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New Orleans

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September 4 - September 10, 2010 45th Year Volume 14 www.ladatanews.com



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On the Fifth Anniversary of Katrina, Displacement Continues



While Patterson's story is just one story, it is emblematic of the situation of many African-Americans from New Orleans, who no longer feel welcomed in the city they were born in.

By Jordan Flaherty

Poet Sunni Patterson is one of New Orleans' most beloved artists. She has performed in nearly every venue in the city, toured the US, and frequently appears on television and radio, from Democracy Now to Def Poetry Jam. When she performs her poems in local venues, half the crowd recites the words along with her. But, like many who grew up here, she was forced to move away

from the city she loves. She left as part of a wave of displacement that began with Katrina and still continues to this day. While hers is just one story, it is emblematic of the situation of many African-Americans from New Orleans, who no longer feel welcomed in the city they were born in.

Patterson comes from New Orleans' Ninth Ward. Her family's house was cut in half by the floodwaters and has since been demolished. De-

spite the loss of her home, she was soon back in the city, living in the Tremé neighborhood. She spent much of the following years traveling the country, performing poetry and trying to raise awareness about the plight of New Orleans. But her income was not enough—her post-Katrina rent was twice what she had paid before the storm, and she was also putting up money to help her family rebuild as well as preparing for the birth of her son

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call (504) 309-9913 for subscription information. Dated material two weeks in advance.
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- 4) Visit one of our Claims Site Offices:** Claims offices have been established in **Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.** Visit our website for a complete list of locations. A Claims Evaluator will assist you with the filing process.

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Jibril. "I wound up getting evicted from my apartment because we were still working on the house," she said. "In the midst of it, you realize that you are not generating the amount of money you need to sustain a living."

Patterson's family had difficulty presenting the proper paperwork to receive federal rebuilding dollars—a problem shared by many New Orleanians. "We're dealing with properties that have been passed down from generation to generation," says Patterson. "The paperwork is not always available. A lot of elders are tired, they don't know what to do."

Just as the storm revealed racial inequalities, the recovery has also been shaped by systemic racism. According to a recent survey of New Orleanians by the Kaiser

Family Foundation, forty-two percent of African-Americans - versus just sixteen percent of Whites - said they still have not recovered from Katrina. Thirty-one percent of African-American residents - versus eight percent of White respondents - said they had trouble paying for food or housing in the last year. Housing prices in New Orleans have gone up sixty-three percent just since 2009.

Eleven billion federal dollars went into Louisiana's Road Home program, which was meant to help the city rebuild. The payouts from this program went exclusively to homeowners, which cut out renters from the primary source of federal aid.

Even among homeowners, the program treated different populations in different ways. U.S.

District Judge Henry Kennedy recently found that the program was racially discriminatory in the formula it used to disperse funds. By partially basing payouts on home values instead of on damage to homes, the program favored properties in wealthier - often Whiter - neighborhoods. However, the same judge found no legal obligation for the state to correct this discrimination for the 98% of applicants whose cases have been closed.

At approximately 355,000, the city's population remains more than 100,000 lower than its pre-Katrina number, and many counted in the current population are among the tens of thousands who moved here post-Katrina. This puts the number of New Orleanians still displaced at well over

100,000 - perhaps 150,000 or more. A survey by the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps found that seventy-five percent of African-Americans who were displaced wanted to return but were being kept out. Like Patterson, most of those surveyed said economic forces kept them from returning.

A Changed City

As New Orleans approaches the Fifth Anniversary of Katrina and begins a long recovery from the BP drilling disaster, the media has been searching for an uplifting angle. Stories of the city's rebirth are everywhere, and there are reasons to feel good about New Orleans. The Saints' Superbowl victory was a turning point for the city, and the HBO series *Treme* has gone a long way towards helping the story of the

city's vibrant culture and struggle for recovery get out to a wider audience. Music festivals like Jazz Fest and Essence Fest, which are so central to the city's tourism-based economy, have brought in some of their largest crowds in recent years. Because of a combination of grassroots pressure, independent media, and federal investigations, the city's corrupt police department seems to be on the cusp of real reform.

