

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

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News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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**Data News Around Town
at Bayou Classic**

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in New Orleans?**



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Election 2010

A New Beginning



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

NOLA 2006-Present

The election season is about to be in full gear where candidates vie for positions to represent citizens in offices ranging from Mayor, City

Council, Judges and the consolidation of the Assessors seat from seven to one.

This is truly a monumental time for a city attempting to turn the page since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina which further opened up wounds of race and class creating a social breach that was as bad as the water that left

many people without a place they could call home.

During the last election cycle efforts were put in place to ensure full voter participation, as outgoing mayor Ray Nagin triumphed over Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu in a hard fought race that saw the Nagin reposition himself, going

Photo credit: New Orleans City Council

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from what some thought was a black conservative to a voice for those who longed to come home.

But during these four years much has changed in a city as demographic shifts, as well as several high profile trials leading to the convictions of prominent elected officials, business leaders and the ending of a political dynasty. After all these things what should voters look for as the city attempts to move forward?

The Race against 'Race'

The last election cycle was something that further divided a city. During this time a well meaning mayor knowingly or unknowingly helped to fan the flames of a racial divide, and leaders in the white community polarized citizens with racially charged venom. Today it is time to build bridges of understanding not erect more walls of misunderstanding. It is time for the city to move beyond the simple formula of race in election of its candidates.

Today it is less about who is the Black candidate or the White candidate it is about who is the wrong or right candidate. New Orleans is a city that is poised for greatness and can truly be an example of a progressive 21st century city but it must move beyond thinking that pigmentation alone equals progress.

But that does not mean that the city needs to turn back the hands of time with only Whites dominating the political process. It simply means that the best qualified people are voted in that can make this city a better place for all of its citizens. And the only way to do that is through all people working together for the greater good of the city, for the waters that flooded the city did not discriminate. All over the city everyone is in the mode of trying to rebuild their lives. As many have come to the shores of our country and our city on different ships, today we are all in the same boat trying to stay afloat.

It is in this time that we need bold courageous leaders who are visionaries; men and women who are able to inspire the city, nation and world that New Orleans is a city ready to do business in a new way. That gone are the old ways of doing things that has been a black eye for a city that has so many positive things to offer, but all too often it is overshadowed by the things that are negative.

Or even worse by a scandal mongering mainstream media, that creates a sideshow like backdrop for the political climate in the city. But admittedly some of the foibles of our elected officials lend itself to people outside of the city believing the city and for that matter the state is a 'Confederacy of Dunces.' We must in this election cycle begin to remove this image from the minds of people across the globe. We must in this race get past 'race' in determining who we elect and look at who is the most capable and competent person for the job.

Doing the Right Thing

New Orleans has been a city that has been known for finding a way within the political pro-

cess to get it all wrong; where too many back room deals are being made. This is the sad history of this city whether the leaders have been black or white. It is time for citizens to demand more of their elected leaders.

It is time to hold them accountable for what they do while they are serving on the dime of the people they represent. This city cannot continue to give people a pass because they look like them, and are not working in their best interest. It is time for citizens to stop letting politicians play musical chairs; going from seat to seat but not providing the city the leadership it needs. For this is not a child's game, it is the serious business of rebuilding of a city.

It is time to have a bold brash new movement of leaders to emerge that can pump new blood inside the veins of the political process of New Orleans. It is time for the city to heal the wounds that divides its citizens, it is time to give the city surgery and give it a new prescription and the medicine it needs to become the city it could be.

And that is a task that is not solely in the hands of the politicians it is in the hands of the citizens. Those who actually go to the polls and vote, the power are in their hands, so it must be used wisely.

Election 2010?

As the election season begins this is the most important election in the modern history of the city of New Orleans. It can and perhaps will change the make up of elected offices. Some seats may go from White to Black or Asian. The changing demographics of the city are something that may force some to forge new political alliances to help get candidates elected.

