



## Data Around Town

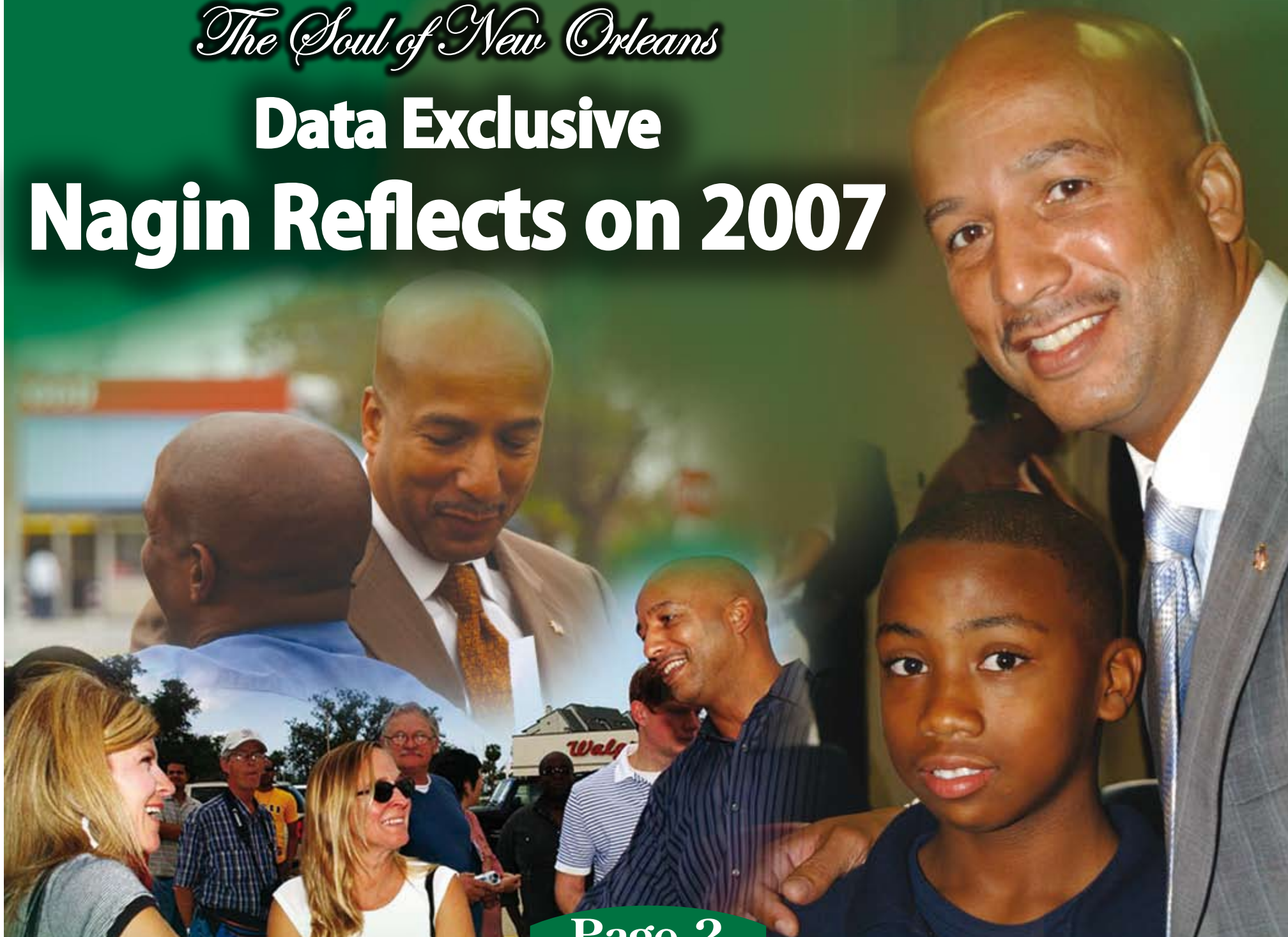
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Page 8

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*The Soul of New Orleans*

## Data Exclusive Nagin Reflects on 2007



Page 2



### Newsmaker

HANO Halts Demo  
for Three

Page 4

### Trailblazer

Dr. Corey Hebert, MD



Page 7



# Reflections of 2007 - The Year According to Nagin

By Edwin Buggage  
Photos by Julie Plonk

## Prologue

The year 2007 has been another year of triumphs and tragedies for this troubled city that lies on the mouth of the Mississippi River. It has been over two years since the calamity that was Hurricane Katrina drowned the city and washing away more than just many of the physical structures of the city, but the spirit of many of the people who are still displaced, and where this road called life will lead them is still unknown. Will they ever truly be able to whiff the unique flavor that is life in New Orleans ever again? For much of the time after the storm and the ensuing breaches of the levees at the center of what the future is to hold for the city has been Mayor Ray Nagin who has received his equal share of bouquets and brickbats since Hurricane Katrina. As New Orleans faces a barrage of unanswered questions about what it will become Nagin sat with Data News Weekly to talk about what happened in the past year and what is to be expected in 2008.

## Crime and Punishment

The criminal justice system of the city of New Orleans has received much



criticism this year. With the number of murders spiraling out of control the city once again has the distinction as being dubbed one of the most dangerous cities in America. This year has seen citizens march on city hall, asking for those in leadership heads on a platter including Mayor Ray Nagin, Police Superintendent Warren Riley and District Attorney Eddie Jordan. Later this year one of their wishes came to fruition with the resignation of District Attorney Eddie Jordan amidst scandal and controversy.

Nagin feels that many of the new developments in the

criminal justice system will turn around a system that is filled with problems that far predate Hurricane Katrina. "The criminal justice system continues to kind of be a work in progress it was shut down completely after Hurricane Katrina and is steadily rebuilding, I feel really good about the direction the police is going in where recently they just had their largest recruit class in quite some time and they are fully equipped to fight crime on the streets." "Criminal Judges are now getting the resources that they need, and we've had a serious struggle with the Dis-

trict Attorney's Office, we've given them some resources also, but with recent departure of our D.A. who chose to move on, but that does not get in the way of what is happening and that we are moving in a positive direction in respect to the criminal justice system."

## Reflections of 2007

Nagin reflections on 2007 are a mix of ups and downs in what has become this real life roller-coaster ride for many residents of the crescent city. "Two Thousand Seven was really a tough year for the city, but it was a good year in

that we continued to lay the foundation for a full recovery." "What I mean by that is that the neighborhoods have the services they need, some of the Road Home money is flowing, we are rebuilding playgrounds and parks, and we are continuing to do the things necessary so that 2008 will be sort of a breakout year for us as continue to rebuild the streets, fire stations, police stations and schools, and make the city greater than it was before."

While some have received much needed monies to repair their homes with monies awarded through the Louisiana Road Home Program, many have not and what was initially thought of as a saving grace has become a symbol of slow recovery. Nagin feels the program was a recipe for disaster from the outset, "I recognized this would be a problem right after the storm and I pleaded with federal and state officials not set up another bureaucracy because we know this was going to be huge and it was going to be hard to start this thing off from scratch we thought a better alternative was to use the banking community and unfortunately our worse fears became a reality."

