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New Orleans

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**Page 5**

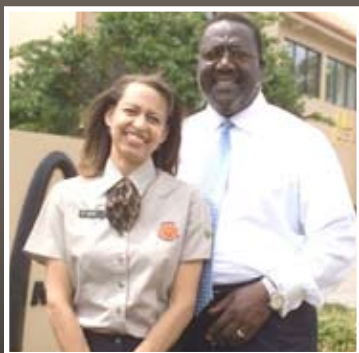
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December 11 - December 17, 2010 45th Year Volume 28 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

# Celebration on the Boulevard

*The Soul of New Orleans*

**Page 2**



**Newsmaker**

Henry Coaxum  
Awarded

**Page 6**

**Faces of  
AIDS Part 2**



**Page 10**



# Celebration on the Boulevard

## Ashe Cultural Arts Center and the Renaissance on Oretha Castle Haley



Ashé's holiday icons,: Baba Kwanzaa (John O'Neal) and Mama YéYé (Olayeela Daste) - Left of carriage: Historical New Orleans Characters portrayed by Carol Sutton and Harold Evans

By Edwin Buggage

### Ashe Brings Peace

Along Oretha Castle Boulevard the City of New Orleans is seeing a renaissance of the storied street that was once known as Dryades. It was once the center of African-American commerce during the torrid days of segregation where Blacks could shop in primarily Jewish owned stores with dignity with the street later becoming a center for Black owned business and artistic expression. In the decades following the gains of the Civil Rights Movement the street saw a steep decline; but today buildings are being refurbished, businesses are re-opening and this sprawling thoroughfare is now as much of the City rebuilding to a brighter future.

At the center of this resurgence is the Ashe Cultural Arts Center, a multi-purpose building that houses works of art, is an event space, in addition to several apartments with a di-

verse cross section of occupants. Today they are celebrating their 12th Anniversary. "We feel good that as pioneers we have been able to be part of a revitalization of this community," says Ashe's co-founder Carol Bebel.

### A Celebration of Life and Revitalization

For the eleventh consecutive year, the Celebration on the Boulevard brings people from around the City as Ashé Cultural Arts Center and GoodWork Network join with musicians, actors, merchants, and the community to create an amazingly entertaining holiday festival and marketplace in Central City New Orleans. The festival brings together a mix of jazz, hip-hop, R&B, gospel, folk, reggae, along with spoken word and dance. Holiday on the Boulevard's major events will occur on Dec. 10-11 at Ashé which is located at 1712 Oretha

*Cover Story, Continued on next page.*

## INSIDE DATA

Cover Story . . . . .	2	Commentary. . . . .	8
Newsmaker . . . . .	4	State & Local News . .	9
Data Zone . . . . .	6	Special Feature . . .	11
Shoot Ya Best Shot . .	7		

## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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*Cover Story, Continued from previous page.*



Ashe Co Founder, Carol Bebelles, photo by Peter Nakhid



Ashé's signature original dance/theater adaptation of the book "The Origin of Life on Earth: An African Creation Myth" - Photo by Carlton Mickel - 2008.

Castle Haley Blvd., and at GoodWork Network, 1824 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. "We created the event as a celebratory fun opportunity for people to come and visit the Central City Community and to witness the renaissance that is happening and to create an opportunity for people to come together and also it is opportunity for small businesses and artists to find a wider audience to sell and promote themselves and their work," says Bebelles of the Celebration on the Boulevard.

The City of New Orleans as is many urban cities plagued by the scourge of violence; this weekend's festival will dedicate time to make a "plea for peace". This year the Ashé Cultural Arts Center is happy to collaborate with The 13 Moon Walk 4 Peace Movement. The Trail of Dreams World Peace Walkers will be in New Orleans December 10th through December 14th, as part of their current walk. This national peace walk began in Atlanta on 10/10/10, with plans to circle the country for approximately 10,000 miles until 11/11/11. The peace walkers will be visiting over forty cities with their message of peace and social justice. They will be carrying the Sacred Flame of Thunder representing The Great Law of Peace passed on from the Iroquois Six Nations in Canada.

Two members of the 13 Moon Walk for Peace, Audri Scott Williams, the first

African/Native American woman to lead a world peace walk, and Karen Hunter Watson, visited Ashé Cultural Arts Center in 2005 at the beginning of the Trail of Dreams Peace Walk. Says Williams, "The idea for the 13 Moon Walk for Peace came when we returned to the USA from our three and a half year global walk for peace. On our journey from New York back to Atlanta, Georgia, we were struck by the pockets of poverty and disenfranchised communities that appeared to be under the radar, invisible to the general population. We realized our work was not done, in many ways it was just beginning. We decided, before we even made it back home to Atlanta, that we would do a walk in the USA to be a catalyst for healing the heart of our communities here at home."

#### **Sankofa: Art in the Tradition of Community Building**

"The celebration is also about preparing the next generation to lead and connecting them to their past," says Bebelles. The festival will feature the Good Work Network Youth Marketplace where young people ages 7-21 who have participated in entrepreneurship training provided by the GoodWork Network. The training culminates with "real-world" selling on December 11th, at Holiday on the Boulevard. Along with other young people, they will sell affordable food items and

hand-made holiday gifts. Participating youth groups include LA Green Corps, Alpha Coffee House, Sojourner Truth Community Center, and Café Reconcile.