Women who make up the majority of voters and black women being the largest percentage may be the margin of difference. Today communities cannot allow themselves to be monolithic in choosing a candidate. Today the citizens of New Orleans needs to sift through those who offer themselves up for service and ask themselves some serious questions about how they will serve if elected. Because as the city moves forward it can no longer afford politicians who serve themselves pie ala mode and

give the people crumbs. Today it is time for everybody to have an opportunity to get a piece of the pie.

But it is also time for citizens to realize that



they must be engaged, because disengagement could be detrimental to their future. Today it is incumbent upon citizens to use their voice. Using their votes effectively, to place people in office who can lead New Orleans into the future, into a new direction giving the city the leadership that it needs moving forward.

And if some of those are leaders who have previously held office then today they must be held to a higher standard than in the past; for today is a new day. And for those newcomers they must know that the old rules of leadership do not apply anymore. For this election is more than sound bites, showmanship, and spectacle, but about sober mindedness, seriousness and substance because the time dictates that is what's needed in a new breed of elected leaders that will captain the ship of New Orleans. One that can either sail towards a new oasis of prosperity and progress or sink further into the abyss; but those choices lie within the hearts, hands and minds of the voters as they prepare to go to the polls to cast their votes.

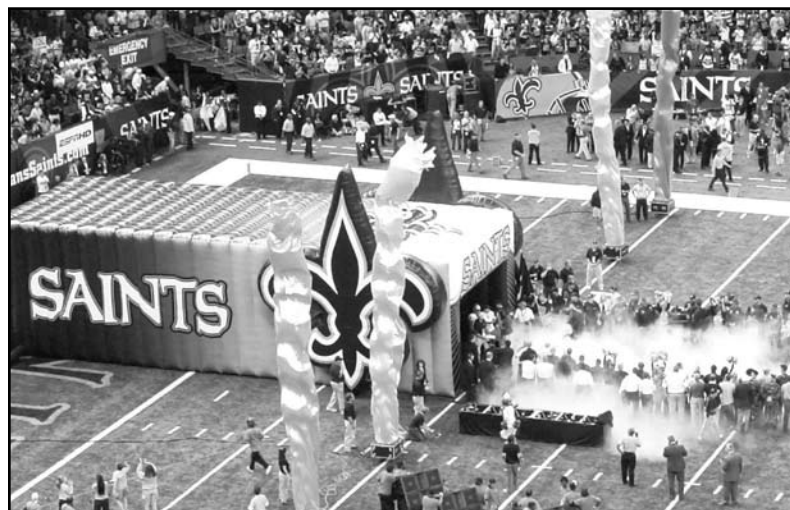
New Orleans Saints Clinch NFC South

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.
Managing Editor

Saints fans near and far were on edge Sunday, Dec. 6 during the team's game against the Washington Redskins as it started to look as though the winning streak was headed down the drain. A few missteps by the Redskins, followed up with several great plays by the Saints lead the team to a 33-30 overtime victory. The Saints are now 12-0, and are also the NFC South Champions.

In the postgame press conference, Saints Coach Sean Payton, pointed out that the Redskins played a good game, but he also commended his players for the determination they had. According to Payton, the team members played with momentum in spite of the shorter week they had to prepare because of the Monday Night game against the New England Patriots.

"As that game went on, our guys stuck with the momentum," said Payton, as he discussed key



Photos: Glen Summers

plays in the game that helped the Saints eventually win against Washington. "It was a good win," he added.

Star quarterback for the Saints, Drew Brees, also expressed his views on the 12-0 record and win over Washington.

"I definitely believe in destiny; and I believe in karma and what goes around comes around, and just the fact that we have been on the other side of this deal just too

many times," said Brees. "Maybe it is our time, that we start catching some of the breaks."

New Orleans Saints wide receiver Robert Meachem was one of the many players who were instrumental to the Saints' victory. During his comments, Meachem acknowledged how important the win was for the Saints fans.