But despite positive developments in the city's recovery, more than 100,000 New Orleanians received a one-way ticket out-of-town and still have received no help in coming back, and these voices are left out of most stories of the city. Many from this silenced population complain of post-Katrina decisions that placed obstacles in their path, such as the firing of 7,000 public school employees and canceling of their union contracts shortly after the storm, or the tearing down of nearly 5,000 public housing units - two post-Katrina decisions that disproportionately affected Black residents.

Advocates have also noted that among those who are not counted in the statistics on displacement are the New Orleanians who are in the city, but not home. They fall into the category that international human rights organizations call internally displaced. The guiding principles of internal displacement call for more than return. UN principles number 28 and 29 call for, in part, "the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration." They also state that, "They shall have the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs at all levels and have equal access to public services," as well as to have their property and possessions replaced, or receive "appropriate compensation or another form of just reparation."

In other words, these principles call for a return that includes restoration and reparations. As civil rights attorney Tracie Washington has said, "I'm still displaced, until the conditions that caused my displacement have been alleviated. I'm still displaced as long as Charity Hospital remains closed. I'm still displaced as long as rents remain unaffordable. I'm still displaced as long as schools are in such bad shape."

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Rethink Possible



Project K.I.K.S. Gives Shoes to New Orleans Youth

By Edwin Buggage
Paul Cheatham is a man with a giving heart. He has served his nation and people across the globe serving as the most decorated African-American of the NATO

forces. After his retirement he chose to continue in the spirit of giving back as a philanthropist assisting those who are in need. He began thinking how could he help and he founded Project K.I.K.S.

(Kind Initiative for Kids Shoes). He then partnered with AMVETS and they initially gave shoes to kids in the most ravaged areas of South Africa. After several trips to the conti-



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nent of Africa he was asked why not find a place where people are in need in this country to help as well? He recounts this time by saying, "My son and I were talking and he mentioned New Orleans as a place that could use help after

more people to come to the city to provide aid."

As a fledgling organization Project K.I.K.S. is always seeking to find community and corporate partners to expand its reach. "In the beginning I funded much of

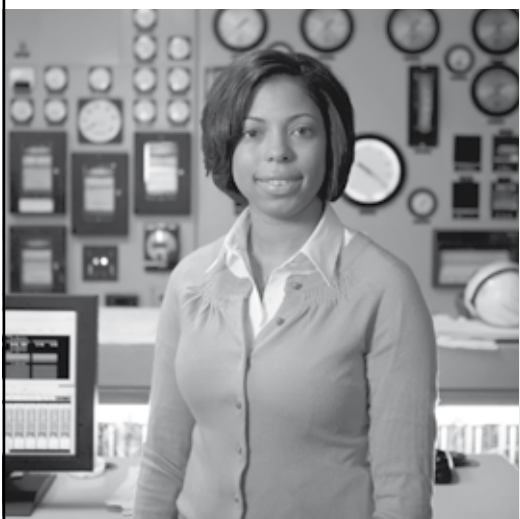


Katrina," says Cheatham. So he began to research and came on a fact finding trip and saw a city in desperate need of help. "I saw conditions that needed to be addressed that were broad in their scope, but on a more basic level kids just having shoes to wear was something I wanted to help with."

He has committed himself and his resources to help the forgotten kids of Katrina. "When I look at the faces of young people who don't have the basic necessities of life this is something that bothers me," says Cheatham. "It is necessary that more people become involved and my organization and AMVETS are trying to give some help with the hope that it inspires

this project myself because I believe it is important, but now we are growing and impacting more lives because we have been able to find others that are committed to our cause," Cheatham remarks about the project. He is excited about New Orleans and the footprint they have made on the city, one he wants to continue to build. "I have come to love this city and its people and Project K.I.K.S and AMVETS will do whatever we can to help the city and its people rebuild." He is someone who loves young people and says of the mission of Project K.I.K.S. "We are preparing people to take the steps to do that by putting shoes on the feet of the future of New Orleans."

