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News Weekly

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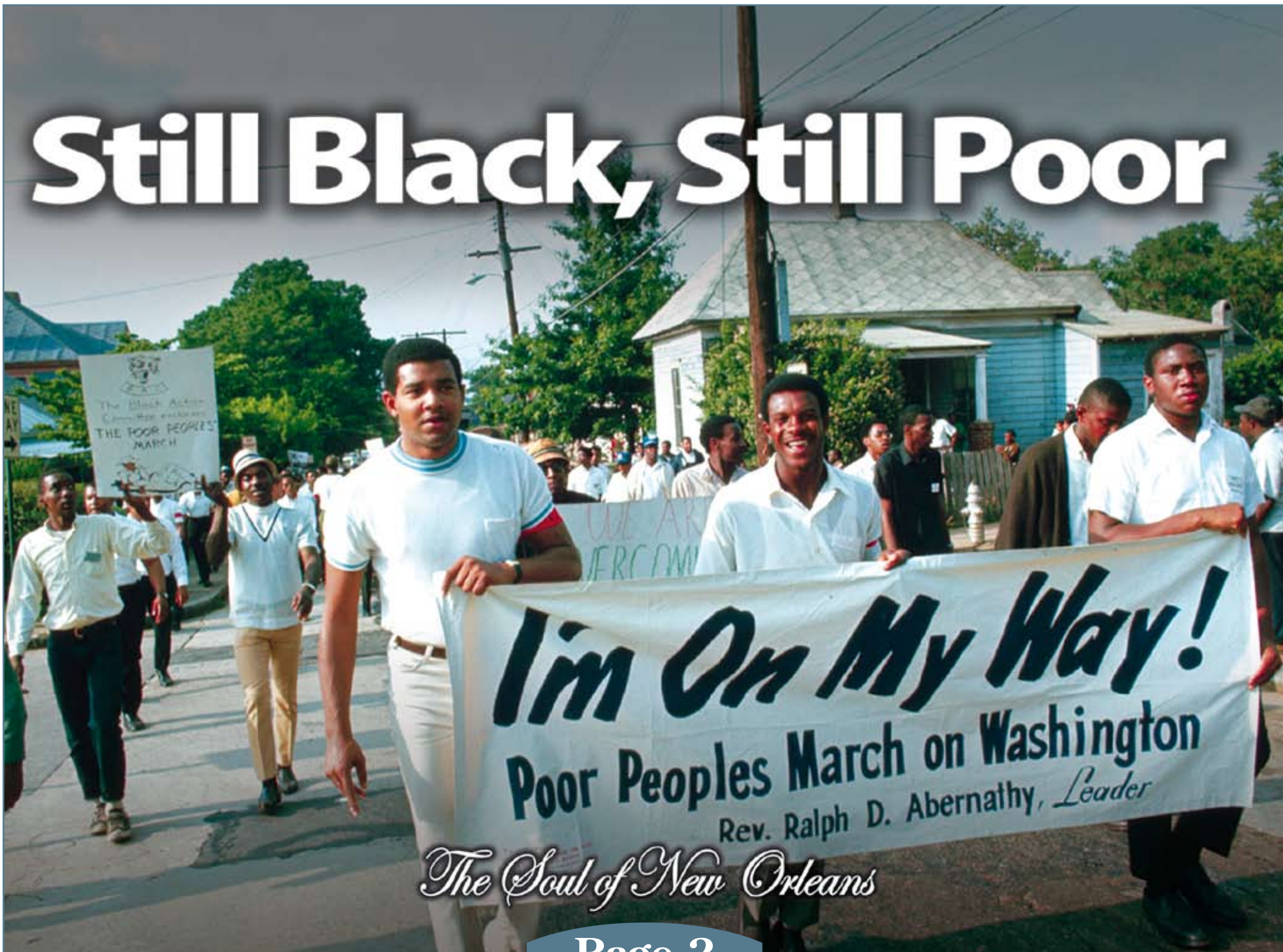
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Diva's Book Party

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Still Black, Still Poor



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Keep Drilling!



