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New Orleans

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**News Weekly**

*"The People's Paper"*

**Page 8 DataZone**

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**Data News Weekly to Honor  
2008-2009 Trailblazers  
at Anniversary Celebration**



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Nat Turner



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# Data News Weekly to Honor 2008-2009 Trailblazers at Anniversary Celebration



Charles Dickerson



Bobbie Mason



Robert "Kool Black" Horton



Janice Meredith



Joe Johnson



Dui Jarrod



Rodrina Rouege



Nolan Rollins



Sean Hunter



Shayla De La Rose



Vince Craig



Larry Calvin

**Shaniece B. Bickham and Edwin Buggage**  
Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief

Data News Weekly has a long-standing history of serving the community and spotlighting the “everyday people” who give New Orleans its unique fervor and appeal. These are the people who give a little extra than others in their efforts of community service and giving back for the greater good of the community.

Each month, Data News Weekly, along with sponsor AT&T, salutes an unsung hero as a Trailblazer of the Month with a full-page article showcasing the honoree’s hard work and dedication. The article gives readers an opportunity to learn about the community service and accomplishments of the Trailblazer that warranted the award and special recognition. In many

instances, the articles influence others to begin serving their community in a greater capacity.

It is important that those who give of their time unselfishly are recognized; though their passion for the community runs deeper than receiving recognition for their work. The Trailblazers identified by Data News Weekly give of themselves for the greater good.

Community service and volunteerism are always important factors in the survival of any area or initiative, but in post-Katrina New Orleans, the need is even greater. For the past four years the city has been faced with challenges that are unique. Many of these challenges have not ever been faced by any other city in the country. Unique challenges call for unique people with unique solutions. The Trailblazers of 2008-2009

have proven that they are up to the challenges and will not turn away from working to meet the needs of the City of New Orleans.

The 2008-2009 Trailblazers come from all walks of life with different stories and experiences. They all have one characteristic in common, however. All of the Trailblazers have an undying commitment to serve New Orleans to the best of their ability.

In conjunction with Data News Weekly’s annual anniversary celebration each year, Trailblazers are formally honored and a Trailblazer of the Year is chosen. This year’s anniversary celebration will take place on Sept. 3. The Trailblazers for 2008-2009 are:

**June 2008: Rodrina Rouege** has been working in the community for over a decade. She has used African

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## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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*Cover Story, Continued from previous page.*

dance as a tool to help build confidence and self-esteem in young girls. "I feel it is important for young girls to participate in positive activities because of so many of the negative things they are exposed to," says Rouege. Rouege is a dedicated mother of three and continues to contribute to the lives of the youth through her art.

**July 2008: Bobbie Mason** is a local attorney who has worked on community projects through Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and church organizations. "I have been involved in projects that have helped people all over the city, state and nation," says Mason. "And since coming back to the city after the storm, I am even more determined to do whatever I can to assist citizens who are in need as we rebuild the city and our lives." Mason is a mother of two and is founder of KISS, a support group for single mothers.

**August 2008: Robert "Kool Black" Horton** is a community activist and organizer who has worked on various campaigns involving social justice and human rights issues. "Today it is up to us to take a stand against the injustices that occur and affect our community and that is what I have done and will continue to do until the problems are eliminated," says Horton. He is on the frontlines

of a struggle for the rights of the disenfranchised whose grassroots efforts have led him to work on joint projects with the likes of civil rights icon Angela Davis. Horton is tied to a tradition of activism and he serves as a voice for those who sometimes find themselves voiceless.

**September 2008: Janice Meredith** is a local hair salon owner who has transformed her space into a place for women's empowerment. She has hosted reading groups as well as held forums focusing on battered women. She also serves as a consultant to other salons and stylists helping them to maximize their business potential. "We as business owners need to help one another in our community like other groups," says Meredith. "I have been fortunate enough to have a successful business, and I would like to pass those tools on to other entrepreneurs because I feel there is room for all of us to be a success." Meredith has also started a magazine dedicated to the beauty industry and hosts an annual stylist competition.

**October 2008: Joe Johnson** is a former New Orleans Saint who since retiring has dedicated his time to philanthropy. He has used his resources to help citizens through programs aimed at young people in addition to building affordable homes for

those affected by Hurricane Katrina. "This city has been such a big part of my life, and I feel that it is a place that has done so much for me that I should give something back," says Johnson. He continues to travel between New Orleans, Atlanta, and his native St. Louis on his mission to help those who are in need. Johnson is spreading his gift with the heart of a saint.

**November 2008: Charles Dickerson** is an educator who has worked with youth from New Orleans, La. and Houston, Texas sharing his knowledge and life experiences to help youth aspire to reach higher. "I have been blessed to do something I truly love," says Dickerson. The son of a pastor, Dickerson has always been heavily steeped in the spirit. "I have watched my father minister, and I feel that teaching people is my gift and is a ministry of sorts. I get up everyday and inspire young people." Dickerson has set up a foundation to further his mission to prepare the future leaders of tomorrow.

