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Essence Festival Highlights

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The Soul of New Orleans


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42nd


Anniversary Celebration




Kermit Ruffins




Michael Ward



Sharon Martin



Al Ancar



Raghan Duroseau

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Bobbie Mason

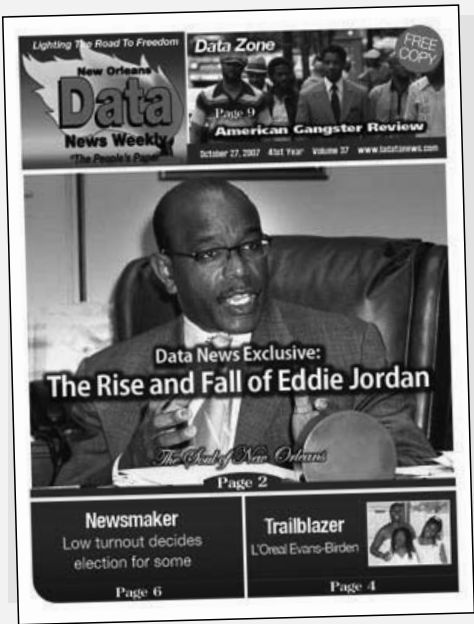


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The Year in Data

Edited by: Edwin Buggage & Cheryl Mainor

As the New Orleans Data News Weekly celebrates 42 years as the city premiere African-American newspaper, we recognize that it has been another stellar year with cutting edge journalism. We have been at the forefront of the city’s breaking news that affects our community. Here are some of the highlights. To read the full stories in addition to other events we have covered please go to ladatanews.com and click on editorial and search the archives.



Eddie Jordan

Crime and punishment was a major and burning issue as the crime rate escalated in New Orleans, during which time District Attorney Eddie Jordan was engaged in a long battle with certain segments of the community that were calling for his resignation.

Jordan sat down for exclusive interviews with Data News Weekly on three occasions. In our June 21, 2007 issue he spoke about crime and initiatives that were put in place to fight and keep criminals locked up. He also spoke about how during his administration he outperformed his predecessor Harry Connick Sr. and his office was doing the best possible job they could given the limited resources the office had at its disposal after Hurricane Katrina.

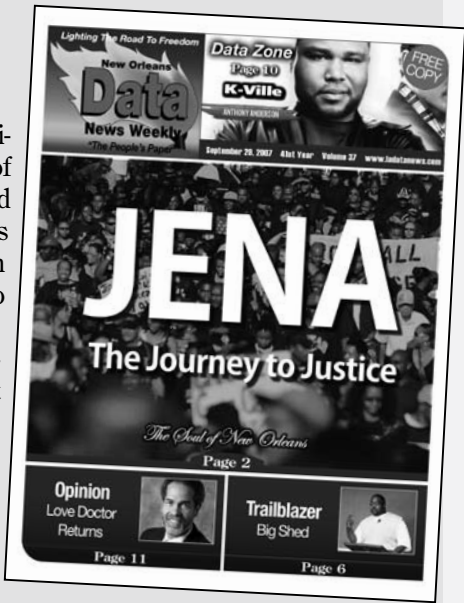
The story culminated with Jordan resigning amidst a sea of controversy, and Data News Weekly in its October 27, 2007 issue published the last interview with Eddie Jordan entitled, The Rise and Fall of Eddie Jordan.

Jena 6

People from around the country and media outlets spanning the globe came to the small town of Jena, Louisiana as a protest march took place to expose injustice as the ugly head of America’s spotted history in the area of race relations reoccurred for the world to witness. In the September 29, 2007 issue Data News Weekly provided continued coverage of the story written by Jordan Flaherty, who had broken the story months before. Jordan’s article in Data was the first to break this major story in print concerning what was going on in this saga which was reminiscent of the Scottsboro Boys case which was the inspiration for the film book by Harper Lee “To Kill a Mockingbird”.

Data News Weekly went into this small town on the day of the march where protestors donning black t-shirts marched in the name of justice. Organizers of the march included the Reverend Al Sharpton, Radio host Michael Baisden, Attorney Warren Ballentine, Actor and Hip-hop artist Mos Def and a host of others who came out in a show of support of the defendants in the Jena 6 case.

In the end, the march, shone the spotlight and a miscarriage of justice was exposed to the world, showing that there is power in numbers and that although in matters of race this country has come a long way, it still has a long way to travel down the road to ensure freedom, justice and equality to all Americans.



Continued next page.

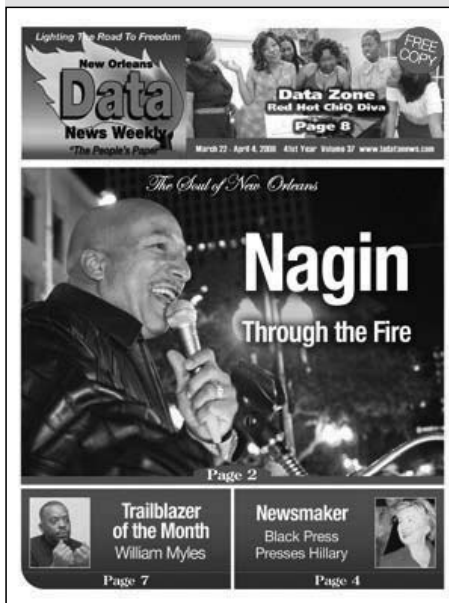
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Ray Nagin

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin has graced the cover of Data News Weekly four times with the first being September 15, 2007 where he appeared in a silhouette in an article titled, "Reflections of Ray". In this exclusive interview Nagin talks about the city and the direction of the recovery, and his personal feelings about how he is portrayed by the mainstream media, and speaks candidly on issues of class and race and how they have affected the city's recovery efforts.