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Plight Of Black Poor Continues To Worsen



Rev Ralph David Abernathy and others in the Civil Rights Movement marched against poverty in 1968. Today, the gap between poor Blacks and Whites continues to deepen despite decades of economic growth the disparity remains and grows.

By Sherwood Ross

“The conditions now, in my view, are unquestionably worse in the inner cities,” attorney and civil rights stalwart David Ginsburg told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. “Education is worse. Housing is worse. Unemployment is worse. We now have a drug problem that we didn’t have in 1967 and 1968. There are millions of handguns.

The cities have been essentially disregarded by the federal government.”

Ginsburg knew what he was talking about. He served as executive director of President Lyndon Johnson’s National Commission on Civil Disorders, formed after explosive race riots swept the nation in 1967. He believed White America was responsible for that unrest by pen-

ning African-Americans into ghettos. “White institutions created it (the ghetto), White institutions maintain it and White society condones it,” he said, according to his obituary in The New York Times.

Ginsburg, who died May 23rd at his home in Alexandria, Va., at age 98, made the statement quoted above in 1992 comparing the situ-

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ation then with the Sixties, but he might just as well have spoken today comparing our grim realities with the bleak Nineties. That's because a poverty-struck Black underclass continues to be a source of profits for the unscrupulous.

Slumlords charge exorbitant rents. "Convenience" stores charge higher prices. Military recruiters have their pick of jobless youth desperate for work. And the for-profit, private prisons increase their head count (and income) as the judicial system hands off the young drug peddlers caught in the legal web. As the Kaiser Family Foundation reported, African-Americans fill 40 percent of the nation's prison cells. Yet they make up just 13 percent of the nation's population.

It's a fact, the Associated Press reported, that "More than three times as many Black people live in prison cells as in college dorms," according to a Census Bureau finding in 2006. "It's one of the great social and economic tragedies of our time," Marc Morial, President and CEO of the Urban League, commented. "It points to the signature failure in our education system and how we've been raising our children."

Indeed, a report released this May by the U.S. Department of Education finds the U.S. has 16,122 "high poverty" schools, and that students in them "are more likely to be minorities," an AP story said. What's more, the number of such schools is up from 12 percent of the total in the 1999-2000 school year to 17 percent of the total in 2007-2008 school year. In President Bush's "no child left behind" era, it seems entire schools got left behind.

As for housing, Habitat For Humanity reports that "95 million (Americans) experience housing problems, including cost burden, overcrowding, poor housing quality and homelessness." That's nearly one-third of a nation. Here, Blacks again, are getting the worst of it. Writing about Philadelphia in the Huffington Post on Feb. 11th of this year, journalist James Sanders says wretched conditions persist: "Predominantly Black parts of town - North Philly, and the so-called 'Badlands,' for instance - are all too synonymous with crime and poverty. Too many Black students drop out of high school, and give in to lives on the streets or in gangs." The situation is similar in San Francisco where substandard public housing, high crime rates, and "dissatisfaction with

underperforming urban schools" have combined to ignite a Black exodus from the city, according to the August 28, 2007 USA Today. In Springfield, MO., writes Cheryl Fischer of the Kuumba Human Rights Focus Group, the city's own records show that 35 percent of African-Americans live in substandard housing and 5 percent live in dilapidated housing. As well, 70 percent of African-Americans in that city earn \$20,000 or less annually, and only 12% of African-Americans earn from \$30,000

to \$60,000 annually.

The Urban League's report put unemployment among Blacks nationally at nearly 15 percent in 2009, compared with 8.5 percent for Whites and 12.1 percent for Hispanics. It also showed a median income



"It's one of the great social and economic tragedies of our time."

—Marc Morial,
President and CEO of
the Urban League

"I'm most excited about rebuilding libraries because, in New Orleans they tend to be historic buildings and they're well utilized. Helping a Library rebuild means an instant impact for a neighborhood."