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Leah Badger, Engineer



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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Data News Weekly Celebrates 44 Years Of Service *2009 Trailblazer Gala*

The night was very young, as many gathered to attend the 44th Anniversary Gala Celebration of Data News Weekly on Thursday, August 26th and the Southport Music Hall.

Honored for their efforts in the community were Dr. Doris Roche-Hicks, Rev. T.J. Smith, Capt. Charles Leach, Demetric Mercadel, Pete Rhodes, Wendell Pierce, Dalton Savoir, Jr., Brandon Spann, Ron Gardner, Terry Scott, Nat Turner and Reginald Stewman.

As the night progressed, Wendell Pierce graced us with his presence, Captain Charles thanked us via cell phone on the microphone as he was unable to attend

and BRW took us back in time with some ole' school hits, while many danced to the beat of their steps. Kermit Ruffins, Sharon Martin, and Chucky C, just to name a few, including myself, performed from the big stage while many enjoyed good food, conversation and incredible people.

This 44th Data News Gala was a huge success. As we vastly approach next year's honorees, I look forward to an amazing year of people who continue to make a difference giving their hearts and souls in making a change above and beyond in the community of New Orleans.

Trailblazer of the Year Award

Wendell Pierce for his tremendous efforts in rebuilding Pontchartrain Park was named the 2009 Trailblazer of the Year. Rev. T.J. Smith, was awarded the Data News Weekly Legacy Award and Trailblazer Emeritus, the award was accepted by his son Kenya Smith.

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



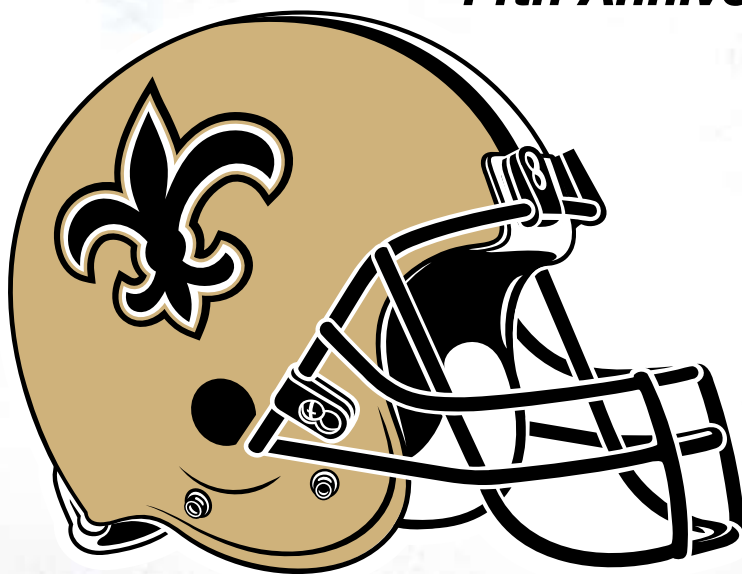
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Photography by Glenn Summers

