



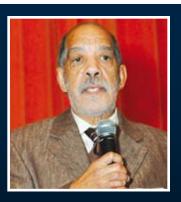


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Cover Story

Questioning A Fresh Start



By Chanelle Lauren

New Orleans: The City that Care Forgot

Corruption, nepotism and scandal are familiar words when one thinks of the City and its politics. This is a fact that is known inside and outside New Orleans and is much a part of its lore as Mardi Gras, Gumbo and Jazz when one conjures up images of the Crescent City.

After Hurricane Katrina the City was placed under the spotlight of the international media and became the poster child for ineffective leadership. It had become the living embodiment of John Kennedy Toole's novel, A Confederacy of Dunces.

During these tumultuous times the City experienced a political environ-

ment that fractured an already divided city along lines of race and class. New Orleans was in need of something or someone to navigate the City to some sort of common ground. To move it forward out of the mire of the political abyss and chaos that characterized the City throughout its history. A little over one year ago the City thought it found its man in Mitch Landrieu.

Citizen Landrieu: A Fresh Start

Data News Weekly published an article in its May 15, 2010 issue called 'A Fresh Start,' today the Landrieu Administration is facing a true test of its mission to make New Orleans a city that will not stand for corruption. In a recent profile on the CBS News Magazine '60 Minutes' Landrieu talked about the City and its fight against wrongdoing. "We are confronting corruption making sure the people of America know we got it and we're going to do something about it and that is a healthy thing," said the Mayor to CBS News Byron Pitts.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.

Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

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In a bold move upon taking office Mayor Landrieu called for the Department of Justice to conduct an investigation of the New Orleans Police Department and on March 16, 2011 they came back with a scathing report saying that NOPD was in need of major reforms among the many things that needed to be addressed includes. their use of excessive force, unconstitutional stops, searches and arrests, and racial profiling. Also listed was a failed system of police recruitment, promotion and evaluation, in their findings

of a 'dog and pony

show.' The City while divided among lines of class and race on many issues are united in their desire to stamp out corruption and cronyism. "I have lived through the City being run by both White then Black political leaders and saw both of them take from the people who needed resources the most, it is time to bring people in who understand that they are there to serve the people and not themselves, but it is up to us to make sure they are held accountable,"

that he was able to develop has begun to erode and people of all races are calling for the removal of Serpas," says Danatus King. Continuing he says of the longterm impact of this scandal, "The Mayor has to make a decision if the police chief can be effective with this cloud hanging over his head."

One New Orleans... **Questioned?**

As the political landscape of

the City leadership has changed from majority Black to a majority White city council, mayor and police chief, questions are arising in the City that's becoming more polarized. "While race is an issue it is about fairness and iustice and those that have been disenfranchised and left out of the conversation having a voice," says Ierome Smith.

This scandal seems to have been the fire that has lit the wick as the citizens are beginning to question policies and practices in politics; and demanding that politicians in practice match the rheto-

ric as they advocate change. New Orleans NAACP President Danatus King echoes the words that many citizens feel saying, "Cronyism cannot continue as this City moves forward, we cannot allow the continuation of a government that does not work for the betterment of all the people, so maybe this is the one thing that's gotten the people involved and we hope it continues until we can have the type of leaders and government that's effective and we can live in a City we can be proud of."

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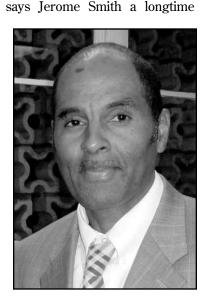
Police Chief Ronal Serpas

it was concluded that there were ineffective systems of complaint intake, investigation and adjudication. But the one thing mentioned in the report that has been making recent headlines is their failed paid detail system.

Defiant Voices Speak Out

Some in the community have voiced their outrage over what they see is the continuing practice of cronyism that runs counter to Landrieu's rhetoric, "Nepotism, cronyism and corruption is alive and well in New Orleans, just looking at the detail system, when you see some of the top commanders on the force making the type of money their making and having the power to control who gets to work," says Danatus King, President of the New Orleans Branch of the NAACP and has been a vocal critic of the Mayor and Chief

Some are saying that the selection process of the Police Chief was flawed from the beginning and smelled of good-ole-boy politics New Orleans style. That Serpas whose father was an NOPD officer and former bodyguard for Maurice Edwin "Moon" Landrieu has been long affiliated with the family was a 'shoe in' and the 'nationwide search' resembled more



Danatus King, President NAACP New **Orleans Chapter**

community activist.