- Sonji

Project manager, MWH
Graduated from Tulane University, and came back to New Orleans to help with the recovery.



BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

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MWH has been a partner in New Orleans for over 30 years; our company and our employees are very tied to the community we call home. We believe in contributing to the communities where we live and serve. Our employees are active in their neighborhoods—they are leaders, volunteers and members of local organizations. That's the culture and passion of MWH.

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WET INFRASTRUCTURE

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Diva's Book Release Party

Wildflower: Growing From The Muck

By: Dionne Character

I am back from vacation, had a few glasses of merlot, some hot sun, waterfront walks in Old Town Alexandria, a night on the town in Washington, DC, and finally have come down a "little" from the natu-

ral high of celebrating the release of WildFlower, which has hit the public with much success!

It's not often that a writer gets to sing, have a Borders representative attend their release, host, perform, and have her own menu all in one night. What an experience!

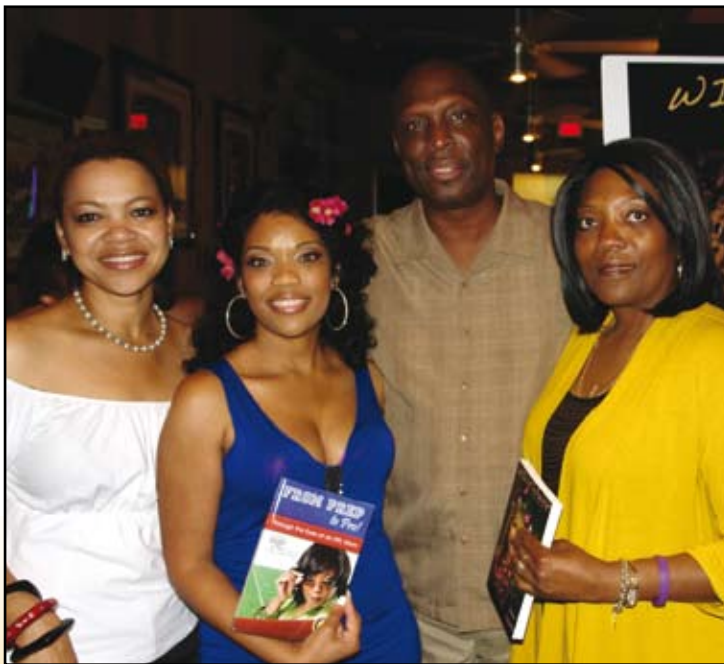
I wanted to thank all of you who dropped by Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club to show some love and appreciation for my works. The release was "fierce."

In the house was Mario Abney on trumpet, Manny Burke on piano, and Bobby J and Stuff Like That Band, who stopped by to open the show. Nature

Man blessed the mic, as I had the opportunity to interview a few guests at my own release party.

For those of you who missed the release, you can get a copy of WildFlower at Borders, Community Book Store, Afro-American Book Stop, online at www.dionnecharacter.com, or catch up with me on my tour of Poetry, Jazz and Character for an autographed copy.

Special thanks to all the poets/authors who donated autographed copies of their books to the library at Mc Donogh #35 High School, as we continue to spread the gift of literacy in the Community.



Six gas mileage myths

By Jim Motavalli

Do Americans care about fuel economy as oil spills into the Gulf of Mexico and gasoline hovers around \$3 a gallon? You bet they do, though they also have a fair number of misconceptions about how to squeeze a few more miles out of every drop.

The Consumer Federation of America's (CFA) most recent survey says that if we had a 50-mile-per-gallon car fleet today, we'd save more oil than the entire proven reserves in the entire Gulf of Mexico. And people care about that.

According to Jack Gillis, author of *The Car Book* and a CFA spokesman, 87 percent of respondents said it is "important that the country reduce its consumption of oil," and 54 percent said it is "very important."

An amazing 65 percent of Americans surveyed support a mandated transition to a 50-mpg fuel economy standard by 2025. That's a tough standard, some

15 mpg better than the ambitious goal set by the Obama Administration (35 mpg by 2016).