"12 and 0 means a lot to us," said Meachem. "I would say it is bigger than that team...all of



the fans, that's what it means... because they have been through Katrina and Gustav, and they have been through a lot of bad things. And for us to be 12 and 0, when we touch down, they will be there chanting."

And Meachem was right. The Saints fans were waiting on the team's arrival from the Washington game to greet them and let them know how excited they were and happy for the Saints' success.

Fans waved signs, shouted Who Dat!, and sang Saints-themed songs to express their gratitude for the team's hard work.

As many fans opted to go to the Black and Gold Shop the Monday following the game instead of work, many are gearing up for the Dec. 13 game against the Saints' rival, Atlanta Falcons. Many predict that this will be an easy win for the team, especially because the Falcon's quarterback, Matt Ryan, might still be out with an injury. Commentators warn, however, that teams who will compete against the Saints will bring their A game because they know they have to in order to have any shot at beating them. From then on, the Saints will have three games remaining against the Cowboys, Buccaneers, and Panthers, and then the countdown to the playoffs, and possibly the Super Bowl, begins. Needless to say, many have already started planning their trips to Miami.



OFFICIAL MEDICARE ANNOUNCEMENT

Medicare Open Enrollment begins November 15th

Every year from November 15th to December 31st Open Enrollment gives you the opportunity to review your Medicare plans. Use our resources to see if your plans still meet your needs. Visit Medicare online, call to speak with a Medicare representative and check your mail for the *2010 Medicare & You* handbook to review available plans.

Visit us online to review your plan at www.medicare.gov.

Call 1-800-MEDICARE (TTY 1-877-486-2048) to get help from a trained Medicare representative or learn where you can get help locally.

Check your mail for the handbook *2010 Medicare & You* to review available Medicare plans.

*My Health.
My Medicare.*





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My Medicare.*



The Essence of the Game

Behind The Scenes of Bayou Classic



Dionne Character, Author
Data News Weekly Columnist

Bayou Classic is much more than what the human eye could ever discover sitting in the stands. Besides the die-hard fans, cheerleaders, the fierce sound of The Human Jukebox, half-time and those rooting for Grambling State University, that of which I attended and played in the band, this Thanksgiving, I realized that we have

come a long way in football and as black professionals.

As I strolled the hallway of the suites, not only was I greeted by the Mayor and First Lady of New Orleans, I met doctors, lawyers, radio personalities, politicians, teachers, and athletics, all of whom were African Americans.

A spirit of awakening lingered. Everyone seemed to carry a sense of pride and fortitude. Perhaps we all understood that we have contributed to a society, who now realizes that being Black in America is being proud of who we are.

The Essence of the game lies beyond the stands, the food, the music, the drinks, and all the sponsors who continue to contribute to higher education.

It is in the pride of the scenes behind the football that we celebrate



who we are and how far we have traveled as professionals, making a difference, changing the game.

Dionne Character can be reached at dasolediva@yahoo.com.



Make the holiday meal your crowning achievement.

The holiday meal is not a time to leave anything to chance, especially when serving a traditional favorite like Chitterlings. So go with the brand that has been a holiday favorite for over 40 years: Queenella. Our chitterlings are triple cleaned. And sure to satisfy all your party guests.



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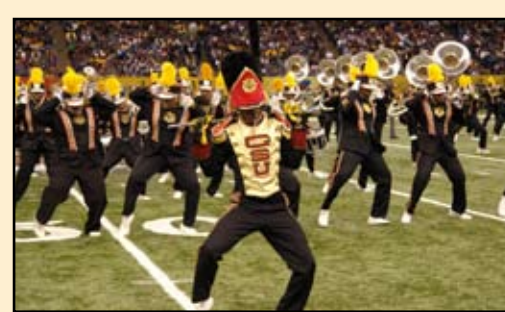
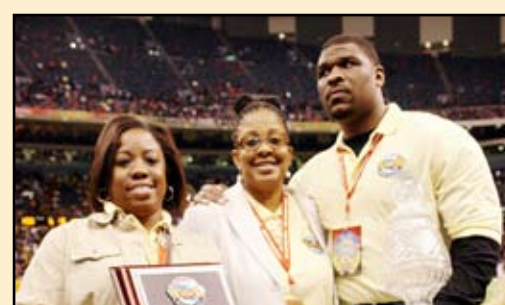
Data's feature Shoot Ya Best Shot showcases candid photos from around town. To have your photos included in the Shoot Ya Best Shot special section, email them along with the photographer's name to datanewsphotos@gmail.com.

