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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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April 24 - April 30, 2010 44th Year Volume 29 www.ladatanews.com

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Crossing the Thin Blue Line

When enough is enough



Lance Madison is shown being arrested on Sept. 4, 2005 on the Danziger Bridge in east New Orleans. His brother, Ronald was killed by NOPD on the bridge that day. Photo: NNS/Times-Picayune/Landov

by Cheryl Mainor

In January 2010, the City of New Orleans settled two lawsuits last week centering on police brutality and misconduct. In one case, a lawsuit alleged that the owner of the Sportsman's Corner bar was arrested, tased and beaten after police executed an illegal search of the bar. In the other suit, a group of off-duty police allegedly shouted racial epithets towards a group of African-American men at a bar before following them outside and beating them. The settlement amount in the first lawsuit was not revealed. The City agreed to pay \$25,000 to settle the second lawsuit.

That was January, but today the dark cloud still hangs over the City as residents along with the rest of the nation have witnessed now four New Orleans Police plead guilty to the horrific murder and subsequent cover up of residents Ronald Madison and James Brissette and the wounding of four others who were attempting to flee the wrath of the flood after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. These revelations have rocked the City and bring to the light the dire consequences when those who are sworn, "to serve and protect" take it upon themselves to

become the judge, jury and in worst cases, the executioner. A rash of such incidents has drawn the attention of the U.S. Justice Department, who's investigation of the Danziger Bridge incident has yielded now four guilty pleas; three from officers involved in the cover up and one who has admitted being part of the shooting melee. During the aftermath of Katrina seven residents were killed by NOPD hands, and several others were wounded by NOPD gunfire. While Madison's case has received the most media attention, the deaths of Matthew McDonald, Henry Glover and two unidentified men killed outside of the Convention Center have yet to be concluded. Allegations of police shooting by two NOPD officers of Keenon McCann have yet to be answered as well.

But Post Katrina shootings are not the only cases being investigated by the Feds at this time. The FBI confirmed earlier this month that it has an ongoing civil rights investigation into the actions of New Orleans police officers during a 2008 bar brawl with city transit workers.

The FBI now has at least eight ongoing civil-rights investigations into the New Orleans Police Department. Most of the other inquiries involve cases in

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which civilians died at the hands of police like during the Danziger Bridge incident. But, will they be as thorough and successful when looking further at some of the other cases still to be resolved is the question yet to be answered. Will justice be served for all?

"In times of disaster, we look to our law enforcement officers to protect public safety and keep the peace," Thomas E. Perez, Assistant U.S. Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division," said in a statement. "This former (New Orleans Police Department) officer has admitted that amidst the devastation that followed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina he watched fellow officers shoot unarmed civilians. And, he admitted covering up about what they did." Perez has called the NOPD "one of the most troubled departments in the country." As the number of allegations of misconduct rise, it may become too clear that he is correct in his statement.

In addition to last week's guilty plea by Officer Barrios, (the fourth NOPD officer to plead guilty) new allegations surrounding another post-Katrina murder and cover up have surfaced. Veteran NOPD Officer Greg McRae became a suspect in a federal investigation into the torching of a vehicle containing the body of Algiers resident Henry Glover. Mr. Glover was shot and killed Sept. 2, 2005, near an Algiers strip mall, and a vehicle with his body in it was burned and abandoned on the Mississippi River levee.

A passerby discovered Mr. Glover suffering from a gunshot wound and drove the severely wounded man to Habans School in Algiers, which was a makeshift police station after the storm. According to the witness, several officers then drove away in the car with Mr. Glover still in the back seat. They burned the vehicle and Mr. Glover's charred remains were found inside weeks later on the levee.

Former New Orleans Police Officer David Warren, is suspected of shooting Mr. Glover. Similar to the Danziger case, Capt. Jeff Winn and Lt. Dwayne Scheuermann are suspected attempting to cover up the crime by burning the car. And like the Danziger case, Officer McRae is the fourth NOPD member named as a subject in this investigation.