Scandal and its Impact at City Hall

The recent scandal inside of the police department have citizens questioning how transparent is the Landrieu Administration in dealing with this issue and has segments of the community in an uproar. And they feel that more should be done in investigating Serpas and the potential of his prior knowledge of the problems regarding paid details by his officers.

His critics say it is highly unlikely that Serpas did not have knowledge of details and contracts surrounding traffic cameras given his good friend, son-in-law and driver were involved and that it is highly unlikely this would never come up in conversation.

The chorus of voices calling for Serpas to resign or the Mayor to take more vigilant action is growing. Because some feel it is impacting the already strained relations between NOPD and its citizens, notwithstanding the Department of Justice Report and its findings.

"Mayor Landrieu has been on his soapbox saying the police can only be effective when the citizens are involved and in the present climate and the confidence and trust Daughters of Charity Health Centers

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Newsmaker

SUNO/UNO Merger Pulled Off the Table

By Cheryl Mainor

The proposed merger between Southern University of New Orleans and the University of New Orleans was pulled from consideration by the State Legislature on Wednesday with House Speaker Jim Tucker, R-Algiers, removing the measure from consideration by the House when it was determined that the proposal didn't have the required 70 votes to pass and move to the Senate for consideration.

Though Speaker Tucker and Governor Jindal were in support of the controversial merger which was supported by Governor Bobby Jindal, the proposal was strongly opposed by the Legislative Black Caucus as well as community leaders both Black and White in New Orleans, and was so contentious that it drew national attention from activists and educators nation-wide. The Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus members opposed any attempt to merge the University of New Orleans campus with the Historically Black Southern University at New Orleans campus stating that such a merger would be the beginning of a "systematic demise" of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Louisiana.

District 101 State Rep. Wesley Bishop, was one of the most vocal of the Black Caucus members who opposed the proposed merger. The former Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for SUNO said in a statement to Data News Weekly, "I am extremely



State Representative Wesley Bishop

happy to have been able to galvanize the entire SUNO family to fend off this attack on the SUNO System." He continued, "This was a campaign of misinformation which we had to combat with accurate information." "The caliber of education at SUNO is second to none, and I am happy it worked out the way that it did, for the students, the faculty and the entire SUNO family", said Bishop. He concluded, "In politics, you may lose some wars, but you also win some battles too, this was a battle worth winning."

The House Speaker pulled all references to SUNO from the bill, according to District 100 State Rep. Austin Badon. Instead, some lawmakers want to consider moving UNO into the University of Louisiana System, Badon said. Presently, UNO is a part of the LSU System. Instead of a merger, Speaker Tucker said he would look to pursue separate legislation to possibly move UNO from the Louisiana State University System to the University of Louisiana System, where he thinks the university will be better served by being with other "tier 2" universities.

The House is expected to take up the debate on this issue as early as next week.

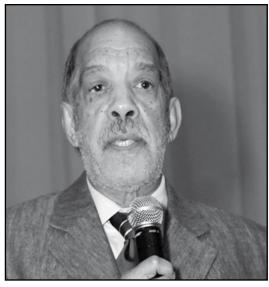
Joseph Peychaud Welcomed as New Principal and President at Xavier University Prep

by Cheryl Mainor

The Board of Directors at Xavier University Prep has announced that longtime New Orleans educator and former Principal, Joseph Peychaud, will return to fill the position, leading the institution as Principal and President of the school.

Mr. Peychaud has a long history with Xavier Prep, having served as the first lay principal of the all-girls institution. His unique experience with Xavier Prep includes serving not only as principal, but as a teacher, as a board member, he has worked on and directed capital campaigns for the school as well. This experience has given him insight into how to move the school forward, and how to ensure the components necessary for the vision become reality are in place. As the new Principal/President, he feels confident he will be up to the task.

In addition to his vast experience with Xavier Prep, Peychaud was formerly an Associate Superintendent with the Archdiocese



Mr. Joseph Peychaud

of New Orleans for Urban Education and Federal Programs and he most recently served as a School Improvement Specialist for the Orleans Parish School Board working with federal programs supporting private schools.