Bayou Classic weekend was filled with many parties and corporate gatherings around town. Here are a few highlights from Bayou Classic Suites at the Superdome, as well as the Miller Coors Suite at the Sheraton Hotel.



The city of New Orleans once again hosted the State Farm Bayou Classic. A sea of ebony faces converged on the Crescent City for a weekend of friendly rivalry and revelry. Data News Weekly was there behind the scenes of this marvelous event.

Photos: Glenn Summers



Liberty Bank Expands its Reach to Michigan

Liberty Bank and Trust Company, a Louisiana based commercial bank, announced last month that it had acquired Home Federal Savings Bank located in Detroit, Michigan. This acquisition is a continuation of Liberty's rapid expansion over the past 10 years. Liberty now has financial institutions operating in seven major urban areas (New Orleans, Baton Rouge, LA – Jackson, MS – Houston, TX – Kansas City, MO – Kansas City, KS – Detroit, Michigan) and six states (Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Michigan).

The purchase of the assets of Home Federal Savings Bank was effective at close of business Friday, Nov. 6. The institution opened under the Liberty Bank and Trust Company banner on Monday, Nov. 9. In assuming all of the deposits of Home Federal Savings Bank, Liberty Bank and

Trust Company has purchased approximately \$14.9 million of assets. The acquisition has been approved by all of the involved regulatory authorities.

Liberty Bank was established in 1972. Since that time, Liberty Bank and Trust company has grown from an initial asset base of \$2 million to \$420 million. Liberty Bank and Trust Company is one of the most profitable in the United States and ranks among the top five African-American owned financial institutions in the United States.

In making the announcement about the Detroit, Michigan bank acquisition, Liberty Bank and Trust Company's President and CEO, Alden J. McDonald, Jr. said, "The expansion of our banking network to Detroit is a significant benchmark in our development. We want to broaden our reach and to provide our services to a

larger audience. We saw the need to have a diverse and expansive portfolio and geographical reach. This acquisition is another step to be more aggressive on a national stage".

The two Home Federal Savings Bank locations have been transferred to Liberty Bank and Trust Company. "Normal banking operation for Home Federal Savings Bank customers will continue uninterrupted," said Liberty Bank President Alden J. McDonald, Jr. "We will be open for business and will be able to conduct all transactions for our new customers." Liberty Bank and Trust Company offers full banking services and has been an industry leader in mortgage lending and financial products geared to enhance the financial well being of its customer base.

HBO Treme` Series Star Clarke Peters Visits Local School with Mardi Gras Indians

Second and Third Grade students at McDonogh #42 Charter Elementary school received books from Mardi Gras Indians and Actor Clarke Peters during a special presentation Tuesday, Dec. 1, as part of a special community collaboration between Basin St. Station, the Mardi Gras Indian Hall of Fame, and Guardians Institute.



Peters, who most recently starred in the HBO Series, *The Wire*, also read from the book *Duke Ellington* by Andrea Pinkney. The Mardi Gras Indian Nation also participated in a special musical presentation.

The book club was inspired by the late Big Chief Donald Harrison, Sr., he read over forty books a year and encouraged children to read by giving books as gifts. The presentation at McDonogh #42

provided children with books to enhance their love of reading and academic achievement. Big Chief Donald Harrison, Sr. died on December 1, 1998, so the event also commemorated the eleventh anniversary of his death.