**December 2008: Shayla De La Rose** is an educator who works with young people in her community and through her church to help them deal with the issues that affect their everyday lives. "I was very fortunate to have a loving, supportive family, and a lot of our kids do not always have that. So,

*See Cover Story, Continued page 5.*

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# Four Years Later: New Orleans is Still Home



**Edwin Buggage**  
Editor-in-Chief

It has been four years since the city of New Orleans experienced a great deluge that changed the lives of so many in this city. Today the city is a gumbo of tragedy and triumph. It is a story that has a great number of successes and failures. It is a city where pockets of progress are nestled alongside blight, hopelessness and neglect, and where city government has made both giant steps and missteps. Today, however, we honor those who are the heartbeat of the city, whether they have returned or not, because New Orleans continues to give their lives meaning and will always be the place they call home.

In these days, yes we mourn, but it is also a day to rejoice in who we are as New Orleanians, a special group of people that are unlike any people in the world. Although buildings have been destroyed, and yes there are some things that have changed, the spirit and the flavor of the city and its people are still here. Even in the aftermath of a disaster, it is a place where people from around the globe come to experience our rich cultural traditions and hospitality that is unmatched.

After Hurricane Katrina caused so many people to find homes elsewhere, the spirit of resilience is still here. It's a place that you can still see people smiling in the face of tragedy, still finding that

silver lining behind the clouds of despair. Still talking about the secondline, or who makes the best gumbo, or how and when they were out of town it is hard to find D & D sausage to make their red beans.

Today, although some people maybe have left New Orleans never to return to live and are perhaps in better economic conditions than they were, many still long for the familiarity of home. They miss being able to be a short distance from mama or grandma's house, or the extended families of uncles, aunts, cousins or "paran" and "nanan." It's the kind of city where people say "Where 'ya at?" And then they ask "Where you from?" and "Who's your people?" This is New Orleans at its best.

It's the clanging of the bell on the St. Charles streetcar that takes you on a leisurely ride on a Saturday afternoon. It's buying a praline from Ms. Tammy or getting a po-boy and a Big Shot "cold drink" or getting a daiquiri or "sno-ball" and sitting in the park. Or it's Mardi Gras when neutral grounds or medians—for those who are not from here—are transformed into places where families and friends get together to have cookouts, drink, laugh and have a good time while floats pass throwing trinkets and bands play.

It is a town where we always find a reason to celebrate. Wheth-

er it's life or death, you might hear the sonorous, dissonant sounds of a brass band. It is a city where white people look black and black people look white. New Orleans is a place where French, Spanish, and African cultures have merged into something unknown to the rest of the U.S.

New Orleans is a city without a Main Street. There is Chartres, Burgundy, Carondelet and Tchoupitoulas. This city and state are filled with family names that are not seen anywhere else in the U.S. ranging from Bagneris, Herbert, Charbonnet and a host of others that befuddle people who are not locals to the area when they see them for the first time. It is where the now demolished public housing developments once sounded like luxurious places to live with names like Iberville, Lafite, Calliope and Magnolia that stood right across the street from Shakespeare Park.

It is a place that introduced jazz to the world and has one of the highest concentrations of talented people in the world. But because there are so many like them, they never fully realize their genius. Before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had some of the richest poorest people you ever wanted to see, for they had a full life in spite of challenging economic circumstances. It's the kind of place where people are always will-

ing to help without an agenda or angle just a smile. It's the kind of place where you can see the same person 20 times and they will always speak. This is a city where everyday lemons are made into lemonade and people drink of the sweet nectar that is living life to the fullest. The people of the city truly possess the spirit and exemplify the essence of joie de vivre.

Even four years after a storm that toppled the levees bringing in waters that washed away the lives so many knew, New Orleanians are still standing tall. The storm caused New Orleans to experience what was seemingly its darkest days, but because of the resilience of the people the sun has not yet set on the city for it still has a bright future. New Orleans' future is one that is in the hands of the citizens who have the power if they work together casting aside race, class and political affiliations. If this is done, they can shape and mold the city into a masterpiece and a model for a world class 21st century city. New Orleans can be a safe and better place to live, do business and raise and educate children. We are on the horizon of this storied time for a city that is ready for a renewal, renaissance and rebirth. And wherever we are on this day as we commemorate this day, we are 5-0-4 ever.

## Historic Rhodes Location Reopens

The Rhodes Family of Businesses recently celebrated their 125th anniversary with the re-opening of their Washington Avenue location. Friends and family along with political, civic and business leaders from across the city and nation came out during this blessed event.



Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones, Joan Rhodes, Former City Councilman-at-Large Jim Singleton, Former U.S. Senator and Ambassador Carol Moseley-Braun and Former New Orleans Mayor Sidney Barthelemy



State Representative Jared Brossett, Pete Rhodes and State Senator Ed Murray

## Q93 and WYLD-FM Hosts Radiothon in Support of Literacy

Area students will receive a break in their school expenses thanks to a two-day radiothon that will be staged by Q93 and WYLD-FM and in partnership with Scholastic Book Fairs.

The radiothon, which will take place at the end of August, has a purpose to raise money to support literacy in the New Orleans community. The proceeds from the event will be used to purchase vouchers that will be distributed to students for use at Scholastic book fairs.

Scholastic Book Fairs has a goal to assist students in the Recovery School District with plans to eventually be able to offer help to students and schools who need assistance in other areas throughout the city. Scholastic Book Fairs will also award schools "Scholastic Dollars," which will also be valid at fairs for the purchase of books and other resources available through the appropriate School Resource Catalog.

## City forms Partnership with Nickelodeon to Open Amusement Park in N.O. East

There were smiles and laughter from kids today in a one-of-a-kind press conference hosted by the City of New Orleans, featuring SpongeBob SquarePants and Dora the Explorer. Nickelodeon, the City of New Orleans and Southern Star Amusement, Inc. (SSA) today announced plans to create a new Nickelodeon water and theme park in New Orleans, LA - Nickelodeon Universe New Orleans. Nickelodeon - the number-one kids' entertainment brand - and Southern Star have entered into a licensing arrangement in which Southern Star will construct the new park themed with the Nickelodeon brand and its characters. The Nickelodeon/SSA agreement is part of the City of New Orleans' and SSA's redevelopment plans for the existing 65-acre theme park space (formerly Jazzland/Six Flags) in Eastern New Orleans, and will represent Nickelodeon's



first-ever outdoor theme park.

Plans for the park include the addition of brand-new rides including several major water-based attractions and the renovation of existing attractions, all to be themed with Nickelodeon's popular programs and characters, including: SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, Go, Diego, Go! and Avatar: The

Last Airbender. Nickelodeon costumed characters, live interactive entertainment, retail shops, games, food establishments and more also will be featured. Construction will begin this fall after the creative and architectural plans are complete and the park is targeted to be in service by the end of 2010.

### Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

I felt I would do whatever I could to fill that void with the contribution of service," says De La Rose. De La Rose is young, gifted and black, and is dedicated to giving back.

**January 2009: Dui Jarrod** is a man who has used his art to uplift and inspire young people. Through his Cloud Nine Productions, he has made educational films dealing with sensitive topics such as HIV, as well as conducted acting workshops. "There is enough art out there that is destructive and I wanted to do something that is more constructive and instructive that can get us to dialogue about issues that are relevant to our community," says Jarrod. Jarrod is a young man dedicated to making his vision of portraying more positive images a reality through his art.

**February 2009: Larry Calvin** is a man cloaked in the spirit. As a church deacon, he continues to go out in the community and initiate men's prayer groups to stop violence in the community. "I think a lot of the problems our community have stem from a retreat from our spiritual roots that have held us together for so long. This is something we have to get back to if we are to survive and

combat some of the issues that we face today with our youth," says Calvin. Calvin is a dedicated family man who says he could not have accomplished all he has in life without the help of his wife, Phyllis Calvin, who serves as his confidant, best friend and help mate.

**March 2009: Nolan Rollins** is the executive director of the New Orleans Branch of the National Urban League. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, he is a man who came to the city on a mission. Through his organization and as a private citizen, Rollins has dedicated his time to the betterment of New Orleans post-Katrina. "This is a great city with a rich history, and amazing people," says Rollins. "Although the people of this city have been through a lot, I am always encouraged when I meet citizens who have survived the storm and witness their resilience." Rollins sits on several civic and business boards and is part of a new breed of leadership emerging who has his foot in both the civil rights and business community.

**April 2009: Sean Hunter** is formerly the director of aviation at the New Orleans Louis Armstrong Airport. Over the years he

has been involved in community service projects that have helped young people throughout the City of New Orleans. "Being part of solutions has been what I am focused on through mentoring and other things. I come from similar circumstances as some of the kids I talk to and I want to be a positive example and let them know they can achieve whatever they desire in life if they try," says Hunter. Hunter is a business leader who continues to inspire those he comes in contact with to aim high and shoot for the stars.

**May 2009: Vince Craige** is co-owner of the Craige Cultural Center. Since Hurricane Katrina, he and his brother Todd Craige have developed programs that provide life skills and mentoring and educational enhancement for youth. "It is up to us to have places and programs in place that serve our youth that we own and control," says Craige. "The goal of our center is to be a ray of hope for our people as they try to rebuild their lives." Craige says he wants to continue in the trail blazed by his family who has always been committed to service.

All of the 2008-2009 Trailblazers are hard-working, dedicated individuals who only add to the specialness of New Orleans. It is because of them that the city has come as far as it has since

the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Data News Weekly's Trailblazer Award is merely one way of showing that their endeavors are appreciated.