In the December 22, 2007 issue Nagin gives his reflections on what happened during the year and his predictions for the following year. In the March 22, 2008 issue nearing the middle of his second term he talks about what the administration has accomplished and how the federal monies necessary to aid in the rebuilding have finally started to trickle down the beginning of a full recovery can begin.

The June 7, 2008 issue shows Mayor Nagin on the cover giving his State of the City address. Data News Weekly did an expose entitled, "Two Cities", where it explored the viewpoint of citizens of the city about the progress of the city and their feeling about the pace of the recovery. Their views were mixed ranging from pessimistic and skeptical to optimistic and excited about the future of the city. How history will judge Mayor Ray Nagin and his efforts during this crucial time for New Orleans only time will tell, but in the meantime Data News Weekly will continue in its attempts to provide fair and balanced coverage of Mayor Nagin and others who are our newsmakers.

HANO

The issue of housing but particularly public housing has been a pressing issue after Hurricane Katrina fanning the flames of misunderstanding where passions arose to a boiling point in late 2007. In the December 8, 2007 edition of the New Orleans Data News Weekly we focused on the demolition of several public housing developments in the city of New Orleans, and the dilemma of those who would be displaced as a result.

The issue came to a head when the New Orleans City Council voted unanimously to demolish several public housing units and replace them with mixed income housing. This vote did not take place without controversy as extra security measures were taken because of the protesters who came from around the country to have their voices heard.

Violence ensued between some of the protestors and police, making national headlines.

Since then the city has moved forward with the demolition of public housing, where acres and acres of housing where people formerly resided are now hollow shells, and virtual ghost towns. What will happen with this pressing and vital issue in regards to affordable housing is still a question that remained unanswered.



State of the Black Union

Radio and Television personality Tavis Smiley hosted his annual State of the Black Union in New Orleans this year, and in the March 9, 2008 edition of Data News Weekly we focused on the address, its purpose, message, meaning and significance.

Leaders from many walks of life gathered inside the New Orleans Convention Center a place where hope died on the days after Hurricane Katrina to discuss hope, redemption and resurrection of a people. Issues of education, family, community, spirituality and the ascendance of Barack Obama were discussed in the all day forum.

It was a day of information, insight, and for some a day of healing. For the Black community it was a day to look at itself, criticize itself, and celebrate the greatness of who we are and what we have contributed to America.

From the 'Dream' to the 'Audacity of Hope'

April 19, 2008 Cover Story

It has been forty years since an assassin's bullet ended the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a man who had the audacity to dream. To imagine a country that would be true to its creed of all people being created equal, but furthering the proposition to pose the question of all people being treated equal. To dream that this country could rid itself of the scourge of racial inequality and bigotry interwoven into the fabric of this nation and being as much part of this country's lore as apple pie. In this day in 2008 can America overcome it's past to ensure a better future for all Americans?

2008 has been an historic election year with the country having an African-American and a woman vying for the Democratic Party's nomination for the President of the United States. The question of race has been front and center shifting in various directions during the campaign. At various points his campaign has been an example how problems of racial misunderstanding rears this ugly head and how in matters concerning race there are six degrees of separation between racial camaraderie and chaos.

That notwithstanding, this election is still a testament of how far the nation's whites have come in forty years, and how blacks, once completely disenfranchised, now occupy places inside the corridors of American society where whites, only a generation ago, would not have considered voting for Black man now are placing their votes for Barack Obama.

And in 2008 Obama is the man who has talked about hope has made the country think and talk about race in a way that it has not been talked about in quite some time. But this time not in an us vs. them as it was with Hurricane Katrina or other situations where race polarization was highlighted, but in a way where it is about people uniting to realize that people working together can change the direction of this country and the world.

On April 4th 1968 a man died in the name of love. On the eve of Barack Obama perhaps becoming President of the United States, Martin Luther King's Dream may be closer to becoming a reality. When ability and ambition trumps one's race holding them back from achieving what for previous generations of African-Americans was unthinkable. As we observe four decades after the death of Dr. King, a man who dared to dream, today it is the job of those who inherited this task to live the dream and have the 'Audacity of Hope.'



SUNO's \$44 million student housing project impacts local economic development

June 26 was a good day for Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO), but the beginning of the day did not offer the best omen. Dark gray skies blanketed the grounds of SUNO's Lake Campus as lightening flashed in the distance and concerned faces prepared for history.

Thursday, June 26 began with the ground breaking for the university's first-ever residential complex; later that night SUNO's major annual fundraiser, The BASH, would take place. The rain stayed away from the ground breaking and BASH III was a raging success, offering the university faithful confidence that things were on the rise for the near future.

Making History and Money for the Community

SUNO's Student & Faculty Housing is scheduled for completion by the fall of 2010. There will be two phases implemented in the construction of the facility with Phase I expected to be complete by the fall of 2009. A long-time commuter campus, residential housing opens up a new world of possibilities for New Orleans' only public HBCU. Those possibilities make SUNO's chancellor, Dr. Victor Ukpoko, beam with optimism.

"This means many things but most of all SUNO is proud to contribute as a major local economic driver with this project," said Ukpoko. "We're talking about a \$44 million economic impact on this area and beyond!"

Forty-four million dollars is the price tag of the project. The funds are coming from a low-interest loan from the Federal government's HBCU Capital Financing Program, a program which allows for the low-interest loans to be used to finance and re-finance campus projects such as classrooms, laboratories, student centers, instructional equipment, research instrumentation and capital equipment or fixtures.