Peters will return to HBO in a new series *Treme*, which is based on the New Orleans community. He has been cast as a Mardi Gras Indian Big Chief in the series.

Broadway Returns to New Orleans with Production of The Color Purple



Photos: www.cityofno.com

The *Color Purple* presented by Oprah Winfrey drew in sold-out audiences at the Mahalia Jackson Theater for Performing Arts Dec. 1 through Dec. 6. Part of the Broadway Across America Tour, *The Color Purple* is one of five musicals to come to New Orleans for the first time since Hurricane Katrina.

The soul-stirring new musical celebrates life through a story about the transformative power of hope and love. Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Alice Walker and the touching film by Steven Spielberg, *The Color Purple* unfolds a family saga of despair and transforms it into a story of triumph. Along with the acting and dancing talent, the production featured a musical score of jazz, gospel, blues, and ragtime. Closing the show, the actors received a heartfelt standing ovation from the New Orleans crowd.

Sheriff Gusman Hosts Annual Thanksgiving Dinner



Photos: Courtesy of the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office

The Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office hosted its 35th Annual Sheriff's Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration, on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26. Formerly an event for senior citizens, Sheriff Marlin Gusman opened the doors to individuals and families of all ages interested in celebrating the holiday with family, good food, great music and the staff of the Orleans Criminal Sheriff's Office.



The day featured performances by Irma Thomas,

bass guitarist George French, Trombone Shorty and many others who volunteered their time and talents. New Orleans Cultural Ambassador Irvin Mayfield also attended.



Renovations Completed at District Attorney's Office



Mayor Nagin, joined by city, state, and federal officials, held his hands in the air to bless a criminal justice facility recently restored. District Attorney Leon Cannizzarro and his staff moved into the building late last month, and the DA's Office hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the renovations.

Located at 619 S White Street, the building was inundated with approximately 4 feet of salt water for several weeks causing extensive damage to all aspects of the facility. The \$5.7 million renovation included new electrical and mechanical, installation of approximately 100 modular offices, renovation of interior and

exterior plumbing, installation of new staircase, installation of Dex-O-Tex flooring for extended durability and moisture protection, installation of new security system, repair and installation of new sidewalks, and library modifications.



Photos: www.cityofno.com

Local Chapter of The Links, Inc. Sponsors Free Health Seminars

The first in a series of health seminars that target women over 40 proved to be a success on Nov. 11.

Several parishioners of St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church, as well as New Orleans East residents, participated in the first installment of the "HeartLinks to Heart Health Program" that the Pontchartrain Chapter of The Links, Incorporated sponsors. The next session, "Act in Time: Heart Attack Signs," will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 9 at St. Maria Goretti, 7300 Crowder Blvd.

The HeartLinks program is aimed at helping African-American women achieve a healthy lifestyle that will minimize their risk of heart disease. The Pontchartrain Chapter of The Links, Incorporated is sponsoring this program to give African-American women free information and tools that will enable them to live longer and better. The program is part of a national initiative of the Links Incorporated that is

aimed at combating the number one killer of African-American women.

"Act in Time: Heart Attack Signs" is the second of eight monthly sessions that will involve doctors, nutritionists, fitness experts and a host of other healthy-living professionals who will share information and engage the participants in other activities. The third session, "Heart Healthy Eating" will take place on Jan. 13, 2010.

Other monthly sessions are as follows: "Controlling High Blood Pressure," February 10; "Keeping Your Cholesterol in Check," March 10; "Managing Diabetes," April 14; and "Physical Fitness," May 12.

No advanced registration is necessary. Women only need to show up at St. Maria Goretti's Monsignor Gautreaux Center on Dec. 9.