### New Orleans City Council Request for Qualifications Cable and Telecommunications Consulting Services

The New Orleans City Council is soliciting Statements of Qualifications for Professional Cable/Telecommunications Consultants firms to provide consulting services and advice to the City Council and its Cable/Telecommunications Committee regarding matters associated with the telecommunications franchise act, cable access issues, new franchises, franchise amendments, and ongoing franchise extensions, as well as audit or compliance issues regarding existing franchises and to address a broad range of cable/telecommunications issues as they arise. A complete copy of the Request for Qualifications is available at the city council's website at [www.nocitycouncil.com](http://www.nocitycouncil.com). Complete statements of qualifications must be received by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2009.

For further information and the Request for Qualifications packet please contact:

Council Chief of Staff  
1300 Perdido Street - Room 1E06  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
E-mail: [rjpursell@cityofno.com](mailto:rjpursell@cityofno.com)



# Entergy New Orleans Proposes "Energy Smart" Energy Efficiency Plan

*Plan to deliver over \$3.1 million annually to New Orleans customers through incentives*

At the request of the New Orleans City Council Entergy has filed 'Energy Smart' a plan that according to officials at the power company could annually make up to 7,300 homes and businesses more energy efficient and save customers money.

"This proposal is the result of a comprehensive and ongoing process by Entergy New Orleans, the City Council and various other community stakeholders that wanted to help our residential and business customers save money, while also helping to stimulate the market for energy efficiency products and services," said Tracie Boutte, vice president of regulatory affairs, Entergy New Orleans, Inc. "It is our belief that these programs will help transform the market and create a robust and sustainable demand for energy efficient products and services and

promote the growth of a 'green' workforce of local contractors and energy efficiency auditors."

With annual funding of \$3.1 million, Entergy New Orleans is projecting that 7,300 participants will benefit from Energy Smart within the first year. For example, the Residential Solutions program in the proposal would provide rebates to New Orleans customers who make energy efficient improvements such as insulation, duct sealing and weatherization through a qualified contractor. Once the work is complete, Entergy New Orleans customers would receive immediate cash rebates to help defray the improvement costs while also benefiting from lower electric bill costs through the more energy-efficient residence. Small and large businesses and government buildings will also benefit.

The plan also includes incentives for the installation of solar hot water heaters. And over the next year, proposes to study the effectiveness of solar power for residences and businesses to provide customers with the benefits of solar applications in the city.

The Energy Smart Program has a program at low income residents that improves energy efficiency of homes for low income residents. It will make homes weatherization-ready to qualify for up to 6,500 dollars of additional energy efficiency improvements through the federal Weatherization Assistance Program. It also replaces old window air conditioning units with new energy efficient units.

Another feature that can benefit customers according to officials at Entergy is the In Home Display (Smart Meter Pilot) It

provides the latest automate metering device that are linked with an in home display unit that allows customers to monitor their energy usage and show how simple changes in their behavior can lower their electric bill.

The company will continue to research financing mechanisms that will help it reach more customers such as federal financing, private capital or grants.

The Energy Smart programs will be reviewed and approved by the Council on an annual basis. All residential and non-residential electric customers are eligible to participate in the program.

This proposal is part of Entergy New Orleans's ongoing efforts to help save customers money through a focus on energy efficiency and conservation. The Entergy New Orleans \$2 million energy efficiency program an-

nounced in January rewards customers that make their homes or businesses more energy efficient. Delgado Community College and Stirling Properties are examples of the first business customers to receive cash incentives totaling \$42,000 for installing energy efficient technologies in their facilities. The current program was designed to act as a "Quick Start" initiative to serve as a bridge until the Energy Smart Program is approved by the council.

Over the past few months, Entergy New Orleans has worked with the council, its advisors and the public to review the proposed programs, funding levels, efficiency goals and incentives.

A public hearing at the City Council Chambers takes place Sept. 10 and the council is scheduled to vote on this proposal Sept. 17.

## Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Festival 10th Anniversary Celebration

Dionne Character, Author

There is a certain sort of energy that flows through Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club. The spirit in the building is always filled with music, happiness, food, and down home people. Once you have frequented, it becomes native land to your soul. A place where you can let down your hair and certainly leave your tie at the front door.

Celebrating its 10th Anniversary Sept. 4 through Sept. 6, Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club has been in the area for over 50 years. This event is all about giving back to a community, which it has served for over three generations, beginning in 1944. A successful black-owned business, Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club has provided the finest of "live" entertainment in the Greater New Orleans Community.

The line-up for the community festival includes Norman Connors, Stephanie Jordan featuring Marlon Jordan and Kent Jordan, Kermit Ruffins, Charmine Neville, Treme Brass Band ending in a closing finale with the Black Men of Labor, who will be controlling the streets with their Annual Labor Day Second Line Parade.

