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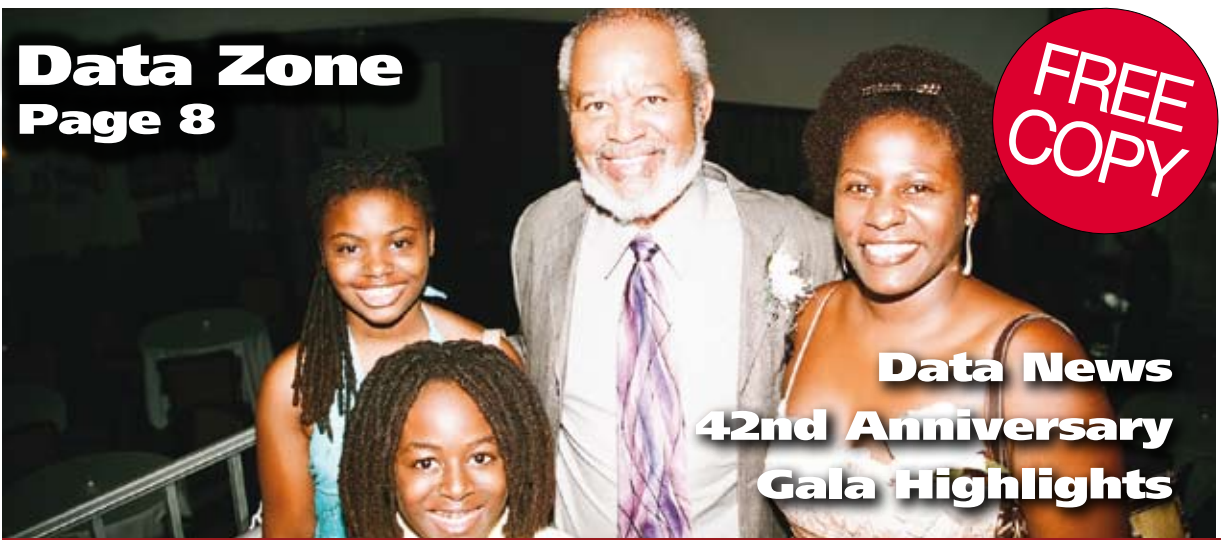
New Orleans

# Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

**Data Zone**  
Page 8



**Data News**  
42nd Anniversary  
Gala Highlights

August 9 - 22, 2008 42nd Year Volume 43 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

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*The Soul of New Orleans*

# Data News Celebrates

## at 42nd Anniversary Gala



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# Data News Weekly's 42nd Anniversary Gala Honors Heroes and Scholars



**Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.**

The Fine Arts Center in Uptown New Orleans was filled with longtime friends, sponsors, readers, and community leaders as Data News Weekly celebrated 42 years of service at its annual anniversary gala Thursday, July 24.

The event was more than just a celebration, however. It served as an opportunity to honor influential community leaders with the Trailblazer Award, and deserving college students with the Joseph M. "Scoop" Jones Continuing Education Fund Scholarship. Sponsors who have supported Data News Weekly through the years were

also honored.

The Gala, which featured live music, food selections from several local caterers, and an exclusive VIP floor for honorees, benefits the Joseph M. "Scoop" Jones Continuing Education Fund. The JMJ Continuing Education Fund serves the community by providing scholarships for students who want to further their education at one of New Orleans' local colleges or universities. The 2008 scholarship recipients are Brittany Odom and Angelica Boyd, both juniors at Dillard University. The two recipients are also mass communication majors with B averages.

Odom, who serves as editor-in-chief of Dillard

## On the Cover...

**Clockwise from the top:** Terry B. Jones, Publisher, Data News Weekly presented the Trailblazer of the Year Award to Gwendolyn H. Richardson, this year's recipient; (Left to Right) Jazz Trumpeter Kermit Ruffins, Terry Jones, Data News Weekly, and Jazz Violinist Michael Ward; John Singleton of Reynolds American was presented a certificate by Terry B. Jones, Publisher of Data News Weekly, for their support to JMJ and Data News Weekly throughout the years; Renowned Violinist Michael Ward gave his usual support as an entertainer at the Gala. Photos by Alfred Peters

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**Opposite Page:** "Let's Party" shown in the background is the house band, performing on stage is Vocalist Ed Perkins and Violinist Michael Ward. After the awards ceremony it was time to get down and have fun. Have fun they did!  
**This page top row:** Joseph M. "Scoop" Jones Continuing Education Fund Board President, Kim Brown, presenting scholarship award; State Representative District 101 Cedric Richmond and also a Candidate for US Congress District 2, Terry B. Jones, Publisher, Data News Weekly, and his son, Glenn Jones. (Shown from left to right). **Second row:** Scholarship recipient and a Junior at Dillard University, Brittany Odom; The infamous Ms. Sharon Martin sings between doubling as one of our hostesses for the evening; Vocalist Ed Perkins performs giving his support at the Gala. Photos by: Alfred Peters

University's student newspaper, The Courtbouillon, said that she was surprised when she learned that she had been selected, and is very appreciative for the scholarship.

"I am extremely honored to have even been thought of when it came to this award," said Odom, who has plans to pursue a career in either television or print journalism once she graduates. Odom is also interested in earning a master's degree in mass communication.

"I've always been interested in news and current events and I enjoy writing, so I looked at my options once I got to college and figured that mass communication was what I should be studying," said Odom.

Boyd is the photography editor for The Courtbouillon. She is interested in several fields in the

mass communication industry including journalism, broadcasting and public relations. Boyd said that being selected for the JMJ Continuing Education Fund Scholarship has made her desire to strive for excellence grow.

"I feel very honored," said Boyd. Boyd added that her main focus has been maintaining her grades. She would also like to attend law school after graduation.

"The mass communication field is so broad, and I feel as though knowing media law would take me much further in my career," said Boyd. She said that she would love to be able to go into the entertainment industry and try her hand at managing people, as well as being on television sharing her views on the latest crisis in America.

The recipients will use the JMJ scholarship funds to offset costs

of textbooks, tuition, and other college-related fees.

Another portion of the evening was dedicated to honoring the 2007-2008 Trailblazers. The Trailblazers were recognized with plaques. Each honoree's biography and contributions were read to the audience as the awards were presented. A slideshow with photographs of the Trailblazers was also shown during the presentation. The 2007-2008 Trailblazers are:

- Kimberly Dilosa
- Wayne Benjamin
- L'Oreal Birden
- Wayne Carriere
- Shedrick White
- Gwendolyn Richardson
- Corey J. Hebert, MD
- Stephen Bradberry
- Burnell Moliere
- William Myles

- Deforest Cornish
- Harold X. Evans

After the 2007-2008 Trailblazers were honored, Data News Weekly's publisher Terry Jones announced the Trailblazer of the Year. Gwendolyn Richardson, who does community work with children dealing with behavioral problems and victims of domestic violence, received a special Trailblazer of the Year plaque. Richardson expressed great appreciation for the recognition.

Another highlight of the evening occurred when Louisiana State Representative Cedric Richmond presented a special resolution to Data News Weekly's Publisher Terry Jones. During the presentation, Richmond reminisced about his family's longtime relationship with the Jones family and Data News Weekly, including

Terry's father, Scoop Jones.

Terry Jones also introduced the Data News Weekly staff to the audience and expressed their commitment to continuing the legacy that his father started. The newspaper will continue to focus on the news that the community wants and needs to know.

Live entertainment for the night included music from Kermit Ruffins, Michael Ward, Sharon Martin, Ed Perkins, and Al Ancar. The performances took place throughout the evening with Martin closing out the celebration. Martin and Raghan Durousseau served as MCs for the Gala. Once all awards and scholarships had been presented, the evening culminated with everyone joining in the celebration with much dancing and laughter.



