Recently, survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were given false hope when inaccurate information about an American Red

Cross initiative hit the streets via emails, on-line postings and syndicated radio programs.

The misinformation about the Means to Recovery initiative caused many survivors to believe the Red Cross would provide

\$20,000 dollars for everyone affected by the hurricanes. Unfortunately that is not true and has never been true. There are no direct financial grants available for hurricane survivors from the Red Cross. Our focus has always been

on providing long term recovery planning, referral information and resources to help survivors get back on their feet.

Through a variety of community-based and individual assistance programs, the American Red Cross continues to try to help as many as possible who were affected by the storms. Even before Katrina and Rita roared through the Gulf Coast, we were in action providing assistance everywhere we could in the form of shelter, food and emotional support. Red Cross volunteers went door to door in affected areas after the hurricanes to let people know about available long-term recovery assistance.

We attended citizens meetings, met with elected officials, visited churches, talked to the media, activated our nationwide network and created or enhanced more than 1,000 new partnerships across the Gulf Coast to let people know about the programs and services that were available. The Red Cross provided basic needs for more than 1.4 million families and spent nearly \$2 billion to make sure people had a safe, dry

place to go with their families, food to eat and other essentials like first aid attention and clean up supplies.

Despite all that the Red Cross did and continues to do to assist survivors, the entire nonprofit sector has never had the financial resources to meet the needs of everyone affected. The recent surge of survivor calls has placed one of our individual assistance programs, Means to Recovery, at capacity. Currently, there are 35,000 clients seeking assistance from the American Red Cross and partner disaster recovery specialists, the access point for Means to Recovery.

As we approach the second anniversary of the 2005 hurricanes, we know that the initiatives of the Hurricane Recovery Program have made a difference. These programs have changed the lives of families who now have homes because of Means to Recovery resources.

They brought a glimmer of light to a father who now has transportation to get to and from work and is now capable of providing for his family. Funds from

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Continued on next page.

It's still about race in Jena, La.

Amy Goodman
Syndicated Columnist

Last week in Detroit, the NAACP held a mock funeral for the N-word. But a chilling case in Louisiana shows us how far we have to go to bury racism. This story begins in the small, central Louisiana town of Jena. Last September, a black high school student requested the school's permission to sit beneath a broad, leafy tree in the hot schoolyard. Until then, only white students sat there.

The next morning, three nooses were hanging from the tree. The black students responded en masse. Justin Purvis, the kid who first sat under the tree, told filmmaker Jacquie Soohen: "They said, 'Y'all want to go stand under the tree?' We said, 'Yeah.' They said, 'If you go, I'll go. If you go, I'll go.' One person went, the next person went, everybody else just went."

Then the police and the district attorney showed up. Substitute teacher Michelle Rogers recounts: "District Attorney Reed Walters proceeded to tell those kids that 'I could end your lives with the stroke of a pen.'"

It wouldn't happen for a few more months, but that is exactly what the district attorney is trying to do.

Jena, a community of 4,000, is about 85 percent white. While the black community gathered at a church to respond, others didn't see the significance. Soohen interviewed Jena town librarian Barbara Murphy, who reflected: "The nooses? I don't even know why they were there, what they were supposed to mean. There's pranks all the time, of one type or another, going on. And it just didn't seem to be racist to me." Tensions rose.

Robert Bailey, a black student, was beaten up at a white party. Then, a few nights later, Robert and two others were threatened by a white man with a sawed-off shotgun, at a convenience store. They wrestled the gun away and fled. Robert's mother, Caseptla Bailey, said: "I know they were in fear of their lives. They were afraid that this man was going to shoot them, you know, especially in the back, running away from the scene."

The next day, Dec. 4, 2006, a fight broke out at the school. A white student was injured, taken to the hospital and released. Robert Bailey and five other black students were charged ... with second-degree attempted murder. They each faced 100 years in prison. The black community was reeling.

Independent journalist Jordan Flaherty was the first to break the story nationally. He explained: "I'm sure it was a serious fight, and I'm sure it deserved real discipline within the school system, but he (the white student) was out later that day. He was smiling. He was with friends ... it was a serious school problem that came on the heels of a long series of other events ... as soon as black students were involved, that's when the hammer came down."