## Recovery and Beyond: The Future of Public Housing

After two years the city is a tale of two cities, one a bus-

*Continued next page.*

## INSIDE DATA

Cover Story . . . . .	2	Opinions . . . . .	10
Newsmaker . . . . .	4	Commentary. . . . .	11
State & Local. . . . .	6	National News . . . . .	13
Trailblazer . . . . .	7	Special Section. . . . .	15
Data Zone . . . . .	8		

## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

616 Barrone Street, Suite 584, New Orleans, LA 70113

Phone: (504) 284-3840 | Fax: (504) 304-0203

editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

**Terry B. Jones**  
**CEO/Publisher**  
Glenn Jones  
**VP Advertising**  
**& Marketing**  
Edwin Buggage  
**Editor-in-Chief**  
Cheryl Mainor  
**Managing Editor**  
**Distribution**  
Glenn Jones

**Contributors**  
Edwin Buggage  
Lloyd Dennis  
Marian Wright Edelman  
Hazel Trice Edney  
Dr. Aaron E. Harold  
Tom Hester, Jr.  
Dr. Phill Wilson  
AP News Service  
NNPA Newswire  
**Art Direction**  
**& Production**  
MainorMedia.com

**Contributing Photographers**  
Julie Plonk  
Glenn Summers  
Common Ground  
AP Newswire  
NNPA Newswire  
**Editorial Submissions**  
datanewseditor@bellsouth.net  
**Advertising Inquiries**  
datanewsad@bellsouth.net

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ting place moving ahead, while the other parts are virtual ghost towns sinking into the abyss amidst neglect and the delay to give these parts of town a face lift is causing further blight and decay. A point not lost on Nagin, "I have mixed emotions about the progress of the recovery, I wish we would be further along by now, and we're two and a half years along and we're still debat-

ognized it was topped by vanilla and sprinkled with a few nuts for good measure.

But after the storm and the ensuing melee that wrecked havoc upon the city opening the carefully concealed wounds to the world that New Orleans was more than just a quaint little place where one came to do the forbidden and rid themselves of their inhibitions, but it was and is a place plagued



ing where should we go moving forward, but be that as it may I am ready for us to forge ahead."

With the recent decision to change the composition of public housing in New Orleans, and with people on both sides debating the issue Mayor Nagin feels that affordable housing is important to keep the fabric of the city intact. "I have worked with many people, the lawyers involved, I've talked to public housing residents, HUD, Congressman William Jefferson, Maxine Waters and many others and we have come down with a few key principals." Continuing he says, "We need to have better public housing, we need to have more affordable housing, the second principal is everyone who lived in public housing prior to Hurricane Katrina should have the right to return with either having a guaranteed place in public housing or a voucher sustaining them in their neighborhoods, and then thirdly, there should be phased demolition and redevelopment of all those major complexes and that's what we are trying to achieve as we move forward with in regards to public housing."

### Economics and Money Matters

The city prior to Hurricane Katrina and thereafter has been a city of the have plenty's and have nothings. It has been a city where a Third World economy has been in place for decades if not centuries. It is as Nagin stated at the King Celebration where he made his Chocolate City remarks, that yes New Orleans is in fact a chocolate city, but the people who lived here prior to the storm rec-

with inequality and a lack of opportunities for many. Nagin says the city is working toward diversifying and moving the economy into the 21st century. But he still realizes that the city's cash cow is tourism, "It is our goal to move the economy into a more diverse direction, but New Orleans will always be a place where tourist come to visit because we're so unique culturally, our food is wonderful, and you can enjoy a European, African, and Caribbean type of experience right here in New Orleans."

Recently, there have been developments in the Biomedical field and with the city rebuilding its medical infrastructure New Orleans is poised to be a major player, something that is an exciting development according to Nagin. "I am excited about how the medical industry is going to grow since we have solidified the deal with the new VA Hospital that is going to spurn pharmaceutical development, also there will be research into diabetes and heart disease and we should become a mecca for biomedical research."

New Orleans has always been a city where creativity is ubiquitous as po-boys, red beans, and Hubig's pies. The sweet and funky music of New Orleans is a gift to America and the world. It is a cultural jewel that is priceless, and Nagin sees the creative industry that was spawned before Hurricane Katrina to be part and parcel of the economic recovery of the city. "I see the city having a strong foothold in the creative industries, music, the movie industry, digital media those types of things creating jobs and provid-

ing opportunities for so many of the creative people inside the city of New Orleans."

As the city faces this recovery, the reconstruction of the city has created many opportunities in the fields of construction related industries. Nagin says this is one of the most important things going on in the city as far as economic activity is concerned but realizes that it will take years to complete many of these projects. "I feel this is a five to seven year build cycle where we're repairing sewerage and water, houses, and I think in the areas of oil and gas we will continue to be a vital place for it and

I think with all these industries evolving we will see the economy growing and provide new opportunities for many of the people of the city of New Orleans."

### Leadership and Race: Filling the Void

In the twenty-first century the days of the great race men of days past, and in this seemingly age of let me get mine, we-ism has been replaced by me-ism, and where communities and a people seem to be a people without a vision.

And as the Bible say where there is no vision the people perish. Nagin who cites Martin Luther King Jr. as one of his heroes says there are leaders who are out there but intestinal fortitude and sincerity are absent in many of them. "I think that the depth of our leadership is a problem, I don't think there is enough bold leadership, we're not really pushing this country in the right direction, I see if anything I think we're moving backwards." "When I look at the Jena Six situation nooses all

*Continued on page 4.*

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# Demolition Temporarily Stopped At Three Housing Projects

*B.W Cooper still slated for destruction on schedule*

NEW ORLEANS – Demolition at Lafitte, C.J. Peete at St. Bernard housing developments will not proceed this weekend, as scheduled.

The Housing Authority of New Orleans agreed to postpone the start of demolition pending a hearing next Thursday before the New Orleans City Council. A statement was issued on December 14 by HANO stating, “After a hearing this morning, the Housing Authority agreed to delay any demolitions on CJ Peete, St. Bernard and Lafitte until the City Council

hears the matter during next week’s meeting.”

**But, the group seemed confident that demolition would proceed after the hearing.**

“We believe the redevelopment of public housing is essential to our mission of providing safe, sanitary and decent housing for low-income residents,” the HANO statement reported. “We, along with the overwhelming majority of our residents, are looking forward to building vibrant and thriving communities in New Orleans.”

Meanwhile, the B.W. Cooper demolition is scheduled to proceed, despite enormous public outcry and protestors clashing with police.

Residents of the housing developments had announced they would “celebrate Christmas” at the Housing Authority of New Orleans offices “to point to the corruption inherent in these de-



New Orleans public housing spokeswoman Sharon Jasper speaks out as the Coalition to Stop Demolition rallied in front of City Hall Thursday morning. Photo: CommonGroundRelief.org

cisions,” according to protestors’ press release.

**Protestors began their “celebration” around 7:30 a.m. and chained themselves down to prevent police from removing them.**

Hours before the newest protest, two protestors holed up inside the B.W. Cooper housing development Thursday night surrendered to police over night.

Angela Jaster, 53, and Paul Stets, 58, of Brooklyn, came out of a unit in B.W. Cooper with their hands up after a three-hour standoff. Officers arrested them and

charged them with trespassing.