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

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Idris Elba

Entertainment's International Renaissance Man

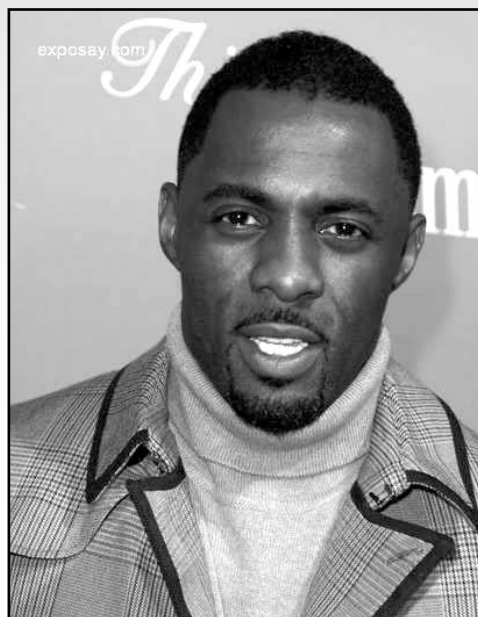
By Edwin Buggage

Idris Elba has become a force to be reckoned with on both the large and small screens. He is a standout talent whose work in shows such as the Wire, The Office and Britain's Luther, in addition to appearing in films starring opposite Denzel Washington, Beyoncé Knowles and working with Tyler Perry. This brother from across the pond has been making an impact in the entertainment arena and is becoming a force in the industry on a global scale.

In his new film "Takers" that finished its first week at number one at the box office. It stars Elba as a ring leader in a film that centers on a bank heist. As Gordon he plays a master criminal that is smooth, suave and deceptive. In this film Elba uses his British accent adding a dimension of bond like swagger to his character.

The ensemble cast includes, Matt Dillion, Paul Walker, Chris Brown and T.I. "It's a heist film and it's an entertaining film and I want people to be entertained." Continuing he says, "I want people to enjoy it. I want people to hold on to their seats and get really engaged with the characters."

The film is a wonder to look at. Its



IDRIS ELBA

cinematography makes the film a delight to watch. "Hopefully we not only gave the audience something spectacular just to look at, but we want something for them to feel. So each one of our characters has a storyline that takes you in a certain direction and I hope that works for the audience," says Elba.

In recent years Elba has come into

his own and has become a legitimate sex symbol for the twenty-first century with his rugged good looks British lilt he's an urbane James Bond. It has been rumored that he may take the screen as the first Black actor to play Bond. He is flattered that he is considered a sex symbol, which is a very different for title for a Black male. Elba is trying to redefine what it means to be a Black sex symbol, "I've said this in the press many times that Black men in film are not often times described as sexy, and if we are it's not in the right sort of connotation, it's just about the size of our members or what not, or we're either very intimidating in a sexy way, or we are scary in a sexy way. But just to be a Black man that is sexy, that is a rare thing. So hey, if that's the moniker that goes above the title, hey, I'm in for it and I thank you."

As for the Bond role he says, "It's been a crazy rumor, and of course my name has been in the mix. Again, it's one of those fantasy roles that a lot of actors, Black or White, would love to play." This renaissance man from a distant land also a DJ who is putting out a mix tape with established as well as new talent. About his mix tape he says

"I'm going to get on it. I asked some of the guys that were in the film to give me music for the tape and then also I gave them an opportunity for my social network, Twitter, ... Elba on Twitter and my Facebook to submit music for the tape. There is some great music out there, and try to put some on this tape. A lot of people are going to say, "Listen to this tape" just because it's associated with the film, so it's an opportunity to maybe discover some new talent."

Recently, he appeared in New Orleans hosting a party during the Essence Music Festival. As we have just reached the five year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina Elba saying he understands there is a lot of work to be done but is encouraged by the progress of the city. "I was there for maybe three or four days at the ESSENCE Festival. But from what the naked eye could see, there was an obvious rebound and an obvious sort of reinstatement for the culture of New Orleans, in a good way. I feel the pride hasn't left New Orleans; its legacy is intact. I expect that the infrastructure is still suffering from the damage that is going to take a lot longer to rebuild. But the spirit of New Orleans is definitely much alive."

Scenes from around town as Data stops in as Cedric Richmond and supporters celebrate his Democratic Primary victory & Councilman Jon Johnson's Lower 9th Ward Katrina event with Congresswoman Maxine Waters



The 1963 March on Washington Got Off to a Rocky Start



George C. Curry
NNPA

of other civil rights leaders: Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP; the National Urban League's Whitney Young; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. of SCLC; James Farmer, head of CORE and Jim Forman, the chief strategist for SNCC. Together, with John Lewis, the new SNCC president replacing Forman, they were known as the movement's Big Six.