The African American community began to call them the Jena Six. The first to be tried was Mychal Bell, 17 years old and a talented football player, looking forward to a university scholarship.

Bell was offered a plea deal, but refused. His father, Marcus Jones, took a few minutes off from work to talk to me: "Here in LaSalle Parish, whenever a black man is offered a plea bargain, he is innocent. That's a dead giveaway here in the South."

Right before the trial, the charges of attempted second-degree murder were lowered to aggravated battery, which under Louisiana law requires a dangerous weapon. The weapon? Tennis shoes.

Mychal Bell was convicted by an all-white jury. His court-appointed defense attorney called no witnesses. Bell will be sentenced on July 31, facing a possible 22 years. The remaining five teens, several of whom were jailed for months, unable to make bail, still face attempted second-degree murder charges and a hundred years each in prison.

Flaherty, who grew up in New

Orleans, sums up the case of the Jena Six: "I don't think there is anyone around that would doubt that if this had been a fight between black students or a fight of white students beating up a black student, you would never be seeing this. It's completely about race. It's completely about two systems of justice."

Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco gained national prominence during Hurricane Katrina. There's another hurricane that's devastating the lives of her constituents: racism. The families of the Jena Six are asking her to intervene. The district attorney says he can end the boys' lives with his pen. But Blanco's pen is mightier. She should wield it, now, for justice for the Jena Six.

Amy Goodman is the host of "Democracy Now!," a daily international TV/radio news hour.

Continued from page 11.

three countries. An organization of accomplished, dedicated women who are active in their communities, the Links serve as role models, mentors, activists and volunteers who work toward purposeful service in their respective communities. The 2007-2009 governance team, consisting of more than 250 elected and appointed national and regional officers, will meet August 10 to 12 in

New Orleans at the J.W. Marriott on Canal Street. Members of The Links from the New Orleans area, headed by Ernestine Gray, president of the New Orleans chapter, Anita Dabon, president of the Pontchartrain chapter, and Patricia Rudfin-Brooks, president of the Crescent City chapter, have been involved in planning the health fair and assisting with the logistics of the governance team meeting.

Red Cross, continued from previous page.

American Red Cross donors made it possible for hundreds of youth throughout the Gulf Coast to learn how to swim, a valuable skill that could save lives in the future.

We have always known that our limited resources could not help everyone, but the positive change in the lives of those who have been helped lets us know that helping as many as possible is better than not helping at all.

Mark Smith is senior director for Client and Community Recovery, American Red Cross Hurricane Recovery Program

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Sharpton Expanding Group to Chicago

By Karen Hawkins

CHICAGO (AP) - The Rev. Al Sharpton plans to open a branch of his National Action Network in Chicago to target what he calls chronic police misconduct and a lack of political accountability. It's also the home turf of the Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

Sharpton, a New York-based civil rights activist, says he sees no conflict.

"There's this outrageous notion that one black with a national profile and another black, (we're) going to fight if we're in the same town," Sharpton said at a news conference Wednesday. "Every national civil rights group has a



Rev. Al Sharpton

branch in New York - NAACP, Urban League, Rainbow/PUSH, all of them. And I don't have a problem with anybody in town.

"So what is the controversy about me coming to Chicago?" the 52-year-old asked.

For now, Jackson isn't commenting on Sharpton's move, a Rainbow/PUSH Coalition spokeswoman told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Jackson, 65, a one-time presidential candidate like Sharpton, marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr. and helped mentor Sharpton in his early career. More recently, the two men worked together to protest radio personality Don Imus, who was fired from CBS after he used racist and sexist language about female college athletes on the air.

Jackson has told the Chicago Sun-Times that he will continue

to work with Sharpton, but that Sharpton's mission replicates what Jackson and other civil rights groups are already doing in Chicago.

The Chicago office would be one of 36 nationwide run by Sharpton's group. It would be headed by Jeri Wright, whose high-profile father, Dr. Jeremiah Wright, is pastor of Sen. Barack Obama's church, Sharpton said Wednesday.

Sharpton, who has crusaded against police brutality since the 1990s, said local civil rights leaders have failed to hold Mayor Richard M. Daley accountable for police torture.

The mayor and police department have been under scrutiny

after several highly publicized recent incidents involving off-duty officers, including the alleged beating of a female bartender caught on video.