Beyond these two high profile post-Katrina incidents other incidents are being investigated under multiple civil rights probes of the Police Department. These cases are beginning to gain recognition as well, such as the case

of the New Orleans man, 22-year-old Adolph Grimes III, who was killed as he traveled to his grandmother's home near the French Quarter in order to celebrate New Year's Eve. Three hours after arrival, around 3 a.m., he was found dead a block from the front door.

The Orleans Parish coroner said Grimes was shot 14 times, including 12 times in the back. "This violence has to stop. My child's death will not be meaningless. He did not die in vain," said Grimes' mother, Patricia Grimes.

Despite the fact that the seven officers involved in the incident have been reassigned, Superintendent Warren Riley has refused to answer "fundamental questions" about the shooting and maintains that Grimes fired upon his men first.

Sheila Thorne, spokeswoman for the FBI's field office in New Orleans, confirmed Thursday that federal agents are examining the melee at the Beach Corner bar on Mardi Gras night 2008, in which a group of Regional Transit Authority workers allege they were assaulted by police, with one worker falsely arrested. Thorne could not say when the FBI investigation began.

The NOPD's internal investigation into the brawl determined that an off-duty officer pulled a gun from a man's vehicle and that other officers arrested a different man for possessing the gun. Investigators concluded that officers then persuaded a civilian bar patron to participate in a cover-up by making a false police report.

An article titled "Transgender Community in New Orleans Speaks Out Against Abuse and Discrimination" by writer and activist Jordan Flaherty, is gaining national attention as it raises awareness of the problems the Transgender community faces daily with harassment, discrimination, false arrest and sometimes ends in brutality and their fight for their civil rights. In the article, he interviews a woman Wendi Cooper, a Black and transgender health care worker, was charged under the Crime Against Nature law almost ten years ago. Although Cooper only tried prostitution very briefly and has not tried it again since her arrest, she still faces harassment from the police. She is frequently stopped, and when they run her ID through the system and find out about the prostitution charge, they threaten to arrest her again or sometimes, she alleged, they demand sex.

Thinking about her experiences with police over the years, Cooper got quiet. "Sometimes I

just wanna do something out the ordinary, and just expose it, you know?" She sighed. "They hurt me, you know? And I just hope they do something about it."

In response to the allegations of abuse, New Orleans Police Department spokesman Bob Young responded, "Persons are charged according to the crime they commit." He encouraged anyone with complaints to come file them with the department, adding, "the NOPD has not received any complaints against plain clothes officers assigned to the vice squad."

The New Orleans Office of Criminal Sheriff did not respond to requests for comment. However, a September 2009 report from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) found that, "conditions at OPP violate the constitutional rights of inmates." The DOJ went on to report; "Inmates confined at OPP are not adequately protected from harm, including physical harm from excessive use of force by staff." And documented "a pat-



New Orleans police officers, their attorneys and supporters arrive to turn themselves in at the city jail in New Orleans. Four officers have plead guilty to charges participating in a cover-up in the Sept. 4, 2005, shootings on the Danziger Bridge in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Ronald Madison and James Brissette were both killed in the incident with four others wounded. Photo: MSNBC

tern and practice of unnecessary and inappropriate use of force by OPP correctional officers." This included "several examples where OPP officers openly engaged in abusive and retaliatory conduct, which resulted in serious injuries to prisoners. In some instances, the investigation found, the officers' conduct was so flagrant it clearly constituted calculated abuse."

It remains to be seen what the outcome of the Justice Department Investigations, but with local

and national attention currently being directed on the NOPD and signs that the federal government is headed towards a takeover of the department seems almost inevitable. But there is hope, as Mayor-elect Mitch Landrieu is engaged in a national search for a new police chief, telling reporters that the department needs "a complete culture change." For the people of the City of New Orleans that change in culture cannot come too soon.

Our RECOVERY IN PROGRESS

Compliance with Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management



April 19, 2010
Notice of Explanation

The City of New Orleans, Office of Community Development (OCD) intends to carry out an action which may effect or be affected by the 100-year floodplain and seeks to involve the public in the decision making process. OCD is considering assisting the Urban League of Greater New Orleans in the construction of a Head Start and Family Center Facility located in the 2800 block of Desire Parkway bounded by Agriculture Street, Piety Street and Industry Street in Orleans Parish to assist low-income residents. Pursuant to Executive Order 11988, the City of New Orleans has determined that the property is located in the 100-year floodplain.