This extravaganza is with purpose. Net proceeds will be donated to St. Augustine High School Jazz Music Program.

If you are interested in becoming a vendor or would like more information visit [www.sweetlorrainesjazzclub.com](http://www.sweetlorrainesjazzclub.com).



## Lake Carmel Community Celebrates Night Out Against Crime







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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

This week's Shoot Ya Best Shot highlights special events, birthday parties, and poetry and jazz nights throughout the area. If you would like to have your photos featured in Shoot Ya Best Shot, please send them to [datanewsphotos@gmail.com](mailto:datanewsphotos@gmail.com)



Family and friends celebrated Codi Sullivan's Sweet 16 party on Aug. 14, 2009 at the Crystal Palace. The Hollywood Theme allowed guests to walk the red carpet and have their photos taken.



Sweet Lorraine's on Friday, August 21st – Friends having fun.



Poetry Night Tuesday at Sweet Lorraine's, Data News Weekly's Publisher Terry Jones' grandson Hiram Jones made his poetry debut. Pictured left to right are: Poet and Host Shelton Alexander (known as Shakespeare), Hiram Jones and his father Glenn Jones.



Friday Nights are always a treat at the Perfect Fit!



Hanging out on Friday at Austin's Creole Kitchen, enjoying the entertainment by vocalist, Nadja Cojoe, standing with the guys.



Friends gather at The Prime Example to have a good time.



# The Peoples Health Senior Health Series



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– Dale Owens,  
Peoples Health member

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That's why AT&T proudly supports Data News Weekly for their outstanding work to connect our community for 43 years.

Congratulations to this year's recipients of the Trailblazer Program.





# Singer Gina Brown

## On Anutha Level of Entertainment



Dionne Character  
Data News Weekly Columnist

I am hardly impressed by anything but a fierce pair of shoes, but I must say, singer, Gina Brown who sat in with Emile Hall on saxophone, surely got my toes thumping and the straps around

my ankles loosened, listening to her sing at Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club on Saturday, Aug. 8.

This Sista is on Anutha Level like the name of her band. She brings so much fire to the stage, I didn't know whether to get a glass of water or a drink simply because I couldn't believe what I'd just heard on vocals. She can intertwine Peabo Bryson with Lil Wayne, leaving you with a taste of Chaka Khan all in one-riff.

Gina Brown is an amazing performer who is originally from Mobile, Alabama. Her musical style varies from Blues, Jazz, Motown, Pop, Oldies, Hip-Hop and Funk. Gina Brown is as real as it gets when it comes to "live" entertainment. She made her debut on the Jazz circuit with violin-



ist Michael Ward, and was also featured on Harrah's Fulton Street Live compilation. Brown has also shared

the stage with Earl Turner, Roberta Flack, Gerald Levert and a host of other artists. Her travels include Brazil, Hong Kong and Indonesia just to name a few. Check out this soulful Sista for yourself at [www.ginabrownonline.com](http://www.ginabrownonline.com).

If you have any upcoming events, feel free to contact Dionne Character at [www.dionnecharacter.com](http://www.dionnecharacter.com).

## "Lift Every Voice:

### The NAACP and the Making of The Civil Rights Movement" by Patricia Sullivan

c.2009, , The New Press  
\$29.95, 514 pages

Terri Schlichenmeyer

#### "I'm telling my Dad!"

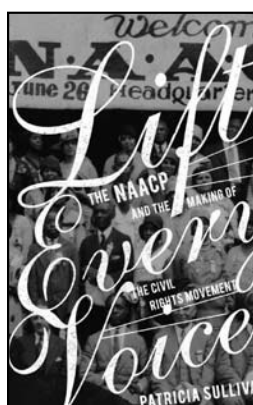
Four simple words that put fear into schoolyard bullies, teasing siblings, and everybody within earshot of your wail. Together, they made a declarative statement that conjured up a tall, imposing figure with booming voice and a long shadow – someone mighty who wouldn't allow anybody to mess with you.

"I'm telling Dad!" Words that might have, in truth, been about as effective as a wet spaghetti, but which made you feel stronger just saying them.

And how did your Pop do it? Read "Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of The Civil Rights Movement" by Patricia Sullivan and you'll see that, all your life, Dad had help watching your back.

"In the summer of 1910 the NAACP remained little more than an idea," says author Patricia Sullivan. The organization got its start nearly two years previously when The National Negro Congress convened, in part, to help combat the racism and violence that was rampant in the South and was escalating in the North. According to press reports of the day, as many whites as blacks were in attendance.

During that conference – the second held – the official name of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was adopted. Sullivan



says the use of "Colored" was the idea of W.E.B. Du Bois, who had accepted the job of director of publications and research.