As one of the largest concentration of senior citizens in New Orleans, Central City is a community housed with elders that have wisdom to share in the tradition and spirit of the African Griot. The celebration will feature Voices Not Forgotten, which spotlights senior citizens (ages 62 to 94) from the Central City Senior Center. These ladies and gentlemen infuse oral histories, backed by videography, into their song-and-dance routines and are known for not only packing the house, but "bringing it down" with a foot-stomping audience that always begs for more. They offer gospel, R&B, and humorous testimonies.

As the center moves forward and the boulevard is seeing a resurgence, Bebelles talks about during this time of year and the spirit of those who have come before and what they had to share, she especially reserves a special place for her Ashe co-founder the late Doug Redd. "His spirit is always with us and it is our legacy to give recognition and a creative outlet to people who sometimes lacked a voice." "In that way through the arts Doug was a pioneer and we continue to move ahead with his vision, and we miss him dearly but what he poured into us,

his commitment to community empowerment lives on."

#### **A Rebirth and Renewal on the Boulevard: A Model for One New Orleans**

Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard is changing as is the City with new residents, buildings and businesses. The landscape and demographics of the community is changing. This phenomenon is something Bebelles feels is an encouraging trend, "I think the City needs to be more economically diverse and not have people living in poverty concentrated in one area." Continuing she says, "Many times they do not have access to services or do not have the capacity to leverage to get things done for sometimes it is just about surviving from day to day."

She feels the future to the City prospering is rooted in citizens putting their differences aside to work towards the common goal, "I think the things that are happening on Oretha Castle Haley is a good example of how diverse people can get along and maybe the Celebration on the Boulevard can show the best of what the City is and can be all people together working together to make the City better."



# McDonald's Honors Henry Coaxum for Outstanding Service

New Orleans Restaurateur Receives Prestigious Ronald Award Henry L. Coaxum, Jr., a local McDonald's Restaurant Franchisee, has been presented with The Ronald Award. The prestigious award honors McDonald's owner/operators for outstanding service - to both the McDonald's brand through exemplary operations, marketing and employee relations practices, as well as to their local communities. Coaxum received the award along with his wife, Karen, at the 2010 Great Southern Regional Operators Association meeting held recently in Chicago.

Coaxum operates seven McDonald's restaurants in the New Orleans area. Although three of Coaxum's original restaurants he opened in 2002 were damaged and closed due to Hurricane Katrina, he bought and reopened the St. Charles Avenue restaurant in February 2006 - just in time for

the 150th Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans. This was the first McDonald's restaurant to reopen on the east bank of New Orleans post Hurricane Katrina. In 2006, Coaxum set a restaurateur record by acquiring and reopening four closed full-service restaurants in five months. In December 2006, Coaxum reopened his originally-owned Read Boulevard location, which was rebuilt to its award-winning appearance and décor.

In January 2007, he reopened the S. Claiborne Avenue restaurant (one of his original three restaurants he owned pre-Katrina). In July of that year, he reopened the Bullard Avenue McDonald's, which was the first quick-service restaurant to reopen on that eastern New Orleans avenue.

In August 2010, Coaxum was elected as President of the Great Southern Region's Black McDonald's Operators Association. Also in August, Coaxum was ap-



Henry and Karen Coaxum outside their St. Charles Ave McDonald's Restaurant

pointed by New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu as Chairman of the NOLA Business Alliance Board, launching the city's first-

ever public-private partnership for economic development. Also that month, he was appointed to the Board of Commissioners of the City's Hospital Service District Board that will oversee the development and operation of a full service hospital in Eastern New Orleans.

Coaxum's work with the area's youth also is being furthered as a McDonald's franchisee. He offers two education incentive programs for his student employees. For high school students, employees are rewarded with pay raises for good grades. And for college students, his "scholarships" help pay for books and tuition if the student employees' grades are maintained while being employed. "Our youth need to learn that you can get rewarded if you work hard at both school and a job. Who knows, that job could end up being your career," he says.

Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year

Data  
News  
Weekly



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*Dr. Garth Graham, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health in the Office of Minority Health at HHS, administers the seasonal flu vaccine to Tom Joyner.*

**“If I’m the hardest working man in radio,  
I can’t miss any time from work or with my loved ones.**

**I bet you can’t either.**

**That’s why I got my flu vaccine,  
and I urge you to get yours.”**

**—Tom Joyner**

*Protect yourself and those around you*  
**Get a flu vaccine**

THE FLU ENDS WITH 





# The Measure Of A Man Designer, Harold Clarke



Dionne Character, Author  
Entertainment Editor & Columnist

On December 4, 2010, Jamaican Designer, Harold Clarke gave an exclusive exhibition of high fashion, as models pranced around in full magnificence, hitting the runway of Harold Clarke's Couturier Atelier located at 102 Canal Street.

Clarke's dream as a kid was to someday become a household name, that of which he has accomplished after attending the Fashion Institute of Technology (F.I.T.) in New York,

where he would create some of the most beautiful collections of wedding gowns. Clarke's designs have been published in multiple publications throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. His clients, Vanna White, Patty LeBelle, Delta Burke, and Vivica Fox, have all worn original designs created especially for them. A household name in Hollywood, Clarke's designs have been worn to many red carpet events such as The Emmy Awards and The Golden Globe Awards.

