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Race to Justice

The Nomination of Sonia Sotomayor



Judge Sonia Sotomayor with mother Celina Sotomayor.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

In a historic move President Barack Obama nominated Federal Judge Sonia Sotomayor for the U.S. Supreme Court. If she is confirmed, she will be the first Hispanic Justice of the land's highest court. This decision by Obama has caused a firestorm among some in the Republican Party and those to the far-right including radio-talk show host Rush Limbaugh who went as far as calling her a racist for statements made in 2001 ref-

erencing that as a Latina woman she would be better suited to make decisions on the bench than one dominated by white males. Her statements, while taken out of context, exemplify the six degrees of separation between racial camaraderie and chaos. With the nomination of Sotomayor, the country again stands at another monumental moment in history, another moment where Lady Liberty's light can perhaps shine its light bright showing that the U.S. can put its racial baggage behind and move forward. But



Judge Sonia Sotomayor in 2009. Photo Credit: www.whitehouse.gov

many segments of the nation have become more divided because some members of the white community feel they are victims of racism. The words of Limbaugh only echo some of the thoughts that some in the white community feel after Barack Obama's stunning victory in November's election.

While millions came to celebrate this sea of change in January conversely, gun sales have risen dramatically and white rights organizations, and secessionist movements are using the election of President Obama and in now his nomination of Judge Sotomayor as evidence that the days of America being a

Front cover photo credit: White House photo by Pete Souza

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

white country is on the wane. They may feel that today whites—and more specifically white males—are in jeopardy of losing their status and power and are the victims of racism.

While this is gaining some traction in certain pockets of the world of conservative talk radio and the blogosphere, sober minded citizens believe it is just a bunch of lunatics and entertainers like Limbaugh and those on the fringes of mainstream thought. While some of the wild-eyed lunacy of these claims made by him and others may fall on deaf ears of some, unfortunately this country has had a spotty record in the area of race relations in respect to the courts. This is in spite of the country being one grounded in the idea of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all of its citizens. And hopefully this maelstrom of vitriolic language does not grow like a cancer stirring up tensions that may lead to violence.

It has not been long ago that the scourge of racial repression and unfairness have plagued the courts of law as all white justices let their biases get in the way of fairness. It is a judicial system that has on its record, the infamous Dred Scott decision where Supreme Court Judges didn't see Scott as even a citizen with rights that whites were bound to respect. Or decisions made by the founding fathers on how to count slaves, making a 3/5ths Compromise. Or the dark days of restrictive covenants that kept people from living in certain neighborhoods, and joining labor unions. People just trying to get work to support their

families were locked out of participating in the American Dream.

The Hispanic community is the fastest growing minority in the country, in spite of the country being embroiled in a debate about immigration. In addition, Judge Sotomayor is finding herself in the middle of an argument that far supersedes her nomination. The core of the country's identity is being rethought in the 21st century. Today is a turning point for the U.S. where, since Europeans came to this land, it has been what many would consider a white country.

As the demographics change and the U.S. becomes more populated with more people of color, what will America's identity be? As more non-whites enter the bastions of power will this country become more just as far as social policies and laws are concerned? Will those in power become more empathetic to those who are less fortunate than themselves? Will this nation become true to its creed?

Also a larger question becomes, as exhibited by some to the right concerning the nomination of Judge Sotomayor, what will happen to white identity? Will



Sotomayor visits students at her alma mater, Cardinal Spellman High School, in New York.

this changing of the guard equal justice? Will this equal fairness or will we see the same actions or inactions in black or brown face? Or, will this nation finally get to a place where all its citizens can get to the finish line in the race for justice?

New Orleans Recreation Department

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION EXTENDED

*** JUNE 20th ***

To register for summer camp, visit the camp location
Monday through Friday, from 9 am - 3 pm:

Behrman Center Camp, 2529 General Meyer Avenue, 364-4092

Caffin Avenue Summer Camp, 1029 Caffin Avenue, 784-6850

Cut-Off Center Camp, 6600 Belgrade Street, 364-4059

Treme Center Camp, 900 North Villere Street, 658-3160

Cheer for NORD, Annunciation Center, 800 Race Street, 658-3000

For more information,
call NORD at 504-658-3000



Second Annual State of NORD Community Event Held



NORD Director Larry Barabino, Jr. Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com

Hundreds of kids and parents attended the second State of NORD community event recently at the St. Bernard Center. The event's theme, The Re-Building of NORD: Quality Cultural, Recreational and Educational Experiences for Youth and Families, showcased the talents of NORD participants and updated the community on the recovery on NORD facilities and additional programs returning this fall.

The State of NORD featured performances by a student vocalist, the NORD Marching Band, Dillard University and NORD Cheerleaders, and the St. Bernard Senior Citizens group. The Vietnamese American Youth

Leadership Organization sponsored a performance by its hip hop dance group. The department also acknowledged a host of local and national volunteers that assisted in the recovery of NORD facilities.