"The expectations of American consumers are reasonable and achievable," Gillis said in a conference call." CFA says that Asian carmakers, compared to the U.S. competition, are offering twice as many vehicles with 30 mpg or better. "It's shocking that so few of today's cars get more than 30 mpg," he said.

Mark Cooper, CFA's research director, noted that in five years of the group's polling, the public's views have stayed remarkably consistent: Americans want less dependence on Middle Eastern oil and higher fuel-economy standards.

People care about fuel economy, but they're misinformed about how to actually achieve it. The federal government's fuel-economy.gov site (very useful to check cars' mpg) just published the "Top 10 Misconceptions About Fuel Economy."



Here are a few big myths:

- It takes more fuel to start a vehicle than it does to let it idle. People are really confused about this one and will leave a car idling for half an hour rather than turn it off and restart. Some kids I know started an anti-idling campaign in the suburbs and are shaming parents into shutting down their cars. Idling uses a quarter- to a half-gallon of fuel in an hour (costing you one to two cents a minute).

Unless you're stalled in traffic, turn off the car when stopped for more a few minutes.

- Vehicles need to be warmed up before they're driven. Pshaw. That is a long-outdated notion. Today's cars are fine being driven off seconds after they're started.
- As a vehicle ages, its fuel economy decreases significantly. Not true. As long as it's maintained, a 10- or 15-year-old car should have like-new mileage.

The key thing is maintenance – an out-of-tune car will definitely start to decline mileage-wise.

- Replacing your air filter helps your car run efficiently. Another outdated claim, going back to the pre-1976 carburetor days. Modern fuel-injection engines don't get economy benefits from a clean air filter.
- After-market additives and devices can dramatically improve your fuel economy. As readers of my story on *The Blade* recall, there's not much evidence that these "miracle products" do much more than drain your wallet. Both the Federal Trade Commission and Consumer Reports have weighed in on this. There are no top-secret 100-mpg add-ons out there.
- Using premium fuel improves fuel economy. You might as well write a check to BP if you believe this. Only use premium if your car specifies it.

Five tips to save cash this summer

By Lori Bongiorno

Rising temperatures are a reminder that summer is just around the corner. It's true that the costs of travel, hosting backyard barbecues, and staying cool can all add up. But you don't have to spend a fortune to get out and have some summer fun.

Just keep these cash-saving tips in mind as you make your plans. And in this case, there's an added bonus because what's good for your wallet is also good for the planet.

Travel at off-peak times. Flying at less crowded times is not only a great way to save money on a plane ticket, but it can be less of a hassle, according to a new Union of Concerned Scientists' travel guide, which is chock full of many useful tips. Chances are you won't hit traffic going to the airport (so you'll save money on gas), and you'll experience fewer delays (which can waste fuel and produce even more carbon pollution).

Off-peak also applies to car travel, says Aaron Huertas, at UCS. With less traffic on the road, you can maximize your miles-per-gallon by avoiding traffic jams.

Shop at the local farmer's market. There's a long list of reasons why it's a good idea to eat local foods that are in season. They are fresher, taste better, and don't need to travel as far as the produce in a typical grocery store. Buying directly from a local farmer often costs less. And replacing packaged foods with fruits and veggies is also better for your pocketbook, your health, and the planet's. Find nearby farmers' markets at LocalHarvest. Find out what's in season where you live right now, and get more tips for cutting your food bill.

Find creative ways to stay cool. Movies are a common escape when temperatures rise because of the allure of free air-conditioning. But the price of movie tickets (and snacks) can add up quickly. Consider spending some time at



the library reading your favorite magazines and books (for free) while soaking up the cool air. Or find out when nearby museums

offer free or reduced admission. Turn your AC up to 78 degrees when you're at home and raise it even more when you're out or

sleeping.

Line dry clothes. Summer is the perfect time to give your dryer a break. It's better for your clothing (which will likely last longer if you're not constantly overdrying it) and your wallet (since you'll save around \$43.60 by air drying your clothes for the entire season).