Harold Clarke has been in New Orleans since the day he was chosen to design one of the grandest weddings in New Orleans' history, the wedding of Mayor Marc Morial to News Reporter Michelle Miller, whose gown is now on display at the Louisiana State Museum.

Clarke, fell in love with the culture, the people and Mardi Gras. The City of New Orleans has embraced him as an honorary citizen. He has become a man we can all measure by every stitch he gives of himself to others. To meet Harold Clarke is a red carpet experience. Visit Harold Clarke online at [www.haroldclarke.com](http://www.haroldclarke.com).



Designer Harold Clarke



Clarke makes alterations to one of his designs for a customer



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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Ladies of Jazz Holiday Concert

A full house at the University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center Recital Hall enjoyed a special holiday concert by the New Orleans Ladies of Jazz; Stephanie Jordan, Germaine Bazzle, and Leah Chase in collaboration with the Music Alive Ensemble String Octet and Jazz Quintet. photos by Vincent Sylvain



Stephanie Jordan, Leah Chase and Germaine Bazzle



Music Alive Ensemble of New Orleans



Leah Chase



Rachel Jordan

### 11th Annual

## HOLIDAY ON THE BOULEVARD

**ASHÉ CULTURAL ARTS CENTER**  
1712 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.  
(504) 569-9070

**GOODWORK NETWORK**  
1824 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.  
(504) 309-2073

Live Entertainment | Marketplace  
Fashion Show | Dance  
Peace Walk | Film Showings  
Food & Beverages

[www.ashecac.org](http://www.ashecac.org)



Festival Sponsors: Ashé Cultural Arts Center, GoodWork Network, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation, Oretha Castle Haley Merchants and Business Association, Hope Community Credit Union, Central City Renaissance Alliance, Brown's Dairy, Arts Council of New Orleans, City of New Orleans, The Office of the Lt. Governor of Louisiana, Ford Foundation

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2010

**ASHÉ CULTURAL ARTS CENTER - 1712 O.C. Haley Blvd.**

8:00 a Breakfast and Open House for Elected Officials  
10:00 a Kwanzaa Ceremony with Mama YéYé and Imagination Tour (dance & drum workshop) with Bamboula 2000  
Noon Community Leaders Luncheon and Open House  
6:00 p Community Reception and Open House, Music by Bamboula 2000

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2010

**ASHÉ CULTURAL ARTS CENTER - 1712/1724 O.C. Haley Blvd.**

10:00 a – 8:00 p.m. -- Vendor Marketplace  
10:00 a One Mile Peace Walk through Central City with 13 Moon Walk 4 Peace; starts and ends at Ashé Kuumba Institute  
Noon Sistahs Making a Change  
1:00 p Shades of Praise Gospel Choir  
2:15 p Voices Not Forgotten/Movers & Groovers  
3:00 p Fashion Show with Spoken Word  
5:00 p Arrival of Baby Boyz Brass Band, Young Guardians of the Flame Indian Gang, Santa & Mrs. Claus, Baba Kwanzaa & Mama YéYé  
6:00 p **DANCE 4 PEACE** featuring national recording artists: Michael Ward | Kelly Love Jones | Mikuak Rai Crescent City Choreographers (jazz) | Liquid Rhythm (salsa)

**GOODWORK NETWORK - 1824 O.C. Haley Blvd.**

10:00 a – 5:00 p --Vendor Marketplace  
11:00 a Golden Voices Choir  
Noon Face Painting by Miss Jennifer until 2:00 p.m.  
12:15 p Silhouette Dance Ensemble  
1:15 p Sess 4-5 & Friends Hip-Hop Thrown-Down  
2:00 p Domingma'  
3:00 p Phat Word  
4:30 p Baby Boyz Brass Band  
4:45 p Parade: Brass Band & Indians from GoodWork to Ashé

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2010

**ASHÉ CULTURAL ARTS CENTER - 1712 O.C. Haley Blvd.**

1:00 p – 8:30 p Vendor Marketplace  
1:00 p Dorise & Tanya  
1:30 p Ras Chemash Trio  
2:15 p John Mosley & Friends  
3:15 p Sharon Martin  
4:30 p Naydja Cojoe  
5:30 p Lloyd Daly  
6:30 p Michaela Harrison  
7:30 p Zion Trinity

**ASHÉ CULTURAL ARTS CENTER - 1724 O.C. Haley Blvd.**

2:00 p Film: *Asé*  
4:00 p Film: *The Next 7 Generations*

*Watch the Saints Game at Ashé*

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OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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# Wikileaks – Proceed with Caution



**Rev. Al Sharpton**  
NNPA Columnist

Taken at face value, the latest Wikileaks release is in one word - disturbing. Leaked confidential information regarding international relations and sensitive global issues, these 250,000 documents have reshaped the dynamic of diplomacy perhaps like never before. The diplomatic cables touch on everything like Guantanamo Bay, predator drone attacks in Yemen, officials in Afghanistan, Russian, and Italian relations, Pakistani nuclear fuel, North Korea, Iran,

Zimbabwe and much much more. But although we'd like to believe all of this classified information without question, we must take a moment and dig a little deeper.