It has also been determined that no practical alternative sites exist and that the project will adhere to all applicable State and Federal floodplain protection standards.

Public comments will be received for seven (7) days following the publication of this notice. Comments should be forwarded to the Office of Community Development, 1340 Poydras St., 10th Floor, New Orleans, LA 70112, ATTN: Shirley Smith, Environmental Compliance Supervisor.

Kenya J. H. Smith

Director, Office of Community Development

Anthony Faciane

Deputy Director, Neighborhood Stabilization

C. Ray Nagin
Mayor, City of New Orleans

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WWOZ Jazz Stage Presents Trumpeter Mario Abney and SEXTET



Dionne Character, Author
Entertainment Editor & Columnist

Mario Abney is as unique as the sounds he brings to stage. Once his trumpet embraces his lips, the dialog between the two become one as he fuses traditional and extended trumpet techniques in a most creative way.

A native of Chicago, Ill, Mario Abney began his musical career with the piano at age 7. By the age of 11 Mario added drums to his musical training. He continued to hone his percussion skills by playing drums for his church. It was during High School that his interest turned from piano and drums to wind instruments.

His career has moved quickly since graduating from Central state in 2005 with a B.S in Music Education and a minor in Jazz Studies. Having shared the



Trumpeter Mario Abney

stage with Latin percussionist Bobby Matos, vocalist Erikah Badu, trumpeter virtuoso Wynton Marsalis, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, jazz legend Jimmy Cobb, jazz steel pan master Othello Molineux, trumpeter Ray Vega, trumpeter Mike

Wade, comic genius Dave Chappelle and many other note worthy performers and entertainers, Mario has made his way to the WWOZ Stage for the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

Check out Mario Abney and SEXTET

on Thursday, April 30, 2010 at 12:30 p.m., at the WWOZ Jazz Tent.

Dionne Character can be reached at www.dionnecharacter.com.

Data News Weekly

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The Passing of Two Giants

Dr. Dorothy Height: 'God Mother' of the Civil Rights Movement

Dr. Benjamin Hooks Remembered as Great American

By Hazel Trice Edney, NNPA News Service, and Alexis K. Barnes, Howard University News Service
By Pharoh Martin NNPA National Correspondent

(NNPA) - Dr. Dorothy I. Height, the civil rights icon and living legend whose name has for decades been synonymous with quest for justice, died at the Howard University Hospital Tuesday morning at the age of 98.

"Michelle and I were deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Dorothy Height - the godmother of the Civil Rights Movement and a hero to so many Americans," President Obama said in a statement.

"Ever since she was denied entrance to college because the incoming class had already met its quota of two African-American women, Dr. Height devoted her life to those struggling for equality. She led the National Council of Negro Women for 40 years, and served as the only woman at the highest level of the Civil Rights Movement - witnessing every march and milestone along the way," the President said. "And even in the final weeks of her life - a time when anyone else would have enjoyed their well-earned rest - Dr. Height continued her fight to make our nation a more open and inclusive place for people of every race, gender, background and faith."

At 98, the civil and human rights activist was still working for a better tomorrow.



"We advanced in so many ways, but at the same time the poorest seem to be poorer, and the poverty among us seems to be entrenched," Height said in a recent interview. "However, I am always an optimist, because I have an abiding faith. I believe that somehow the right will prevail. We have to keep working. Justice is not impossible. We can achieve it."

Height did most of her work through the NCNW. But, she also chaired the executive committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the largest civil rights organization in the nation.

With every advancement, Height often reveled in how far African-Americans have come.

"In my lifetime, I have witnessed the evolution of desegregation, the spread of civil rights and the rise of possibilities for people



regardless of race and sex," Height she said in a recent statement.

"I have also recently witnessed the passage of our health-care bill, something people of all different races and genders can applaud."