Visit yard sales instead of going to the mall. It's cheaper to buy used stuff, and it's better for the environment since it keeps perfectly good things out of landfills and resources aren't needed to make new products from scratch. Better yet, turn your trash into a treasure by hosting your own garage sale. It's a great way to earn extra cash for even more fun summer activities and get rid of all the clutter you've accumulated.

Environmental journalist Lori Bongiorno's book, *Green Greener Greenest: A Practical Guide to Making Eco-smart Choices a Part of Your Life* is available on Amazon.com.

Mayor Landrieu & Secretary Levine Offer Funding Solutions To Keep Primary Care Clinics Open

NEW ORLEANS, LA—Mayor Mitch Landrieu and Louisiana Department of Health Hospitals Secretary Alan Levine submitted a letter and white paper to U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Director Cindy Mann highlighting the importance Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant (PCASG) clinics play in Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes and offering funding solutions to keep the clinics open. Federal funding for the clinics currently ends on

September 30, 2010.

The letter notes that the Greater New Orleans region's residents "are not only disproportionately poor, uninsured and at high risk medically, but have also fallen victim to two of the most devastating natural disaster in our nation's history—Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill."

"Since the beginning of the (PCASG) grant, more than 250,000 individuals have been served by more than one million visits to these clinics," they write.

"The Greater New Orleans region is in danger of losing this robust network of high quality, affordable community-based care."

"Today we propose continued collaboration with our federal partners and community partners in the development of a Section 1115 Medicaid Research and Demonstration Waiver to preserve and enhance the primary care provider infrastructure. By redirecting Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funding and transitioning to a patient-centered primary care

model, the waiver will allow the State to provide more cost effective care," they wrote.

"As we work to build a biomedical corridor in Mid City and a state-of-the-art hospital in New Orleans East, we must continue to work with our local, state, and federal partners to ensure that these primary care clinics are funded and preserved," said Mayor Landrieu. "They provide cost-effective primary care for much of our community and are vital to improving the quality life of the

residents here in New Orleans."

"I would like to thank Mayor Landrieu for working with us to develop this white paper detailing the critical need and role these primary care clinics play in New Orleans. Together, we working hard to find a long-term funding solution to keep these clinics open and serving the thousands of people who need the primary and behavioral health care provided by the clinics," remarked Secretary Levine.

Bobby Jindal Asks Obama To End Moratorium On Deepwater Drilling

By Sam Stein

Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal wrote President Obama a letter on Wednesday criticizing his decision to implement a temporary moratorium of deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.

Arguing that his state had already suffered crippling economic consequences, the Louisiana Republican urged Obama to rethink his decision to suspend activity at 33 previously permitted deepwater drilling rigs – including 22 "currently in operation off the Louisiana coast."

Joining Jindal in his call to lift the moratorium is Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) who accused the Obama administration of pursuing a policy that "could kill thousands of Louisiana jobs."

In his letter, Gov. Jindal said his state was facing "one of the most challenging economic periods in decades."

"The last thing we need is to enact public policies that will certainly destroy thousands of existing jobs while preventing the creation of thousands more," he added.

"I fully understand the need for strict oversight of deepwater drilling," Jindal wrote. "However, I would ask that the federal government move quickly to ensure that all deepwater drilling is in proper compliance with federal



regulation and is conducted safely so that energy production and more importantly, thousands of jobs, are not in limbo."

The undertone of the letter is that of a governor whose political livelihood is, in no small way, dependent on stemming the economic damage of the current spill. Certainly, Jindal's national political ambitions correspond with the idea that offshore drilling (including the deepwater variety) should not be interrupted – merely made safer.