"NORD is open for business," said Larry Barabino, Jr., director of NORD. "We have restored 84 active and passive playgrounds and play spots, 10 swimming pools, 4 multi purpose centers, 5 stadiums and one theatre. We've reopened a NORD facility, park or playground within 1 mile or less from each neighborhood, and tonight is a testament of the hard work and dedication of this amazing staff, and determined kids."

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New Orleans

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(504) 241-5556



Area students participate in recent State of NORD activities. Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com

Homeland Security Director Uses Years of Military Experience to Serve New Orleans

As Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Ret. Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Sneed puts his 32 years of military experience to work for the citizens of New Orleans.

Lieutenant Colonel Sneed is responsible for the response and coordination of those actions needed to protect the lives and property of citizens from natural or man-made disasters as well as emergency planning for the City of New Orleans. He began working for the city as a volunteer immediately following Hurricane Katrina.

After two months of volunteer work, Lieutenant Colonel Sneed joined the city of New Orleans Office of Homeland Security as a planner and helped develop the City Assisted Evacuation Plan (CAEP), which provides transportation assistance to citizens who cannot evacuate on their own.

On Oct. 2, 2006, Lieutenant Colonel Sneed became Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, and he was named to his current position in July 2008.

Governor Jindal Joins New Orleans Saints To Kick Off 2009 "Get A Game Plan" Hurricane Preparedness Campaign

Governor Bobby Jindal joined members of the New Orleans Saints, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) Director Mark Cooper, State Police Superintendent Col. Mike Edmonson and Major General Bennett C. Landreneau, Adjutant General of the Louisiana National Guard to kick off the state's 2009 "Get A Game Plan" hurricane preparedness campaign. Governor Jindal launched the "Get A Game Plan" campaign last year to provide Louisianians with the information and tools they need to prepare for a possible hurricane. Governor Jindal announced several initiatives – including new public service announcements (PSAs) with the Saints and a first-of-its-kind

public-private partnership with Wal-Mart – that are part of the "Get A Game Plan" campaign to promote hurricane preparedness across the state.

Governor Jindal said, "We must be vigilant this hurricane season. We must be prepared and make sure we have a plan to help our families in times of emergency. Most of all – have a personal game plan. Take time now, before a storm is even in the Gulf, to talk to your family again and get prepared for a possible hurricane this year."

The Governor unveiled two new public service announcements that he taped with members of the New Orleans Saints urging Louisianians to "Get A Game Plan" in the event of a hurricane or any type of

hazard. Specifically, the Governor taped a hurricane preparedness PSA with wide receivers Devery Henderson and Marques Colston as well as a PSA on preparing for hazards with wide receiver Lance Moore. Governor Jindal said the PSAs will begin airing statewide early next week on both television and radio.

Governor Jindal announced that GOHSEP has launched a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership in emergency management with Wal-Mart. The Governor said that Wal-Mart has donated \$15,000 and pledged to donate additional dollars to GOHSEP to help with education and outreach.

Governor Jindal noted that the partnership with Wal-Mart will focus on two areas to promote

hurricane preparedness. First, he said that Wal-Mart's donations will help fund the "Get A Game Plan" campaign for kids and parents. Governor Jindal said these initiatives will be launched in the coming weeks, including a coloring book aimed at students in 1st-4th grades.

Second, the Governor said Wal-Mart has agreed to establish a hurricane preparedness campaign at all of their pharmacies in South Louisiana, including promotional tents highlighting the "Get A Game Plan" website and preparedness info as well as attaching a hurricane preparedness check sheet to every prescription they distribute. Wal-Mart has indicated that they fill approximately 640,000 prescriptions per month

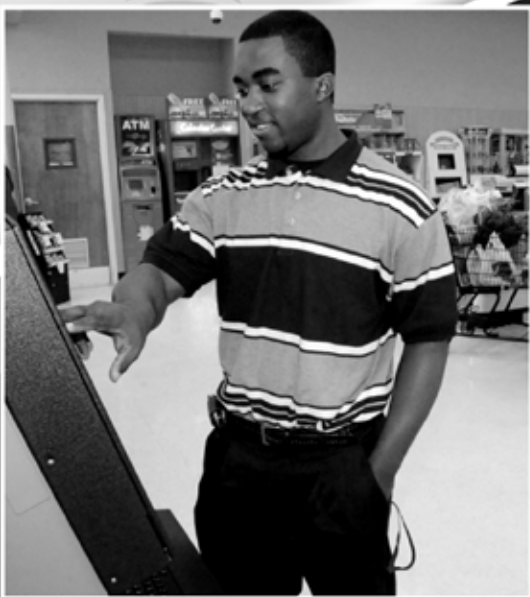
at their South Louisiana pharmacies.