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The news of the death of former NAACP Executive Director and CEO Benjamin Hooks has reverberated to the very core of America's civil rights and political leadership.

"Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks was among the greatest Americans of the 20th Century," said NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous. "He was a giant of hope and humanity who, as executive director and CEO of the NAACP, expanded the circle of opportunity in our nation for millions by greatly accelerating the desegregation of our largest corporations."

Jealous described the 85-year-old Dr. Hooks as "simply the greatest living person to have served as Executive Director and CEO of the NAACP".

Hooks was also a Baptist minister, a lawyer, an FCC commissioner, a businessman and a judge. But he was best known as a civil rights leader who resurrected the na-

tion's oldest civil rights organization as its long-time executive director from 1977 to 1992.

Under Hooks' leadership, the organization led the way of pressuring Congress to pass the extension of such landmark legislation such the civil rights and voting rights bills. Also, NAACP's membership base reportedly grew by hundreds of thousands during his tenure.

"Dr. Hooks led this organization to new heights, and we will continue to honor his legacy by fighting on, in his words with truth, justice and righteousness on our side," stated NAACP Chairman Roslyn M. Brock. "...He was a civil rights icon and my mentor and personal friend. He taught me to stand up for what I believe in; even in the face of adversity, and that the struggle for civil and human rights for all Americans never ends."

President Obama called Hooks a "true trailblazer" who, as the first African-American to serve as a criminal court judge in Tennessee and to serve on the Federal Communications Commission, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his work. He received the medal from President Bush in 2007.

Obama said, "As I was running for this office, I had the honor of spending some time with Dr. Hooks, and hearing about his extraordinary place in our American story."

This Time They Beat Up White Guys

By Harry C. Alford
NNPA Columnist

Police brutality in Prince George's County, Md. is legendary. There have been scandals after scandals for at least the last 50 years. Much of it has spread across the border into Washington, DC. It is bad and wide scale and it is also tinged with Black and Hispanic inclusion.

Most of the abuses are targeted to these two national minorities and for good reason. The applicable prosecutors and court systems protect and shield the dirty cops who perpetrate brutality. They will defend the actions of the cops no matter how heinous their actions are.

So last week, when the actions of the Prince George's Police Department during a recent basketball game on the campus of the University of Maryland in College Park, were splashed on television it was no surprise to my family circle. There they were smashing the heads of a few college students who were doing nothing but mildly celebrating the victory of their school.

After the beatings they filed false police reports on the victims. This is so common

to us. We know their M.O. (modus operandi) too well. We call it "Dirty Cops 101". Tragically, it is supported by the judicial system and to the detriment of innocent citizens, usually young Black men.

My sons and their close friends have matriculated through the University of Maryland and Georgetown University. They are good, productive Black males and are destined for great careers. However, there have been challenges with the local police departments where their parents have had to get involved and save their futures through expensive legal representation against heinous criminal acts by policemen. Let me give you a few actual experiences of these students and what their parents had to go through to save them from the wicked, dirty cops.

A few of the guys are walking down the streets of Georgetown (Washington, DC) one Saturday night. They are approached by DC cops (Precinct 2) and asked, "What are you boys doing in Georgetown?" One replied we happen to live here. After a few minutes the cops return and state, "Your guy is a smart a__ and now he must pay."

They handcuffed him; picked him up and body slammed him into their squad car; picked him up again and body slammed him to the ground. They arrested him and sent him to the lock up for the weekend and not arraigned until noon Monday. He had a busted lip, scars on his face and neck, a broken watch and money missing from his wallet. What were the charges?

They formally claimed that he charged a parked car with his head and caused \$400 in property damage. They actually did this! The sad thing is his parents had to hire a top law firm and pay over \$25,000 to convince the DC courts to throw the case out. There was no action done about the false police report or beat down.