But the context of the note to Obama is a peculiar one. For starters, an investigation into what went wrong with the current spill has yet to conclude – meaning that the same technical problems could still pop up at other sites. Moreover, Jindal has been quite public and aggressive with his insistence that BP has been less than capable in manag-

ing the fallout of the spill it has caused. He made explicit calls for the "federal government to force BP to act responsible" and for the oil company to "either begin the work or get out of the way,"

But the oil company that Jindal (and others) are now demonizing would be overseeing a good chunk of the deepwater drilling that he wants put back online. Of the 33 permitted deepwater drilling rigs that Jindal wants to continue operating, two are under BP leases and two are operating under leases controlled jointly by BP and Devon, according to a federal official.

Toby Odone, a spokesperson for BP, confirmed that the company currently operates in the following "fields" in the Gulf of Mexico: "Atlantis, Thunder Horse, Mad Dog, Pompano, Marlin, Horn Mountain and Na Kika."

"We also have non-operating interests in fields such as Mars, Ursa, Diana, Hoover and Ram Powell," said Odone.

A White House official email response however, offers a rather blunt response. The gist is simple: while Jindal and others may think dire economic consequences will result from the moratorium, it would be far more perilous and catastrophic if another spill took place.

BP chief apologizes for 'I'd like my life back' comment

Under-fire BP chief executive Tony Hayward issued an apology Wednesday for saying in an interview that he would "like my life back," as a massive oil spill wreaks devastation along the Gulf coast.

"I made a hurtful and thoughtless comment on Sunday when I said that 'I wanted my life back,'" Hayward said in a post to BP America's Facebook page.

"When I read that recently, I was appalled. I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who lost their lives in this tragic accident," he said.

Eleven rig workers aboard the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon drilling platform were killed when it exploded on April 20, sinking two days later into the Gulf of Mexico. Since then, according to government estimates, at least 20 million gallons have leaked into the waters.

Despite BP's efforts to cap the flow, thick crude continues to ooze into the Gulf of Mexico's fragile wetlands and once-pristine tourist beaches, killing

wildlife and their habitats and destroying the local fishing and tourism-based economy.

"Those words don't represent how I feel about this tragedy, and certainly don't represent the hearts of the people of BP – many of whom live and work in the Gulf – who are doing everything they can to make things right," Hayward said in the post.

"My first priority is doing all we can to restore the lives of the people of the Gulf region and their families – to restore their lives, not mine."

In an interview with NBC on Sunday, Hayward had begun to offer an apology to Gulf residents "for the massive disruption it's caused to their lives."

He continued: "There's no one who wants this thing over more than I do, I'd like my life back."

The environmental disaster – the worst in US history – has badly damaged BP's reputation, with its shares sliding 2.13 percent Wednesday a day after plunging 13 percent, wiping 17.6 billion dollars off its market value.

Beck's Attack on Malia Shows Depth of Depravity That Must Be Confronted By Sane Americans

By Barbara A. Reynolds
NNPA Columnist

(NNPA) - Glenn Beck, Fox News most notorious hate-monger, has sane people incensed because of his racist attacks on Malia Obama, the 11-year-old daughter of President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama on his national radio show.

Beck's attack is below the belt and stomach wrenching. On one level it is a reminder that while racial terrorists no longer bomb churches and kill Black children as they did in Birmingham in 1963, their hatred is still simmering. And if not checked, who knows what could be the outcome.

Moreover, this should be a shakeup call for those who think Blacks have arrived because President Obama is in the White House. This attack shows that no matter how brilliant you are and how high you fly, if you are Black in America, the racists are still there to harass and ridicule our children. It also shows the depths of hate for the First Family which must be countered by the depths of love and support from fair-minded Americans.

The latest brohuha ereputed over the BP oil spill when the President made a casual remark in a news conference that his daughter Malia had asked him "Did you plug the hole yet, Daddy?"

Never missing an opportunity to dish up dirt against the President and his family, Beck, mimicked Malia on his radio show with his radio pal playing the part of Obama. He attacked Malia's intellect for asking the question and also put words in her mouth to suggest her father was a mere puppet and a man who didn't like Blacks.



Malia Obama

"Why don't you like Blacks Daddy?" Beck said imitating Malia in a silly childish southern drawl.

"Because I am half-White," the faux-Obama replied.