Governor Jindal said, "Wal-Mart provided significant help last year during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike – and I want to thank them for their continued support. Public-Private partnerships are a critical part of ensuring that we get the message out to Louisianians in the event of an emergency."

Wal-Mart Public Affairs & Government Relations Senior Manager Tice White said, "Wal-Mart is proud to partner with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. The safety of our customers and associates are of the upmost importance to us. We value our role as a corporate citizen very highly and look forward to working with

See Jindal continued on page 9

Our PARTNERS in Recovery



Winn-Dixie is joining us in recovery with new city kiosks that bring City Hall to your neighborhood.

- Apply for Permits
- Pay City Bills & Tickets
- Find Public Meetings
- Browse CityofNO.com

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ONE
NEW ORLEANS
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C. Ray Nagin, Mayor

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

The Pontchartrain Chapter of the Links, Inc. in conjunction with The International School hosted an International Familiarization Fair at Schaumburg Elementary School in New Orleans East on May 21. The educational fair featured hands-on learning activities about the history and culture of France, Mexico, and South Africa for 75 fourth graders. The students also learned about the connections these areas have to New Orleans' unique culture. Highlights of the fair also included food from each country, dancing, and singing. Photo Credit: Dwayne Pierce



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\$1.50 Domestic Cold Beer
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D.J - 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday - Pool Tournaments - 7:00 P.M.

Thursday - Female Impersonations Show - 9:30 P.M.

Friday & Saturday - DJ 10:00 P.M.

Sunday - Lisa Amos & The LA Band - 10:00 P.M. - until

Open - Monday through Friday - 10:00 A.M. until
Saturday & Sunday - 8:00 A.M. until

Kiss Network Empowers Single Women

Elise Schenck

Young, sophisticated, and successful is the story of many ambitious single women who have excelled in their careers. However, many of these same women find themselves in need of an outlet to counter all the challenges that everyday life can sometimes bring.

Too often, women find themselves juggling demanding careers, financial responsibilities, and family. As a result, they can feel isolated in their quest. Kiss Network social club was created to empower single women 25-40 years of age through camaraderie and social networking.

Kiss Network social club activities include sporting events, traveling, entertainment, and promotional fundraisers. However, there is a screening process for membership. Factors for membership consideration include one's ability to display confidence, personality, and character.

The recent launch of Kiss Network's website has had impressive success garnering hundreds of hits from interested women inquiring about how they can become part of this social network. For information on how to apply for membership, please call 504.592.3233 or log on to: www.mykissnetwork.com.

"Why Wait" Tackles Tough Issues Facing College Students



"Why Wait," the stage play, delves into the ups and downs of college life. The characters are intertwined in a series of events that will ultimately change all of their lives. Abstinence is explored as a healthy option throughout the play. Furthermore, the lessons learned throughout the storyline answer the bold question...WHY WAIT?

"Why Wait" was written by Leah Davis and produced by Benny Andrews and Keith Swanier II in conjunction with Him-N-Me Productions. It runs in the New Orleans market June 12 and 13 at the Victory Fellowship Center; 5708 Airline Highway in Metairie, Louisiana (next to the Saints Training Facility). Doors open at 7pm, Play starts at 8:30pm

"This is the story of life on a college campus, and it's about young people overcoming peer pressure, because sometimes us as young people find ourselves doing things not because we necessarily want to, but because of other people are doing it," said Swanier.

"Why Wait" has a renowned cast including....

Delano Mitchell from BET's "College Hill" & played as SPOOK in "Da Block Party"

Keith Swanier II from "Jeremy's Family Reunion & Black Saturday"

Gavin Lewis from "Jeremy's Family Reunion"

Trazi from the upcoming blockbuster movie "Final Destination 4"

This is a story about making better decisions, because making the wrong decision in relation to having early and unprotected sex can sometimes come with consequences.

"If I could change it I would have waited to become sexually active, because I had a child at an early age and don't get me wrong she is my biggest blessing and she has changed my life, but I would advise people if they can to wait until marriage," he said with passion and conviction.

The play also co-stars Amanda Whitfield, Stephen Sutton, Jazlyn Turner, Ronnika Allen, Kesha McKey, Stylist B, Omar Washington, Derrick Deal, Ellis Edmund, Giselle Nahkid, Shauntrell Demesme.

Swanier, talking about the impact he hopes the play has on the audience said, "It is a powerful message and I hope that people leave away from it informed about making healthy choices about their lives and be inspired."

Why Wait tickets - Call 504-717-3761 for Group Rates.

Pre-sale Tickets available at...

Victory Fellowship Center
5708 Airline Hwy

Tiger's Creole Cuisine
1612 Basin St.

Ashe' Cultural Center
1712 Oretha C. Haley Blvd

Temple Shop
1610 Basin St.