Another guy is walking with about 20 others leaving a UM bar and walking towards the dormitories. He is holding hands with a white girl and that sent off alarms with the PG cops. They arrest both of them; throw them in a paddy wagon and lock them up at the local "tank" until Monday. The formal charges were "Disturbing the Peace". I guest inter-racial hand holding is disturbing the peace for a racist. Here again, the

parents had to hire proper legal representation in order to make this trumped up charge go away. The white girl had to go through therapy from this racist trauma and her folks spent big bucks also.

One of the guys was walking down Rhode Island Avenue in College Park and was given a "Jay Walking" ticket. About a year later he found that it was entered as a moving vehicle violation and two points were on his record. He had to jump through hoops to get it removed so that his auto insurance rate wouldn't sky rocket.

All of the guys have at least one bad experience during their college days. Life isn't easy for Black college males. The cops are predators looking for and stalking them. But this time they beat up white guys and the world now knows the deal. Hopefully, we can now remove all of these dirty cops.

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

How important is the Census?

When you fill out the census form, you're making a statement about what resources your community needs going forward.

Accurate data reflecting changes in your community are crucial in apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and deciding how more than \$400 billion per year is allocated for projects like new hospitals and schools.

It's just 10 easy questions that provides 10 years of benefits.

African American Families and the 2010 Census

The census is a count of every person in the United States that the Constitution requires every ten years. The 2010 census will influence the education of African-American children, the health of families, and the economic and

political power of African-American communities for the next 10 years and beyond.

The census is used to distribute government money to communities for job training, schools, and hospitals. It's also used by businesses to decide where to open new shops, grocery stores, and restaurants. And it is used to determine representation in Congress, state legislatures, and local governments. Communities that are undercounted lose out in all those areas.

In fact, every person who is not counted could cost the community more than \$14,000 in funds for schools, health care, and jobs - and will diminish African-American influence at all levels of government. Getting counted will bring communities respect, resources,

and political representation.

In the past, African Americans have been undercounted at a worse rate than any other racial or ethnic group. Eliminating the gap between African Americans and other Americans in the census count is essential to ensure that African-American communities receive their fair share of federal funds, to ensure full political representation, and to provide for effective enforcement of civil rights laws.

The Census Bureau expects the African-American population to grow by more than 70 percent between now and 2050, so an accurate count in 2010 will help meet the needs of African American communities in the years ahead.

How the Census Affects African Americans

Jobs - Census information influences the distribution of community development block grants and is used by state governments and private companies to figure out where to build new housing, roads, and shopping centers. The census also helps the government monitor for discrimination and enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1965, which ensures equal opportunity in the workplace.

Education - Billions of dollars in federal education funding are distributed based on census figures. Millions of African-American children depend on these programs for nutritious, regular meals.

Health Care - The Public Health Service Act uses data on

race and origin to identify populations who may not have access to adequate medical care. Census data influence the distribution of funding for programs such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicaid.

Political Power - The census is used to shape voting districts, which can determine whether African-American communities are fairly represented in Congress and state governments.

Voting Rights - Census information is used to monitor whether people have access to the voting booth. This is particularly important for African-American communities, who have been historically disenfranchised from the voting process.



Though it should only take 10 minutes to answer 10 questions, if you didn't fill out and mail back your Census form, then a qualified Census taker will visit your home to ensure that your voice is represented. Census takers are easily identified by their badges and all responses are confidential. Remember, only you can help ensure better services for your community.

Please open your door to the Census taker. **2010CENSUS.GOV**

WE CAN'T MOVE FORWARD UNTIL WE GET YOUR RESPONSE.

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**Census
 2010**

IT'S IN OUR HANDS

Verizon Wireless encourages cell phone recycling on Earth Day



Celebrate Earth Day on April 22 by recycling no-longer-used wireless phones, batteries and accessories through Verizon Wireless' HopeLine® program. This Earth Day and every day, residents can play a part in helping the environment while assisting victims of domestic violence. Phones donated

to the Verizon Wireless HopeLine® program are refurbished and resold for use with proceeds benefitting local victims of domestic violence. Every phone donated can make a difference in the environment and the life of a domestic violence victim.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for every one million cell phones recycled, 35,274 pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold, and 33 pounds of palladium can be recovered, conserving natural resources, avoiding air and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2009, 11.7 million cell phones were turned in by Americans for reuse and recycling.