The primary contractor for the project is Walton Construction Company, LLC a company with an office based in the New Orleans area. Tom Reeves, Walton's vice president of operations, shares in the excitement of spreading the wealth of the historic project.

"We realized very early that we had the opportunity to make New Orleans better, and we consider this dormitory project to be a cornerstone of that improvement,"



SUNO officials break ground for first-ever residential complex.



Clean-up is underway at SUNO campus in preparation for new construction.

said Walton. A majority of the subcontractors who will be working on the project are from South Louisiana.

SUNO's Student & Faculty Housing promises to provide another economic impact. The immediate area will benefit from the number of residents who will have basic needs such as a supermarket and places to eat. Additionally SUNO has been in talks with

representatives of both the Pontchartrain Park Neighborhood Association and the Pontilly Neighborhood Association about filtering SUNO students, personnel and graduates into the areas to increase home ownership. Currently the university provides an on-campus space for the Pontchartrain Park group to meet once a month.

New Blood

The SUNO Student & Faculty Housing project answers another vital need for the university to have on-campus housing available for the school's new customers. In the fall of 2010 the university will have adopted new admissions criteria as requested by the Louisiana Board of Regents. Incoming SUNO freshmen will have to possess a high school GPA of 2.0 or higher or an ACT composite score of 20 or greater or they will have to be ranked in the top 50% of their respective graduating classes. The freshmen will also have to have completed the Regents/TOPS high school core curriculum and

will have to require no more than one remedial course.

The new residential facility sets the stage for the university to mount its most aggressive out-of-town recruiting campaign in history. The person at the helm of the university's recruiting efforts is Renée Gill-Pratt, Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Retention. Gill-Pratt recognizes the need for SUNO to take a newly energized approach to recruiting potential students.

"Since we will no longer be labeled as a commuter university, we're doing much more outreach to diversify our student body. Our new housing is definitely helping to facilitate that," according to Gill-Pratt.

Incidentally the new admissions criteria have also encouraged the SUNO administration, faculty and staff to increase their contact with high school and even middle school students in order to get them prepared for this brave new academic world. The university has proactively created opportunities to mold potential SUNO students. One such opportunity is the Chancellor's Emerging Leaders Program which began in 2007. The program currently

works through Sophie B. Wright Charter School, and offers 40 middle school students full scholarships to SUNO if they maintain certain requirements throughout high school.

Moving Quickly

With all of the excitement of a new residential facility and other projects falling in place for SUNO many wonder about the state of the university's facilities on its original campus, also known as the Park Campus. At the end of the 2007-2008 school year the university was still operating mostly out of the temporary trailer campus on the Lake Campus north of the Park Campus. Only the first floor of the Park Campus's Health & Physical Education Building was being utilized.

By June of 2008 the Park Campus buildings at 6400 Press Drive were teeming with workers. "We would like to think that it was the pressure we put on the state," said Chancellor Ukpoko, with a laugh. "But the State saw how hard we were working behind the scenes to bring this vital institution back."

The SUNO family has more reasons to smile. Not only will the Student & Faculty Housing sit on the Lake Campus but the land is ripe for additional development. There are plans to construct both a building for the College of Business and Public Administration and an Information Technology Center. The university is also working toward a building for its lauded School of Social Work.

To add to the excitement about the future SUNO has also had three critical academic programs reinstated for the fall of 2008 in addition to forming two major partnerships. Once again the university will offer undergraduate degrees in English, Mathematics and History. SUNO has also built an important bridge with the two-year college system by forming partnerships with Delgado Community College and Nunez Community College.

With so much happening so quickly the SUNO administration is experiencing the good problem of needing time to catch its collective breath to prepare for the good things to come. "This has been a long, challenging process (of recovery)," said Ukpoko. "And we're confident that we will be ready to go for the fall."

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Bobbie Mason

The Power of Perseverance

By: Edwin Buggage

Her story is a story of perseverance. She has come a long way in her 30 some odd years from humble beginnings to becoming a prominent attorney, mentor, and mother. Bobbie Mason was raised by a single mother, who instilled in her a work ethic that she has carried with her to this day. "I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth, I always saw my mother going to work and doing the best she could to be a good provider," says Mason.

Bobbie Mason went on to the Academy of Holy Angels where she was elected class president for three consecutive years. From there she attended Howard University and was also Senior Class President of the College of Arts and Sciences and was President of the Louisiana Club. "During that time in my life I felt it was necessary to prove myself that I could compete at any level, that you could achieve anything if you put the effort into it and applied yourself."

After graduating from Howard University she worked as a Staff Assistant to U.S. Congressman William Jefferson. But her passion to be an advocate for people led her back to New Orleans where she entered Loyola Law School and received her juris doctorate. She says her accomplishments did not come without sacrifice, something she passes on to young people, "When I talk to people and they see me now, I am an attorney, but they must understand where I've come from, and the sacrifices I've made to get to this place in my life." Continuing she says, "Throughout school I sometimes worked three jobs, but I stayed focused on what I was working towards and I knew eventually it would pay off."

Mason says the thing that keeps her going is her commitment to Jesus Christ. "Without him nothing is possible, and I feel it is important to have a spiritual foundation that can give you the strength to overcome any obstacles and challenges that come your way."

What also gives her life meaning and purpose now is her commitment to being a good mother to her two young daughters Jessica and Jayla. "Every time I see them, I know that I have to be a good example for them and provide them with love and care and give them the tools to lead successful and happy lives."