President John F. Kennedy urged Randolph to cancel the march, but he refused. Failing to halt the march, Kennedy asked Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, to exert his influence over the gathering.

"The White House asked [Reuther] to infiltrate the march and steer it away from radical rhetoric and direct action. And so he did," Euchner wrote.

Randolph wanted Bayard Rustin to serve as director of the march. However, his detractors gave three reasons why Rustin would be a poor choice – he had been a communist, he was a draft dodger and he was a homosexual.

Randolph ended the stalemate by declaring, "I will not press Bayard on you gentlemen as the leader of the March on Washington. I will take it." But Randolph would take it on one condition – Rustin would serve as his chief deputy. Every one accepted that arrangement.

Even after that tension had been eased, Martin Luther King's speech – carried live on all three TV networks – was in danger of not being heard.

"Someone sabotaged the \$16,000 sound

system – state-of-the-art electronic equipment – to derail the March on Washington," the author wrote. The damage was done on the eve of the march and Walter Fauntroy, one of King's top aides, scrambled at the last moment, eventually persuading a Justice Department contact to get the Army Signal Corps to fix the system on the morning of the march.

March organizers faced a larger problem when copies of SNCC Chairman John Lewis' speech were circulated. In the prepared text, Lewis expressed opposition to an administration backed civil rights bill, derided those who urged patience and talked about "the revolution is at hand."

There was strong objection to this passage: "We will march through the South, through the heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We shall pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground – nonviolently. We shall fragment the South into a thousands pieces and put them back together in the image of democracy."

Patrick O'Boyle, the archbishop of Washington, who had been scheduled to deliver the invocation, objected to Lewis' speech and threatened to not only walk out, but to take all Catholics with him if the speech was given. John Lewis said he would deliver the speech as written or not at all.

Walter Reuther of the UAW told coalition members, "If John Lewis feels strongly that he wants to make this speech, he can go someplace else and make it, but he has no right to make it here because if he tries

to make it he destroys the integrity of our coalition and he drives people out of the coalition who agree to the principles... This is just immoral and he has no right to do it, and I demand a vote right now because I have to call the archbishop."

By then, the Big Six had been expanded to a coalition of 10. And nine of the 10 voted with Reuther, only John Lewis abstained. The speech was toned down an hour before the march got underway.

As the last speaker, Martin Luther King's would define the march. And he was allotted only seven minutes to do so.

Euchner wrote, "Now King wondered: Should I talk about the dream? Should the dream provide the emotional conclusion of the speech? King had spoken about a dream for months. At a mass meeting in Birmingham, he sketched out a vision of an integrated society, concluding, 'I have a dream tonight.'"

In a Detroit speech, King's dream encompassed a world in which the sons of former slaves and slave owners could live together as brothers and sisters. Although the audience cheered wildly, King thought the speech could be better crafted.

"King asked Wyatt Walker and Andrew Young what they thought," the author wrote. "Don't use the lines about 'I have a dream,' Walker told King. 'It's trite, it's cliché. You've used it too many times already.' Young agreed. King looked up but said nothing."

Not until he gave his rousing speech. .

The Resignation of Dr. Laura



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

ments and repeatedly used the "n-word" in responding to Jade, a black woman caller, who complained that her white husband's friends and relatives use racial slurs and make racially demeaning comments in front of her. Instead of offering helpful advice, Dr. Laura scoffed, "some people are hypersensitive."

She noted that "black guys" use the n-word "all the time," and repeated the word 11 times during the call for emphasis. But her most revealing comment was, "I don't get it. If anybody without enough melanin says it, it's a horrible thing, but when black people say it, it's affectionate. It's very confusing." As she admitted, Dr. Schlessinger most emphatically doesn't get it and she is very confused about what constitutes racism. It is beyond comprehension that she would consider Jade "hypersensitive" for being offended by the n-word.