On Friday morning, a hearing is scheduled for a lawsuit filed on behalf of public housing residents to stop the demolition work.

A crowd of protestors, angered over public housing demolition plans, clashed with U.S. Marshals around 12:30 p.m. Thursday. Marshals held the doors of the federal courthouse shut against the protestors who tried to shove through to gain access to the HUD office.

The standoff ensued as demolition crews tore down a portion of the B.W. Cooper housing development – all of which is scheduled to be torn down over the weekend.

**Protestors spent a good deal of the rest of the day marching around town.**

As of 1 p.m., no injuries or arrests were reported. A growing crowd of police had been dispatched to the protest throughout the morning, including mounted officers.

Later Thursday, activist and attorney Tracie Washington, along with Loyola Law Clinic attorneys Bill Quigley and David Finger, filed a lawsuit in an attempt to stop the demolition.

Among plaintiffs’ claims were that the Housing Authority of New Orleans violated the law by

authorizing demolition of housing with approval from the City Council. They also alleged HANO signed \$20 million worth of contracts without an open bid process in violation of public bid law.

Protesters stopped a demolition crew from taking down decrepit buildings at the B.W. Cooper housing site Wednesday and vowed to continue disrupting work there and at other sites around the city. But Thursday morning, demolition of buildings at Cooper cranked up unopposed.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development wants to demolish about 4,500 public housing units at four of the city’s largest complexes and replace them with mixed-income neighborhoods.

Opponents are suspicious of HUD because the redevelopment plans call for a reduction in subsidized housing and allow commercial development on the sites.

Tessua Faulk, a 31-year-old teacher, said she doesn’t trust the plans because demolition at New Orleans’ Saint Thomas development, where she grew up, left some of her old neighbors homeless.

Meanwhile, hundreds are marching in Washington D.C. to protest the demolition, at the office of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso Jackson. The protestors are demanding that he reconsider and cancel the demolition scheduled for this weekend.

*Cover Story, Continued from page 3.*

around the country, I see African-American businesses struggling I see a lot of work that needs to be done.” But he remains optimistic that something new may be on the horizon in regards to leadership, “I think since King’s time we have made great progress on the educational front, I feel that the talent to provide a new breed of leadership is there it is simply a matter of if some people are going to step forward and take on this battle that we’re in.”

Before Hurricane Katrina New Orleans was a city where even if it was economically controlled by whites, much of those who

held elected offices were African-Americans. After the storm much of this leadership came under assault, as many white candidates came out to stake their claim that they would re-claim leadership at the electoral level. In some instances they were successful, while Nagin in a hard fought election beat off the well financed and heavily endorsed Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu. And while corruption or the idea that it exists and whether real or imagined has always been part of Louisiana politics recent probes have pinpointed several prominent African-Americans leaders placing their actions

under the microscope. There are some voices inside the African-American community who feels that some of these probes may be racially motivated. Nagin feels this is a very complex situation that has many dynamics, “We as African-Americans in this community need to be sure that we put in our best and brightest forth as leadership, and I don’t think we should just elect anyone because of the color of their skin.” “And I also feel that we should check out who we select to make sure that they don’t get in the game and look around and see people doing things that are unethical and ille-

gal and they figure let me get my piece.” Continuing he says, “They must remember that they are there to serve and not be served.” But while he feels that African-Americans who are caught doing wrong should be dealt with to the full extent of the law, he does not ignore the issue of how race plays into how these cases are played out whether through the courts or how they are handled in the media. “I definitely think there is a double standard out there, and I think that for the most part I thought some of the people that I thought would get caught up in investigations are not being

caught up in investigations and I think it seems to be a predominance of African-Americans who are being brought forward, and maybe it may balance itself out later but right now it seems to be tilted a little too heavily towards African-Americans.”

## Outlook for 08

As we end 2007 Mayor Nagin has an optimistic outlook for 08. “I am encouraged because everywhere I look all the key economic indicators are good; the neighborhood revitalization looks really good to me. And this year I think we’re going to issue 30,000

*Continued on page 15.*

# SEASON'S GREETINGS

TO THE READERS OF DATA NEWS WEEKLY



at&t



# LRA Moves to Increase Funding for Local Recovery Plans, Schools

Board also approves measure to support the redevelopment of Road Home properties

BATON ROUGE, La. (December 11, 2007)-The Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) recently approved resolutions calling for the development of an action plan to allocate \$500 million in additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the Long Term Community Recovery Program.

"Congress' action last month

has not only ensured that the Road Home program is solvent, it has also enabled us to increase funding that's available to parishes for their local recovery plans by more than a half a billion dollars," said John T. Landry, Chair of the LRA's Infrastructure Task Force. "This critical funding has been promised to the parishes twice already—once when we were fighting for the 10 percent match waiver, and then again when the Road Home shortfall was recognized. I have

no doubt this money will have a significant impact on their ability to get recovery projects off the ground, and I am thrilled that we were able to move forward with preliminary approval today."

Over the next month, these actions plans will be developed and published for public comment. The Board is expected to consider the measures for final approval at its next meeting in 2008.

Conceived by the LRA and implemented by the Division of

Administration's Office of Community Development (OCD), this program provides funds to support implementation of local long-term recovery plans in the most heavily impacted communities in the state. The proposed reallocation of funding brings the total amount of funding that will be available to the parishes for this program to \$700 million. Funds from this program will be distributed among parishes in the most heavily impacted areas of the state

according to a formula that is based on estimated housing and infrastructure damages inflicted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This is the same formula which was used to distribute the original \$200 million to the districts.

A complete list of parishes and funding allocations are available online at: <http://www.lra.louisiana.gov/assets/Dec07/APA19LTCRAllocations.pdf>.

The Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs held a Holiday Soiree at Ray's Over the River, and Data News Weekly was there to capture the spirit of the season.

Photos by Julie Plonk



Director of Special Projects for the Mayor's Office Carlyn Ducre with Data News Weekly Editor-in-Chief Edwin Buggage.



City Councilmember James Carter and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Kenya Smith.

## The Allstate Foundation & Partners Plan New State-of-the-Art Playgrounds Across New Orleans

*Drew Brees, actor Dennis Haysbert ("The Unit" & "24") to support first "Little Hands Playground" at Lyons Center*

NEW ORLEANS — The Allstate Foundation is presenting the first of several proposed state-of-the-art playgrounds as a holiday gift to the children of New Orleans. The construction of the "Little Hands" Playground was announced today at the Lyons Center. The new playground is the result of a new three-year initiative to bring safe recreational spaces to kids across the city.

Drew & Brittany Brees of the Brees Dream Foundation, Operation Kids and the Injury Free Coalition for Kids have joined The Allstate Foundation to help rebuild New Orleans in ways that matter most to kids.

The Little Hands Playgrounds are a new innovation in New Orleans. They offer children a safe recreational space and provide an environment for kids to stay

healthy, both physically and emotionally.

"The Little Hands Neighborhood Playground Initiative is a symbol of what can be accomplished when a community bands together to revitalize their neighborhood," said Ron Corbin, field vice president of the southern region for Allstate Insurance. "Allstate and The Allstate Foundation remain committed to the renaissance of New Orleans and, to this day, we continuously seek to invest in new ways to help its children, people, neighborhoods and nonprofit organizations continue to grow and thrive."