# LSU Partners With New Orleans Recovery School District in \$110,000 Workforce Prep Course

*LSYOU Program Engages At-Risk Youth on Academics, Employment and Leadership*

Twenty New Orleans Recovery School District eight graders received a chance to enjoy the feeling of graduating on LSU's campus recently through the LSYOU program.

LSYOU, which stands for Louisiana State Youth Opportunities Unlimited, is a program created by the LSU College of Education's Susan Gaston nearly 25 years ago.

"It's the culminating day for students who made it through a rigorous five-week program, living on campus, working on campus, studying with LSU students and working with university staff," said Gaston.

The ceremony featured performances by the LSYOU Choir and Dramatic Arts programs. Malcolm Myer, section chief for Government Relations for the Louisiana Attorney General's Office, sent the New Orleans students home with a vision of how to succeed beyond the LSYOU summer camp. Students received awards for their accomplishments

and a LSYOU Diploma of Completion in addition to their savings from their summer job.

The program has received national recognition for its track record in helping poor, academical-

Career Solutions' In-School Youth Development Program.

Recovery School District Superintendent Paul Vallas said the program was a natural fit.

"Our students have some of the

the trauma suffered from Hurricane Katrina.

"This program addresses the needs of students who are most likely to drop out of the educational system completely," he added.

cated workforce for the state of Louisiana.

The program does this by hosting the students on campus facilities, placing them in a positive, controlled atmosphere. In addition to structured academic counseling, the students also receive intensive support services from trained counselors to address any emotional or behavioral issues that could be barriers to increased academic performance.

With group meals and recreational activities, LEAP and academic tutoring, counseling and work readiness classes with mentors, and on-campus, paid jobs, the program fosters a sense of accomplishment, ability to succeed and the added bonus of exposing them to college or aspiring to higher educational or professional goals.

Gaston added that this type of positive intervention can really change people's lives.

"One of our graduates received a Purple Heart this year," she said. "He invited us to the ceremony because he thought we had really impacted his life. It was an honor to see someone so transformed and to still be a part of his life even after all these years. This is just one story of LSYOU's success."



Officials of LSYOU participate in ceremony.



New Orleans Recovery School District student accepts her certificate for completing the LSYOU program.

ly under-performing youth at-risk for dropping out of high school.

The program, which has worked with the East Baton Rouge Parish Workforce Board in the past, expanded this summer with more than \$110,000 in funding through Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana in conjunction with JOB1 Business and

greatest challenges in the state," said Vallas. "Our district serves students who are overwhelmingly poor and academically challenged. More than 85 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 85 percent of our students are two or more grade-levels behind. Plus, our children's lives were further complicated by

Gaston commented that the Recovery District's partnering with LSU on a program that has been in existence for 25 years was a great investment in state funds, hoping that money spent on students in advance would later pay off through a decreased drop-out rate as well as aiding in the creation of a more trained and edu-

## City's Controversial Home Remediation Program Suspended After Much Scrutiny

**Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.**

Employees of New Orleans Affordable Homeownership Corporation have been placed on paid leave as the board of NOAH works to investigate possible inappropriate business dealings and spending by the city agency.

Local television news station WWL-TV began probing into questionable contracts and lists of remediation work completed by NOAH as part of the Mayor's Home Remediation Program a few weeks ago. The remediation program offers free gutting services to eligible homeowners.

Poor record keeping lead to more concerns raised by the television station regarding whether work had actually been done on several of the properties listed. In addition, the news report revealed that NOAH's former executive director, Stacey Jackson, had ties to some of the entities awarded contracts, including two of the highest-paid contractors involved with the remediation program, Hall & Hall Enterprises LLC, owned by Richard Hall Jr., and Parish-Dubuclet Services Inc., owned by Trellis Smith.

"I am deeply concerned about the allegations that have arisen

surrounding an agency that we entrusted to implement a program to stabilize flood-damaged homes - a critical element of our recovery," said New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin in a formal letter to NOAH's chairman, Ed Shanklin.

Nagin also advised Shanklin and NOAH's Board of Directors to take a series of actions in an effort to investigate the issue further. The actions include ceasing operations and securing files, placing all employees on administrative leave, retaining an independent accounting firm, providing key information to the City Attorney's office, and reporting their find-

ings in two weeks. According to the letter, Nagin has already invited HUD to become involved in any aspect of the investigation it deemed necessary, as well as assigning the verification of work performed at each address to the Office of Recovery and Development Administration.

The mayor also stated in the letter that he was "concerned about the seriousness of allegations of potentially criminal activities by a key NOAH staff member."

The city's inspector general, Robert Cerasoli, has also launched an investigation into NOAH.

According to NOAH's website,

the New Orleans Affordable Homeownership Corporation was formed in 1989 as Urban Homeowners Corporation of New Orleans. Its purpose is to "develop, promote and administer housing initiatives, economic development programs, youth enhancement and senior services on behalf of the city of New Orleans via the Office of Planning and Development, formerly the Mayor's Division of Housing and Neighborhood Development."



# Pathways to Homeownership Program Designed to Increase Homeownership Opportunities

The Finance Authority of New Orleans in cooperation with the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the State of Louisiana Office of Community Development and the City of New Orleans will launch the first phase of a global 'Pathway to Homeownership' Soft-Second Mortgage Loan Program designed to assist residents in purchasing homes, and those current homeowners who need help with

renovating their homes.

The program will be open to properties located in the Housing Opportunity Zones in Orleans Parish, which were created in response to the two year citizen-driven Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) for recovery and redevelopment of New Orleans.

The initial phase of the program funded by the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) offers

soft-second mortgage loans for up to \$65,000 to first time homebuyers with household incomes of 80 percent or less of the metropolitan area median income (AMI). The loans will be available through participating lenders, and are offered at zero percent interest with payments on the loan deferred until the sale or refinance of the home. In addition, this phase of the program offers up to \$10,000

in closing cost assistance for the homebuyer's principal residence in any one of the Housing Opportunity Zones.

Homebuyers who have already received payments from the State under the "sell" or "relocate" options of the Road Home Program are not eligible to participate in this program.

The actual amount of the loan and closing cost grant received

will be determined by need and annual household income, since the goal of this loan program is to cover the 'gap' between the highest affordable first mortgage loan for which the homebuyer would qualify, and the purchase price or value of the home. The LRA has approved \$27.8 million to fund this portion of the program.

*See Homeownership, continued on page 15.*

## Mayors from both political parties join together to re-elect a strong, effective Senator for all of Louisiana.



**Nobody fights harder for Louisiana than Senator Mary Landrieu. She gets things done by using her seniority and working across party lines. She's a strong, determined voice for all of Louisiana. She brings people together and works to make our communities more livable, prosperous and safe. The following Louisiana Mayors support her re-election:**

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Martha W. Andrus, Grambling  
Ron Animashaun, Napoleonville  
Eddie Beckwith, Jr., Tallulah  
Roger Boudreaux, Church Point  
Herman P. Bourgeois, Gramercy  
Vern Breland, Sterlington  
Edward Brown, St. Joseph  
Maurice A. Brown, White Castle  
Marshall Brumfield, Folsom  
Charles Caillouet, Thibodaux  
David Camardelle, Grand Isle  
Gregory D. Clark, Lecompte  
Hiram Copeland, Vidalia  
Justin Cox, Fardoche  
Donald Cravins, Opelousas  
Danny Cupit, Westlake

Billy Joe Cupp, Baskin  
Billy D'Aquilla, St. Francisville  
Randy Dupree, Provencal  
George Dupuis, Erath  
Jimmy Durbin, Denham Springs  
Clarence Fields, Pineville  
Louis Fitzmorris, Abita Springs  
Mayson Foster, Hammond  
Kenneth A. Freeman, Many  
Cedric Glover, Shreveport  
George Grace, St. Gabriel  
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Ron Harris, Gretna  
James Haskin, Jr., Lucky  
Clarence Hawkins, Bastrop  
Willie Hendricks, Simsboro  
Joe Hicks, Bernice  
Kip Holden, Baton Rouge

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Coral A. Johnson, Cheneyville  
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Ron LeLeux, Sulphur  
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Harry "Kayo" Lewis, Rayville  
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Herman Malveaux, Chataignier  
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## State Representative Cedric Richmond Receives Strong Endorsements for Congress



State Representative Cedric Richmond

The Young Democrats of Louisiana (YDL) recently announced its endorsement of State Representative Cedric Richmond for Louisiana's Second Congressional District race. The vote was a unanimous decision by the YDL Executive Board.