Dr. Schlessinger's comments, which can be heard in their entirety at <http://media-matters.org/blog/201008120045>, created

a national uproar. Millions of people of all races were offended by her insensitive and highly offensive on-air rant. Her resignation on August 18th came just five days after the National Urban League urged the Talk Radio Network to drop the Dr. Laura Show from syndication; and it demonstrates the impact people of good conscience can have when they speak out against intolerance. Several days after the incident, Dr. Schlessinger did issue a written apology which said in part, "I was attempting to make a philosophical point, and I articulated the 'n' word all the way out - more than one time. And that was wrong. I'll say it again - that was wrong." That is an understatement. We cannot help but wonder, as did Nita Hanson (Jade's real name), how Dr. Schlessinger, who grew up during the height of the civil rights movement, and who once was a practicing marriage and family counselor, could not understand how hurtful the n-word is to most Americans. It is also disturbing that former vice

presidential candidate, Sara Palin would publicly say to Dr. Schlessinger, "Don't retreat...reload." That kind of pandering to the basest element of the American electorate is highly offensive, inflammatory and counterproductive.

Dr. Schlessinger claims she resigned to "regain her Constitutional right to free speech." That is ludicrous on its face. Nobody has prevented her or her supporters from speaking their minds. But nobody is also preventing the public from reacting. It should be noted that following her remarks, several of her affiliates and major sponsors dropped her show. That was their Constitutional right.

As the nation works toward racial reconciliation and a celebration of diversity, we find it necessary to make it clear once again that this kind of divisiveness and casual use of racial slurs have no place among the public discourse.

Marc Morial is president & CEO of the National Urban League.

Here we go again. One more time, a clueless commentator with a microphone and an audience of millions, has brazenly insulted Black America and reacted as if we were the perpetrators. The latest incident involves Dr. Laura Schlessinger, the host of the Dr. Laura radio show. On August 10th, Dr. Laura made racially insensitive state-



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Music Is The Cure

Celebrating The Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina



Dionne Character, Author
Entertainment Editor & Columnist

Souls seemed to have vanished in the hand-claps, whistles, tambourines, and second-line music, as we let the good times roll putting to rest all of our troubles during the 5th Year Commoration of Hurricane

Katrina, which was held at The Mahalia Jackson Theater on Sunday, August 29.

As the music of New Orleans seems to be the cure to the problems we continue to face in a city many can't return, a city where parents have to make decisions pertaining to over-crowded schools, a city where there are few jobs and no housing, a city where we seem to be stuck in an unhealthy reverse situation, New Orleans is a city we would love to hate but we can't because it is a known fact that New Orleans is one of the best places on the universe to dwell. We are all aware that there is no place like home if you were born and raised in the Crescent City.

As survivors of Katrina, we all have faced the most challenging assignments we've ever encountered. We've experienced every emotion and yet, we continue to surrender, gather and celebrate the loss and pain

that of which has given us joy even through football, as the nation has witnessed and heard our "Who Dat" chant.

While New Orleans was taken by storm as we celebrated the 5th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina with cameras, marches, candle ceremonies, and superstars who invested in some of our lives, there is a stillness that of which continues to bring us closer as neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

Our reflection has shown the world that we are a determined people who continue to rise in victory because our heritage of African drums, Indian dances and songs, keeps us grateful and alive with an endurance that has never been shown throughout the country.

No matter what is placed before us, through it all, our problems continue to "fly away" when we hear names like Trom-

bone Shorty, Donald Harrison, Terence Blanchard, Rebirth Brass Band, and Kermit Ruffins.

The Mahalia Jackson Theatre was full to capacity and as the rain poured outside, our troubles didn't matter, black and white didn't matter, the only matter of the evening was that we all survived an event we would love to forget, an event that has given us all strength, an event that that has changed our lives.