Diplomatic relations are never an easy task for any government to manage. There are areas of key interest, volatile regions, and shifting nuances in an ever-changing world. But when private conversations and classified cables are released to the public in such a manner, the task of managing these difficult international relationships takes on an entirely new meaning. For not only is our President and our government exposed here, but leaders and strategic partners around the planet now find their private exchanges with the U.S. available for the world to view with a simple click of the mouse. And, we must ask ourselves, why now?

Every administration in the history of this nation has had to withhold information from the public for a multitude of reasons; to believe otherwise would simply be foolish. But we cannot blindly accept these quarter of a million leaks as 100% factual and true, for that would be just as foolish.

Because we do not instantaneously believe everything we watch on TV or read in the paper, we cannot unequivocally accept everything in these leaked documents. Much of this information is incomplete and could be dangerous for us, and our strategic allies and informed resources in the field.

Whenever there is any sort of leak, we must proceed with caution and with a keen focus on why these events are transpiring now. During the previous administration, there was more than a fair share of international dilemmas and challenges that faced the United States. With the start of two wars, an escalating threat of terrorism, and increasingly controversial mechanisms for securing intelligence, the Bush administration undoubtedly had countless classified documents, conversations, and cables that never managed to reach the waves of the World Wide Web.

As people sift through the hundreds of thousands of Wikileaks files during the course of the next few days, weeks, months and perhaps longer, we must remain open to the idea that this may in fact have all transpired because of some sort of hidden

agenda. Is this leak released with partial information? Is someone or something maybe working to discredit our President and this nation? Would people have the same reaction if these sorts of leaks were done under George Bush?

The White House, Secretary Hillary Clinton, and other officials are now in damage control mode. Diligently reaching out to world leaders, they are warning and preparing everyone for the reality that some of their most confidential and trusted information is about to go public. Containing the names of informants, journalists, and others who provide necessary information to various governments, the Wikileaks cables will have ramifications for years to come. Normally, we would have to wait decades to learn of the secrets and intricacies of some of our governmental workings. Thanks to these leaked documents, that opportunity is available in real time and no longer reserved just for historians. But, remember - proceed with caution - for there could be a hidden agenda in even this, the seemingly transparent one. And who will blow the whistle on that?

# Some Want Jobs for Christmas



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

In the weeks since the "shellacking" of the November 2nd election, there has been much talk that the economy will turn around and, indeed, is on the mend. Both pundits and expert economists are saying the economic indicators are better. The recession is over, according to these indicators, and it is unlikely that we have a double dip recession. The stock market has done well this year. So why is the unemployment rate so high?

The November unemployment numbers

went up, not down. Now at 9.8 percent we are only two-tenths of a percentage point lower than this time a year ago. No wonder voters rejected Democrats at the polls in November. If there is progress it has come far too slowly, and all Americans are taking it in the pocketbook.

What does 9.8 percent unemployment translate into? It translates into a whole heck of a lot of human misery. It translates into 15.1 million people who want jobs but can't find them, 6.3 million who haven't worked for at least half a year. It means that the marginal attachment to the labor force is rising, with 2.5 million now part of that group. It means that the traditionally reported Black unemployment rate is now 16 percent, 16.7 percent for African-American men, and 13.1 percent for African-American women. And Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke says, we might have to live with unemployment rates this high for another few years, and that unemployment rates might not return to the "normal" 5 or 6 percent until 2015.

Of course, the 9.8 percent that is reported totally understates the reality of the situation. Including discouraged workers and others, the unemployment rate is closer to

16.3 percent and thus closer to 30 percent for African-Americans. The enormity of this problem in the African-American community is staggering and gives one the sense that the Senate and Congress are fiddling, figuratively as Rome burns and much less figuratively, in the African-American community.

Extending unemployment benefits has become a political football. And there has been little attention focused on the possibility of job creation. If Bernanke is saying that we can expect to live with high unemployment rates for quite some time, then it is irresponsible for Congress to ignore joblessness because they want to balance budgets. Meanwhile, many are gearing up to celebrate the season, while others simply want to work, but the jobs aren't there. To be sure, there will be a few new jobs this month in the retail sector as retailers desperately attempt to stimulate consumer sales. "Black Friday", the traditional big day for shopping seems to have gone over with a thud, there will be new data out in mid-December. So far, preliminary data say that Black Friday sales were up by about 2 percent, but prices have been dropped so significantly that profits have been hurt.

But profits haven't been as hurt as employment. People are hurting, and they aren't getting the results they need from those policy makers who could alleviate their pain.

There will be people caroling and crooning through the New Year, celebrating the joy of a season that must be celebrated. We manage our lives around these rituals, these mysteries of faith, this time of the year when life grinds to a halt and we recognize humanity, human values, the birth of the Christ child, and the coming of winter solstice. And yet, while some croon, others will struggle to celebrate, scraping pennies together to come up with some semblance of celebration because they have children so barraged by commercialism that they equate the end of the year with gifts and goodies.

So on one hand we have people pricing what the 12 days of Christmas would cost today and others are poring through the pricey Neiman Marcus catalog; some folks just want jobs for Christmas. Maybe this Congress will manage things so that more than a few are granted their wish.

Julianne Malveaux is President of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, NC.



# City of New Orleans and Richard's Disposal Reach Agreement

Landrieu: "We've successfully renegotiated sanitation collection contracts at a price the City can afford while keeping these contracts with local businesses and providing curbside recycling to citizens."