She is a member of "Delta Sigma Theta" "Alpha Chapter" where she coordinated an event where members of her chapter partnered with United Methodist South East Louisiana Disaster Recovery Center to participate in the gutting



of houses throughout the Greater New Orleans. "It felt really good to help people in their time of need, and it is important that we come together to help each other particularly right now during the recovery."

After Hurricane Katrina Mason relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, where she was doing well living in a gated community, but felt it was necessary to come back to New Orleans. "I felt like this city has given me so much and it was my duty to come back and help in the rebuilding." "And I encourage particularly professional people to come back and put their skills to work in making New Orleans a better city."

Bobbie Mason's life is a testament that one can overcome obstacles; her life is an inspiration and an example that because you come from humble beginnings doesn't mean you can't change your life circumstances through hard work. She says, "This is what my life is about, being an example and showing people you can improve your life and achieve your goals if you believe in yourself, work hard and put God first."

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Kenya Smith Announces His Candidacy for Congress

By Eric Connerly

Former Director of Intergovernmental Relations for the City of New Orleans Kenya Smith recently announced his candidacy for U.S. Congressional District 2, which covers parts of Orleans and Jefferson Parish. This seat is now held by the embattled longtime incumbent William Jefferson.

Kenya Smith is touting his

to Washington D.C. and continuing to fight for the people of the city of New Orleans to get the resources it needs in rebuilding. "In the capacity that I have worked in as Director of Intergovernmental Relations I have helped secure funding for levees, housing, infrastructure, issues of public safety, and these are just a few of the areas we need to address as we move forward and I feel I am best

us and concentrate on the things we have in common that binds us together and truly be one New Orleans standing united." "This is not the time for us to stand as a house divided, we must work together to be a better city and the time is now."

Smith continues talking about his goal to unite the city as he cites his heroes Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr., Former President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, Jesus Christ and his parents, "Their lives were all about love, giving and serving their fellow man," says Smith. Continuing his sentiments about the importance of unity he says, "That's what this race is about uniting the city, and getting the resources we need and to build a city where all the people can

prosper, and I feel my life as well as my record speaks for itself and we need someone in Congress with integrity that we can trust, who can turn the page and start a new chapter for our city; leading us in a new direction and with the assurance that they will have an advocate of the people in Kenya Smith."



Kenya Smith

credentials as being someone immersed and well versed in community issues as well as having ties to the business community. He feels that the skills he possess makes him uniquely qualified and are necessary for the next person going to congress as the city recovers. "I feel that if we are going to go in a new direction and get away from the politics of old that we need to elect new types of leaders to guide our path to the future and that's why I decided to run for this position," says Smith.

Smith says that his will to serve came from his parents where his father ministered the gospel serving his congregation and people in the community and his mother who was a teacher in the New Orleans public schools. "I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by a loving family, who has given me the tools to succeed, but it is more than that, they also taught me to be vigilant about being an advocate for change and that's what my life has been about and that is what this campaign is about."

He says he wants to continue to help the city recover by going

qualified to handle the challenges that we as a city face as we forge ahead."

Smith also says he wants to concentrate on education and economic development because he feels they go hand in hand. "I feel if we are going to be competitive economically then we have to focus on getting a workforce that can compete in a 21st century economy and the types of jobs that will be coming to the city, and it is essential if we want to be a world class city then we must have a first rate educational system to train and educate the future leaders and the workforce in our city so that everyone can have an opportunity to get a piece of the economic pie."

After Hurricane Katrina the city has seen racial and class divisions increase. This is an issue Smith says he wants to tackle head on. "I have to say that the city has had problems in the areas of race and class, but the waters of Hurricane Katrina did not discriminate, for people of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds were affected, and it is time to put all the things that separate us behind

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Data Around Town

The Essence Music Festival rolled through the Crescent City earlier this month, and as always Data was there.

Photos by Glen Summers



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1. Data News Weekly Editor-in-Chief Edwin Buggage and radio personality and philanthropist Tom Joyner; 2. R&B superstar Musiq; 3. Bishop T.D. Jakes, CNN's Soledad O'Brien and Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones; 4. The captivating Jill Scott; 5. New Orleans cultural ambassador, trumpeter and composer Irving Mayfield; 6. Legendary performer Gil Scott-Heron; 7. New Orleans Urban League President Nolan Rollins, New Orleans City Councilman and Congressional Candidate James Carter, New Orleans Businessman Terrell Clayton; 8. New Orleans own and Grammy nominee singer Ledisi; 9. New Orleans own Roi Anthony performs Long Way From Home with Pallo da Jiint; 10. Pannelists from CNN & Essence's forum on Black in America discussion.

The Soul of New Orleans



42nd Anniversary Celebration



Kermit Ruffins



Michael Ward



Sharon Martin



Al Ancar



Raghan Duroseau

Kermit Ruffins, Michael Ward, Sharon Martin, Ed Perkins, Al Ancar and much more

Join Data as we party with a purpose and celebrate this milestone. Since 1966, Data News Weekly has been the trusted news source for African Americans in New Orleans. This year, Data invites you to join us as we celebrate completing our 42nd year of being "The People's Paper".

Data's Gala Event has become a must attend function each year, providing top notch entertainment, great food and an elegant atmosphere while benefiting a worthy cause. Proceeds from the annual event benefit the Joseph M. "Scoop" Jones Continuing Education Fund (JMJE) which serves the community by providing

funding for students who want to further their education at one of New Orleans local Colleges or Universities.