Each Democratic Congressional candidate was invited to speak with or send a representative to meet with the YDL Executive Board. Those who participated took part in a question and answer session, covering issues from coastal restoration to "don't ask, don't tell."

"Representative Richmond is very pleased to receive the endorsement of the Young Democrats of Louisiana," Richmond

For Congress Communications Director Bambi Hall said. "This is yet another sign that the campaign is gaining momentum, particularly amongst the younger voters and new registrants who are being brought into the electoral process in record numbers by Senator Barack Obama."

According to Katrina Rogers, a YDL National Committeewoman from Caddo Parish, because of this year's Presidential election, young democrats are experiencing resurgence in the state of Louisiana.

"We are really excited and looking forward to changes in the Congressional areas of the state, and we're hoping to get more blue seats in Congress," she added.

Richmond also received the coveted Alliance For Good Government endorsement last month, and also picked up support from House Members Andy Anders (District 21), Damon Baldone (District 53), John Bel Edwards (District 72), Rickey Hardy (District 44), Patricia Smith (District 67), and Karen St. Germain (District 60), who were visiting New Orleans for the 34th annual summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures.



Richmond greets supporters during a recent event.

PHOTO: www.cedricrichmond.com

PHOTO: www.cedricrichmond.com

## Efforts to Clean Up Mississippi River Oil Spill Still Underway

New Orleans—The U.S. Coast Guard is still busy working to clean up as much as 420,000 gallons of oil spilled into the Mississippi River almost two weeks ago when a tanker collided with a barge. The op-



U.S. Coast Guard photo/ PO3 Jaclyn Young

erator of the tugboat pulling the barge was not properly licensed.

To date, oil pumping operations are underway. Though vessel traffic continues to move with safety restrictions, more than 500 vessels have been cleared, inspected, and/or decontaminated and released since operations began. The entire length of the river's ship channel remains open to deep-draft vessels. Sixty barges used the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet as an alternate route when there were restrictions on the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock, commonly known as Industrial Canal Lock.

More than 2,000 responders are currently deployed throughout the region affected by the spill. Field responders are using three tugs, 209 work boats, four barges, 11 skimmers and four vacuum trucks on scene to clean up the spill.

In addition, more than 158,000 gallons of oil/water mix has been recovered. Fifteen oiled animals have been captured, seven are in the process of being cleaned and five have been released.

As clean-up operations continue, work is also being done to salvage the barge DM 932, which has been stabilized.

Updated information regarding the progress of the clean-up and the removal of the barge is available at [www.neworleansoilspill.com](http://www.neworleansoilspill.com) and [www.incidentnews.gov/incident/7861](http://www.incidentnews.gov/incident/7861). Oiled wildlife can be reported at 504-393-0353.



U.S. Coast Guard photo/ PO3 Jaclyn Young



U.S. Coast Guard photo/ PO3 Jaclyn Young

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## Louisiana Selected to Participate in College and Career-Ready Institute

BATON ROUGE, La. – State education officials recently learned that Louisiana has been selected as one of eight states to participate in the national College and Career-Ready Policy Institute.

“It’s an honor to be selected for this program, and we take pride in the fact that the Institute recognizes Louisiana’s progress and commitment to readying high school students for life,” State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek said. “Our selection demonstrates our state is on the right track with its High School Redesign efforts as we seek to prepare students for life beyond

high school graduation. Overall, the states selected to participate in this program have aligned their K-12 academic standards and high school requirements to meet the demands of college and careers and are ready to take their efforts to the next level.”

Louisiana’s selection will allow education leaders to join representatives from Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, New Mexico, Ohio, and Tennessee to participate in a series of cross-state Leadership Sessions. The Institute will also provide custom-designed technical assistance to help each state achieve specific objectives, including:

- Developing goals to improve high school graduation, college and career-readiness, and post-secondary attainment;
- Reviewing the state’s comprehensive assessment system to ensure measurements align

with college and career-ready standards and allow student progress to be evaluated over time;

- Evaluating the state’s current system of accountability to determine whether college and career-readiness is a central priority;
- Designing a statewide system of supports and interventions to assist low-performing districts and schools; and
- Creating educational opportunities to ensure high-risk students advance to become college-ready.

“We think some of the key benefits for us will result from the Institute’s commitment to provide each state with tailor-made technical assistance as well as the opportunities we’ll have to share ideas with peers from other states,” Pastorek said. “This comes at a crucial time for us, considering

the Department is largely focused on ensuring our students are prepared to enter the 21st century workplace.”

In September, representatives from participating states will meet in Washington, D.C., to launch the program. Following the launch, Institute representatives will conduct in-state visits to gain a more thorough understanding of current policies and to identify potential issues the program can target. Following the state visits, the Institute will host the first cross-state Leadership Session in November.

The Institute is sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is a collaborative effort of Achieve, Data Quality Campaign, EducationCounsel, Jobs for the Future and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

## Data News Weekly Selects New Managing Editor

New Orleans Data News Weekly has recently hired Shaniece B. Bickham to serve as managing editor. Bickham, who has extensive experience in print journalism and public relations, is also an assistant professor in mass communication. Bickham brings her knowledge in these areas to Data News Weekly in an effort to continue the newspaper’s mission of lighting the road to the future and serving as The People’s Paper. She also served previously as Managing Editor of Data News Weekly.



Bickham’s professional experience includes working in community affairs and media relations with the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation and in research at Loyola University New Orleans. She also brings her knowledge to the classroom, having served in teaching positions with Tulane University, Dillard University, and the University of Phoenix.

The new managing editor’s educational background includes a master’s and doctoral degree in mass communication.

“My studies in mass communication allow me to analyze and determine news content for the newspaper from a critical perspective as well,” said Bickham.

Once settled in her new position, Bickham plans to offer commentary and blog posts on key news issues that affect the African-American community.

“I am elated to rejoin this staff and am committed to providing the most essential news each issue,” said Bickham. “Our readers can rest assured that they will receive pertinent information and news that matters at the local, state, national, and international levels.”

## Friends Gather for Pellerin’s Birthday Celebration



Derrick Williams – JW Marriot, Wayne Johnson – Manager of Pellerins, Erica Duroisseau – NRG Events and Promotions, Raghan Duroisseau – Marketing Manager KMP LLC, Kurte Pellerin – President of KMP LLC, Steve Ketchum, Herbert Alexander – Manager of Le Roux

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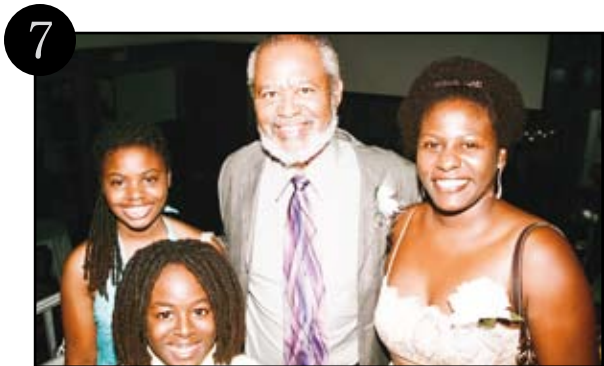
Justin Nicholas,  
General Science,  
SGA President



# Data News Weekly's 42nd Anniversary Gala Highlights

Attendees at the 42nd Anniversary Gala for Data News Weekly had a joyous time as they enjoyed good food and entertainment. Trailblazers, sponsors, and scholars were also honored during the event. The photographs below showcase some of the many highlights of the evening.