Kings Fashions
2809 Jackson Ave

Peaches Records Store
408 N. Peters St.

Nuthin But Fire Records
Store 1840 N. Claiborne Ave.

Boss Status Apparel
3129 Gentilly Ave.

Subway
2900 S. Claiborne Ave.

For more info check the website www.HIM-N-ME.com. For More information call Wild Wayne at 504-388-6599 or email industryinfluence@gmail.com



Every year young people arrive on new school campuses to get educated and quite often they get a bit more educated than they anticipated! The struggle with academics, peer pressure and temptation can be a volatile combination! Choices have never been so important....

Around Town at Le Roux



Earl and Gayle Gray enjoy an evening at Le Roux.

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DSS Offers Pre-Application for Disaster Food Stamps

Baton Rouge—The Louisiana Department of Social Services announced on June 1 that Louisiana residents can now pre-apply online or by phone for Disaster Food Stamps in order to prepare for hurricane season, save time, and avoid long waits in the event of a disaster.

"I urge all low- to moderate-income residents, especially those who were affected by hurricanes Gustav and Ike last year, to take

advantage of our Disaster Food Stamps pre-application process," said DSS Secretary Kristy Nichols. "Collecting the required income information for the Disaster Food Stamp application is easier to do before a hurricane strikes rather than after an evacuation. I hope all residents who may be eligible will make pre-application for Disaster Food Stamps part of their hurricane preparation plan."

Disaster Food Stamps provide

food assistance for eligible low- to moderate-income households that do not receive regular food stamps who need help buying groceries due to lost income or damages following a disaster. Exact requirements for the program are determined following the event and are based on location and income.

Louisiana residents who already receive regular Food Stamps do not need to pre-apply. If regular Food Stamp recipients are eligible for additional benefits, they will be added to their monthly benefit amount automatically.

To pre-apply, residents can visit <https://dsnap.dss.state.la.us/CitizenPortal/logon.jsp> and provide the following information:

Names, Social Security Num-

bers and Dates of Birth for each household member

Current address and parish of household

Monthly income for each household member

All liquid resources for each household member (cash on hand, checking & savings account balances, certificates of deposit and money market balance) The information will be kept securely on file and will be confidential.

If residents do not have on-line access, they may call 1-888-LA HELP U (1- 888-524-3578) to apply as well.

Pre-application will be accepted online or by phone only. Pre-applications will not be accepted at DSS Office of Family Services Food Stamp offices.

Pre-applying does not guarantee benefits. After a disaster, residents who have pre-applied only need to visit a Disaster Food Stamp issuance site to verify their information and identity to determine final eligibility and receive their benefit cards. Eligibility requirements and DFSP locations will only be announced after a disaster.

Louisiana's system is the first year-round Disaster Food Stamps pre-application process in the nation. Florida's pre-application concept is available for use only in the days before a hurricane makes landfall, compared to Louisiana's system which is available year-round.

Li'l Dizzy's Offers Creole Cooking for the Soul



Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com

Li'l Dizzy's is Wayne Baquet's continuation of a long tradition of great Creole cooking begun by his father, whose Eddie's on Law Street was one of the most famous soul food restaurants in America. After a few years at Zachary's, a restaurant once known for its fried chicken and Sunday brunches in the Carrolton neighborhood, Wayne opened Li'l Dizzy's, a popular cafe on Esplanade Avenue in the Treme section of New Orleans.

After consulting with his grandson for the perfect name for the café, Li'l Dizzy's is named after jazz great Dizzy Gillespie, and has brought diners in from all over the country. In 2007, Wayne took over the cafe in The Whitney, a grand space in marble and brass that once served as the bank's lobby. It now features Li'l Dizzy's downtown location. Wayne continues to carry on the Baquet family tradition of fine food and restaurateurs that spans three generations.



Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com

The Orleans Public Education Network Hosts a Public Education Retreat

(New Orleans) A citywide coalition of public education advocacy groups – The Orleans Public Education Network (OPEN) - is inviting public school advocates, parents, administrators, teachers, faith-based organizations, neighborhood and business leaders, and anyone interested in the future development of quality public education in New Orleans to come to a three (3) day Retreat at the Bayou Segnette Conference Center June 5 – 7, 2009. Registration and most accommodations are free and the event is open to the public. Space is limited. Participants will be processed on a first come first serve basis.

The Orleans Public Education Network (OPEN) is a collaboration of public education advocacy groups and individuals, which has been meeting for the past two (2) years to create an environment that will allow all segments of the community to engage in an interactive and informative process to define a clear vision of quality public education for all Orleans Parish students.

The Core Group that is con-

vening the communitywide discussion includes:

- The Children's Defense Fund of New Orleans
- Greater New Orleans Urban League
- The Greater New Orleans Education Foundation
- The Louisiana Justice Institute
- Committee for a Better New Orleans / Metropolitan Area Committee (CBNO/MAC)
- The Silverback Society
- Bright Moments, Inc.