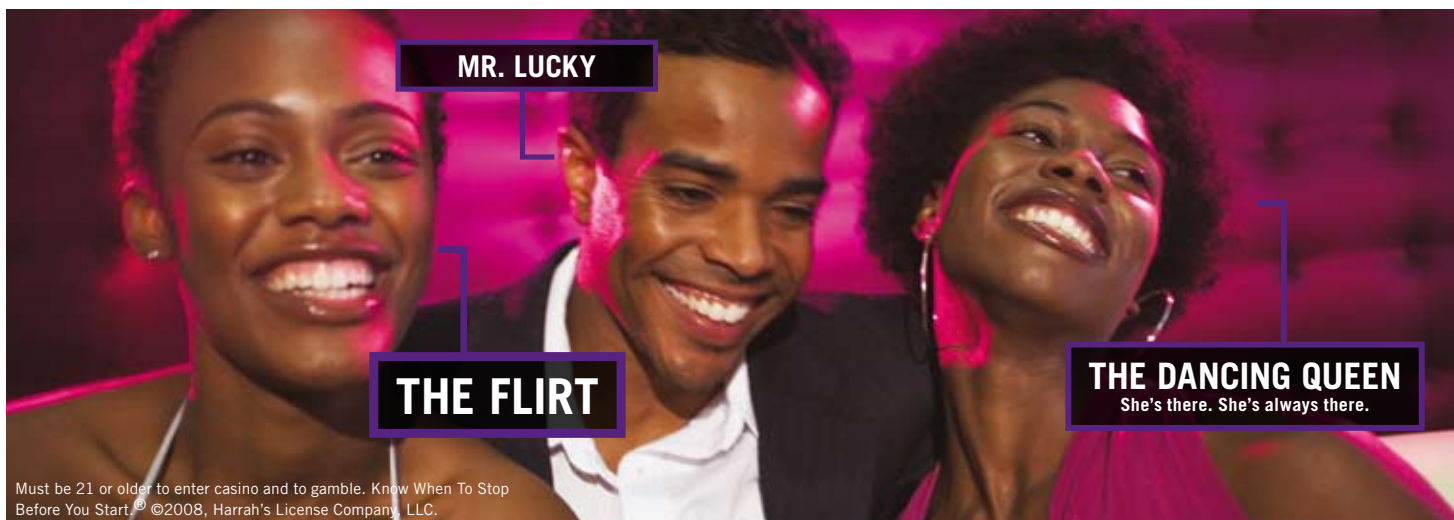
This year's Gala Event will be held at The Fine Arts Center, 1733 Constantinople Street, and will feature world class performers and local favorites. Kermit Ruffins, Sharon Martin, Michael Ward, Al Ancar, Ed Perkins and more will lend their talents to this worthy cause, and the evening will be hosted by New Orleans own Raghan Duroseau.

Make plans to join us this year, it is well worth the ticket price and you won't want to miss it.

Tickets are \$35 general admission or \$125 VIP admission and can be purchased at the door.

The doors open for general admission at 8pm.

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It would discourage domestic oil and gas production and would tax American companies — and *not* the foreign companies. The cost of energy would go up. We'd pay more for heating and cooling — and more at the pump¹.

But the fight is not over. Some members of Congress will be scheming to present the same tax in a different form.

The energy industry is vital to Louisiana.

We hope Senators Landrieu and Vitter will continue to be there to protect our families and protect our businesses.

The NBCC and our local affiliates represent 95,000 Black owned businesses and provide advocacy that reaches all of the nation's million Black owned businesses.

We salute Senators Landrieu and Vitter for their vote against new energy taxes.



Thank You Senators Landrieu and Vitter for Saying NO to Higher Energy Prices

LOUISIANA
BLACK CHAMBER
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The National Black Chamber of Commerce



NEW ORLEANS
REGIONAL
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PAID FOR BY THE NATIONAL BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
www.nationalbcc.org

¹ Energy Bill Study, CRA International, 2007

The NBCC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization dedicated to the economic empowerment of African American communities. 190 affiliated chapters are locally based throughout the nation.

Love and Relationships

Where's the love in your relationship?



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Hi folks, let's talk more about love in your relationship. Most relationships start off with a boom; in other words, the more you see that special someone, the more you want to be with that person. It's a wonderful and beautiful experience. Well, what makes us feel this way when words are sometimes hard to explain what we are feeling on the inside? It's called "Passion"

people. The question is, what is Passion?

Passion is when you are emotionally excited about someone. It's when you are enthused about that person. It's when you have a strong desire or feelings for that person. Let me bring it closer to home; it's when you love that person very much. Passion is a key element in a relationship between a woman and a man. You have to have it to keep the relationship healthy and long lasting. Passionate love in a relationship will allow us to get to know the other person and be known by him or her even more.

Passionate love in a relationship will allow you to serve one another and maintain physical closeness to him or her. Test yourself and see if the relationship you may be in now has that passionate love in it. Alright, here we go, think of the person that you love most passionately right now. If you are not in love right now, think of the last person that you loved with a passion. Maybe, if you haven't been in love, think of the person you came closest to caring for

in that way. Come on, there's someone.

Now, let me ask those that are now still in relationships; is the passion still there? If you said yes to that question, then you are doing fine. Just keep doing what you have been doing so that it can get better and better. Now, on the other hand, if you said no to that question, then you are in big trouble. Listen people, your relationships and marriages can be saved if it's not too far gone. You may still care for that person, so don't just walk away just yet. Look, think about what you once had and how beautiful it was between you and how you both were in love. Talk about allowing the love that you once had in that relationship to grow back again. Everyone needs somebody loving and compassionate in his or her life; even you. Some of you may have said, or heard others say "I don't need no one; I can just live in this world by myself." However, you know in your heart that you don't really mean that.