Special

Stimulus, Education and the Recovery of New Orleans

Part 1 of 2 in a series on AARA and its impact on New Orleans Post Katrina

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

Recovery and the AARA

New Orleans is a city trying to navigate its way back to some sense of normalcy after the tumultuous waters of Hurricane Katrina and the breaching of the federal levees washed away the lives of many New Orleanians. Over four years later the city finds itself in a quagmire grappling with a host of problems from a lack of infrastructure, healthcare, and continuing to

be a city plagued by problems of crime and lawlessness. But a major roadblock that is the thread that connects the rebuilding of the city is one of education. Where the question becomes what types of initiatives are in place to prepare young people to be the leaders of the city as it moves towards the future? How does a city with a decimated and balkanized school system rebuild to enlighten and engage young people?

As part of the American Re-

covery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 \$787 billion has been earmarked to stimulate the economy in the face of the present economic downturn. Louisiana State Representative Cedric Richmond says much of the money the state have received has been allocated to cover budgetary shortfalls and help create of keep people working in addition to helping with infrastructure in addition to addressing issues in healthcare and education. Louisiana has been award-

ed \$2,256,110,000 with the state already receiving \$554,550,000 according to recovery.gov, the U.S. Government website to provide the public access to data and allows for the reporting of fraud waste and abuse. Monies that have been allocated for education the number is almost \$913 million.

Dedication to Education

In the city of New Orleans its educational infrastructure are a tale of two systems. In the after-

math of Katrina some schools have changed becoming models of reform, and others remain examples of schools that failed kids before the storm. While stimulus funds have been recently allocated are schools getting monies and how are they being used to address the problems of schools around the metro area?

When you examine how stimulus monies are being allocated across the nation approximately 40 to 50 percent of monies are going to the Department of

Maxwell's 'Pretty Wings'

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

Throngs of beautiful people came out in the Crescent City back in October to witness the man who has come to define smooth, sophisticated soul. After a recording hiatus, Maxwell has returned topping the charts and selling out venues around the world. On this night his opening acts included Chrisette Michelle, who looked and sounded stunning while performing a short twenty minute set, and Common, who although is a great artist in his own right, seemed strangely out of place despite giving an inspiring performance it . Maybe next time Raphael Saadiq and Robin Thicke can come down with Maxwell and they can do the grown soul man tour.

After the opening acts, the moment the crowd had been waiting for finally came. The man they came to see had finally arrived. As the curtain rose, Maxwell began what would be an hour and a half of sonic pleasure. He and his backing effortlessly interlock interweaving into a vibration leaving the crowd ecstatic and in a state of ecstasy. Throughout his show he moved about the stage with a masculine grace and a style reminiscent of a young Smokey Robinson or Marvin Gaye. Ladies screamed and clamored to touch this si-

ren of sultry soul as he pranced about the stage singing odes of love.

Maxwell held the crowd in the palm of his hand, seamlessly going through his vast array of hits. Taking the audience down memory lane, he performed the bouncy uptempo 'Sumthin Sumthin', to the tender lament to the ladies, 'This Woman's Work' with men holding their women close as Maxwell crooned the words that every man wish he could say to his lady.

Since emerging on the scene a little over a decade ago, Maxwell's musical journey has been a cross between the profound and tastefully profane and that which is spiritual, sensual and sexually erotic. On this night he did not



Photos: Glenn Summers

disappoint his fans singing the hit from his current album Midnight Summer's Dream, 'Bad Habit'. He gave them a

show incorporating all the qualities that has given Maxwell an allure that many contemporary artists cannot claim. He does this with his timeless sound, and themes that are rooted in the real realities of love. In an industry where fly by night artists are lauded as the next big thing, Maxwell's mature sound and songwriting will continue to make him a force to be reckoned with in the music industry.

On this night, he would close his show with his seminal hit from his new project, 'Pretty Wings' with paper wings falling from the ceiling, as the beautiful melody married Maxwell's soulful tenor. The audience gazed and was amazed at what they had just experienced, a true artist. As the wings rained from the ceiling some even caught or picked them up as keepsakes from what was an amazing performance from Maxwell; a man who has come to define sensual, seductive, soul music.