Photos by Alfred Peters



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9



10



11



12



❶ The JMJ Continuing Education Fund Gala, seated upstairs are some of the Trailblazers and their guests. Downstairs are our supporters who attended the Gala along with our sponsors and other Trailblazers and their guests. ❷ Terry B. Jones, Publisher, Data News Weekly and his cousin Daphne Guichard who gave us a helping hand at the Gala. ❸ Terry Jones shown with his cousin, Attorney Willard Hill (seated) and Judge Kern Reese (left to right) ❹ Hostess Sharon Martin shown with Trailblazer "Wild" Wayne Benjamin. ❺ Hostess Raghan Dourousseau with Trailblazer Shedrick White. ❻ Hostess Sharon Martin (left) with Trailblazer Kimberly Dilosa (right). ❼ Mrs. Birden's daughter and son (Left to right) Niya Oni Birden, Khalif Birden, Trailblazer Harold X. Evans and his niece also a Trailblazer, L'Oreal Evans Birden, made the Gala a "family affair". ❽ Trailblazer Wayne Carriere and Edwin Buggage, Editor of Data News Weekly. ❾ Glenn Jones (left), Robin Pittman, Candidate for Judge, and her husband Keith Pittman (right). ❿ Shaniece Bickham, Data News Weekly's new Managing Editor. ⓫ Local R&B Vocalist Al Ancar shown with Gala organizer, June Hazeur. ⓫ Hostess Raghan Dourousseau poses for a quick photo between announcing the next Trailblazer or sponsor.

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## Health

# Incidents of HIV Worse than Previously Known



George C. Curry  
NNPA

MEXICO CITY (NNPA) - The number of people infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is 40 percent higher than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been reporting each year, according to new figures released last Saturday.

According to the CDC, approximately 56,300 new HIV infections occurred in the United States in 2006. The previous estimate had been 40,000 new infections per year.

"It's important to note that the new estimate does not represent an actual increase in the number of new infections, but reflects our ability to more precisely measure HIV incidence and secure a better understanding of the epidemic," said Dr. Kevin Fenton, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention. "This new picture reveals that the HIV epidemic is - and has been - worse than previously known and underscores the challenges in confronting this disease."

The study shows that HIV has the greatest impact among African-Americans and gay and bisexual men of all races.

"The rate of new infections among non-Hispanic Blacks was seven times as high as that among Whites in 2006 (83.7 versus 11.5 new infections per 100,000 population)," the CDC said. "Blacks also accounted for the largest share of new infections (45 percent, or 24,900). Historical trends data show that the number of new infections among Blacks peaked in the late 1980s and

has exceeded the number of infections in Whites since that time."

The CDC acknowledged what activists have been saying all along: More concentrated prevention efforts are needed if the virus is ever going to be contained among African-Americans.

"The continued severity of the epidemic among blacks underscores the need to sustain and accelerate prevention efforts in this population," the CDC said. "While race itself is not a risk factor for HIV infection, a range of issues contribute to the disproportionate HIV risk for African Americans in the U.S., including poverty, stigma, higher rates of other STDs, and drug use."

Gays and bisexual men - referred to as men who have sex with men (MSM) - represented a significantly greater proportion of new infections in 2006 than any other group.

"MSM accounted for 53 percent (28,700) of estimated new HIV infections in 2006," CDC reported. "CDC's historical trend analysis indicates that HIV incidence has been increasing steadily among gay and bisexual men since the early 1990s, confirming a trend suggested by other data showing increases in risk behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV diagnosis in this population."

Heterosexuals accounted for 31 percent of new HIV infections in 2006.

The new CDC figures were expected to be announced at a news conference Sunday at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City. However, after several news outlets violated the scheduled embargo by reporting the findings on Saturday, the embargo was lifted.

CDC said it was able to come up with the new figures showing greater incidences of HIV by using new technology that allows them to pinpoint when a person was actually infected with HIV. In the past, the agency could only determine when a person was diagnosed, which could have been years after the infection.

## In The Spirit

# Relationships

*How to keep yourself happy*



Dr. Aaron E. Harold  
Data Columnist

We all need to be spiritually healthy. One of the most important ways to a better life is for us to keep ourselves happy, rather than satisfy everybody around us. Many times we take on a false sense of responsibility, because we feel we are required to make sure that others are happy and not putting enough time and effort into our own happiness. There is nothing wrong when we are caring and concerned about others we know. It's wonderful to reach out to others in need, but we can't forget about our own spiritual well being.

Our spiritual health is very important just like our physical health. When we exercise our physical muscles to stay healthy, we must also exercise our spiritual inner person. Family, our Creator wants us to be spiritually happy and energized, so stop trying to sacrifice your happiness to keep somebody else happy. However, that's not being selfish; it's about being real about yourself as a complete person. Our number one goal is to take care of ourselves.

In order to do that, we must keep in mind that some people are still not going to be happy no matter what we do for them; no matter how kind we are; no matter how much time and energy we give to them. Family, people have their own issues and things on the inside of them that they too need to resolve. We can't take responsibility for other folks' mistakes in life. If we do, those people will start to control and manipulate you, and eventually you will become spiritually unbalanced and sick. Spiritual wellness is very important to you and

me.

Spiritual Wellness can also determine the quality of happiness in our lives. Stop letting everybody interfere with your spiritual happiness. Family let me tell you this story; there was a couple that I grew up with who got married, and their marriage was fine for a little while, but soon their marriage was miserable. Shelly is a woman who came from an extremely negative family environment where she endured many unfair hardships growing up and she brought unhappiness and negativity right into her marriage with John.

You see Shelly didn't get her way like she wanted to, so she would pout and cut up. Shelly would do that for days sometimes weeks. She was always having some kind of crisis where she needed attention. She was always miserable and always snapping people up, if you know what I mean. We all know people like that. Folks, she did her best to make everyone around her spiritually miserable. John was a good loving man to Shelly; a good husband; I mean one of the best.

He went out of his way to keep Shelly happy. He would always build her up, trying to solve her problems, and letting her know that she would be fine. John did this for five years. He gave up his own happiness, but that didn't keep her happy and satisfied. John made up his mind that his wife was never going to change. He was spiritually miserable and exhausted. He went to Shelly and said to her "I love you, but no matter what I do for you, you're not going to be happy. So I'm finished trying."

She never heard John say that and mean it. Folks, he forced her to look within herself and deal with her problems for a change. That previous remark from John woke Shelly up, and now she is spiritually happy and loving it. Family, our Creator wants you and me to be spiritually happy and have his peace in us. God said, "Peace I give to you, not as the world give it." Family, don't let no one or anything rob you from your joy. God Bless You, and remember be happy because you deserve it.

For comments to this story contact Dr. Aaron Harold at rharold1@cox.net



# Juveniles Don't Belong in Adult Prisons



Marian Wright Edelman  
NNPA Columnist

cerating Youth in Adult Jails in America," released in November 2007, outlines the challenges to keeping

children safe in adult jails.

It catalogs the numerous jurisdictions throughout the United States where teens are placed in great danger because of the variety of flawed policies and laws governing juvenile incarceration. In 44 states and the District of Columbia, juveniles as young as 14 can be tried in the adult criminal system. Forty states either permit or mandate the jailing of young people in adult facilities before trial.

The report argues that children and teens should not be held to the same standard of accountability for their actions as grown-ups, citing research that shows the developmental differences between adolescents and adults. These findings indicate that the prefrontal cortex, which governs the "executive functions" of reasoning, advanced thinking and impulse control, is one of the last areas of the brain to mature.

In numerous cases, there is no public safety justification for locking up these young people in adult prisons. Juveniles may be held in adult jails for months or even years, although most of them are not charged with a violent crime, and many will not be convicted of any crime.