Crews will commence the first build effort at the Lyons Center, 700 Louisiana Ave. on Wednesday, Jan. 2. The Allstate Foundation and its partners will dedicate the new site on Jan. 4.

## SUNO Student Wins Tom Joyner Scholarship

NEW ORLEANS, LA - Congratulations to Rayon Golding, a junior biology major from Montego Bay, Jamaica, on receiving a \$2,500 "Brothers on the Move Scholarship" from The Tom Joyner Foundation. The announcement happened Thursday on the nationally syndicated "Tom Joyner Morning Show". The show airs locally on 98.5 WYLD from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Mr. Golding, who is actively involved with SUNO's First 50 Knights, plans to attend medical school upon graduating from SUNO. Candidates had to possess a minimum 3.0 GPA and show demonstrated community service either internally or externally.

## Entergy To Give Rate Credit

NEW ORLEANS – The New Orleans City Council Utility Committee will hear from Entergy New Orleans. The utility company is scheduled to give a presentation about its electric recovery rate credit customer relief.

Entergy New Orleans said the credit will be given because customers are moving back to the city faster than expected. A 6 percent credit will appear on bills beginning in January. That averages to about \$3. Entergy claims customers will see the so-called "recovery credit" through 2008.



# JMJ Foundation TRAIL BLAZERS

## Corey J. Hebert, MD: Medicine for the Soul



Corey J. Hebert, M.D.

By: Edwin Buggage

He is a man who is wise beyond his years, and has a heart of gold; with his gifted hands he has helped save the lives of youths all over the city of New Orleans. He has become a fixture as a television and radio personality spreading his messages, of hope, care and comfort, as he promotes a healthy lifestyle for the residents of the city of New Orleans. And it is in this city's darkest hour he is a guiding light, and an example of what the city can become if the best of its citizenry does its part.

Dr. Corey Hebert, a practicing physician, and television and radio talk show host, is one of the most widely sought after professionals in his fields of community inspired medicine and motivational speaking. Dr. Hebert always wanted to serve his fellow man and upon graduation from Morehouse he continued the pursuit of his goals at Meharry Medical College in Nashville.

Upon completion of his studies, Dr. Hebert started a residency at Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans, LA. where he honed his clinical as well as his leadership skills. He was elected to the National Executive Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics during which he received a special National ex-

emplary achievement award for leadership. Dr. Hebert was also the Chairman of the Louisiana State Medical Society Resident section, the first African-American to hold this position.

He says of his choice to become a pediatrician, "Children's problems are not self-inflicted, they are very pure." He says his mission of saving young people is a full time job, "I am working with the school system to implement healthy lifestyles in the community as well as doing lectures to expecting mothers and fathers and everyday brings about new opportunities and challenges."

And while the city faces a tough rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina, Hebert is continuing to put his time and his resources where his mouth is as a staunch advocate for the rebuilding of New Orleans, "I volunteer in many organizations and donate my money and most importantly my time to ensure that the children and adults of New Orleans will continue to reach new heights of excellence, and I also want to use my visibility to keep the national spotlight on us so we won't ever be forgotten."

He is truly a young man with fortitude and is a trailblazer, blazing the path for many young African-Americans

to follow. Dr. Hebert's clinical prowess as well as leadership ability also earned him the position of Chief Resident of Pediatrics at Tulane University making him the first African-American to achieve this honor in the school's history. After his residency Dr. Hebert continued to strive for excellence while fulfilling his obligation to the National Health Service Corps.

Hebert is the Director of Pediatrics for Excelth, Inc., Clinical Pediatrician for New Orleans City Health Dept, and an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Tulane University. Dr. Hebert saw the needs of the downtrodden of New Orleans, which were not being addressed. Talking to patients, one by one, was just not good enough, so he took the initiative to make sweeping changes to work to provide information for those who where sometimes the bare necessities of life supplant issue about their health and wellness. So Dr. Hebert took the bull by the horns and started to produce and host an informative TV show about pediatric issues that were unique to the inner city. The show is aptly titled "Urban Pediatrics" and is still very well received by the parents in the greater New Orleans area.

Dr. Hebert truly cares and has a great understanding of people regardless of their stations in life he is able to communicate in a spirit of kindness and care very. This unique gift allows him to talk to urban youth and chairmen of boards with the same level of acceptance and respect. This is an extremely difficult balancing act, and this is what separates him from so many others in his fields of pursuit. "I want to be able to talk to the janitor and the chief of staff so that both can understand what I am telling them, says Dr. Hebert, "This is what exemplifies a great communicator."

Since Hurricane Katrina, Dr. Hebert has been featured many times on national broadcasts including "The Oprah Winfrey Show", "The Early Show" with Harry Smith on CBS, "NBC Nightly News" with Brian Williams and on BET's "Meet the Faith". Dr. Hebert has been dubbed as

the expert on "Post-Katrina" healthcare

issues by the NBC News where he is also the Chief Medical Editor. He was also featured in the Spike Lee feature film, "When the Levees Broke". He hosts a weekly radio show on Citadel Broadcasting Network, aptly titled, "Doctor for the People". a nickname given to him by the communities which he so readily serves.

Dr. Hebert has been appointed to Vice-Chairman of the National Executive Committee for the National Health Service Corps. This very important board, overseen by the Surgeon General decides which areas in the US and US territories will be designated as underserved and underrepresented.

Continuing his fight to help the school children of New Orleans where unfortunately some of the most unhealthy, overweight, stressed children in the United States; Dr. Hebert plans to change all that, where recently he accepted the position of Medical Director of the State of Louisiana Recovery School District. In his post he will spearhead an innovative wellness concept in the district to ensure the mental, physical and social health for all 34 school's students as well as all faculty and staff. Dr. Hebert has always had the vision of helping others without boundaries which also prompted him to start a health delivery program called "No Excuses" in which he calls on his colleagues throughout the United States to treat the psychiatric illnesses of the children of New Orleans scarred by Hurricane Katrina. Dr. Hebert started this program with is own private funds because as he puts it, "Sometimes people have to do what they have to do, no matter the price". This fledgling program is off to a great start and with Dr. Hebert's dedication to "the people"; it will grow with leaps and bounds. Hebert is a man with a heart, and the will to help and as we end 2007 entering into the New Year it is most befitting that we honor this promoter of wellness and health of our future generations as we enter 2008. Dr. Corey Hebert New Orleans Data News Weekly Trailblazer for December 2007.





# WBOK 1230AM holds reception to welcome station owner Danny Bakewell Sr.

By Edwin Buggage  
Photos by Glenn Summers

He is an activist, businessman and humanitarian, over the years Danny Bakewell Sr. has made a difference in the African-American Community where his Los Angeles based Brotherhood Crusade has helped inspire many who aspire to dream. He is also a real estate developer and owner of the Los Angeles Sentinel the largest African-American Newspaper on the west coast. This New Orleans native recently purchased WBOK 1230AM. A reception was held welcoming him into the New Orleans business community at the home of prominent businessman Ronnie Burns and his wife Sheila Burns, and Data News Weekly was there up close and personal with the movers and shakers of the crescent city



Danny Bakewell Jr. Danny Bakewell Sr. Ronnie Burns and Jason Burns.