Over the last 2 years, OPEN has received information and been advised by the following organizations:

- The Orleans Parish School Board
- The Louisiana Recovery School District
- PolicyLink
- The Kirwan Institute
- The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
- The Cowen Institute
- The Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

Funding to date for the effort has been provided by The Greater New Orleans Education

Foundation and the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation.

The OPEN group will conduct a participatory research process that will lay the basis for a

community consensus on the vision for Quality Public Education in Orleans Parish. Participants will help to design the research effort and will guide the analysis of the information collected.

OPEN will reach out to every segment of the community and will work toward a collective and inclusive community discussion.

The June Retreat is the kick-off to an on-going process of engaging every sector of the New Orleans community in a critical discussion of the public education system in New Orleans. For more information on the OPEN organization and to participate in the Retreat, please contact Sabrina Mays-Montana at 504-267-4678 or 504-267-4687 or visit the website at <http://www.orleans-publiceducationnetwork.org>.

Immunization Requirements Changing for Students in Fall 2009

Parents urged to update children's vaccinations early

BATON ROUGE, La.— Now that the 2008-2009 school year has ended in Louisiana, it's time for parents to start on some summer homework for their kids' health.

Louisiana has issued new vaccination requirements for students, effective this coming 2009-2010 school year, and it's not too soon for parents to make sure their children's shots are up to date.

In addition to the scheduled immunizations already required in state law, two doses of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine will be required for children four years and older who are entering kindergarten, pre-kindergarten, daycare or HeadStart programs in the fall. Also, children who are 11 years old or are entering the sixth grade must have proof of all age-appropriate immunizations, including a new meningococcal (meningitis)

vaccine requirement.

The chicken pox and meningitis vaccines have been recommended for several years. However, by requiring these immunizations for school attendance, the State of Louisiana is now taking an important step to protect Louisiana's children, from individual kids to entire classrooms, from disease.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals is working closely with schools to collect students' immunization data to monitor and ensure kids are on their proper vaccination schedules.

State law already requires standard immunizations for diseases like hepatitis B, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella for all children depending on their age. See the chart at the end of this release for details.

Dr. Frank Welch, medical di-

rector for the Immunization Program, urges parents to contact their health care provider to make appointments for their children, or to ask questions about vaccinations.

"Proper vaccination sometimes takes more than one visit, and your child is not fully protected until all vaccines are finished," Dr. Welch said. "However, if you show proof that he or she is in the process of receiving a vaccine series, your child can enter and remain in school."

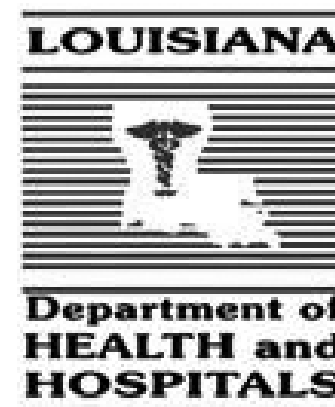
Louisiana residents needing a copy of their immunization record or their child's record, can get a copy from any parish health unit, regardless of where the shots were received or where the individual currently resides. This is provided by the DHH Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids

Statewide (LINKS) database. This system allows providers to track the immunization status of children from birth. The LINKS database is also used to help ensure that all children are properly vaccinated and, in the event of a public health emergency, allows health officials to easily know who has been immunized against a specific disease.

For a list of parish health units, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=223>.

If your physician has not enrolled in the LINKS system, the best way to get your immunization records is to contact your physician directly.

If you are unable to get your records directly from your health care provider, the LINKS system or any other method, you will need to get re-vaccinated in order



to get a new record.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals serves to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>.

Jindal, Continued from page 5.

GOHSEP to create a greater awareness level regarding the appropriate preparation steps and response methods for the citizens of Louisiana during emergencies and disasters. As it has been our commitment in the past, Wal-Mart willingly stands as a strong partner in this important area of safety."

GOHSEP Director Mark Cooper said, "As we enter our second hurricane season under this administration, I greatly appreciate the leadership and support of Governor Jindal in better preparing Louisiana for the 2009 hurricane season. I also appreciate the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and resolve that now exists among our state agencies, local emergency managers, first responders and other stakeholders that have made us successful in our preparedness efforts and ultimately in our response should a hurricane hit our state. While Louisiana is prepared for this hurricane season, we will continue to implement innovative and cost-effective initiatives to promote family preparedness such as corporate partnerships and the use of technology."

State Police Superintendent Col. Mike Edmonson announced that the state has updated the Southeast Hurricane Evacuation Guide to include the latest contra-flow routes, contact info and emergency shelter information. Col. Edmonson said that starting this year, contra-flow termination points will be extended farther north into Mississippi in an effort to alleviate the potential for bottleneck. He said the new

maps in the evacuation guide have also been updated so they are easier to read – and that a dash line is now used to indicate contra-flow while a solid line indicates normal traffic flow. He noted that there were no changes to the Southwest evacuation map.