Buying a New Phone? Recycle Your Old One

Verizon Wireless includes a postage-paid phone donation envelope in welcome packages customers receive when purchasing or upgrading to new phones online. Customers can simply place their old phones, batteries and accessories in the envelope and drop it in the mail. It's quick and easy.

Visit a Store to Donate a Phone and Learn More about Cell Phone Recycling

Verizon Wireless provides collection bins and information about cell phone recycling through HopeLine at all Communications Stores in the New Orleans area and across the country. Visit a store; drop your phone in the bin and go. For a complete list of Verizon Wireless retail stores in your area visit www.verizonwireless.com.

Online Mailing Label Makes Phone Donation Easy

Can't stop by a Verizon Wireless Communications Store? Print a postage-paid label from the Verizon Wireless Web site at www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline-mailinglabel, adhere it to a box or envelope and mail the phone to HopeLine. Seal and send.

Other Ways to Be "Green"

In addition to recycling an old wireless phone, mobile users in the New Orleans area can also make a difference this Earth Day by "going green" with some simple steps that will help conserve the Earth's resources, including:

Use a power strip for your wireless phone or PDA chargers, and then make sure to switch it off when everything has been charged so you don't use "phantom" energy.

Improve battery life and reduce the need for charging by changing the settings of your wireless phone or PDA's backlighting.

Save paper by signing up for Verizon Wireless' paperless Green Bill and eliminate the monthly bill in your mailbox. Register at www.verizonwireless.com/myverizon.

Save gas and commuting costs by using VZ NavigatorSM or use Mobile Broadband service to create a mobile office on-the-go.

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Sustainable Living Tips



by Eric Shutt:
Associated Content

Sustainable living is pretty easy and involves a lot of doing nothing. But it's a different kind of nothing than we're used to.

When it comes to sustainable living, we need simple ways to make the sustainable choice, regardless of time, place or political debate. These choices need to be ones that we can make over and over again, without fear of mak-

ing the wrong decision. Here are a few tips to start us off right.

Save More

Save more money. Save more energy. Save more of everything you use. Saving more means using less. To think about consumption in terms of savings is to rethink what we don't need to do - how much less we need - to be sustainable.

We need to consume less. So

Continued next page.

It's time to plant vegetable gardens

By Dan Gill, Allen Owings
and John Young
LSU AgCenter Horticulturists

Many of our favorite vegetables are planted into the spring garden now for production later in spring and in early summer. For many of these vegetables, planting in April helps ensure abundant production before the intense heat of mid-summer and when we have fewer insect and disease problems.

Here are just a few of the choices you have:

- Snap beans, especially the bush types, are easy to grow, extremely productive and rarely attacked by insects. After three to four large harvests, the production ends. They don't need a trellis to grow on.

- With pole snap beans, each harvest is smaller than bush types. Because they produce over a longer period of time, though, total production on pole varieties is greater than total production of bush varieties. You must provide a 5- to 6-foot trellis for them to grow on. This involves some work, but you don't have to bend over to pick them the way you do the bush types.

- Tomatoes are America's favorite homegrown vegetable. With our long, warm summers, there is no denying that we can grow some of the tastiest tomatoes in the world. And now is the time to put out transplants into your gar-



den. Recommended varieties include the vining types Better Boy, Fantastic, Monte Carlo and Sweet Million – a cherry tomato. Bush types include Bingo, Celebrity, Mountain Delight, Solar Set and Sunleaper.

Many other varieties of large-fruited, cherry and plum tomatoes can be grown successfully in Louisiana. If you're planting a number of tomato plants, try several different varieties to ensure good production.

- Peppers are another popular vegetable that is productive and not difficult to grow. Peppers are less likely to be attacked by insects, and disease problems gen-

erally are less severe than with tomatoes.

Many types of sweet and hot peppers can be grown here. Popular hot types include tabasco, jalapeno, cayenne and habanera. Remember, one hot pepper plant

is probably all or more than you need.