Nevertheless, they languish behind bars with dangerous criminals and are at great risk of being raped and beaten. Many are pushed to attempt suicide.

As in the administration of many laws in this country, Black and Latino children and teens end up in adult facilities in numbers disproportionately higher than their representation in the general population. Nationally, according to the Campaign for Youth Justice report, three out of four young people admitted to adult prison in 2002 were either Black or Latino.

At issue is the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDP). When originally enacted, it was designed to prevent young people from going to adult jails and prisons and to separate young people from adults while incarcerated.

These protections were called "Sight and Sound Separation"—a young person would be beyond the sight and sound of the adult inmates. Over time, however, these provisions have been eroded and do not apply to young people being tried in the adult criminal system.

Now judges in juvenile courts are often excluded from the decision to prosecute children and teens as adults. In many states, these decisions are made at the discretion of prosecutors, no matter how minor the

infraction might be.

The JJDP does not provide a level playing field for Black and Latino youths who are more likely than White youths to end up in adult prisons and jails.

We have an opportunity and responsibility to do better in our country. Placing juveniles in adult jails and prisons is an appalling injustice—and it doesn't work to reduce crime. With the JJDP set to be reauthorized this year, Congress must amend the Act to ban the placement of children or teens in adult jails or prisons no matter what court hears their case. This is the right and sensible thing to do.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information about the Children's Defense Fund, go to [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org).

Child Watch® Column—Jails and prisons are dangerous places for anybody, but especially for children and teens. Many of these institutions house vicious predators who have been locked up for brutal violent crimes.

Yet, on any given day, approximately 9,500 juveniles under the age of 18 are locked up in adult penal institutions. Children as young as 15 can be prosecuted as adults in many states without review by a judge or a court hearing.

The Campaign for Youth Justice report, "Jailing Juveniles: The Dangers of Incar-

## Let's Discuss the Credit Crisis

Bill Fletcher, Jr.

(NNPA)—Some weeks ago I had a discussion with a very wealthy businessman. When I was getting ready to leave I mentioned to him the devastation being brought about by the credit crisis. His response, which actually should not have surprised me, nevertheless infuriated me: "Yes, it is too bad," he said. "People were trying to live beyond their means."

Barely had the words left his mouth than I was ready to jump at him. I realized, however, that none of my arguments would make any sense to him because his vantage point was that of a rich person who was determined to stay rich, who was not able to see life through the eyes of working people and he had to justify the current state of affairs in order to sleep at night.

So, how was this businessman so fundamentally wrong? After all, in the media we often hear the same thing. Yet the reality is very different.

First, the living standard of the average US working person has been in decline since the mid 1970s. In other words, after you factor in inflation, our earnings have been dropping, so much so that we are at or beneath what workers were earning in 1967, again, factoring in inflation.

While productivity has been rising, our incomes have not. They have been kept

down by various things, including, layoffs, the restructuring of work, forced give-backs by employees, efforts to smash labor unions, and changing workplace technology.

Coupled with this have been policies, particularly those instituted beginning with the era of Ronald Reagan, to enrich the rich and the corporations through tax policies, and at the same time, cut or erode what was once called the 'social safety net' (unemployment, food stamps, etc.).

The other thing that happened was that much that we once received for free, or very low cost, started to cost. This would include items such as parks, public transportation, or garbage pickup.

The response to this situation was complicated. Generally speaking, people tried to handle these challenges on their own.

In fact, as they found themselves being squeezed they tended to believe that the problem was them. So, people looked for individual solutions. The most common was credit or debt. Particularly with banks giving out credit cards as if they were candy on Halloween, working people who were squeezed made greater and greater use of credit in order to stabilize their living standard.

This is not about people living beyond their means, contrary to what the rich businessman suggested, but instead was

about people trying to live. By the 1990s, the average person who possessed a credit card was carrying over roughly \$5,000 per month in credit card debt.

This was on top of housing payments and car payments. Yet when the housing 'bubble' unfolded, homeowners thought that they had discovered the golden goose and that the value of houses would continue to rise with the result being that homeowners could continue to borrow against the increasing value of their homes.

Things did not quite work out that way.

In the case of the housing bubble, what happened was the equivalent of the pyramid schemes you are probably familiar with. The first people to enter the game and leave, usually do VERY well. It is the rest of us that get stung when the pyramid collapses.

So, what is this all to say? Well, frankly, that too many of us thought that the problem that we faced was a problem of our own making rather than realizing that the economic system has been operating against us.

While a small percentage of the population has become fabulously wealthy, the bottom 80% of the population has found itself either stagnating or in free fall. Most of us hoped that credit could keep us afloat, but even a life preserver becomes water-

logged after long periods in the water.

The answer to this situation is collective action. Sure, if you are lucky to hit the 'number' you may be able to walk away free and clear but that is really not an option for most of the millions of people who are pulling their hair out trying to figure out what to do.

Not only do we need to demand of politicians, such as Senator Obama, that if elected they will take steps to address this, but we must also organized ourselves through unions and community-based organizations to insist that the public is protected against the ravages of the economy. That means that we not only need to improve our living standards, but we need to make sure that society is looking out for those who are falling through the black hole created by conservatives.

Taking personal responsibility in this case - to borrow the term that the conservatives love to throw around—means joining with others to fight back.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a Senior Scholar with the Institute for Policy Studies and is the immediate past president of TransAfrica Forum. He is the co-author of the recently published "Solidarity Divided" which examines the crisis of organized labor in the USA. He can be reached at [papaq54@hotmail.com](mailto:papaq54@hotmail.com).



# Presumptive, Arrogant, Egotistical; Who Does He Think He Is?



Cheryl Mainor  
Data Columnist

Just turn on your television set and watch the three-ringed circus that the 24/7 cable news world has become and it seems that Sen. Barack Obama is the biggest enigma to ever hit the political scene. Where is this guy coming from and who does he think he is? Does he think he is better, is he to arrogant, too cocky, too over-confident? These are the ridiculous questions being thrown out there to titillate the scene today. But it's backfiring a bit. Because actually, when measuring the mores of Obama against his opponent Sen. John McCain, the answer is obvious, not only to me, but to the majority of Americans, and to the rest of the world, that these two candidates are not in the same race, and by race I mean political race, no pun intended.

Maybe if I could have the chance to answer their questions all at once, it could all go away since all it seems to take is the smallest bit of common sense to know the right answers. Observe:

Q) Is Obama too confident?

A) No, he isn't. He is going to win, plain and simple. Now how about if instead of him being confident and saying "Change you can believe in" he had a slogan something like, "I don't know if I am going to be a good president, but I sure hope so, don't you?" Wouldn't that make them feel better?

Q) Is Obama too arrogant?

A) No, he isn't. He is running for President of the United States of America, the "Leader of the Free World." So is John McCain, and all other candidates who throw their hat in the ring for that spot. Every man or woman who signs up for that job is by nature arrogant. Each one of them somehow has the notion that he or she alone has what it takes to lead this nation, and indeed the rest of the world. It takes a "big head" to wake up and say, "Hey, I can get people to elect me." Think about it.

Q) Is Obama too inexperienced in foreign policy?

A) No, he isn't. He is as experienced in foreign policy as any other senator who serves on the Foreign Relations Committee who has not been the President, the Secretary of State, or a high level Diplomat in the State Department or an Ambassador. He is as experienced at being the President as anyone else who has never been the President before. I love it when they say "I have the experience" when the truth is that NONE of them have been the President a day longer than he has. They all have the same on-the-job-experience, which is NONE!

Q) Does it matter that Obama never served in the military?