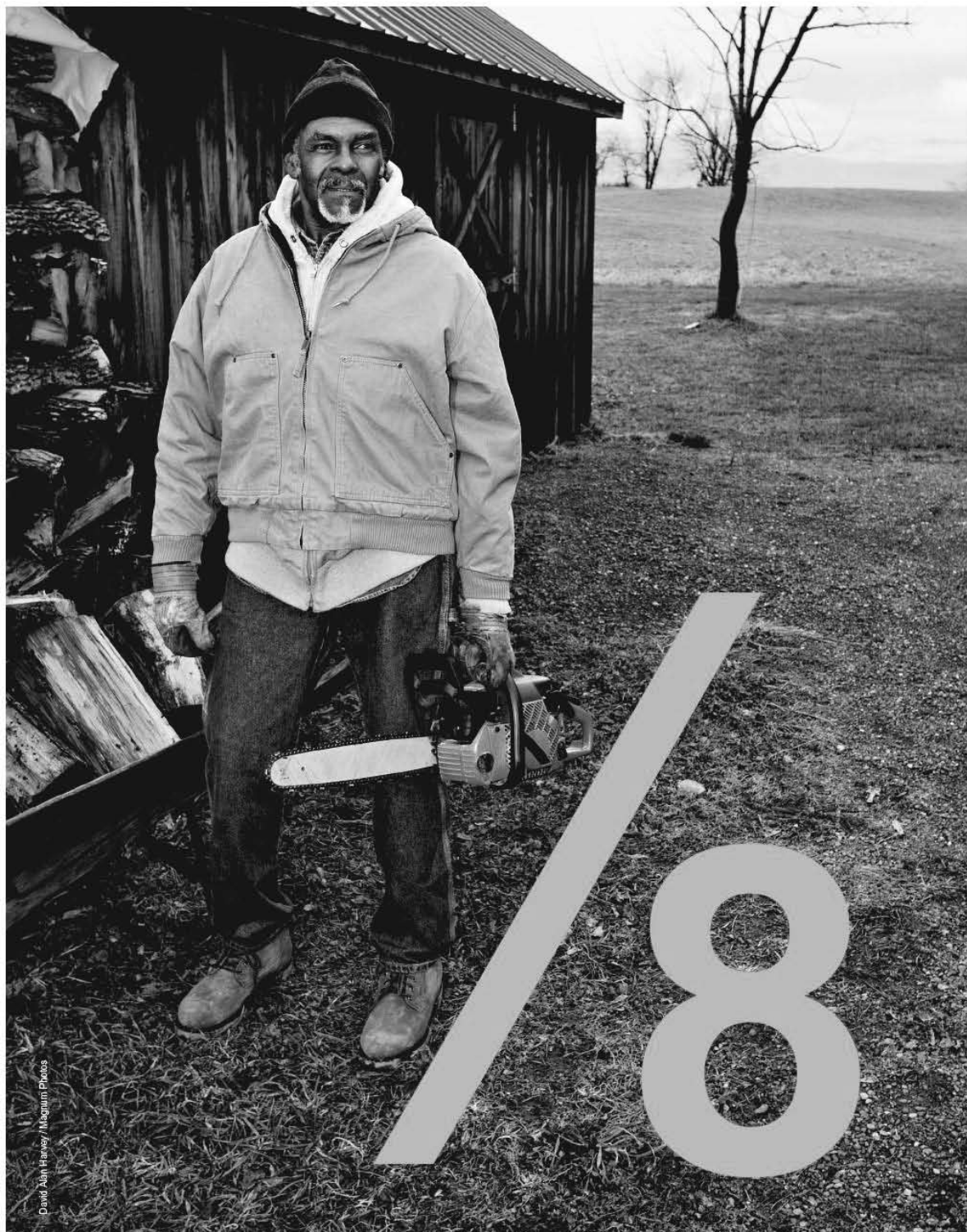
Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced that the City of New Orleans successfully renegotiated a contract with Richard's Disposal, Inc., one of the city's sanitation collection contractors, the Mayor also announced that the City

Council will pass a fully balanced budget for 2011.

"I'm pleased to announce that the City Council and I have reached an accord to pass a fully balanced budget that funds citizen priorities. I'd like to thank the Council for their strong leadership and partnership in putting together this historic budget. We worked together like never before, and I want to thank each of them for their unwavering commitment to do what is right for

our citizens.

"On December 1st, I noted that the Council had unfinished business. We now have all of the information we need to move forward. First, we've successfully renegotiated all of the sanitation collection contracts while adding recycling services. We now have a better sense of the actual cost of sanitation services in 2011. Second, we've agreed that the proposed changes to the excise tax on non-residential parking require fur-



Alvin Richard, Owner of Richard's Disposal and Mayor Landrieu reached an agreement for continuation of sanitation services for "Area 1" of the City, which includes Algiers, Uptown, Garden District, and Mid-City.

ther study.

"This is a big win for the residents of New Orleans," Landrieu stated. "The negotiations were guided by three core principles. First, I honored my fiduciary responsibility to get a good value for taxpayer dollars at a price the City can afford. Second, I honored my belief that government has an obligation to support local businesses. And third, I honored my commitment to good customer service by providing curbside recycling, which we heard loud and clear, is a priority for our citizens."