Pat Hightower, Denise St. Etienne and Diane Cooper.

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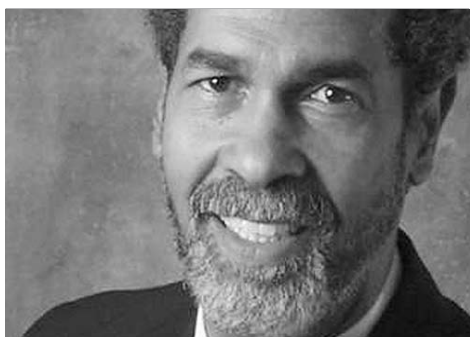


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# Racial Cooperation in New Orleans?



The Love Dr.  
Data Columnist

If there is ever going to be an opportunity for racial cooperation in New Orleans, the rebuilding of the public schools is a grand one. In many ways having a “ground zero” event that completely disrupted and destroyed our failing system has given us a chance to address the deficiencies of the system on which most poor black children had to depend as their up ramp to opportunity in America.

Quite frankly, black people have taken high ground. When Paul Pastorek announced that Paul Vallas was his choice, the African American community rustled. The “race card” would certainly be played. Well it hasn’t. It turns out that Paul Vallas had credentials and a successful record in improving the performance of urban students, and even the staunchest black education activists bit their lips and took a wait and see attitude.

Even when the issue was raised that there was insignificant minority participation in the emergency renovations and

construction projects that led to a successful and timely school opening day, leaders in the African American community bristled but acknowledged that getting the schools open on time didn’t allow the creation of a process for integrating minority and smaller companies in time. Now there are discussions and plans being made to make sure there is adequate opportunity for minority and smaller companies in the remaining rebuilding of the system.

At the same time, quite frankly, I am amazed at the acceptance by local whites of the idea that providing quality education for children who are poor may be the real solution for what ails New Orleans. They haven’t backed off their “criminal justice” mindset, but seem willing to see the Valas reforms through, even though some of the concerns seem to be based on the kind of twisted perceptions that we call bigotry. There is a lot of concern that after the FEMA money is gone that the benefits of short term efforts will disappear, as if the fourth grader that gets up to grade level is somehow going to slip back after getting caught up, as if there is something wrong with his ability to retain knowledge. That perception has been a major part of the problem.

With the exception of the effects of Katrina, research will show that the children who are behind in school were behind the day they started. They were not taught vocabulary, colors, shapes, numbers or read to before they entered school. My point is that once the current population of children get caught up, all we have to do is make sure “at risk” children get “caught up in pre-schools or worst case intensive

kindergarten programs and even then only until our success with educating young people turns them into parents with capacity, broader horizons and upward mobility.

This win-win opportunity in the education of children who are poor can possibly heal New Orleans. A whole city becoming dedicated to all children learning and having world class opportunities can change the future into one with overflowing opportunities for everyone except those who own prisons.

We have to make sure that even if a young person cannot find employment here that they can be hopeful of opportunities elsewhere in America or the world, rather than giving in to the fast buck-no future life of crime that seems to be a primary refuge for the hopeless.

Think about it. If in three years most kids are graduating from high school, that means their children will be raised by high school graduates and kids in seventh, eighth and ninth grades will begin to assume that they will graduate as well.

Much of the stuff we fight one another over shouldn’t exist. High crime shouldn’t exist. Cyclical poverty shouldn’t exist. Homelessness shouldn’t exist, but a massive and expensive intervention was needed to change the education of children who are poor in New Orleans, and unfortunately without FEMA that commitment may never have happened given the political stroke of a hotel industry that has benefitted from our failure because of the large pool of unskilled labor our public schools provided. Hotels having to compete for workers in a higher skilled more mobile workforce will raise their pay rates and every other busi-

ness in town will benefit from the increase in local commerce. And that brings me to the politics of running schools. Part of the failure of our school system was politics, too much of it. The system simply cannot support the politics of seven different political camps. It is too expensive and creates friction between elected members that very often interferes with policy issues. The African proverb goes, “When the elephants fight, the grass gets trampled; and quite frankly that is what has happened then add the black/white thing and the up-town/downtown thing and I hope you get my point.

I’m one of those people who were upset when elected officials were circumvented by the creation of the RSD. Every principal of American democracy dictates that the school system has to be accountable to the community it serves, but a seven ring political circus cannot be returned to power. It doesn’t work because it can’t settle its politics, but the loss of democracy is a slippery slope.

I’d like to see something like a board of six, two appointed by the governor, two appointed by the mayor and two elected at large by plurality. That should make for less political infighting because there are only four political interests at the table and if a simple majority of 4 is required then only two political interests have to be aligned, the mayor and the governor, or either of their teams aligned with the two at large. A city wide plurality in a regular election almost guarantees that elected members will tend to be racially different.

Imagine if we cooperate and educate all the children.

## A New Year & A New Beginning



Dr. Aaron E. Harold  
Data Columnist

Hi Family, we’re facing a new year. I’m excited about that, and you should be too. A new year means a brand new start in your life. A new year means a new look on life. A new year means a fresh start. Also, a

new year could mean to someone that I’m going back to school, or I’m going back to college to get my degree.

It can mean to someone else that you’ve been sitting around all year worrying about things that you really don’t have any control over, and you have made a decision that this new year you’re not going to let the trials of life get you down anymore. It could also mean for somebody that you’ve decided to stop dreaming and start living your dream by starting your own business. A new year, a new beginning could mean to someone I’m tired about the way I look and this year you’re going to lose the weight once and for all.

The question comes to mind, “What do you want to do this New Year that you didn’t get a chance to do in 2007?” Come on family, have you asked yourself that question yet? Come on, think about it people,

and if you haven’t asked you should. Tell yourself, “I’m going to do better this year even though I did alright in 2007. We all should want to get better in what we do.

We should not want to sit around and complain and do nothing with our lives, and just let life year in and year out pass us by. Let me tell you this short story. “There was a man who planted a large crop. He was a beginner or some would call him an “apprentice” farmer. He prepared the ground to put his seeds in for planting. After a while, he noticed that his crop was not growing the way it should have been. When he finally figured out what had happened, he forgot to fertilize the ground before he planted his seeds.”

What we need to understand about the farmer is that even though he spent a lot of time and money getting the land ready, he didn’t get discouraged to give up farming.

This is what he said to himself, “I’m going to let this be a learning experience to me and next years crop is going to be great. What I’m saying to you is that we all have made some mistakes in 2007. All of us have fallen short in some area of our lives. It may have been in the area of not being the best mother you should have been to your child or children.

It may have been in the area of not being a good spouse. It may have been in the area of not being a good son or daughter, or employee. Family, let’s not look back and feel sorry for ourselves, but let’s look forward to a new year and a new beginning. Donnie McClurkin sang in his song, “We fall down, but we can get back up again.” The Bible tells us this in Phillipians 3 verses 14, “Forgetting those things that are behind us and move on to the future.” God bless you and have a happy and prosperous New Year.