Celebrating "THE REASON": A Soulful Christmas Musical Play for the Whole Family at Anthony Bean Theater

The Anthony Bean Community Theater presents the World Premiere of "The Reason". A powerful, soulful drama celebrating the Christmas spirit with music and dance. The play is written and directed by Anthony Bean and choreographed by Arieuna McGee.

Performances are Dec. 11 through Dec. 13 and Dec. 18 through Dec. 20. Six Performances ONLY. On Friday and Saturday at 8:00 pm. and Sunday mat-

inee at 3:00 pm. Tickets are \$18.00 for adults, \$14.00 for students and seniors, and are available by calling the Box Office at (504) 862-7529. (Box Office hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 2-6 pm. and two hours before performances.) You can also charge by phone or charge on line at www.anthonybeantheater.com

The story examines the true meaning of Christmas as seen by various young adults and children who experience homelessness, wealthy environ-

ments, illness and finding spirituality when coping during the holiday season. It's a cast of forty performers, ranging from the ages of 7 through 21 who act, sing and dance to your favorite holiday music. It is entertainment for the entire family. Come and experience the gamut of emotions this brilliant young cast of ABCT regulars possesses, and you too, will sing along in the warmth of the Christmas Spirit as we celebrate the real reason for the season.

Special, Continued from page 7.

Education. In Mississippi, a state similarly affected by Hurricane Katrina, received \$1.7 billion in stimulus money with a little over \$629 million going towards education. Comparatively, when you look at New Orleans some education leaders claim that fewer monies have been allocated to the city's schools because of FEMA projects and recovery monies



President Obama speaks during a recent visit to New Orleans

have been given to the city. But what some of the critics may not realize is that something else may be at work as the city's student population has decreased, there are fewer schools that are operating at full capacity and former residents who are within the state have moved to neighboring parishes and cities.

Dr. Andre Perry is the CEO of the Capital One University of New Orleans Charter School Network. Where he oversees the operation of 4 schools; he says of AARA funds, "Funds have been allocated and we have received some monies that have been very small, but it has been in the form of Title 1 monies," says Perry. But he warns that the stimulus is not a panacea to correct the ills of the educational system in New Orleans, "This conversation should be about more than simply the stimulus, it should be about base spending per pupil, and for us to have a serious conversation about taxes if we are going to cover the cost of education long term."

Success as SUNO Rebuilds

Southern University at New Orleans is a historically black college that is located in Pontchartrain Park, a middle class black neighborhood that is adjacent to a golf course. Since opening its doors in 1959 it has been the avenue many Black New Orleanians used to get a college education. Hurricane Katrina engulfed the campus in as much as 11 feet of water that left the university facili-

ties inoperable. In the aftermath programs were cut as enrollment plummeted, with classes operating inside of trailers. Today the university is seeing brighter days according to SUNO'S Vice Chancellor Wesley Bishop, "We are glad to announce and thankful to the Obama Administration for settling an ongoing dispute between FEMA and the state of Louisiana regarding \$33 million that were earmarked to repair SUNO's campus that have finally gotten the green light to begin rebuilding projects."

SUNO as part of the Southern University System is a great beneficiary of stimulus funds, while schools like Xavier University received considerably less somewhere in the neighborhood of 182,000. Southern's flagship campus in Baton Rouge campus received over \$8 million in Stimulus and SUNO has had over \$2 million allocated for its renovation. "We are excited about getting back onto our main campus and having it fully operational," says SUNO interim Director of Public Relations Eddie Francis. "The recovery funds we have received have been sorely needed to get us completely back to the Park Campus, our main site and also to continue to provide our students with our signature academic programs such as Social Work, Criminal Justice, Business Entrepreneurship, Education, Natural Sciences, etc." "When you think of the SUNO graduates who dot the local and national landscapes with quality grassroots leadership and active community engagement, it makes our receiving rebuilding money that much more of a breath of fresh air."