Reunited once again to the rhythm of some of the best music, souls were uplifted one more year as the victory to our dance is the music, the food, the people and the cure to all of our troubles. New Orleans shall forever dance till the "Saints Go Marching In".

"504" the Musical Returns to ABCT

The Anthony Bean Community Theater will commemorate the 5th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina by bringing back the hugely successful hip-hop musical, "504".

"504" premiered at the Anthony Bean Theater September, 2007. Since then has toured nationally to enthusiastic reviews. Set just after the storm, "504" tells the story of New Orleans youngsters' involvement in our city's recovery. "504" is written and directed by Anthony Bean, choreographed by Arieuna McGee and musical directions by Jeremy Pierre.

It is four weeks after Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans is under military siege and a dusk to dawn curfew has been enacted. The international press is here to cover the story of the Katrina devastation. Fearing they will not be included in the rebuilding

of a New Orleans, a group of displaced New Orleans youth stage an "under the radar" dance concert on the corner of Orleans & North Claiborne Avenue to bring attention to the violence, crime, homelessness, and inhumane living conditions. Seven young actors, a singing trio, and a group of dancers portray the trials that make up their daily lives as they exist in the shadows of New Orleans rich and powerful. "504" blends rap, gospel, jazz, bounce and rock and roll to help the youngsters express their emotions as they tell their stories of pre- and post-Katrina.

The ABCT revival runs September 3-5, 10-12, 17-19, and 24-26. Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 pm. Sundays at 3:00 pm. Special note: Sunday, September 5 show will be at 8:00 pm. Tickets are available by calling the Box Office at (504) 862-7529.



lets you give students at risk of dropping out the boost they need to make it through high school. Because over 30% of students in the U.S. aren't graduating. And they've got a lot more to tackle than just their schoolwork.



President Obama Visits New Orleans for 5th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and the future of New Orleans



Words by Edwin Buggage
Photos by Glenn Summers

Obama In New Orleans

President Barack Obama came to New Orleans to observe the Fifth Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina where he visited Parkway Bakery and Tavern along with the new St. Bernard Housing Development and ended his visit inside a packed ballroom at Xavier University. He spoke about the fortitude and drive of the people of New Orleans coming back to reclaim their lives. "It's just inspiring to spend time with people who've demonstrated what it means to persevere in the face of tragedy; to rebuild in the face of ruin," Obama said to the receptive crowd.

Obama touts volunteerism

In what was an upbeat speech he spoke of the spirit of volunteerism and togetherness that has fueled the rebuilding effort. He listed a few of the success stories of some of the courageous people who have worked to rebuild their city and their lives.

"We see New Orleans in the efforts of Joycelyn Heintz, who's here today. Katrina left her house 14 feet underwater. But after volunteers helped her rebuild, she joined AmeriCorps to serve the community herself — part of a wave of AmeriCorps members who've been critical to the rebirth of this city and the rebuilding of this region. So today, she manages a local center for mental health and wellness."

"I've seen the sense of purpose people felt after the storm when I visited Musicians' Village in the Ninth Ward back in 2006. Volunteers were not only constructing houses; they were coming together to preserve the culture of mu-

sic and art that's part of the soul of this city — and the soul of this country. And today, more than 70 homes are complete, and construction is underway on the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music."

"We see the dedication to the community in the efforts of Xavier grad Dr. Regina Benjamin, who mortgaged her home, maxed out her credit cards so she could reopen her Bayou la Batre clinic to care for victims of the storm — and who is now our nation's Surgeon General."

administration is committed to rebuilding the Gulf Coast. "Now, I don't have to tell you that there are still too many vacant and overgrown lots. There are still too many students attending classes in trailers. There are still too many people unable to find work. And there are still too many New Orleanians, folks who haven't been able to come home. So while an incredible amount of progress has been made, on this Fifth Anniversary, I wanted to come here and tell the people of this city di-



Hope and Optimism

While Obama's speech was a mostly optimistic one he commented on the failure of government and his efforts that his

rectly: My administration is going to stand with you — and fight alongside you — until the job is done. Until New Orleans is all the way back, all the way."