Although the fledgling organization had insider struggles and differences of opinion early-on, it quickly became obvious that focused legal strategies were key in fighting racism. The organization's first big skirmish came during the 1912 presidential election, when the fight seemed not for more rights but to prevent tighter restrictions on what had already been gained.

By mid-century, there were NAACP chapters in most major cities and dozens of smaller towns. The organization fought for bathroom rights for mailmen and for soldiers and veterans of World War II. It challenged voting restrictions, segregation, and inequalities in education, and stood by the Scottsboro Boys, tent city dwellers, and anyone who dared to challenge white supremacy. In doing so, it seemed, the NAACP was gearing up for the biggest battle of all.

"Lift Every Voice" is a heavy book, both in size (over 500 pages, includ-

ing index) and in tone. It's also heavy in history, but that is exactly its appeal.

Starting her story with events from 100 years ago, author, teacher, and scholar Patricia Sullivan presents the NAACP, its supporters and its fights, as well as milestone achievements and benefits that have come from its presence. Parts of this book are painful to read and others will outrage most readers, even though many decades have passed. My only complaint is that this book winds down in the early years of the Civil Rights movement, missing what some may feel are the NAACP's most interesting years.

#### Sequel, anyone?

If you're up for a richly-researched history book to wrap up your summer reading season, it's here in "Lift Every Voice". Read this book, and you'll be telling everybody.

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# trailblazer

## Nat Turner's Ninth Ward Resurrection

Edwin Buggage  
Editor-in-Chief



Nathan "Nat" Turner is a native of Minnesota whose journey has taken him to places as far away as the continent of Africa to New York and now to New Orleans with his mission always being helping people help themselves. "I am concerned about people in Africa and the African Diaspora receiving justice," said Turner. "I have made documentary films about child soldiers in West Africa, I have been a teacher in New York and now I am here in New Orleans doing work I feel is significant and will help the people of this city," says Turner.

He has taken a storefront grocery once occupied by the Blair family on the corner of Benton and North Roman Streets in the lower ninth ward and is working with young people from New York and New Orleans transforming this barren piece of land and vacant building into an urban farm. "I am blessed that the family allowed me to use this location to do this in the ninth ward," says Turner. "It is about providing opportunities for young people

to learn about service." An advocate for children he says, "We should begin to look at youth as a constituency and not a problem; as valued members of society, and that's what I am doing with this project."

Coming from an education background, Turner taught for seven years in New York City in a school that was cited for excellence and a model for what a viable, functional school should be. Turner felt upon seeing the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina his

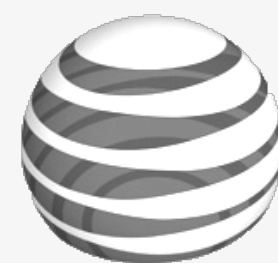
skills could be better utilized helping the youth of the Crescent City. "It is about helping young people realize their full potential, and get involved in positive activities, and as adults it is our job to guide, educate and encourage them giving them the map to how to be a success in life," says Turner.

Throughout his journey Turner has brought hundreds of youth from New York down to New Orleans to take part in his urban farming project. "It

has been a great experience for these kids to come and see the damage, but to learn that through service they can be part solutions as well." "This project has brought kids together across race and class lines and has been educational for both groups." He feels it has been especially eye opening for the kids from New Orleans, "I feel for the New Orleans kids it is essential that they learn about other people and other ways of life, so we are planning on trying do a project where the kids from New Orleans get an opportunity to go up to New York in the future." He is a staunch advocate of education and is disappointed by what he sees as the lack of emphasis on education as a high priority in the recovery, "I think education should be framed as a human rights issue, that too many kids are being given up on with an inferior remedial education and that is criminal," says Turner "I think every child deserves a quality education, and that is the next step of my project is to work on developing and alternative for so-called at risk youth to receive a quality education."

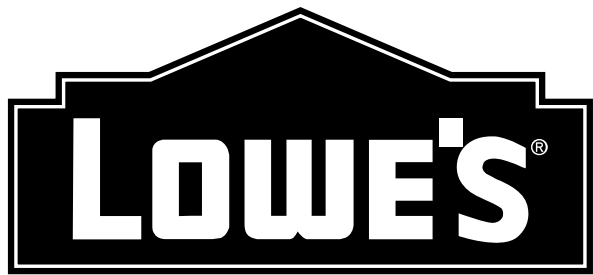
Nat Turner is making a way out of what some people thought was no way in his efforts in the Lower Ninth Ward. "There a lot of people without resources as far as money, but the will to get things done and serve a higher cause is sometimes greater than money," says Turner. Concluding he says, "You can't be afraid to do the right thing; the light will shine on the upright when you do what's right." Nat Turner is a man on a mission leading a resurrection in the Lower Ninth Ward, he is a dedicated soldier in the war against injustice and for his work he has been recognized as the Data News Weekly Trailblazer for the month of August.