A) No, it doesn't. As we know, "serving in the military" can be a misnomer. Our current president "served" in the military, just not actively. As for McCain and his war experience, being a prisoner of war does not teach you how to win wars, it teaches you how to survive a war! I know that won't sit well, but it's true! For the record, let it be known my first cousin is a true War-Hero, who died with honor in Vietnam. A US Marine, he threw his body on top of a live grenade to save his platoon. My father also served in Laos, and suffers still from Agent Orange exposure. Just so nobody thinks

I am against war heroes, I happen to love them, I just don't think that being a POW qualifies you more than anybody else unless you were in a command capacity.

Q) Is Obama a Muslim?

A) No, He isn't. Barack Obama was born of an American mother, and a Kenyan father. Several reports have indicated that both of his parents were Atheists—they did not believe in God, not Jehovah, not Allah, not Buddha, or Krishna, NO GOD! No human being can be born any religion. And because you cannot be born into a religion, he could not be a Muslim unless he chose to be a Muslim. He did not choose to be a Muslim. He chose to be a Christian because he said so. And according the Christian faith, that's what it takes to be one. You have to say so! Islam is not a race, Muslim is not a race, it is a religion that people choose. Some Arabic people are Christian, some Muslim, some Catholic (yes there are Catholics in the Middle East), some are Atheists, Agnostics, and it is just ignorant to say that everyone who is of Arab or African descent (includes us all) are Muslims.

I guess that's enough answers for today. As you can see it only takes a tiny bit of sense to answer the questions, so why do they keep asking them anyway?

## Common Sense Not Just Common Practice



Farrah Gray  
NNPA Columnist

(NNPA)—We live in a world driven by money and ideals, but most notably by fears. Fear of change, fear of taking risks, fear of losing, and fear of failure. Fear is why we can easily cling to false beliefs and let them control our way of thinking.

In the middle of struggle, it's often difficult to stay convinced that success is worth the price that has to be paid. Something tells you that "there must be an easier way." There is an easier way, but not one that leads to success. It depends entirely on what you want.

If you want to retain the option to choose, then part of the payment you make is to be

true to your choice. You can't just bail out when the going gets tough. There may be a point where you have to admit that you made the wrong choice or that you're just not up to the challenge.

You have to turn yourself into the light to see what's written on each facet that goes into your potential success.

Your personal strengths and weaknesses must be identified in order to recognize where improvements are needed. Let's begin by taking your personal assessment as a way to generate the information necessary for you to create the best fit possible between you and your chosen lifestyle for success as you would define it.

What's the key to creating this fit? Simply put, the secret to mastering your universe is, "Pay attention!" Look carefully at your lifestyle and work situation are choosing. Will you be rewarded or penalized for being who you are? What characteristics result in rewards?

Which ones bring penalties? Practice utilizing those attributes that bring awards and refrain from displaying those that result in penalties. By practicing this daily, and having the courage to make the required changes, you truly can stretch the existing "good" fit to a "perfect" fit, on your

journey toward successful self-employment can truly become a dream fulfilled.

### Accepting Responsibility

Pay careful attention to how you respond when you see that a mistake has been made. Do you immediately blame someone else? Do you make excuses? It takes a great deal of confidence in yourself to admit that a mistake has been made.

### Self-Discipline

Most of us think we are self-disciplined until we have to be! Think of something you have "been meaning to do" (losing weight, exercising every morning, etc.) For those things that require regular practice, set our sights on doing them for one week.

### Resourcefulness

Observe how often you say to yourself, or others, "I can't." Resourcefulness springs from developing an "I can" attitude!

### Ability to Delay Gratification

Paying attention to how you respond when you are required to wait in line for a movie; for our spouse or friend to get ready; or to purchase something you just can't do without!

### Ability to Sacrifice

Give up something no steak for a month; no shopping on the weekend, no break during work for a day. The stronger your attachment to the item of sacrifice, the better!

### Accepting Criticism

Do something you're not very good at! Then, seek the opinion of someone whose honesty you value. Pay careful attention to how you feel and respond when you are criticized.

### Flexibility in Thinking

Choose three routines that you regularly adhere to (operational procedures under your control at work, the organization scheme of your garage, etc.). Develop new ways of doing things!

### Support Network

Join a local business group or create your own. Include family/friends in the development phases of your business. The more understanding the people close to you have of your dream, the easier it will be for them

See *Common Sense*, Continued on page 15.



# Legislators, Exonerees Call for Criminal Justice Reform

Janeane Anderson

DALLAS (NNPA) - In the 1980s, Charles Chatman, Billy James Smith, and James Woodard were arrested, tried, and convicted of aggravated sexual assault and murder crimes and spent a total of 70 years behind bars.

All three are now free men, but none of them were ever guilty of the crimes for which they were incarcerated.

Chatman, Smith, and Woodard represent the hundreds of thousands of men and women who are currently serving prison sentences for crimes they did not commit, proof that the criminal justice system in America is in need of reform.

To discuss the prevalence of wrongful convictions and the role DNA technology will play in increasing the number of exonerations in Dallas County and around the country,

Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson hosted a panel discussion of legislators, legal representatives and recently exonerated men at Cedar Valley College last weekend. "There is no greater failure in any part of democracy than the incarceration of the wrongfully accused," said Congresswoman Johnson.

"We all expect this system to work, but it doesn't. We expect that when a judge finds someone guilty he is, but that just isn't the case," said Dallas County Criminal District Court No. 4 Judge John Creuzot.

Saturday's panel discussion was more than an ideological think tank that only paid lip ser-



Congressman John Conyers, Charles Chatman, Billy Smith, and James Woodard field questions from audience members about their wrongful incarceration experiences at a panel discussion held at Cedar Valley College last weekend.

vice, said Congressman John Conyers, the first African-American to chair the U.S. judiciary commission. He said the discussion was meant to generate ideas that would translate into meaningful reform.

"If you're rich and guilty, you're likely to not go to prison, but if you're poor and innocent then your chances of going to prison increase significantly," said Conyers.

Wrongful convictions can occur for a host of reasons; however, the most common are due to eye witness misidentification, false forensic testimony, erroneous "snitch" testimonials, false or coerced criminal confessions and suppression of evidence.

"If you don't want a faulty conviction, it would help to not be broke, not to be black and to not have an incompetent lawyer," said Sen. Rodney Ellis.

Many people will plead guilty for an offense because they don't have faith in the system, choosing to take the lesser prison sentence for a crime they didn't commit instead of placing their fate in the hands of jurors eager for a conviction, Ellis added.

DNA technology is proving to be an effective method for proving the innocence—or guilt—of men and women behind bars.

Thirty-three men have been exonerated in Texas since 1984, more than in any state in the nation. Due to its history of preserving records and evidence, Dallas County has freed more wrongfully incarcerated prisoners than any county in country.

At the helm of Dallas County's crusade to reincorporate justice into the criminal justice system is District Attorney Craig Watkins whose partnership with the Innocence Project of Texas has

facilitated the freeing of men like Chatman.

"I'm just letting innocent people out of jail," said Watkins, who has received more than an ounce of criticism for his justice reform measures. "I hope this hug-a-thug mentality catches on because I have no intention on changing my philosophy any time soon."

But DNA testing will be less than fully effective in a system that, according to some, is flawed to the core and structured to be against the minorities and the poor.

"I am not optimistic about Texas correcting its behavior on its own," said Innocence Project of Texas attorney Jeff Blackburn. "It's going to take federal mandates. Texas is a national embarrassment, and it should be until it cleans up its act."

Whereas the Innocence Project of Texas is a non-profit orga-

nization with limited funds and resources, every case cannot be investigated, resulting in innocent victims on both sides of the aisle. The community would be better served if the correct verdicts were handed down the first time, Blackburn says.

Meanwhile, Chatman and Smith say they are adjusting to life outside prison.

"I'm getting there. It's been a long process, but I know God has His hand on my life," Chatman who was exonerated seven months ago after spending 27 years incarcerated for a sexual assault he didn't commit.

Despite still waiting for a pardon from Gov. Rick Perry and being unable to find employment because he his record has yet to be expunged, Chatman says he's glad to be a free man.