- Large, fruited sweet or bell peppers are great for stuffing or seasoning. Varieties that perform well in Louisiana include Big Bertha, King Arthur, Merlin and Sentry. Production is usually less during the hottest part of the summer – early planting is important – but it picks up in the fall.

Gypsy pepper is a cross between a bell pepper and a banana-type pepper. It produces a medium-size fruit and is extremely productive even in the heat of summer. The fruit is quite ornamental. It begins yellow-green,

then, as it matures, it changes to yellow to orange to red. The fruit is sweet in flavor and is great in salads or cooking.

- Many jokes have been made about the incredible productivity of zucchini, and entire cookbooks have even been written about this summer squash. Production often reaches levels that can test a chef's ability to use this prolific producer.

Other summer squashes that perform well here include patty pan or scallop, and yellow straight or crookneck. Winter squashes such as butternut and acorn are also good producers in summer. The squash-vine borer is the worst insect problem of squashes. Plant them now to get a good harvest before this pest builds up populations in mid- to late summer.

- Cucumbers should be trellised to increase production, improve quality and save garden space. Make a trellis with stakes and wire fencing material, twine or wire about 3 to 4 feet tall. You can grow two types of cucumbers – either the thin-skinned slicing type or the thicker-skinned pickling type. This is another vegetable that is generally not severely attacked by insects or diseases when it's planted early. Production will last from May into July.

- Okra and eggplant are best planted when the soil is very warm. April is an ideal time to

plant these two vegetables. If planted too early, they often become stunted and are slow to recover.

Eggplants come in various colors, sizes and shapes. All produce well during the summer and through the fall, although production may lag during the hottest months. Choose standard varieties, such as Black Bell, Dusky or Classic. Green types are less bitter in summer, and Oriental types like Ichiban, Millionaire or the All-America Winner Hansel with finger-sized fruit produce very well in summer heat.

Okra seed may be soaked overnight to soften the hard seed coat before planting. After emergence, plants should be thinned to stand 12 inches apart. Production will start in June and will continue into the fall. Harvesting should be done every two to three days for best quality. If left longer on the plant, the okra pods can quickly become tough. Varieties such as Gold Coast, Longhorn, Louisiana Green Velvet, Cajun Delight or Clemson Spineless are all prolific producers.

For more information, the LSU Ag Center offers numerous free publications on home vegetable gardening. Information also is available at your local LSU AgCenter office or online at www.lsuagcenter.com.

Sustainable, Continued previous page.

even if we as a society can make more, we need to choose to use less. So stop buying things you don't need. Buying less equals saving money – a win-win for sustainability.

For example, increasing the efficiency of how you use energy at home can dramatically lower your energy bills.

At any time, in any place, saving more makes for a more sustainable lifestyle.

Think Locally

Transportation is the top contribution to energy consumption in the United States. It's simply more sustainable to stay closer to home. Plus, it's easier.

A joint report by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and Public Transportation Partnership for Tomorrow claims that public transportation uses 50 percent

less fuel than personal vehicles, without even considering the debate on SUVs. "Every dollar communities invest in public transportation generates approximately \$6 in economic returns," according to APTA.

It's also cheaper, cleaner and generates more hometown revenue. Local is more sustainable.

Eat Less Meat

Producing meat requires an incredible amount of land and food. That's especially true considering the amount of land used to grow meat that could be used to grow even more food. Don't worry about eating local, don't worry about being vegetarian, simply eat less meat.

"It takes up to 16 pounds of grain to produce just 1 pound of animal flesh. It's shockingly inefficient to feed plant foods to farmed animals and consume

their flesh rather than eating the plant foods ourselves," GoVeg.com points out.

Demand for meat is also increasing at an unsustainable rate. According to The New York Times, the world's total meat came to 71 million tons in 1961. By 2007, that number was estimated to be 284 million tons.

Less meat is more sustainable.

Now What?

Not everyone needs to act on all of the problems above. And we don't need to do something all at once. Simply taking an honest look at how we're living now, versus what sustainable living might look like, can be enough to start us on the road to making a difference in our own lives, and in the lives of those around us.

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