The department has been accused of brutality since the 1970s, when investigators say a group of detectives and their commander tortured dozens of suspects, most of them black, into confessing to crimes. Prosecutors now say those misconduct cases are too old to pursue.

Daley spokeswoman Jacquelyn Heard said the mayor and Sharpton spoke by phone Wednesday and that the men have many of the same aims, including justice and addressing police misconduct.

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Saints have Tough Time getting through Steel Curtain

Ty Green

When Saints 1st round draft pick, wr Robert Meachem walked off the field after what he called the hardest hit of his life, his teammates ran into a Steel Curtain in the pre-season opening loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers 20-7. Oh, it's only pre-season, but the way the boys in Black and Gold played, we were all thankful it was a game that doesn't count.

While the players from both teams were distracted by golden opportunity of playing in the Hall of Game, on this night, no players from the Saints team seem a likely future candidate.

Meachem, playing in his first NFL game, displayed his discomfort at the pro level, dropping two other passes thrown his way, finishing with one catch for six yards.

"I have a lot of work to do, said the former Vol out of Tennessee." I should have caught the second and third passes thrown my way. I have to adjust quickly (to the Pro level) and get back to work."

The Saints as a whole never adjust both offensively or defensively. The defense allowed the Steelers to move the ball up and down the field, going 80 yards in six plays taking a 7-0 lead on their opening possession. The secondary was scorched with big plays, even with the first unit of the Saints going against the Steelers second unit players.

Offensively, the Saints failed to show any consistently moving the ball. While rb Deuce McAlister sat out, resting a swollen knee, rb Reggie Bush started in the backfield in his absence, gaining 2 yard on 8 carries. "I felt we were very



flat, said quarter-back Drew Brees (6-1-6yds). We never really were able to get a rhythm going in any part of the game."

As a whole, the team played like it was pre-season as it relates to mistakes made in all three phases of the game, offense, defense, and

special teams. No player actually stood out on a positive note. "I've got to do a better job, said disappointing Saints head Coach Sean Payton after his team's loss. 'Our staff 's got to do a better job, and that's all we say about it."

Not all Saints players looked at the loss as a negative, talkative all-pro defensive end Charles Grant made his appeal known to the media loud and clear, saying, its only pre-season and the real Saints will show up in Indianapolis in the season opener against the Colts. "I promise, this team is going to be way better then that. When we roll in Indy, you'll see the real us. Sean Payton will have us ready for game one".

The Saints host Buffalo for game two of the pre-season in the Dome, kick-off is set for 7pm.



BLUE LION Summer Enrichment Program BLUE LION

Dear Parents,

Our Summer Camp is designed to concentrate on the development of character, discipline, respect, courage, honesty and integrity.

For the past 20 years, we have developed and perfected a Summer Camp Program that has experienced much success in the lives of the youth of New Orleans. Our goal is to provide the very best instruction to each and every student. We can seriously impel your child to be the very best that he/she can be. We live by the motto that, "Discipline Is Love" and through that love and concern each and every student can be their best.

*Master Eric "Lionman" O'Neal, Sr.
7 time U.S.K.A. World Karate Champion*

Activities

Discipline, Education, Entrepreneur Training, Chess, Football, Baseball, Basketball, Track, Swimming, Karate, Drill Team, Gymnastics, Field Trips, African Culture, African Drum & Dance, African Storytelling, Black History, Arts & Crafts

Field Trips

Movie, Zoo, Skating, Aquarium, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Lighthouse B&B, Bowling, Creole Queen Cruise, LA Children's Museum, LA Museum of African History, Entergy Imax Theatre, Theatre of Performing Arts

Local Celebrity Appearances

George Huff, American Idol
Deuce McCalister, New Orleans Saints
Eddie Compass, Chief of Police
Warren J. Riley, Superintendent of Police
Zephyr Mascot

Our Camp Is For

Who:
Boys & Girls
Ages 5-13

When:
Orientation: June 1, 2007
Program begins: June 4, 2007
Program ends: August 31, 2007

Important Information:
All Campers must pay a \$30.00 registration fee.

Camp Fee
1st family member is \$85.00 pr wk
2nd family member is \$75.00 pr wk
each additional member: \$75.00 pr wk

Camp Hours
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Before Care begins at 6:00AM
After Care ends at 6:00 PM

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