However, he says his happiness is bated by the knowledge that there are still men and women behind bars who shouldn't be.

"Although we are here, we are not the only ones," Chatman said. "For every innocent person convicted, there is a guilty person walking the street committing crime. If that's all we want [a conviction], then this is a poor place to be. Incarceration might not be so bad."

Although Chatman showed restrained enthusiasm about being released from prison life, Woodard had no qualms about expressing his feelings.

"I'm excited to be out. I'm glad to be out," he said. "I try not to look back because who wants to relive a bad dream? I don't."

## House's Slavery Apology Rebuked Called A 'Stunt'

Eric Mayes

(NNPA) - An official apology for slavery and Jim Crow from the U.S. House of Representatives provoked mixed emotions in Philadelphia last week.

For J. Whyatt Mondesire, president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the NAACP, the apology was a publicity stunt.

"It's too late, too little," said Mondesire. "It was a stunt."

Emphasizing that he was speaking personally and not for the NAACP, he continued by saying that a more appropriate gesture would be "a serious conversation about reparations. But I don't

think that will happen."

The House formally apologized to African-Americans and their ancestors for slavery July 29. The House of Representatives acted alone with the Senate remaining silent.

For Karen Warrington, a spokeswoman for Rep. Bob Brady, the vote was a first step.

"I think that the vote was a step in the right direction and that America has to acknowledge the evils of slavery," said Warrington, she was speaking personally, not as Brady's representative.

If the apology opens a dialogue on slavery and its evils, then it will have been a good thing. The

road to real healing will be long and complicated, she said, but it is necessary.

"The problem is complex, but you have to take the first step and acknowledgment, in terms of any kind of wrong, is a critical part of the healing process," Warrington said.

Radio talk show host Bill Anderson was unimpressed.

"I think it's kind of silly," he said. "I think that it's a symbolic gesture that isn't going to mean anything."

He found it ironic that the apology came from a legislative body that has the power to affect real change but hasn't.

"It would be nice if they were spending the time addressing unemployment rates, the lack of opportunity," he said. "It was about somebody who was trying to get re-elected. All you do is clear somebody's guilt and you initiate no real change. I wasn't impressed."

Rep. Chaka Fattah said he was pleased that his colleagues finally acknowledged the suffering of slaves and their descendants.

"I am pleased that my colleagues saw fit to address an issue so sensitive to so many Americans. This apology has been much awaited and long overdue," said Fattah.

Other Black lawmakers echoed Fattah.

"(This) represents a milestone in our nation's efforts to remedy the ills of our past," said Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick of Michigan, chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Tennessee Democrat Steve Cohen, a White lawmaker who represents a majority Black district, proposed the resolution. Cohen faces a formidable Black challenger in a primary face-off this week.

It is not the first time Congress

*See Slavery Continued on Page 15.*



# Committee Identifies Possible VP Options for Obama as Convention Approaches

Eric Mayes

(NNPA) - Speculation about who Barack Obama will choose as his running mate has grown as the Democratic convention draws closer. Though the candidate himself has remained silent, a short list of candidates had been vetted by a committee charged with finding a suitable vice president.

Chief among them is Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine. Kaine was in Washington, D.C., this week reportedly meeting with campaign officials. He declined to say why he met with campaign officials telling reporters: "My conversations with the campaign stay with the campaign."

He continued, saying he was not seeking the vice presidential

slot.

"I haven't sought it. I'm not running for it. I'm not asking for it. I've never asked anything of the campaign," Kaine said.

Kaine, a Catholic and a Spanish-speaker, would allow Obama to broaden his appeal among those voters.

Sen. Hillary Clinton is conspicuously absent. According to The New York Times, she has not been vetted like several other candidates.

"(Clinton) has not been asked to provide documentation to the Obama team that is vetting potential vice presidential choices and in recent days she has been reportedly telling friends that she does not think she'll be on the ticket," reported the Times.

Most pundits agree there are three other strong contenders.

There is Sen. Evan Bayh, of Indiana, who also served two terms as the state's governor. Bayh, at 33, was the youngest governor in the nation at the time and started in politics in 1986 when he was elected Indiana's secretary of state.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas is a former state lawmaker and was also elected state insurance commissioner. She is the least-known candidate. However, one of the achievements of her career was when, as the state's insurance commissioner, she blocked a proposed merger between an out-of-state insurer and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. It was a feat many credited with sparing

Kansans an increase in insurance rates.

Perhaps the best-known potential candidate is Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, a senator for nearly 36 years. He has more of a public record than perhaps any other prospect. And his own bid for president puts the focus of the vetting largely on financial and personal matters.

In addition, he is considered to have the national security credentials that might strengthen Obama's ticket.

The committee looking over possible vice presidential candidates is made up of Caroline Kennedy, Jim Johnson, former Fannie Mae chief and Eric Holder, a former deputy attorney general.

However, campaign officials

stressed that the final choice will be Obama's.

"Senator Obama is pleased to have three talented and dedicated individuals managing this rigorous process," spokesman Bill Burton told reporters earlier this year. "He will work closely with them in the coming weeks but ultimately this will be his decision and his alone."

Pundits have been guessing for months who might be Obama's running mate. They have included: one of Obama's former opponents, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Pa. Gov. Ed Rendell.

## Rally Urges Black Men to Reclaim Their Place in Family and Community

Setrige Crawford

TALLAHASSEE (NNPA) - "We have foiled, failed, but will still succeed," was the message Dr. Henry Lyons, president of the Florida General Baptist Convention delivered at the 1,000 Man Rally at Walker Ford Community Center.

Lyons, the main speaker of the event, called the first 1,000 Man Rally a fantastic success. The 1,000 Man Rally was an event put together by the Rev. Greg James, Commissioner Bill Proctor, Joe Thomas and a host of other community leaders.

"It was well-organized and I'm overwhelmed by the crowd and the enthusiasm," Lyons said. Lyons talked about the plight of the black man and the circumstances he faces in society.

"We bring a lot on ourselves, but a lot of it has to do with our environment, government and a life-long struggle with racism," Lyons said. "We dealt with that and we can't sit on our failures, this event is about self-help."

The July 25 event started at 10 p.m. with a march from Tabernacle Baptist Church to the Walker-Ford Community Center onto



All-male 100-voice Choir Perform at Rally.

a stage. Minister Tony Parker began by reciting a prayer called "The Man", which was followed by other religious speakers.

Mayor John Marks became emotional when receiving a plaque for his birthday.

"I never felt so special in my entire life," Marks said.

Marks said it is a great thing when we get together and celebrate manhood.

"We need to address the young

males and support them because we need them," Marks said.

The Tallahassee Boys' Choir and the 100 Male Voice Choir performed at the rally. Hezekiah Griggs, Lee Johnson and Doc Bailey spoke for a "Men on the Move" segment.

Bailey, a former member of the Crips street gang, said he was there to deliver a strong message.

"I wanted to share a message

with those men who are in gangs, that we can still come up from that," Bailey said. "We're natural over-comers and the only we can do that is to put all our energy into something positive."

Bailey, who does a gang prevention site with TPD, wasn't impressed with the turnout.

"It's funny, because if this was a Plies concert, all these seats would be filled," Bailey said. He added that many men are just

scared to step out on something positive.

Larry Thompson, speaking on behalf of Jackie Pons, Leon County Superintendent of Schools, introduced Young Black Male Discovery, which is a program that targets underachieving and at-risk black males. Thompson said the program aims to make sure they graduate high school and make it to college.

The program starts at 3rd grade and goes through high school. Thompson insisted that parents ask for this program at their schools.

The rally concluded with "Making a Stand", where James and Minister Al Wilborn held closing speeches.

Alan Williams, president of the local chapter of the FAMU Alumni Association and sponsor for the event, said this cause was important because black men need to take back their rightful place in the community.