Malia, a student in good standing at Sidwell Friends Schools, one of the best in the nation, has done nothing to deserve such contemptible venom. And even when President George W. Bush's daughters Jenna and Barbara were hauled into court for under-age drinking offenses, the media reported the facts but did not make a federal case about it and the issue quietly disappeared.

Remember all the millions of dollars George Bush's son Neil was accused of stealing. In the late '80s and early '90s, Bush embarrassed his father, George H.W. Bush, with his shady dealings as a board member of the infamous Silverado Savings and Loan, whose collapse cost taxpayers

\$1 billion. Yet, during the presidency of George W. the media rarely tracked Neil, nor followed the money.

These attacks from high-powered conservatives on the Obama family are not laughable. Remember the New York Post cartoon that showed Obama as a monkey being shot down by police. Is this not dangerous intent? Both Fox News and the Post are owned by Rupert Murdoch, a dangerous man. Are we looking at an institutional death wish?

The Beck attack is cut from the same cloth as the Rush Limbaugh attacks, which have blatantly said they are poised to make Obama fail. The Beck attack is also a more sophisticated version of the poison that is being spewed on conservative websites.

Recently on the Free Republic Website, Malia was labeled "ghetto street trash." The story which reported on the family's return from Ghana was accompanied by a photo of Michelle Obama speaking to Malia that featured the caption, "To entertain her daughter, Michelle Obama loves to make monkey sounds."

Though this may sound like the garbage on a KKK or White power website, it actually appeared on what is commonly considered one of the prime online locations for U.S. conservative grassroots political discussions and organizing.

For any Black politicians to gain political mainstream support it has become standard practice for Whites to call on them to denounce Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, and most obediently tow the line. Yet when conservatives such as Beck insult and trash our President, there is little outrage

from White Republicans who after all are citizens of one nation indivisible and under one President.

If the hatred of President Obama were only about race that would be chilling enough, but it is methodical more than mere madness. The hatred is the result of the rich White male aristocracy reeling from the first real challenge to their entitlement to reign and rule America's economic power structures. If you really want to know what the fight is about keep your eyes on the money flow and how the President is trying to regulate and restrain the greed that has resulted in millions of hard-working people being unemployed and facing foreclosures.

"Corporate America hates the Obama Administration, New York Times columnist Paul Krugman," has reported. The oil and gas companies, of which BP is a mainstay, gives 76 percent of their largess to the GOP which of course explains the zeal of the Sarah Palin crowd chanting Drill Baby Drill and Beck, who carries their baggage.

The attack on Malia is beyond contempt. And every political, social and spiritual leader, no matter what religion, political or ethnic group ought to add their voice against this assault on a child. This is not the kind of America this generation must will to our children, so we must all lift our voices NOW.

Dr. Barbara Reynolds is an ordained minister, a seminary and Bible college professor, author of several books and writes on religion and political issues for the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Her website is www.Reynoldsworldnews.com