# The Power of One



Dr. Phill Wilson  
NNPA Columnist

I began World AIDS day this year at sunrise on the north side of the Golden Gate Bridge to kick off a 510 mile ultra marathon from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise awareness about HIV testing. "Run in a Million" is the brain child of Mike Sacco, a 26-year-old runner from Underhill, Vermont.

About six months ago Mike walked into my office with an idea. He had been reading about AIDS and wanted to do something. "That's great. So what do you do?" I asked.

"I'm a runner." He replied. "It has been a dream of mine to run from San Francisco to Los Angeles. When I found out about the devastating impact the AIDS epidemic is having on Black communities and what the Black AIDS Institute was doing, a light went off in my head. Maybe I could raise money to fight AIDS and remind people that the AIDS epidemic is not over by combining my love of running and my dream to run from San Francisco to Los Angeles with my desire to do something about the AIDS epidemic?"

I have to admit, when Mike first walked into my office, I found myself in a paradox, because Mike Sacco is White. My favorite quote is from Calvin Rolark: "Nobody can save us from us, but us." The Institute's motto is "Our people, Our problem, Our solution!"

Our mission is to end the AIDS epidemic by getting Black people involved in the AIDS fight. On the other hand, White people should not be given a pass just because Black people bear the brunt of the AIDS epidemic today.

I was there during the early days of the epidemic when White gay men, politicians and celebrities were pledging to "be in the fight until the end." Now that AIDS is primarily about Black and Brown people—gay, straight, male, female, young, old, whatever—where are those White folks?

So I thought, "Wow, here is a young White guy who understands that we all have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to fight this deadly disease until it is over, no matter who might be most af-

fectected at any given time."

Andrew Goodman and Micheal Schwerner were also White, but they were murdered fighting for civil rights in 1964, along with their Black comrade James Chaney. In my mind's eye I saw the mosaic of America—Black, White, Brown, Yellow, young, old, rich, poor—that made up Martin Luther King's vision of the civil rights movement.

And I remembered something else: My parent's response when I asked them why I had to do chores when I was 10. "We are a family," they said, "and the only way for our family to survive was for each of us to do our part." In fact, that is the only way for any family to survive. Mike reminded me that we are all a part of the human family. And our human family has AIDS. We need everyone in the family, regardless of color, to do their part. Not everybody can run 510 miles, but everybody can do something. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve."

I arrived at the Golden Gate Bridge about 6:30 a.m. on Saturday. The sun was not quite up yet, but the view was already spectacular. Some of the runners were already there. Mike and his running partner, Lejon, had recruited other runners to run with them for the day. It moved me to tears to see these young athletes from different backgrounds—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, men, women—so committed and eager to do what they could to fight AIDS.

Lejon probably summed it up best when he said, "It seems like these days, everyone is waiting for the next big thing. People forget about the power of one. One person can make a difference."

Sadly, AIDS is a Black disease in America today. But it is not just a Black disease. Everybody has a role to play and everybody must play their role. Mike Sacco is just one person and he is making a difference. You can make a difference too.

The Route:

After running across the Golden Gate Bridge, the runners made their way to Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and down to Pacifica. They will continue thru Pescadero, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Big Sur, Lucia, San Simeon, San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Malibu before ending up at Nike Town in Beverly Hills.

To join the team to run part of the way or find out when the run will be coming thru your community call (877) Test1Million. For more information about the Run in a Million or the larger Test 1 million campaign go to [www.BlackAIDS.org](http://www.BlackAIDS.org) or tune in to the daily blog at <http://www.myspace.com/runinamillion>.

# Giving - The True Gift of Christmas



Marian Wright Edelman  
NNPA Columnist

Child Watch® Column

Christmas is a festive time when many families come together, homes are decorated with trees hung with ornaments and lights and sumptuous dinners are prepared. Christmas also can be, for a variety of reasons, a time of stress. One source of stress is the oppression of the shopping list.

The longer the list, the greater the anxiety—what shall I get for this niece or that cousin or friend? How do I avoid giving a gift that's too similar to what I gave last year? And of course there are the demands of children who want the latest video game or electronic gadget. Bending to the pressure, many of us join the legions of shoppers hunched over and weighted down by bags full of holiday things.

Amidst it all, we lose sight of the meaning of Christmas. We forget to tell our children why we give gifts in the first place—the story Christians believe about the first Christmas' gift to the world of the Prince of Peace. When he walked on the Earth, he spoke to us of the gifts that really matter: "For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." This message of giving speaks to what's good in and required of all of us.

Christmas is a time to enrich the lives of our children by sharing with them the joy and gift of giving. This can be done in many ways. While shopping with your children, have them select a toy to give to a poor child. Some time during the Christmas season, take your children to a homeless shelter or soup kitchen and volunteer to help prepare or serve food. Bake together a few dozen cookies and take them to your local children's hospital or nursing home to brighten the day of someone less fortunate.

There are many in need not only in our own communities but in our global community. I'm reminded of the wonder-

ful children's story of Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier about a young Ugandan girl whose dream of going to school seems out of reach because her family is poor.

But things change for Beatrice when her family is selected to receive a goat from Heifer International, a program that provides livestock to those in need around the world. After months dutifully tending the goat and selling its milk at the market, Beatrice finally has enough money to pay for books and a school uniform. Then one day, dressed in her new school uniform, after taking the goat's milk to market, Beatrice makes her way to her first day of school.

You can participate in the Heifer International program ([heifer.org](http://heifer.org)) by giving a struggling family in another land the gift of a goat, alpaca, camel, cow, donkey, horse, llama, pig, sheep, a water buffalo, yak, honey bees, a school of fish or a flock of chickens, ducks or geese. The lives of the receiving family will be improved economically by the wool, eggs, milk or honey provided by the animals.

In exchange, the receiving family promises to pass the first offspring on to another family—it's called "Passing on the Gift." This living chain of giving is a dynamic and sustainable approach to grassroots economic development.

The gift of a dairy goat (at \$120) can supply a family several quarts of nutritious milk a day—a ton of milk a year. Extra milk can be sold or used to make cheese, butter or yogurt. Goats can thrive in extreme climates and on poor, dry land by eating grass and leaves. Because goats often have two or three kids a year, Heifer partners can help lift themselves out of poverty by starting small dairies that earn money for food, health care and education. Geese (at \$20) are easy to care for. They don't require much shelter and can adapt to most climates. They can lay up to 75 eggs a year providing a ready source of protein and income.

My grandchildren picked the animals they wanted me to give in their honor with great excitement! This year I'm also buying my grandchildren three banks each for Christmas: one for saving, one for spending, and one for sharing. I hope this will teach them the value of thrift and how to share their good fortune with others. I also hope this will help them understand the true meaning of Christmas.

For more information on the Children's Defense Fund, please visit [childrensdefense.org](http://childrensdefense.org)

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund





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# New Jersey Bans Death Penalty

By Tom Hester, Jr.

TRENTON, N.J. - Gov. Jon S. Corzine signed into law Monday a measure that abolishes the death penalty, making New Jersey the first state in more than four decades to reject capital punishment.

The bill, approved last week by the state's Assembly and Senate, replaces the death sentence with life in prison without parole.

"This is a day of progress for us and for the millions of people across our nation and around the globe who reject the death penalty as a moral or practical response to the grievous, even heinous, crime of murder," Corzine said.