Folks, that's why in the Book of Genesis God made Adam. He said himself that it

was not good for man to live alone, so he made Eve from the rib of Adam. Folks, get the love back in your relationships. You need it to encourage and enhance your marriages and those who are planning to get married in the future. Folks, let me ask you another question? Have you ever been passionate about anything in your life? Take your time and be honest with yourself. Sure you have that job that you love and you have hardly ever been late, or that hobby you love with friends fishing, tennis, basketball, bowling, or singing.

You know that you enjoy and love it, because you have a passion for it. Folks, try using that same energy in your relationships that you're now in, and see the fulfillment and joy it will bring both of you. God bless, and keep the love in your relationships.

For comments or suggested topics you can contact Dr. Aaron E. Harold at rharold1@cox.net or 504.813.5767.

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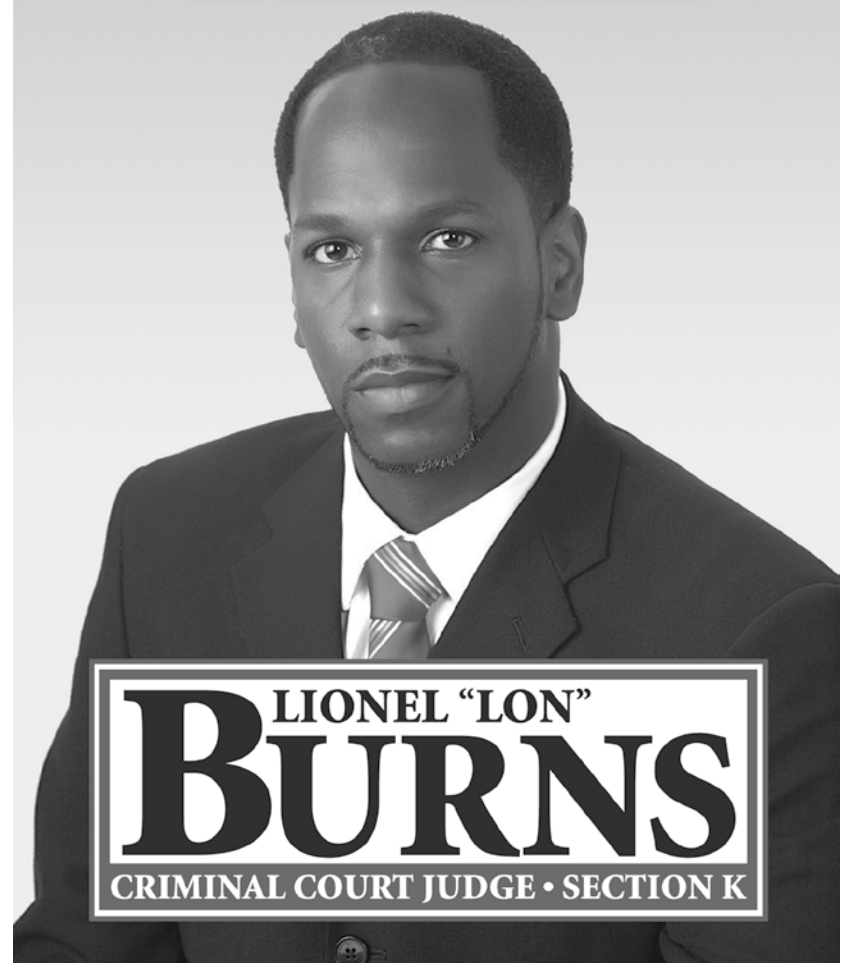
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The Time to be Afraid is Now



Harry C. Alford
Data Columnist

Beyond the Rhetoric

Not since the Great Depression started with the stock market crash of 1929 and followed by an immediate run on the banks has there been such doubt in areas such as "Trust", "Accountability", etc. when it came to where we put our precious money.

Our investments, assets, cash and everything else of value is now on the line. There is a chance that most of it will evaporate right before our eyes and there is nothing we can do about it. Most of this started with the sub-prime mortgage hustle. It has turned out to be a bigger monster than

most of us imagined.

One of the biggest examples is IndyMac Bank. This company is a spin off of Countrywide (one of the biggest firms involved in the sub-prime mortgage scam).

Countrywide took its finest products and birthed the Independent Mortgage Acceptance Corporation, hence the name IndyMac. According to Thomson Financial, "Indy was the second-largest mortgage lender in the United States, and the seventh largest savings and loan, with \$32 billion in assets and \$19 billion in deposits and \$1 billion uninsured.

It was the biggest bank failure in years. Since 2000, according to the FDIC, there have been 32 bank failures in the United States, with IndyMac the fifth one so far in 2008 and bigger than all the other 31 put together." Those depositors with more than \$100 thousand stand to lose all above the \$100 thousand threshold. If you had \$800 thousand in IndyMac you stand to only come out with \$100 thousand.

The rest is a big gamble and most likely at least 50 percent will be lost by the depositor.

Remember, only \$100 thousand in deposits is insured by the FDIC. There is no bank, investment brokerage anywhere that will guarantee you more than the initial

\$100 thousand. This is not security!

The real scary part is that the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.) has another 90 to 150 banks on its list of "troubled" lenders. Is your bank on that list? You can't tell as the FDIC is keeping it a secret to prevent you from running the bank and causing it to collapse like IndyMac. Yes, the times are indeed changing and you nor I know what to do. The government, Congress, Wall St. and others are going in circles and are at a lost on what to do. You and I are at the bottom of this and will be the ones most hurt. **YOUR MONEY ISN'T SAFE!**

Don't think you can avoid this by running to a major bank. They have troubles too. Wachovia Securities, formerly AG Edwards and now a division of the 4th largest bank in the nation – Wachovia Corporation, is now having difficulty in its daily business. The Secretary of State of Missouri after receiving hundreds of complaints from customers who were denied access to their cash sprung a raid on this brokerage last week. Her intent was "to make the investors whole". This looks like the next big horror story.