Col. Edmonson said that the state partnered with the American Red Cross and the United Way to help print the evacuation guides. To date, the American Red Cross and United Way have each donated \$25,000 towards the production of state evacuation guides.

State Police Superintendent Col. Michael Edmonson said, "Emergency preparedness is a team effort that requires advanced planning not only from our government agencies and law enforcement, but also from the public. Our citizens are our greatest asset. We need their teamwork to successfully prepare for any emergency that may affect our state. Working together as a team will enable us to keep public safety our top priority. Make our game plan for being prepared part of your own."

Adjutant General of the Louisiana National Guard, Major General Bennett C. Landreneau said, "The Louisiana National Guard's Soldiers and Airmen are the true credit for our Guard's ability to respond to the needs of our citizens. Our Guardsmen remain the essential link with our communities. Their hard work and dedication has proven time and again to be the critical element during hurricane season. Our Soldiers and Airmen are highly

trained, the best in the Nation, and as we approach this Hurricane Season rest assured that our Guard stands ready."

The main supplies needed in case of a hurricane emergency are listed at www.GetAGameplan.org

Dr. Robert J. Spears, DDS

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Sotomayor Epitomizes American Dream



Rev. Al Sharpton
NNPA Columnist

The American dream. Throughout the decades, people have parted ways with family and friends to reach the shores of the United States with the hopes and aspirations of attaining better jobs, improved living conditions, a stronger future for their children and possibly, just possibly, a shot at that American dream.

It is an ideal unique to our country; a notion that if one works hard and gets an education that no goal is unreachable despite this person's race, gender, religion or creed. That regardless of the obstacles

and circumstances that this person may endure, with strong perseverance, determination, ambition, a tremendous work ethic and focus, anything is attainable.

These American values are emphasized in schools every day and passed down from generation to generation. and today we see their implementation in reality yet again with President Obama's nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Sotomayor's unique and compelling story began right in the South Bronx. Raised in the Bronxdale Public Housing Projects, this daughter of Puerto Rican heritage recalls dodging bullets and drug dealers as a child just vying to survive.

Losing her father at the tender age of nine, Judge Sotomayor's mother worked tirelessly – sometimes two jobs – to ensure that both her children received food, clothing, shelter, a proper education and a chance to alter their own lives. Graduating valedictorian of her class at Blessed Sacrament and at Cardinal Spellman High School in New York, Judge Sotomayor did just that – and then some.

After winning a scholarship to Princeton, Judge Sotomayor graduated summa cum

laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She excelled on to Yale Law School where she served as editor of the Yale Law Journal and as managing editor of the Yale Studies in World Public Order.

The distinguished legal expert has served as a prosecutor, assistant District Attorney, corporate litigator and trial judge. She was appointed to the District Court for the Southern District of New York by then President George H.W. Bush, and later appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit by President Clinton in 1998.

And in addition to her judicial work, Judge Sotomayor is a Lecturer at Columbia University Law School, a former adjunct professor at NYU Law School and still managed to create community organizations such as the Development School for Youth Program which sponsors workshops for inner city youth.

Now on Nov. 4, 2008 Americans voted in historic numbers for a new way forward. They cast their ballots for progress, to move beyond race and ethnicity, to eliminate partisan divide and to unite the nation as a whole. President Obama himself ran an unparalleled campaign that urged citi-

zens to honor the principles of our country and to excel past racial biases and work together to form a more perfect union.

At this moment in our history, there is no one more qualified to assume the bench on the U.S. Supreme Court than Judge Sotomayor. Her opponents have already begun their attack campaigns and spin wars, but they lack any basis or sound reasoning. Instead, they are using the age-old wedges of race and color to divide the country. I say we honor our basic ideals and judge this accomplished woman on her sheer merits.

Armed with more experience than anyone currently serving the Supreme Court, Judge Sotomayor's credentials speak openly for themselves. And her compelling life story speaks candidly to the uniqueness of our nation, to the American dream and to the idea that in this country one truly can aspire to anything. Lets put into practice what we voted for in November, and let's bring to fruition the ideals we teach our children every single day. Lets see Judge Sotomayor seated on the Supreme Court, not because she's a Latina, nor a female, but because she unequivocally has earned it.



City of New Orleans Housing Rehabilitation Program *Office of Recovery and Development Administration*



CONTRACTOR'S CERTIFICATION



The Office of Recovery and Development Administration's Construction Unit is seeking qualified housing rehabilitation contractors who wish to participate in the City's Rehabilitation Program. Contractors who meet all of the qualifications and apply within the specified enrollment period will be classified as eligible to bid on housing rehab projects funded through this office. Contractors determined eligible will also be required to attend an orientation seminar at a time and location to be announced.