The Blacks and Blues of New Orleans

As people are still displaced and in the era of the audacity of hope, many survivors are becoming hopeless that they will never return to New Orleans, or that it will never be the same. That as a people commemorates the destruction of city larger questions arise, about how it will rebuild and who will be included in the "New" New Orleans?

Will the people who are framed as those who always buckjump and having fun get serious about the business of a city where their numbers are dwindling? In a city that a few years ago claims were made by then Mayor Ray Nagin that New Orleans will remain a

And how are those wounds going to be healed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina five years later? While yes there are those who have survived and thrived, but how does a city tend to those who are just trying to stay alive. In a city where hospitals are lack-



ing, jobs that pay a living wage in a city where rents and the costs of owning a home is rising because of insurance. Where small businesses are fighting to stay in business; the speech made was more of a band-aid, or a feel good elixir expecting it to stop a cancer that is spreading or stop the pain of a bullet wound.

The larger question in this commemoration is less about people presenting the city and its residents as regardless of what happens we will always find a reason to dance. But when a city and its people sober up there will still be problems that need to be solved, there will still be issues of injustice that need to be addressed. And it is in this dark hour that the city and its residents find the will to do what is necessary to make New Orleans the city it can be. A great international city that is progressive, with economic opportunities for all and not just a few.

To hear a drive by feel good speech in an atmosphere that resembled a sporting event may be good for some as we enter the football season. But as we welcome back the New Orleans Saints as champions, what will the city do to win the big game in the rebuilding of the city?

"chocolate city". Today the seats of political power have become less chocolate and become something else. Today there is a White mayor, police chief, majority White city council and the city demographics are changing as more formerly African-American Neighborhoods resemble deserts where there is a lack of basic services, infrastructure and quality of life.

Two New Orleans, Separate and Unequal

It is the hard questions that were not addressed in the speech by Obama. That a city is still grappling with issues of race and class.



I was born in New Orleans. My family still lives here. We have to restore the Gulf communities for the shrimpers, fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners who live and work here.

- Iris Cross, BP Community Outreach

Making This Right

Beaches

Claims

Cleanup

Economic Investment
Environmental
Restoration

Health and Safety

Wildlife

No oil has flowed into the Gulf for weeks. But we know this is just the beginning of our work. BP has taken full responsibility for the cleanup in the Gulf and that includes keeping you informed.

Restoring Gulf Communities

We can't undo this tragedy. But we can help people get back on their feet. We have been working with impacted communities since day one.

Partnering with local governments and community organizations, my job is to listen to people's needs and frustrations and find ways to help. We have 19 community centers and teams in four states, listening and helping.

Restoring The Economy

BP is here in Gulf communities with shrimpers, fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners, helping to make them whole.

More than 120,000 claim payments totaling over \$375 million have already gone to people affected by the spill. We have committed a \$20 billion independent fund to pay all legitimate claims, including lost incomes until people impacted can go back to work. And none of this will be paid by taxpayers.

BP has also given grants of \$87 million to the states to help tourism recover and bring people back to the Gulf beaches.

Restoring The Environment

We're going to keep looking for oil and cleaning it up if we find it. Teams will remain in place for as long as it takes to restore the Gulf Coast.

And we've dedicated \$500 million to work with local and national scientific experts on the impact of the spill and to restore environmental damage.

Thousands of BP employees have their roots in the Gulf. We support over 10,000 jobs in the region and people here are our neighbors. We know we haven't always been perfect, but we will be here until the oil is gone and the people and businesses are back to normal. We will do everything we can to make this right.

For general information visit: bp.com

For help or information: (866) 448-5816

restorethegulf.gov

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