The equity in your home, the American Dream, is going up in smoke with the rising tide of foreclosures. Even if you have your home free and clear, you are still at

risk. For every foreclosure within two miles of your home you will lose approximately \$7,000 in net equity. It doesn't take long for this to start mounting up and chipping away at your family's future.

What is going to happen to our retirement accounts and life insurance policies? These two industries have long been investing in the above areas and they must be taking a beating right now.

When the "Baby Boomers" start retiring and cashing in on long-term life insurance policies will they be in for a major shock also? Probably, as the pain is being spread throughout the world.

All of this and China is one of our major creditors. Our personal wealth is going down the tubes; our dollar is shrinking in value weekly; lost faith in the financial markets and a foreign country who could call in our "note" whenever they feel like it. It took our parents/grandparents twenty years and a world war to get out of the last Great Depression. How long and at what price will we have to pay for this one? Let us pray.

Harry Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce. Website: www.nationalbcc.org.

*Crown Royal Salutes
the Data News Weekly
42nd Anniversary*



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2007 - 2008 Trailblazers of the Month to be honored at Gala Event

Each month Data News Weekly and the Joseph M. "Scoop" Jones Continuing Education Fund (JMJ), in conjunction with AT&T, take a moment to spotlight someone who has done incredible things within the community. These unsung heroes and heroines are the Trailblazer of the Month.

The 2007 - 2008 Trailblazers of the Month will join with Data News Weekly and JMJ as we celebrate our 42nd year of publishing "The People's Paper" and during this event, one of these outstanding individuals will be named "Trailblazer of the Year" for exemplifying extraordinary community service over and above the call. We hope you will join us in honoring them at the Gala, and take time now to read a summary of the accomplishments of these brave and heroic individuals.



Kimberly Dilosa

Kimberly did not exactly have youth enrichment in mind as a career goal, but after an internship through the Port of New Orleans she grew frustrated with the endless violence among young

people in her beloved city. Upon receiving her degree from Tuskegee in 1997, she returned home on a mission to make New Orleans a "teen friendly" city. Dilosa has received recognition from a host of local, regional, and national organizations for her vision of creating a safe and productive environment for the teens of New Orleans.



Wayne Carriere

Wayne Carriere was inspired to chronicle his thoughts and feelings by literally make his life "an open book". Carriere wrote a book entitled Inspirational Perspectives of a Katrina Storm Victim

He felt the book was necessary to demonstrate how hope, faith, and endurance were key to his survival after Hurricane Katrina. For many years Carriere has been involved in community activities mentoring young people and serving and through his work has affected the lives of many youths. Wayne Carriere is a man on a mission, as he continues to inspire with his work giving people hope through spirituality.

Wayne Benjamin



He is one of the most recognizable radio personalities in the Crescent City with a special place in his heart for the future leaders of our city; our youth. For the past five years Wayne Benjamin has shaped the minds of young people in New

Orleans through the "Wild Wayne Experience". His foundation has afforded many young people with the experience of attending the Anthony Bean Community Theater. Through his foundation he has been able to reach out to young people and make a difference. Wayne feels that it is important to engage children in a variety of experiences that will enrich them for a lifetime.



Shedrick White

Throughout the early to mid 90s, while working on his college degree, White began working with youth. But it was after the infamous violence on the streets of New Orleans claimed the

life of his younger brother that White was determined to dedicate his life to not only working with our youth, but to transforming them. White is an accomplished poet and has produced a CD & DVD to showcase his talents. He has developed several programs promoting peace. His poetry has been the healing balm for restoring peace among youth gangs in this city.



L'Oreal Birden

L'Oreal Evans-Birden, "Kamaria Esa" as she is known to the New Orleans arts community, has been a quiet community activist for most of her adult years.

She is a noted poet and vocalist to the arts community. She has dedicated her efforts to ensuring that parents understand that they are educators of their children. Mama Kamaria, as she is often referred to by area youth, possesses natural maternal energy that is exuded everywhere she goes. It is almost unnatural to see her without her children or someone listening for one word of knowledge that her many experiences in the community has taught her.



Gwendolyn Richardson

She is a warrior for those who sometimes do not have the courage or the strength to fight for themselves. Much of her community work is centered on children

with behavioral problems and domestic violence. For thirty years she has been an advocate against violence against women. Her work also extends into helping many New Orleans artists recover during these hard times. Through Richardson's work with ASHE she is able to provide many returning citizens with resources such as dealing with FEMA and insurance companies, as well as tips on how to avoid hurdles to make their transition smoother.

trailblazer



Corey J. Hebert, MD

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. Dr. Hebert

has been dubbed as the expert on "Post-Katrina" healthcare. 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 his own private funds because as he puts it, "Sometimes people have to do what they have to do, no matter the price".



Stephen Bradberry: Organizing the Community to Action

After the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, Stephen Bradberry has become a warrior on the frontlines pleading the case for those who have been disenfranchised as a result. Over the years Steve has been a teacher, mentor and presently is the Lead Organizer of the

New Orleans chapter of ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now). Bradberry has been an advocate fighting the everyday battles that affect low-income communities across the city. He has fought to protect the economic, political and social rights of many New Orleanians whose voices are often not heard. He has been inside the fights for a living wage, preventing lead poisoning in children, giving parents a say in regards to the education of their children, fighting predatory lending practices, and working to increase voter participation among poor and minority residents of New Orleans.