The qualifications are as follows:

1. Five years of housing rehabilitation work experience.
2. License or registration with the Louisiana State License Board for Contractor's as a General Contractor or Home Improvement Contractor.
3. Workman's Compensation Insurance in the amount of \$100,000 per occurrence.
4. General Liability Insurance in the amount of \$300,000.
5. Three letters of reference from clients within the last 18 months.
6. Current Occupational License with the City of New Orleans.
7. Federal tax identification number.

Interested contractors should contact Terrance Wills, (504) 658-4360 or Elaine Walton (504) 658-4211 of the Construction Unit, if you require any additional information. Applications will be available starting June 8, 2009 from the ORDA Construction Unit located at 1340 Poydras Street, Suite 950, or online at www.cityofno.com.

All completed applications must be returned to Elaine Walton, Terrance Wills, or Beverly Swinney at the ORDA Construction Unit, between the hours of 8:30AM-4:30PM. **NO applications will be accepted after June 22, 2009.** All applicants will be contacted no later than July 6, 2009 regarding their eligibility.



Obama Targets 5,000 Schools Nationwide for Closing, Reopening

Dorothy Rowley
Special to the NNPA from the
Afro-American Newspapers

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - President Barack Obama has targeted 5,000 schools across the country to be closed then reopened with new faculty and administrators over a five-year span.

The move is in keeping with his promise to improve public education, the White House says.

While the president lacks the power to close chronically underperforming schools himself, his strategy would have local school officials in various states and jurisdictions work closely with his administration to see what works for public education.

So far a list of the targeted schools has not been made available and will be determined both states and local districts based on criteria established for them under guidance of the federal Education Department. But they would be in the bottom 5 percent of those in ailing systems – and the goal would be to transform 1,000

of them each year into vigorous learning facilities.

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is currently undergoing rigorous reformation under no nonsense Chancellor Michelle Rhee; and according to a report by Washington, D.C.-based Center on Education Policy, the number of schools in Maryland under restructuring has steadily increased over the past year, with the state currently listing 85 schools that have failed to meet standards outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002.

Under Obama's watch - NCLB which is allotted about \$500m million each year - is slated to be rewritten.

While the District continues to lose many of its students to charter facilities, DCPS officials have implemented projects such as the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program and DC Stars to drive up student achievement.

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform has reported that DCPS schools made significant gains on the state assess-

ment over the last academic year, but that less than half of students reached proficiency levels in both reading and math on the 2008 tests. However, DCPS's graduation rate increased slightly from 66.2 percent in 2006 to 67.9 percent in 2007.

Many of such improvements came under the leadership of former District of Columbia Board of Education President Robert Bobb, who left the District earlier this year to take up an emergency challenge in Detroit to turn its public schools around.

According to reports in Detroit, Bobb has asked U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan to help get the school system "placed under a special presidential emergency declaration" to get federal funding for infrastructure and curriculum.

Referring to Obama's plan, Duncan said children just have one shot at a good education and Obama's plan includes better pay for teachers as well as untested ideas for turning the systems around.

Duncan, a former Chicago schools chief, commented in an Associated Press interview, saying that Obama's strategy could also mean replacing a principal or turning a school over to a charter school operator.

"We really want to put a laser-like focus on those schools that have historically underperformed," Duncan said.

He also stated in an earlier speech this month at the Brookings Institute in Washington that, "If we turn around just the bottom one percent, the bottom thousand schools per year for the next five years, we could really move the needle, lift the bottom and change the lives of tens of millions of underserved children."

Obama's plan hinges on as much as \$5 billion earmarked in his budget for the federal school turnaround program. As a result, each of the schools involved could be in line for \$1 million each in program and staff upgrades.

In addition, the president's stimulus legislation has reportedly boosted funding to \$3.5 billion

and his budget would add another \$1.5 billion by shifting dollars away from traditional programs.

But not everyone is in line with Obama's plan, saying that overall it would equate to less schools funding. For example, funding for Title One schools which are normally appropriated the largest federal dollars, would decrease to just under \$13 billion from the \$13.4 billion allocated this year, according to a Black America Web report.

Mary Kusler, a lobbyist for the American Association of School Administrators said district officials have already planned their budgets and may have to use stimulus dollars to make up the difference.

Said Kusler, "The increases that were provided to districts through the stimulus were not instead of future funds — they were supposed to be in addition to future funds."