The renegotiation of this contract brings the City of New Orleans into the regional average for sanitation collection services. The range spans from \$13.31 to \$20 for monthly, per unit collection services.

The key points of the new agreement are as follows:

\$17.99 per household monthly, down from \$22 per household;

Curbside recycling now included;

Richard's and the City will collectively agree on a methodology for determining and monitoring the house count;

By advanced mutual consent of the parties, Richard's will receive only a one-year extension through December 31, 2014, to its current contract reducing the 3-year extension granted by the previous administration;

"The new budget we have agreed upon is fiscally prudent and structurally sound. It includes a roll forward of 7.74 mills and a sanitation fee of \$24 per household per month. Perhaps most importantly, 2 of these mills will be permanently dedicated to NORD to ensure that our youth will have the world-class recreational opportunities that are worthy of their great promise – now and for all future generations.

"The millage funds what the people want and need – street and drainage repairs, blight reduction and public safety. The sanitation fee is now more in line with the actual cost of picking up garbage. We must get back to sound fiscal practices and pay for services as we go.

Richard's Disposal currently serves "Area 1" of the City (current house count 66,525), which includes Algiers, Uptown, Garden District, and Mid-City. Richard's is the last on list of sanitation contracts renegotiated by the City. In August, the Landrieu administration successfully renegotiated the SDT Waste & Debris Services, LLC sanitation contract, and last month, the City reached an agreement with Metro Disposal.

The renegotiation of the Richard's Disposal contract cancels the bid solicitation for trash collection services for Area 1 due December 6, 2010.



1 in 8 Americans is struggling with hunger. Including people like your neighbor who lives two houses down, your day care provider, or the person who works on the road repair crew. Who's the 1 in 8 in your life that needs help? Go to [feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org) to see how your support can help those in need.

**FEEDING AMERICA**  
Formerly named  
America's Second Harvest\*



# Statement From Clerk Of Court Dale Atkins Regarding Update On Data Recovery

I am proud to announce today that I am confident in deadlines to achieve the restoration of online data in both the conveyance and mortgage divisions.

Please note these updates as of today: **PERSONNEL** In total, 90 men and women are working on the data recovery project as of today, and I continue to add personnel to complete this task as soon as possible. **BACKLOG COMPLETED** The backlog of documents in the Conveyance and Mortgage divisions has been eliminated. This means all mortgage and conveyance documents received between October 26 and November 18, when our system was reactivated for data entry and

cashiering, have been entered in our system. **CERTIFICATES**

As it relates to Sheriff's sales, we are current on all Sheriff Certificates through sale date of December 29, 2010.

**RESTORATION OF DATA PROJECT: CONVEYANCE** - I am confident the final delivery of the 60,000 conveyance instruments which are currently being re-entered by the Windward Group will be Sunday, Jan. 2, 2011. Once the data is delivered, the only task will be to verify the information. The first delivery of a 1000-piece sample was successfully delivered by the Windward Group on Dec. 1, and successfully uploaded into our database. This data is now be-

ing verified. Another 10,000 records are expected for delivery on Friday, Dec. 10. As more records are entered, more personnel will be shifted to data verification to speed this project. **RESTORATION OF DATA: MORTGAGE DIVISION** - I am in the final stages of negotiating a contract for the data input of the more than 119,000 mortgage documents which need to be restored in our online system.



Clerk of Court Dale Atkins

For now, this task continues to be done by staff. Nevertheless, I am confident this data will be completely uploaded by mid-January, 2011, but I am pushing for a commitment to an earlier delivery date of the data. Again, once data is delivered successfully into our system, our office begins a verification process of the entries. I continue to express my thanks to the real estate community and others for stepping up to assist my office in this crisis. The employees of my office continue to work extended hours and weekends. Restoring our database continues to be my focus and I am grateful for the patience of the citizens of New Orleans.

## America's Health Rankings® Reveals Louisiana Ranks 49th Compared to the Overall Health of Other States

- Overall U.S. health improved in the past year, slightly faster than the past decade, but at a slower rate than in the 1990s
- New grants for public-private partnerships will stimulate local solutions to priority health problems

Welcome improvements in many areas of America's health status are offset by continuing declines in others, according to the 2010 America's Health Rankings. The nation's overall health improved one percentage point last year, but reductions in smoking; preventable hospitalizations and infectious disease were offset by continued increases in obesity, children in poverty, and lack of health insurance. The report also shows a 19 percent increase since the 2005 Edition in the percentage of adults who had been diagnosed with diabetes. In response to these trends, United Health Foundation is establishing a program to address local health challenges.

dress local health challenges.

While last year's one percent improvement in health is better than the previous decade, it falls short of the gains seen in the 1990s. From 2000-2009, health improved just 0.5 percent per year, but in the 1990s, overall health improved 1.5 percent per year, suggesting that the nation is capable of achieving better health more rapidly than it currently is. Given the sharp escalation in health costs, the economic consequences of larger burdens of preventable chronic illness should sound an alarm for urgent action by states and local communities.

### LOUISIANA'S Health Check-Up

According to the 21st Edition of America's Health Rankings, Louisiana is 49th this year compared to 47th in 2009 when compared to the health of other states.