Burnell Moliere

He is a pillar in the New Orleans community who has over the years been a force in the business community as well as a civic minded individual who has given back to give a hand up to those less fortunate. Burnell Moliere, the owner of AME Services Inc. a building service contracting company, inspires others through his hard work and

dedication. In addition to running a successful company he has given his time and money where many have often provided lip service, he has been proactive in helping to solve some of the many problems that plague the city of New Orleans. Moliere says his life's work has been about helping people and giving them a chance to compete and succeed.



William Myles: Desire for Change

Myles has taken the skills he has acquired over the years and have brought them to the Crescent City in an effort help the people of the city of New Orleans regain a sense of normalcy and hope about what lies in their future. He is the Owner's Representative and Developer of the Florida/Desire Neighborhood.

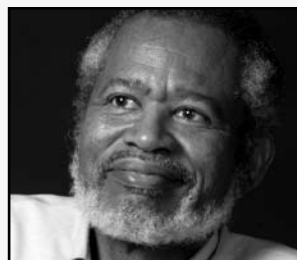
While helping rebuild the community he is working on another project training the next generation of youth to aspire to fulfill all their dreams and ambitions and be future leaders in the community. 'Dream City,' his current project, has a goal is to create a place that will serve as an incubator and training ground for young people to work in a nurturing environment with mentors in various fields of endeavor.



Deforest Cornish: Saving the Children

Throughout his life, Deforest Cornish has worked to help young people. He has made his life mission giving back to children. To honor his deceased mother Linda Cornish, Cornish began plans on the Linda School, and independent educational enrichment program that takes a more holistic approach

to education. After years of remaining focused, The Linda School programs are in New York City and his native New Orleans, "It has taken a lot of hard work to get everything in place, but I'm just glad that we can now get about the business of helping young people." Cornish incorporates hip-hop music to help children learn, saying "We should meet them where they are if that's what their interested in." He has also in conjunction with his students written a children's book; a biography of hip-hop founder/pioneer DJ Kool Herc called "Herc Herc" with the proceeds going to help further the mission of the Linda School.



Art from the Heart: Harold X. Evans

Good art can inspire. It can inspire people to dream, it can provide a mirror for us to view the ugliness and beauty that is in all of us. Good art can make us face ourselves and inspire us to be better human beings.

For almost three decades Harold X. Evans has been the personification of good art, as he has played a variety of roles as an actor, activist, mentor/teacher and mental health professional helping to uplift the spirits of those he has touched throughout his life. On stage his influence is widely known, but for three decades Evans has also worked as a mental healthcare professional helping people cope with a variety of mental health issues. He feels that this is an area that not enough emphasis has been placed on after Hurricane Katrina.

Evans remains steadfast in his commitment to the city and his mission to inspire. Through his art he has been able to uplift a community. And in this time of need for the city he has been a valuable cultural asset, in a city where the culture; its art and artist is the blood that flows through the veins giving it its vibrancy and life.

Regional Delegation Returns from Panama Fact-Finding Mission

Mayor C. Ray Nagin and a regional delegation from Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines Parishes have returned from a four-day trade mission to the Central American nation of Panama. The trip focused on the ongoing expansion of the Panama Canal, a project set for completion in 2014. The delegation is working to ensure that the entire New Orleans region benefits from the coming increase in maritime traffic to the Gulf of Mexico.

Among those attending were Plaquemines Parish President Billy Nungesser, Walter Leger of St. Bernard Parish, Gerald Bologna of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission, Louis Armstrong International Airport Director Sean Hunter and Caesar Burgos of the Regional

Transit Authority. House Speaker Pro Tem Karen Carter-Peterson, Representative Juan LaFonta, Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell, Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis, and several local business leaders also were part of the delegation.

"The widening of the Panama Canal will bring opportunities that we can seize only if we operate as a single, united region," said Mayor Nagin. "The successful, private ports in Panama provide an example of the impact that these projects can have on an entire community. As we prepare for the future, the development of a regional port, including a deep water draft facility, is critical for Southeastern Louisiana."

The group arrived in Panama on Saturday afternoon and immediately

toured the Port of Balboa in Panama City. The Port of Balboa is privately owned and operates 24-hours a day, employing 2,500 people. The group began Sunday with a tour of the Miraflores Locks, one of sets of locks that control the water levels in the canal as ships move from the Atlantic into the Pacific and vice versa. The day ended with a boat tour of the Panama Canal.

On Monday, the delegation met with the Maritime Authority of Panama and the Foreign Relations Commission of the National Assembly. During an afternoon meeting with COPA Airlines, they discussed the possibility of adding flights directly between Panama and New Orleans. Hunter is preparing a packet of additional information for the airline.

On Tuesday, the Mayor and the delegation visited the Port of Manzanillo in the city of Colon on the Caribbean side of Panama. The delegation also met with Nilda Iris, the General Manager of the Colon Free Zone, a tax-exempt area for production and shipping of products, and with the Autoridad del Canal de Panama (Panama Canal Authority). They also traveled to the Panama City Hall, where a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by leaders from Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes was delivered and left for signature by the vice-mayor of Panama, who was out of the office because of a medical emergency. The MOU establishes the Metropolitan New Orleans Regional Port Initiative (MNORPI). The

purpose of the agreement is to facilitate trade opportunities as MNORPI.

Plaquemines Parish President Billy Nungesser said the trip made it clear that the region must work collaboratively to take advantage of the future opportunities.

"It was obvious that we need to put politics and out differences aside and make sure we don't miss this opportunity," Nungesser said. "Once it happens, we won't have it again. We had better make sure we put our money in the best place to advance the whole state."

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