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# Lowery Receives USA's Freedom Award

David Stokes

The "dean" of the civil rights movement added another award on his already-full mantle when he stepped up to receive from President Barack Obama the nation's highest honor to civilians, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"I was pleasantly stunned," the Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lowery said, upon White House officials informing the 88-year-old civil rights leader of the acknowledgement.

Along with Lowery, co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other clergy in 1957, renowned actor/producer/humanitarian Sidney Poitier, U.S. Sen. Edward "Ted" Kennedy of Massachusetts, "South Africa's moral conscience" Archbishop Desmond Tutu, retired U.S. Supreme Court Judge Sandra Day O'Connor, Mary Robinson, Ireland's first female president (1990-97); and tennis great Billie Jean King were among the 16 recipients recognized for accomplished public service on Aug. 12 at the White House.

"These outstanding men and women represent an incredible diversity of backgrounds as agents of change. Their tremendous accomplishments span fields ..., yet they share one over-arching trait: each has been a change agent to set about improving an imperfect world, often overcoming great obstacles along the way," stated President Obama last week in a White House press release. "Their relentless devotion to breaking down barriers and lifting up their fellow citizens sets a standard to which we all should strive. It is my great honor (to bestow them the Medal of Freedom)."

"(The acknowledgement) is an excited surprise; I can only think of words like humbled, honored and overwhelmed. It's just beginning to dawn on me," Rev. Lowery said in July at Cascade United Methodist's Joseph E. Lowery Chapel, "that it's the highest honor that my country can bestow on me as a civilian, and I don't take that lightly." He continued, "I wish the medal were large enough for me to put the names of all the people who are responsible for my being here," he inferred, presumably speaking of the many civil rights



During the 42nd anniversary of the "Selma to Montgomery" march in Selma, Ala., President Barack Obama is locked arm-in-arm with Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, who in turn is connected to his spouse, Evelyn G. Lowery, in 2007, as they walked over the Edmund Pettus Bridge with other civil rights activists. The 1965 successful march, coordinated by Amelia Boynton-Robinson, John Lewis, Hosea Williams and others from Brown Temple AME Church, ultimately rendered African-Americans the right to vote.

activists who "marched too long, wept too bitterly, prayed too hard, bled too profusely and died too young," thereby, assisting King, Lowery, and Dr. Ralph David Abernathy—all respective former presidents of SCLC in the 1950s, '60s and '70s—in leading the struggle toward eventual passage of the federal Civil Rights and Voting Rights bills. (Lowery served longest as SCLC president, 1977-Jan. 15, 1998, while Abernathy (1926-90) became King's immediate successor in '77, after King was murdered in 1968, 11 years upon SCLC's founding in New Orleans in '57.)

Although Lowery retired from SCLC 11 years ago, he remains a great speaker-in-demand, as well as sustains the "agent of change" moniker by heading the Atlanta-based Coalition for the People's Agenda, a consortium of social advocacy organizations working to improve the quality of governance. While at SCLC, first as vice president (1957-67) and chairman of the board (1967-77) prior to becoming president, Rev. Lowery labored, initially in 1948, as a United Methodist church min-

ister. He retired from the church as senior pastor of Cascade UMC in 1995. Furthermore, the Huntsville, Ala., native began his activist role as leader of the Alabama Civic Affairs Association, in the early '50s, which grew to ultimately assist two young ministers in Montgomery, Ala. (King and Abernathy) with the fight for civil rights for African-Americans, in general, and the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott initiative. For the past one-half-plus century, Lowery has doggedly worked for blacks' fair and successful inclusion into the political process, not only with campaigning for a favorite candidate, but also registering to vote and going to the polls to cast your ballot. "Voting is a sacred right and a moral obligation!" the father of five and grandfather/great-grandfather is known to espouse during political seasons. Thus, enters what is now the first African-American president: Lowery, one of Obama's national campaign co-chairs, traveled the country cheerleading, "Yes, We Can!" for the 48 year old commander-in-chief in Iowa, South Carolina, North Carolina

and elsewhere after their first encounter in Selma, Ala., in 2007.

"I saw serving God and serving man as reciprocal and collaborative ...to make Heaven my home," Lowery indicated, summing up the past 60 years as a prolific minister and diligent activist. Along with thanking his longtime spouse, the former Evelyn Gibson, emotion was shown by Lowery while pronouncing "gratefulness" to Obama to "be in his 'first class,' working hard to make (slate of recipients) a good class," as well as "not thinking I'd see the first African-American" U.S. president. Lowery's allegiance was rewarded with he rendering the benediction at the historic inauguration, last Jan. 20, in Washington, D.C. "I've never been more proud of my country than I was that day, standing on the Mall," and "seeing the Lincoln Memorial with the eyes of my soul, and I heard the voice of a 34 year old Ga. preacher (King) speaking from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial summoning America to climb out of the basement of race and color, to the higher ground of content of character and competence (during

the "I Have A Dream" address at 1963's "March on Washington"), and here I was participating in the nation's response to that summons. The "Star Spangled Banner" never sounded better—and I've never been more proud of my country. To receive this award now, I'm just overwhelmed and thankful."