"We need to stand in the gap for those who can't be there," Williams said. "It shows the good spirit we have as men to come together to begin a movement tonight."



# National Urban League President Calls for September as Voter Registration Month

**Hazel Trice Edney**

Morial Also Applauds New Housing Act During Annual Conference

ORLANDO (NNPA) – National Urban League President Marc Morial, exuberant that the Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act has been passed by Congress and signed by President Bush, focused the NUL annual conference in Orlando, Fla. last week on leading citizens into a new direction for by compelling people to register and vote.

"It's 40 years after the death of Dr. King and this is an historic election in American history. I mean...this is the debate about the direction of the country. And that's what's in the halls, in the air, in the sessions and in the plenary sessions," says Morial.

In his keynote speech, he announced historic voter registration efforts as well as community initiatives to help stem the tied of homes being lost due to the sub prime lending crisis.

"We're going to be doggedly aggressive at registering and encouraging people to vote and working to protect the vote," he said.

Morial called on NUL members to make September 'Voter Empowerment Month'. So, we will dedicate our efforts during that month to register people to vote."

The NUL has teamed with the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation for a strong grassroots registration effort.

This is part of a national effort to encourage participation in an election, which has already drawn interest of historic proportions due to the heated race between two U. S. senators, Republican John McCain, a Vietnam veteran, and Democrat Barack Obama, who could become the nation's first African-American president.

"The thing you've got to do is stimulate people to participate. You've got to focus on the fundamentals of democracy, which are registering people to vote and en-

couraging people to double check their vote," Morial says. "In registration, there's been so much purging in some states and so many games they play in efforts to disqualify voters."

Meanwhile, the Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act that was passed by the House and Senate last week and signed by President Bush aims to enable at least 400,000 troubled homeowners to refinance their homes, "switching from risky sub prime mortgages to safer loans backed by the Federal Housing Administration," as described by U. S. Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.).

U. S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), among the leading advocates for the Act, said the bill is a Godsend.

"We've got to help these people keep their homes," she said in an interview. She described how some homeowners were enticed into loans at "teaser" rates, but were left holding the bag when the interest rates quadrupled and simply could not afford to pay.

Waters particularly worked to get the \$4 billion, stipulated in the bill, into city neighborhoods where vacated houses are causing values of neighborhoods to drop and reattracting crime and drugs. "This money will help buy the homes, rehabilitate them and put them back on the market," Waters says.

Morial, who warned the nation about a pending sub prime lending crisis at a press conference just before NUL's convention in St. Louis last year, anticipates being a part of disseminating the benefits of the Act.

"We will be proposing new NUL initiatives called 'Restore Our Homes'; establishing 50 home ownership centers throughout the country to enhance the counseling that we're already doing to help people to save their homes and to help people to become homeowners by getting mortgages for the first time," he said.

In his keynote address to the thousands of conventioners, Morial was set to talk about rebuild-

ing America.

Pointing to America's high school graduation rate as Black males being at 32 percent and White males at 74 percent, Morial said, "We as a nation should have graduation rates that are in the 90s."

Because most people are not willing to go back to high school, he says there must be a greater commitment to what he calls, "Second Chance" programs.

"You've got to develop work force initiatives that helps them to up their education attainment level so that they can be employed. So they're employable in good jobs," he said. "I will be talking about the need for the nation to change its priorities from a focus on spending on the war to an investment focus on domestic issues, jobs, housing and children. We believe that it's time for the nation to get serious. The nation is in trouble, the times are tough and this is an election that's about changing direction."

*Slavery, Continued from page 12.*

has issued an apology. It has formally apologized to Japanese-Americans for their internment during World War II and to native Hawaiians for the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom in 1893. In 2005, the Senate apologized for failing to pass anti-lynching laws.

Five states have issued apologies for slavery, but past proposals in Congress have stalled, part-

ly over concerns that an apology would lead to demands for reparations — payment for damages.

The apology made no mention of reparations. It did say the House would rectify "the lingering consequences of the misdeeds committed against African Americans under slavery and Jim Crow."

On slavery it said that Africans forced into slavery "were brutal-

ized, humiliated, dehumanized and subjected to the indignity of being stripped of their names and heritage" and that Black Americans today continue to suffer from the consequences of slavery and Jim Crow laws that fostered discrimination and segregation.

The House "apologize(d) to African-Americans on behalf of the people of the United States, for the

wrongs committed against them and their ancestors who suffered under slavery and Jim Crow."

Cohen said, "Slavery and Jim Crow are stains upon what is the greatest nation on the face of the earth...Part of forming a more perfect union, he said, "is such a resolution as we have before us today where we face up to our mistakes and apologize as anyone

should apologize for things that were done in the past that were wrong."

More than a dozen of the 42 Congressional Black Caucus members in the House were original co-sponsors of the measure.

*Common Sense, Continued from page 12.*

to buy into it and provide the support you need.

## Energy level

For one week, get up an hour earlier and go to be an hour later than normal. Observe how this affects your mood and your performance.

## Risk-Taking Ability

The most important thing to remember in learning to take risks is to carefully calculate the up and down side to each potential opportunity. Begin slowly!

Personal attributes are both the easiest and the hardest to

change! They are easy to change in that we are the only ones who have control over who we are and how we behave.

The difficulty comes into play when we take things so personally that we become defensive when change is suggested.

Farrah Gray is the author of *Get Real, Get Rich: Conquer the 7 Lies Blocking You from Success* and the international best-seller *Reallionaire: Nine Steps to Becoming Rich from the Inside Out*. He is chairman of the Farrah Gray Foundation. Dr. Gray can be reached via email at [fg@drfarrahgray.com](mailto:fg@drfarrahgray.com) or his web site at [www.drfarrahgray.com](http://www.drfarrahgray.com)

*Homeownership, Continued from page 5.*

The City plans to expand the program to more of its citizens by matching the LRAs funds, increasing the income eligibility, and including soft-second mortgage loans for rehabilitation and renovation. The additional program funds will provide homebuyers with higher incomes an opportunity to utilize the program, and will help to fill the reconstruction gaps experienced by many citizens. The City has pledged \$27 million to fund this portion of the program and anticipates the full approval by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Develop-

ment (HUD) by mid August.

"We anticipate the full approval of the expansion of this program within the first couple of weeks of August. By partnering with the State, the City will provide a \$54 million dollar Soft-Second mortgage program that will reach almost 1000 homeowners, including those in the middle class who historically don't qualify for these types of programs," said Mayor C. Ray Nagin. "By focusing on the targeted Housing Opportunity Zones, this program will be a catalyst for the recovery and renewal of our neighborhoods by creating

infill, clustering and rebuilding, and fighting the Jack-O-Lantern effect, just like the residents told us to do in the UNOP."

Those approved for the loans must commit to remain the owner and/or occupant at the financed home for at least three years. Those borrowers who demonstrate continual occupancy for five years will receive loan forgiveness equal to 20 percent on the balance of their Loan.



"IT CAUSED DESTRUCTION TO EVERYTHING  
IN ITS PATH. HOUSES, BUILDINGS.  
SOME PEOPLE LOST EVERYTHING.

BUT WE WERE PREPARED FOR AN  
EMERGENCY LIKE THAT. WE KNEW HOW TO  
REACH OUR EMPLOYEES, KNEW WHAT TO DO.  
WE HAD EMERGENCY SUPPLIES ON HAND.  
AND AS A COMPANY, WE MADE IT  
THROUGH HURRICANE CHARLEY BECAUSE  
WE HAD A PLAN."

CHARLES G. BROWN, President & CEO,  
Charlotte State Bank, Port Charlotte, FL



Whether it's a hurricane, terrorist attack or other disaster, every business needs an emergency plan. A plan can save your entire business, including company assets and most importantly, the lives of your employees – at little or no cost to your company. You can't control what happens. But you can be prepared. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for practical steps you can take now to give your company a better chance of survival.

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