The measure spares eight men on the state's death row. On Sunday, Corzine signed orders commuting the sentences of those eight to life in prison without parole.

New Jersey reinstated the death penalty in 1982 - six years after the U.S. Supreme Court allowed states to resume executions - but it hasn't executed any-



one since 1963.

The state's move is being hailed across the world as a historic victory against capital punishment. Rome plans to shine golden light on the Colosseum in support. Once the arena for deadly gladi-

ator combat and executions, the Colosseum is now a symbol of the fight against the death penalty.

"The rest of America, and for that matter the entire world, is watching what we are doing here today," said Assemblyman Wilfre-

do Caraballo, a Democrat. "New Jersey is setting a precedent that I'm confident other states will follow."

The bill passed the Legislature largely along party lines, with controlling Democrats support-

ing the abolition and minority Republicans opposed. Republicans had sought to retain the death penalty for those who murder law enforcement officials, rape and murder children, and terrorists, but Democrats rejected that.

The last states to eliminate the death penalty were Iowa and West Virginia in 1965, according to the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

The nation has executed 1,099 people since the U.S. Supreme Court reauthorized the death penalty in 1976. In 1999, 98 people were executed, the most since 1976; last year 53 people were executed, the lowest since 1996.

Other states have considered abolishing the death penalty recently, but none has advanced as far as New Jersey.

The nation's last execution was Sept. 25 in Texas. Since then, executions have been delayed pending a U.S. Supreme Court decision on whether execution through lethal injection violates the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment.



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## Feb. 5 Primaries Could Decide Between Clinton and Obama

By Hazel Trice Edney  
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Despite all eyes being on the state of Iowa and its early Democratic Presidential Primary Jan. 3, it is the string of 22 states to hold primaries and caucuses on Feb. 5 that will likely decide which candidate will get enough delegates to be named Democratic nominee at the Aug 25-28 convention in Denver, Colo., pundits predict.

African-American voters could actually swing those primary elections in either direction.

“There are so many delegates up for grabs on Feb. 5 that anybody who has a boost on Feb. 5 will pick up a lot of delegates, perhaps enough delegates that are essential to win the nomination,” says David Bositis, chief political analyst for the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a think tank for Black politics. “The single biggest day when most Black people will have the opportunity to vote will be Feb. 5...There’ll be an opportunity for close to half the Black voters in the country to vote on Feb. 5.”

University of Maryland Political Scientist Ron Walters agrees that Feb. 5 could be the deciding date.

“That big bang is turning out to be a national primary of sorts,” Walters says. “That’s going to give you a good read.”

Right now, all eyes are on Iowa and New Hampshire because they have early primaries and also because of international talk star Oprah Winfrey’s endorsement of



Oprah Winfrey campaigns with Barack and Michelle Obama after endorsing his candidacy in Iowa last weekend.

Sen. Barack Obama in Iowa Dec. 8. But whether Obama or Sen. Hillary Clinton wins in Iowa or New Hampshire, the greatest indicators of the presidential nomination will come Feb. 5 or shortly thereafter.

With that in mind, several non-partisan Black organizations – anticipating record turnouts in primaries – are joining forces to turn out the maximum Black vote in upcoming primaries and to protect votes, especially in those states with significant Black electorates, such as New York.

“I think this will be a very unusually high turn out primary season because you do have such a high interest. And this is the first time the election process has started so early,” says Melanie Campbell, executive director and CEO of the non-partisan National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

“People are more in tune to the election than in my experience ever... And because we have such highly contested Republican and Democratic primary processes going on, the turn out should reflect that in much higher numbers than seen before.”

Probably nothing is intriguing the electorate more than the possibility of America electing its first Black president. That factor and the excitement brought by the charismatic Obama going against Clinton, the former first lady to a president who remains popular among Blacks, will in itself turn out votes on both sides.

In Iowa, a 95 percent White and 2 percent Black state, Obama is narrowly leading Clinton in a race that pundits have described as neck-in-neck. A poll taken for the Des Moines Register, the states largest daily newspaper, shows Obama with 29 percent, Clinton

with 25 percent and former South Carolina Sen. John Edwards at 23 percent.

But, following Iowa on Jan. 3, New Hampshire on Jan. 8, Michigan on Jan. 15, Nevada on Jan. 19, South Carolina on Jan. 26, and Florida on Jan. 29, there is the huge block of state primaries on Feb. 5 that political thinkers say could be the turning point.

They include Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Minnesota, New Jersey, Utah, New York, North Dakota, Arizona, Delaware, Massachusetts, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Illinois, California, Connecticut, Alaska, Kansas, Alabama, Arkansas and New Mexico.

In addition to high profile Democratic and Republican candidates, it is the hot issues, such as the war in Iraq, jobs and health care that’s exciting the electorate. Those are the highest priority issues for Black people, according to the Joint Center.

Campbell says that based on those three issues, all of which have economic implications, the National Coalition is planning economic forums for a string of states with large Black populations to be announced later this month. Also, get out to vote, voter protection and new technological outreach will be launched for the primaries as part of the Coalition’s Unity ’08 Black campaign, she says.

“With our Black Youth Vote program, they are organizing the additional means of technologies that young people use, such as MySpace to get messages out

about voter protection,” she says. “In addition we’re working with all the legal groups for legal hotlines.”

The hotline numbers, as in past general elections, are 1-866-MYVOTE1, which will act as a poll locator to give people information on where to go vote, and 1-866-OURVOTE, the phone number for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, who will lend legal assistance on questions concerning possible voting violations.

About 18 more primaries will be slated between Feb. 5 and June 7. Still predictions are that the winner will be known long before June.

African-Americans vote overwhelmingly for Democratic candidates, as much as 9-1 in recent years.

Though Iowa will not be a deciding factor in who wins or loses the nomination, Bositis says the Iowa primary, notwithstanding its small Black population, could have a major impact on undecided Black voters. That’s because, if Obama wins in Iowa, it could convince undecided or even doubting Black Democrats to see that Obama could actually win the presidency, Bositis says.

He concludes, “Obama could do a lot to dispel those [doubts] if he won in Iowa and did real well in New Hampshire and look like he has a good chance to win. There’s nothing to do to look like you have a chance to win more than winning.”

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# Tanea's Deadly Secret, Part I: 'I'm Going to Tell Him'

By: Hazel Trice Edney  
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

**The following is the first story of a two-part series on African-American women living with HIV/AIDS.**

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Tanea (Not her real name) is keeping a secret from her boyfriend.

It's not that she once stabbed a man to death 31 times. And it's not that she once got married and separated within one month.

No. The secret that Tanea is keeping from Tim, (Not his real name) has the potential of hurting him far worse than either one of those facts of her life.

She wants to tell him. But she's afraid of how he might react. So, in an interview with the NNPA News Service, she only imagines the moment:

They're in a public park or by a body of water. She invites him to sit down beside her on a big rock and tells him she needs to talk. She gets straight to the point.

"I mean I don't know how to go around and beat around the bush. So any way that I said it, it would be within my first breath of a sentence. I would say, 'I have something to tell you. You know my health has not been well. The reason behind that is because I'm HIV positive.'"

She pauses a moment. "And whatever happens after that just happens," she states. Her voice trails away with uncertainty.