Other recipients are Hispanic actress Chita Rivera, the first openly gay politician, San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk (1930-78), former GOP vice presidential candidate/former HUD secretary Jack Kemp (1935-2008), Plains Indian War Chief Joe Medicine Crow-High Bird, Dr. Pedro Greer, Jr., a physician and assistant dean of Academic Affairs at Florida's International University School of Medicine; Nancy G. Brinker, founder of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure of breast cancer; and theoretical physicist-Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University Stephen Hawking.

Commenting on the recipients, additionally, Cong. John Lewis of Atlanta was nostalgic. "All of Atlanta was very proud when Rev. Lowery received this award. As a leader of SCLC and the Alabama Civic Affairs Association, he has helped free this nation from some of its most persistent limitations and has helped create a more perfect union." Lewis concluded, "all of the (recipients) serve as a source of inspiration to all of us, but especially for young people, who study the lives of these men and women and learn a great deal. Congratulations to them all who represent the very best in our society and the world's community."

Created by President Harry Truman in 1945, other past recipients of the award for "exceptional meritorious service" include baseball great Henry "Hank" Aaron, actor/humanitarian Bill Cosby, former President Jimmy Carter, journalist David Brinkley, Coach "Bear" Bryant of the University of Alabama, jazz great Pearl Bailey and opera singer Marian Anderson, as well as Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong, respectively.



## Greater New Orleans Teens Need Crimeless Nights Every Night



Kimberly Byas-Dilosa  
Data News Contributor

Dear Community:

If you left your community's Night Out Against Crime event inspired to get involved in the fight against crime in some way, PLEASE don't forget about TEENS. In New Orleans, we are facing a worsening crisis called TEEN VIOLENCE.

The Teen Center for Non-Violence conducted an assessment of 40 teens between the ages of 13-18. Thirty percent of the teens assessed have a juvenile offender record resulting from participation in other forms of teen violence. Over 80% of the teens cited depression as a reason for participating in teen violence.

Over 60% of the teens have thought

about or attempted suicide—another form of teen violence.

Face it: Our kids are NOT okay.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Children learn violent behaviors from their family and peers, as well as observe it in their neighborhoods and in the community at large."

If this is true, then we are now forced to ask ourselves, "What have we as individuals and communities taught our kids? And, how do we un-teach them?"

It is impossible for Greater New Orleans to jail its way out of this teen violence problem. It is possible for us to abate these problems by addressing symptoms that

a violent or potentially violent teen might display—symptoms like hopelessness, irritability, isolation, anger, hostility, and crying to name a few.

Most important, when we gather for events like Night Out Against Crime, let's also gather to cure the mental ills plaguing our youth. Let's gather in support of programs like YOUTHanAsia Foundation, the Fountain of Youth Foundation, and the New Orleans Youth Slam Team that recognizes the importance of emotional well-being in teen violence prevention.

Just remember, kids don't wake up as killers, robbers, and/or suicidal.

## School Superintendent Gives Strong Message of Support to the Community

Darryl C. Kilbert

Superintendent, Orleans Parish Public Schools

Thousands of our children returned to the classroom over the past two weeks. We sent them off to school with the hope that they would receive the type of quality education they'll need to succeed in this world.

And it doesn't matter whether our children attend a school run by the Orleans Parish School Board, the Recovery School District or an autonomous charter board. As a community, we are all strong believers in public education. It's no secret that years ago, some of our schools didn't live up to their potential. And our children suffered. But now there are promising signs that we are on the right track. This past spring's LEAP tests show our children making solid gains in math, science and reading. The Orleans Parish School Board will operate this year with a balanced budget, and together with the RSD, we will provide new schools to our children during the next decade under a master plan.

But our schools still face challenges. Both the OPSB, RSD and charters have had to trim costs at our schools this year. We have worked to ensure that any cuts don't affect the quality of instruction our kids receive

in the classroom. But as many of us know during this recession, every dollar counts. And a dollar we lose because of declining tax revenues or a dollar we're forced to use to pay our staggering long-term debt, means we'll have to make more tough decisions about how we pay for extracurriculars, instructional materials or even support staff.

Despite the challenges, we are committed to growing our successful school programs and creating new opportunities for our children to succeed. We join our partners in education at the RSD and charters in asking that parents remain involved in the process at their school and in our community.

And we will do our part. The Orleans Parish School Board was elected to represent our community's interest and investment in public education. And so this year, we will work with the RSD and charters (east and west bank) to find solutions for the decades' worth of debt that threaten to hold back our progress.

We are all in this together. As our children head off to school this year, they'll do so with the knowledge that they carry with them the hopes of their parents and the commitment of this community to public education.

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