### Louisiana's Strengths

- Ready access to early prenatal care
- High immunization coverage
- High per capita public health funding

### Louisiana's Challenges

- High prevalence of obesity
- High rate of preventable hospitalizations
- High infant mortality rate

### Overall State Rankings: Vermont Remains on Top; Mississippi Stays on Bottom

Every state has its successes and every state has its challenges. Vermont tops the list of healthiest states for the last four years of published reports. Mississippi is ranked 50th, with Louisiana, Arkansas, Nevada and Oklahoma rounding out the bottom five.

## Letter to the Editor

Once again, the New Orleans Branch NAACP offers its sympathies and condolences and support to the family of Henry Glover.

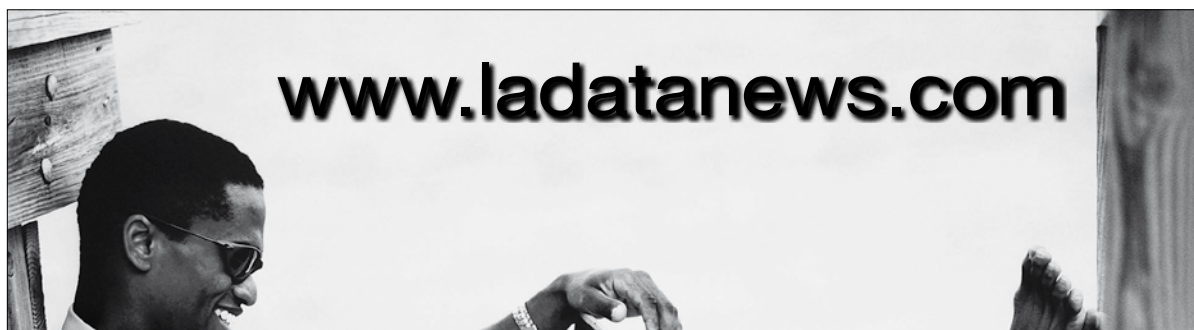
As we extend our offer of support for the family, we also strive to ensure that the murderers of Mr. Glover are fully punished for their crimes. We strive to ensure that all those involved in the cover-up of the murder are brought to justice and punished. It is noted that although some perpetrators have been brought to trial, the cover-up still continues. Although perpetrators have confessed to burning Mr. Glover's body, no one has confessed to, or been charged with, removing the skull from Mr. Glover's corpse. That heinous act is still being covered up. Someone knows who did it. Justice will not be complete until that perpetrator is charged and punished.

During the trial, there have been many confessions and accusations of police officers lying either under oath or to federal and state investigators. The New Orleans Branch NAACP calls on Mayor Landrieu to order the immediate termination of all officers that have admitted lying. It is also demanded that the New Orleans District Attorney, the United States Attorney and all other pertinent authorities investigate all allegations of officers lying in connection with the murder of Mr. Glover and its cover-up. After the investigations, all persons found to have lied should be fully prosecuted, NO EXCEPTIONS.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Danatus King**

Branch President, New Orleans NAACP



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Data News Weekly



# The End of Rae Lewis-Thornton's 'Secret'

By George Curry  
NNPA Special Contributor

## Continuation from last week's story, The Face of AIDS

Essence Magazine Editor-in-Chief Susan Taylor heard Rae Lewis Thornton speak and immediately decided that her story needed to be shared with her magazine's readers.

The December 1994 cover of Essence uncustomarily carried only one story, "Facing AIDS: I'm young, I'm educated, I'm drug-free, and I'm dying of AIDS" by Rae Lewis-Thornton.

The secret that she had shared only with the closest of close friends would now be openly discussed in beauty shops, at social gatherings and around company water fountains.

Because everyone else would be reading about the most intimate details of her life, Lewis-Thornton decided she needed to have a long overdue conversation with Georgia Lewis, the woman she called Mama.

Lewis-Thornton's biological mother was White, her father was Black and both were heroin addicts living in Buffalo, N.Y. Her paternal grandfather, Alfred Lewis, Sr., brought Rae into his household when she was a toddler. By

then, he was 55 years old and his third wife, Georgia, was 34.

But Rae's doting grandfather died of a stroke when she was 6 and Georgia Lewis continued to rear her. Though they had a tempestuous relationship, Rae felt it was only fair to tell Georgia the news before she learned about it elsewhere. At the end of the conversation, Lewis-Thornton wasn't certain how well her mother had processed the information. But that uncertainty wouldn't last long.

"Two weeks later, my Mama called me and said, 'See bitch, I told you if you wasn't no whore, you wouldn't have AIDS.'"

But most of those who read the account of Lewis-Thornton's life were grateful, not critical.

"That took me national," Lewis-Thornton said, referring to the Essence story. "I became in demand as a speaker. People started to bring me across the country."

She was accompanied on those trips by Kenneth, her husband of four months.

"He said that I was his ministry," Lewis-Thornton said. "He believed that he was supposed to be in my life during this period and he was supposed to be there and watch me and be there to support me as I made my transition to death. And he was going

to go around the country and talk about what it was like to be my caregiver."

But when Lewis-Thornton didn't die, the marriage did and the couple got a divorce.

When Rae decided to date again, she had to face a new reality.

She explained, "The stigma around HIV makes it complicated for men who are attracted to me to say, 'You know what? I can do this.' It's not them per se, it's the stigma."