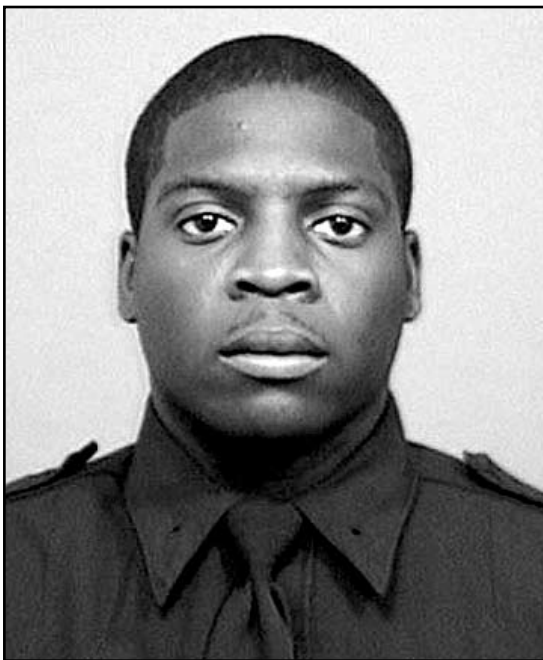
"Friendly Fire" Costs Black Police Officer His Life

Stephon Johnson
Special to the NNPA
from the New York
Amsterdam News

NEW YORK (NNPA) - A Black off-duty housing police officer lost his life to what some are calling a case of mistaken identity.

Around 10:30 pm Thursday night, May 28, on 125th Street in East Harlem. Omar Edwards, 25, after finishing his shift, saw a man, identified as Miguel Santiago, attempting to steal from his car. Edwards, dressed in plain clothes, confronted Santiago and a struggle ensued. Santiago broke the struggle and began to flee on foot.

At the same time a plain-clothes anti-crime team, driving an unmarked car, spotted Edwards chasing Santiago, with his gun



Omar Edwards

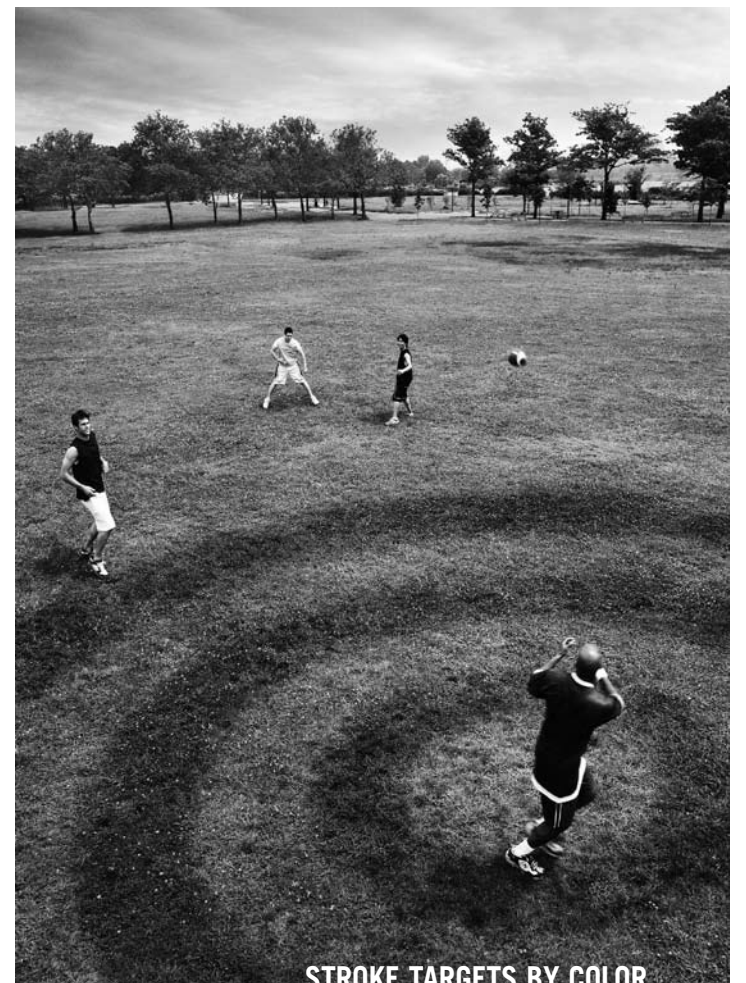
out, and followed him. According to investigators and various sources, 30-year-old officer Andrew Dunton, who is white, got out of his car and opened fire on

Edwards six times connecting twice. One in the arm and once in the chest. Edwards was pronounced dead at Harlem Hospital. He was not wearing a bulletproof vest.

Edwards, who became a newly wed last week, was on his way home to celebrate his wife's birthday.

The Rev. Al Sharpton has already weighed in calling on an independent investigator to look into the matter. Police say that Santiago is in custody. Harlem clergy and community leaders held a vigil outside of the housing precinct for Edwards early on Friday. Another one was planned at Wakefield Baptist Church in Edwards' neighborhood of Ocean Hill, Brooklyn Friday night.

Edwards joined the New York Police Department in 2007. His father-in-law is 19-year veteran of the NYPD.



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