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

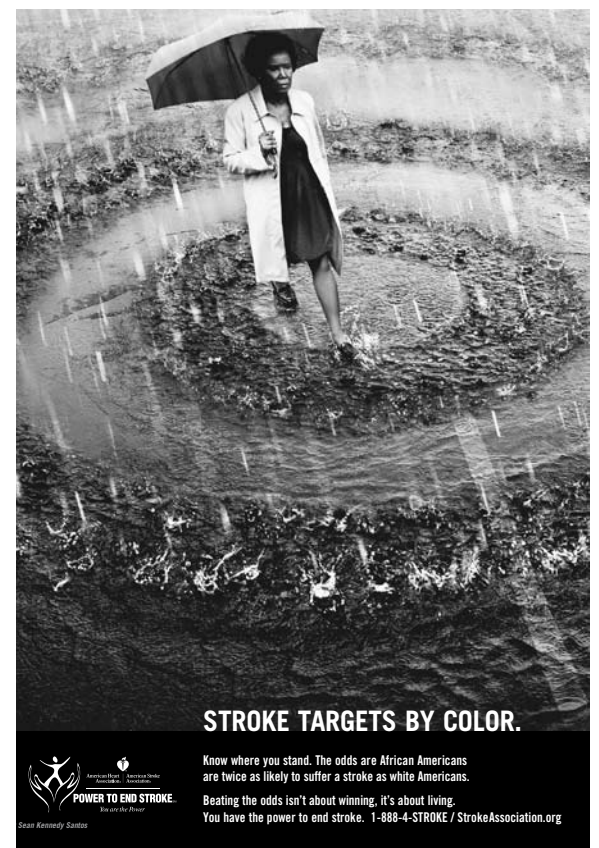
for Whites of \$55,530 compared to \$34,218 for Blacks. The UL called for a job-creation and job training investment of \$168 billion over the next two years. FYI, back in 1962, Whitney Young, then UL's Executive Director, called for a "Marshall Plan" to help Black Americans that was largely ignored by President Johnson. LBJ was intent on "winning" the war in Viet Nam. The U.S. preferred making wars overseas to helping African-Americans at home in those days and Presidents Bush and Obama have followed in his footsteps.

As the National Low Income Housing Coalition reported this April, a family needs to earn \$38,360 a year to afford to rent a decent two-bedroom home but that "rents continue to rise while wages continue to fall" in the current recession. Its "Out of Reach 2010 report shows once again that "prevail-

ing incomes and wages are simply not enough to allow a family to afford a decent home in their community," said Sheila Crowley, NLIHC President. The national two-bedroom Fair Market Rent is a staggering \$959 a month. In addition, 74% of metro renters live in an area where having two full-time jobs at the minimum wage would still not allow them to afford that price. "The persistence of high rates of unemployment and under-employment is making it ever more difficult for families to secure decent housing. Unfortunately, the situation is not likely to improve any time soon," Center for Economic Policy and Research Co-Director Dean Baker commented. Of course, the U.S. could have built 7,779,092 affordable housing units with the \$1 trillion it has now flushed down the sewers of Iraq and Afghanistan, says the National Priorities Project of Northampton, Mass.

But the brilliant brains running Washington instead have got 5,000 coffins shipped home for the same money, not to mention 1-million funerals in Iraq alone. Of course, the profits of oil companies and defense contractors have been stupendous.

Nothing in the above is meant to detract from the remarkable gains by African-Americans who have pushed themselves into the middle-class, despite the formidable odds against them. An examination of U.S. Census data will indicate this has been going on at least since the 1940s. But overall, for Black America, it is as David Ginsburg remarked: "Education is worse. Housing is worse. Unemployment is worse." It's the same old same old today as in the Nineties or Sixties. So where's the civil rights movement?



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We will get it done.
We will make this right.

The Gulf oil spill is a tragedy that never should have happened.

And while we were deeply disappointed that the recent "top kill" operation was unsuccessful, we were also prepared. The best engineers in the world are now working around the clock to contain and collect most of the leak.

As they do that, BP will continue to take full responsibility for cleaning up the spill.

We have organized the largest environmental response in this country's history. More than three million feet of boom, 30 planes and over 1,300 boats are working to protect the shoreline. When oil reaches the shore, thousands of people are ready to clean it up.

Thirty teams of specialists are combing the shore along with US Fish and Wildlife, NOAA and Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries. If wildlife is affected, rescue stations have been set up to take care of them. Experts have been flown in from around the country. And BP has dedicated \$500 million to watch over the long-term impact on marine life and shoreline.

We will honor all legitimate claims. We will continue working for as long as it takes. And our efforts will not come at any cost to taxpayers.

We understand that it is our responsibility to keep you informed. And to do everything we can so this never happens again.

We will get this done. We will make this right.

www.bp.com

www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com

For assistance or information, please call the following 24/7 hotlines:

To report oil on the shoreline: (866) 448-5816

To report impacted wildlife: (866) 557-1401

To make spill-related claims: (800) 440-0858

www.louisianagulfresponse.com