Suddenly, she changes her mind and decides it's best to tell him her deadly secret in the presence of her doctor or counselor at the HIV/AIDS clinic where she receives care.

Either way, Tim's response is unpredictable. That's mainly because Tanea, who gave this inter-

view under conditions of anonymity, has been having unprotected sex with Tim for the past two years.

Tanea's dilemma is statistically rare, according to experts on HIV/AIDS. Now the leading cause of death for Black women between the ages of 25-34, it is usually the Black woman who is at risk of being on the receiving end of catching the deadly virus from men.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2005, an overwhelming 80 percent of Black women who got HIV, got it while having sex with men; about 17 percent from intravenous drugs and 3 percent in other ways. On the other hand, during that same time period, only 25 percent of Black men have gotten HIV from sex with a woman, 49 percent from homosexual activity, 19 percent from intravenous drug use, and 7 percent in other ways.

One would think that Tanea, 37, would be forced to list for medical officials any partner that she may have infected since she was first diagnosed four years ago in 2003. But, according to sex therapist Dr. Gail Wyatt, Tanea's hesitance to tell Tim her HIV status is not unusual.

"It is surprisingly common. Any discussion is surprisingly difficult when it comes to sex," says Wyatt, a professor of psychiatry and associate director of the UCLA AIDS Institute. "People are not socialized to talk about sex. When you have HIV and people who are counseling you recommend that you disclose your status to your partners, many times they don't have the information involved; nor is the testing and counseling program equipped to get into the specifics of how you do that when you've never perhaps even

talked about sex...Many people just move into sex without ever discussing it at all. What type of behavior they want to engage in, what health issues they have. The whole disease issue is not a normal conversation. So, it's not surprising that she would not know how to have a conversation."

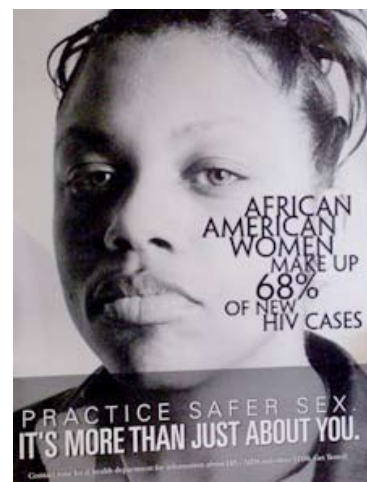
Tanea recalls the moment that she was first diagnosed at an HIV/AIDS clinic. She had had been twice hospitalized for more than a month, suffering with pneumonia. She had dropped from 138 to 98 pounds when a doctor finally advised her to get tested.

"I looked at the papers and it said HIV positive. I sat there and cried. It was something that I had known for a while. But, it was something that ... if I was, I didn't want to know. Now that the reality had actually hit me, it was like, now all of these thoughts were running through my head," she recounts. "How long have I had it? When did I catch it? How many people have I infected? All of these thoughts went through my head."

In her mind, she was able to trace her infection back to a man that she dated for about a year, back around 1998. He was a heroin user, but she never saw him use a needle, only snort. But, there was something else about him.

"Every time I would see him, he was in male company...It seems odd to me." She speculates that he was probably bisexual. "He's the person that I believe my heart tells me that I was infected by."

Many of the women who have caught HIV/AIDS from men have been infected by their own husbands or by boyfriends that they thought were monogamous. Tanea says she has had about seven sexual relationships in her life, most were before she contracted



HIV.

When she first learned about her HIV status, she called only one person. He was a former boyfriend that she loved very deeply. "I told him that I was HIV positive. I never heard from him again," she said.

Before Tim, the only other person she'd been with sexually since contracting the virus was a married man with whom she'd had a summer fling. She didn't bother to tell him either.

Tanea says fear – not love – is the number one barrier to her breaking the news to Tim, a man who runs to the drug store to get cold and flu medicines during some of her prolonged HIV-related symptoms.

She's never known Tim to be violent. But she's known violence.

In the late 1980s, Tanea was in a hotel room with a man to whom she was about to sell her body for drugs. It was her first experience with prostitution.

"As soon as he took a hit off that pipe, he started coming at me using the B-word, saying, 'You're going to do what I tell you to do. You're going to do it this way.' When I saw this and he kept walking toward me and he was a much

bigger man than me and at that time I used to walk around with a Double-O Seven switch blade with brass knuckles. And so, when he came up and got up toward me, I stood up immediately."

She continues, "I got my knife behind my back opened up and all ready in position. So I asked him to please stop walking up on me because he was making me nervous and he just kept coming at me. And I only remember stabbing him three times to be honest with you ... That's it. I took a life. That's it. I was insane ... I called the police myself because when I snapped out of it and saw the picture of everything that happened, I couldn't live with it. It was like a scene from a horror movie. Blood was everywhere. It freaked me out. So, I called the police, told them what I did, where I was and come to get me."

Tanea says she learned from police that she had stabbed the man 31 times. In court, she saw both of his parents and his brothers.

Because of her plea of self-defense, a first degree murder charge was dropped to man slaughter, she says. She served four years in prison.

Tim, 43, knows nothing about this secret. In Tanea's mind, that's not the one that really matters.

It's the secret that could take his life - the fact that he has been having unprotected sex with an HIV positive woman - that has yet to be revealed.

"I know I'm eventually going to have to tell him if I plan to go any further with him because I cannot have sex with him anymore unprotected," she says. "I'm going to tell him. I just don't know how and when."

Part II of this series will be featured in the January 5th issue of Data News Weekly.

*Cover Story, Continued from page 4.*

new electrical permits which tell me that more people are working on their homes or their rental properties." "We have the Trump Towers, the Krauss Building, I am seeing some positive things and I'm optimistic about where the city is going."

And while many New Orleanians are scattered about the country it has been almost two and half years since all their lives were forever changed Mayor Nagin says, "Please don't give up on the city, don't be discouraged it may have

taken you a little bit longer than you would have like to come back to the city, but don't let that get you down, and the city is getting better everyday its just a matter of when you figure out for you when it is the best time for you to return because it's going to be bigger, better and safer than ever before."

## Epilogue

As the year comes to a close the city is still one that is in dire straits, while there is signs of

hope and progress only time will tell the true story of what New Orleans is to become. And as for Ray Nagin and his legacy it may be some time before history can judge his performance as the leader of this city that is recovering from the greatest calamity of the 20th century to an American city.

Two Thousand Eight is upon us and the many, the multitudes that are still lost trying to find their way back to the land where whole families live in one block,

ward or parts of town. Many are a long way from the place where the beat of the street and the rhythms of the percussive language that is New Orleans speech and the local colloquialisms are the sonic music to the ears of the people who always speak even if you are a stranger. The familial vibe and aura of a city and its people are at stake as a city continues to take its place on the world stage, and the question becomes will it receive cheers because in its darkest hour the city has taken this opportunity

to become a world class city, or the jeers of the world as a place that refuses to progress and move into the 21st century and be a place where mismanagement and malfeasance is the way one does business. And it is in 2008 and beyond that leaders such as Ray Nagin and others will be the captains of the ship that navigates the city to its destination, and where it will end up only time will tell the full story of this city's future that lies at the mouth of the Mississippi.



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