DeForest Cornish who is a SUNO graduate is an educator and author who has taught in New Orleans, Massachusetts and New York says, "That I feel that whatever can be done to rebuild SUNO is important to the city because it is where a lot young black people who are local have a chance to get a higher education." "Without SUNO I would not be where I am today." "And the campus has always had issues of resources even before the storm, so if Stimulus funds or whatever funds are available I feel it could help students and the community as we rebuild our city and our lives."

Is the Stimulus Enough?

While stimulus money has been used to save jobs and create opportunities for some, there

are those who feel that the funds could and should have been used in a more effective way. That the allocation of funds were short-sighted and that it should have been a more deliberate and prudent approach to thinking about how to funds were to be used to address issue both short and long term in the city's recovery. Joe Ricks, Ph.D. is an Associate



President Obama and Principal Dr. Doris Roche-Hicks with students at Martin Luther King, Jr. School in the Ninth Ward

Professor of Business at Xavier University of Louisiana. He feels that the AARA is designed not to benefit the city long term, "I think that this is not stimulus in what it really is meant to do in giving a boost to the economy, but more about strategic budgeting," says Ricks. "I don't believe that short term monies should be placed in long term investments using stimulus monies, because you are not stimulating anything. Actually, you may be creating a situation where things may become worse when the funding source is no longer there."

Education is key to rebuilding, and over 40 percent of stimulus monies are aimed at education. Ricks feels that monies used to rebuild facilities is a good idea for the use of funds, but is not a sustainable long term strategy to repair the educational infrastructure post Katrina. "The way monies will be used is key, because education is a major issue that needs a more long term approach that is not dependant on funding from an outside source via the federal government." He feels the need for local control is paramount, "What we need or should have is a local funding source that our local government controls, so that we are not begging for more money in two or three years when the money runs out."

The Education of Barack Obama...A New Orleans Story

In October President Barack Obama came to New Orleans and

held two events both staged inside of schools. During his town hall style meeting at the University of New Orleans, he said he went to the Martin Luther King Jr. School located in the ravaged Lower Ninth Ward because he believed in education and the re-configured New Orleans Public Schools was a model of reform for the country. To date this school

President Obama is a staunch advocate of. "Monies that are available in my mind it seems are more geared towards those who are more in line with what the present administration's agenda of charter schools or towards programs that supposedly enhance student achievement."

Bardell says that getting more resources are important, but beyond stimulus parents need to be more accountable for what they children do in terms of educational achievement. "I think putting more money into education is a noble proposition, but it is more important that parents do their part because they are the first lines of defense in preparing their children for the challenges they will face if they don't receive a proper education." Bardell thinks stimulus monies can help but they have to be put into the proper places to be effective, "I am an advocate for stimulus because it can help our children, but it has to be injected into the right vein, thus far I think that has not necessarily been the case."

Continuing he says, "Monies should be invested in building



President Obama greets students at Martin Luther King, Jr. School

at how much he had known about their school and their plight, and said to her their school was not just an inspiration for the city, but for the nation.

While the words of President Obama makes for great talking points among a captive and receptive audience many schools in the New Orleans area are still sub par or there are communities where unoccupied schools lay aside abandoned homes. Where blighted building that could be used to train the next generation of New Orleanians is suffering from neglect on part of city leaders; Derrick Bardell, has been a teacher and administrator and is a child advocate and educational consultant. He feels that stimulus monies are geared more towards charter schools, something that

libraries and getting poor kids access to technology where they can have the tools to be competitive in the 21st century." "We need partnerships with higher education institutions and vocational schools to give kids options in terms of their career paths, and also monies for our kids in an area that has been neglected is mental health." "After the storm a lot of kids as well as their parents is going through all kinds of mental stresses after a life changing event like that, I feel the stimulus monies if used in that way would be more effective and have a lasting impact in rebuilding the educational system in New Orleans post-Katrina."



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