Now if a man openly dated Lewis-Thornton, the whole world would know that he was dating a woman with AIDS, raising questions about his HIV status and whether other women will want to risk dating him.

"It becomes a very tiresome and a sad thing that men didn't want to be with me publicly, didn't want to say that, 'Yes, I date her and I think she's a wonderful person' as opposed to doing it in the dark," she said.

Lewis-Thornton is more than the sum total of AIDS. She was a Political Organizer as a teen, working on the campaign of Chicago Mayor Harold Washington and later the two presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson. But the drain of AIDS cut short her career as a Political Strategist and

altered the quality of her life.

"At the end of April, I started an intravenous drip, where you take an IV internally, in my arms," she said. "I had to receive the drip twice a day, two hours a day at home and infuse myself because home health care does not send out a nurse to infuse you."

And that medicine made me sick and tired and lethargic. Some days I felt like I couldn't get up and brush my teeth.

"People would call me and say, 'How are you doing, girl?' I'd say, 'I'm tired.' And they'd say, 'Okay, I'll keep you in my prayers.' Has anyone thought that I can't stand over a stove and cook? Or, if I say, 'It took everything I had to get up and brush my teeth this morning,' they say, 'I'll keep you in my prayers.'"

People don't get it. I look normal and I sound normal, but managing HIV requires a lot of work. And you have to manage it well because it will mean the difference between life and death."

She has thought about both life and death.

"I'm not afraid of death, I'm okay with death," she declared. "It's the dying that's the hard part, the loss of your faculties, the loss of who you are and what you are and what you do."

Unless you just get hit by a bus, a chronic illness that kills you is a slow process and there are so many stages to that. The death is easy."

But life isn't.

"I've had a lot of physical changes with HIV," Lewis-Thornton explained. "That's been a huge adjustment for me, emotionally, especially being an attractive woman."

People say, 'Get over it, it's no big deal. You're still cute.'

"You go from a size 12 to a size two. At some point, I was a size zero. And I went back up to a size six. That was fine. And then, out of nowhere, I went to a size 12 at the top part of my body and I shrank to a size two at the bottom part of my body. And I got a hump in my back and I got a chin pouch and I looked like I was six months pregnant."

The uneven redistribution of weight happens when women, such as Lewis-Thornton, suffer from Lipodystrophy, a side effect

of a class of anti-HIV drugs called HAART.

She also suffers from Peripheral Neuropathy, which is damage to the communications network that transmits information from the central nervous system to different parts of the body.

Generally, it creates severe burning and a tingling sensation in the hands or feet. In Lewis-Thornton's case, it feels like someone is constantly sticking pins and needles into the bottom of her feet.

"I had to fight with my HIV," she explained. "So the way I did it back then, I would say, 'Okay, I woke up this morning and all I could do was take my medicine and go back to bed.'"

Before the day was over, I had to make myself get up, brush my teeth, comb my hair and if I did that, then at least AIDS didn't take everything I had.

"So, there was this game I played with this disease, like, 'I can't let you take everything I've got.' And I still play it: 'I can't let you take everything I've got. I got to do something for myself.'"

Lewis-Thornton relishes her role as a Pioneering AIDS Activist, but refuses to be limited by that role.

"It's hard to divorce AIDS," she said. "What I'm trying to figure out now is what else can I do in addition to AIDS now that I'm still here."

Although the speaking invitations have slowed in recent years, Lewis-Thornton has not been idle. She earned a Master's of Divinity Degree from McCormick Theological Seminary and is an ordained Baptist Minister. Lewis-Thornton is close to completing her Doctorate Degree at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and has designed and crafted a line of AIDS awareness bracelets called RLT Collection ([www.rltcollection.com](http://www.rltcollection.com)).

She knows that regardless of what else she does, she'll always be known as an AIDS Activist.

"My whole life has been ministry," Lewis-Thornton said. "I recognized very early in my life that there was a purpose for my suffering and there was a purpose for my life. God wanted to use me and I wanted to be used."

**WE > AIDS**  
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*"Now Gulf seafood is coming back on the menu, so come on down, we're open for business."*

*Bryan Zar  
Co-owner, Restaurant des Familles  
Crown Point, LA*

## Making This Right

Beaches  
Claims  
Cleanup  
**Economic Investment**  
Environmental Restoration  
Health and Safety  
Wildlife

I grew up bussing tables at this restaurant. Last year, my wife, Brooke, and I bought it. We were working hard to build a business, then the spill hit. BP said they would try to make things right. But how was an energy company going to help our restaurant?

### Keeping Businesses Open

We figured they would tell us to take a number and wait in line. Instead, they asked us if we could serve food to the workers, engineers, scientists, and local residents they had hired to cleanup the spill. It kept us busy round the clock. And we weren't the only ones. They hired a lot of local businesses and kept a lot of people working. They have kept businesses up and down the Gulf open and it's still making a difference.

### Open for Business

BP asked us to share our story with you to keep you informed. Our restaurant's open six days a week. Customers are filling our restaurant again and we think it's a good time to come down to the Gulf Coast. And if we could make just one request, please think of us when planning your next vacation. We're still here and while it's been tough, we are still cooking. And we are just one of the hundreds of great places ready to welcome you when you come down. So don't wait. We're looking forward to seeing you.

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