He is a graduate of St. Augustine High School and received a B.A. in Education/Liberal Arts from Xavier University of Louisi-

ana. He also holds a M.A. in Urban Studies from the University of New Orleans. He spent two years in Vietnam before returning to resume his teaching career and then joined the school's administrative ranks in 1971. He became the school's first lay principal in 1976.

Peychaud said his deep connections to Xavier Prep, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the Board

at Xavier Prep, the Alumni Association and the parents and students, make a good fit for him. "The leadership SBS (Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament) Leadership Team, the faculty and staff and the Board were extremely supportive of me, my candidacy and my vision as to how to move this school forward, and continue with the development of the stu-

dent body, and extending and enhancing alumni relations. I plan to focus attention on alumni affairs, marketing, public relations and development, so that the great things that take place at Xavier Prep on a daily basis, will be well known and supported by the community, parents and alumni. "It's a good fit for me, I think,"

Peychaud said.

Peychaud feels extremely confident that he has the support he will need to mobilize the Prep family in doing the things we need to do to move the school forward and that the combined efforts of he, the staff, and the board will yield positive responses from the community.



The Soul of A Fisherman



By Darrell A. Edwards

Okay, so you would like to improve your light tackle saltwater fishing abilities. First, we will discuss the gear. The best light tackle saltwater fishing rods, in my opinion, are the seven foot medium action graphite rods. Many companies make them.

I don't want to begin naming names because they all have rods of the same caliber. I will say that the warranty differs between them and that is something you may want to look at when making your purchase. I prefer a seven-foot rod for the hookset.

To me, the seven-foot rod

works better for hookset as well as sensitivity. Spooled up with good quality monofilament line you are ready. Once again, I prefer monofilament to braided line because monofilament has "memory". Once braided line gets tangled all you can do is cut it. Monofilament can be untangled if you have the patience.

When it comes to reels, you won't believe me but I fish with a \$10 reel. I can catch as many fish with my \$10 reel as you can catch with your \$150 reel. The key to a good reel is the dragset. If you set your drag accordingly, you can catch any fish with a \$10 reel or a \$100 reel. Yes, the fishing manufacturers will boast that this reel has twelve ball bearings and is smooth as a baby's butt, which may be true, but my five ball bearing reel will still catch that same fish your reel caught. And if for some reason a fish pulls my rod and reel off the boat, I'm only out \$60 instead of \$250. If you don't know by now, let me inform you that everything in America is all

about "class". So it is with fishing as well.

Next, I would like to expound briefly about boats. There are three things about boats we need to know. 1) how good is the motor? 2) Does the bilge pump work? 3) Do the running lights work? I will divulge the most well-kept secret about boats that most people don't know; if you are buying a used boat, make sure to run a compression test on the cylinders before you buy it. Compression is measured in foot pounds and each cylinder should generate at least 100 foot pounds no matter what size the motor is. The measurement should not vary more than 15 foot pounds between each cylinder. If it does, leave that motor alone.

As far as the boat, you should check the transom. The transom is the back of the boat where the motor would be mounted. It should be solid and not hollow. Take a hammer and tap on it and listen for changes in sound. Also, check for soft spots in the floor

and any weak spots along the sides of the boat. Another small fact that we need to know is, it is better to run premium gas in your boat motor than regular unleaded. The reason is because regular unleaded does not have enough octane to prevent damage to your rings in the motor. Premium gas has a high enough octane rating to make your rings run smoother. The choice is yours. It's just like I tell people about a fishing license, it is \$15 for a license and \$100 fine if you don't have one. You do the math.

With that being said I will devote the next few columns to answering any questions you may have. After that I will begin in on what light tackle saltwater fishing is all about here in Southeast Louisiana. And, I will divulge all my locations to catch fish as well as GPS coordinates and an explanation of why you're catching fish at that spot. It's all about me revealing "The Soul of a Fisherman." See you next time.

2-Cent Presents: LISTEN Literacy & Arts Festival

Multimedia Organization promotes literacy among youth via Arts Festival

On May 21, 2011 at 12 noon, 2-Cent Entertainment outside The Community Book Center located at 2523 Bayou Road, will host its First Annual "Listen!" Literacy & Arts Festival. 2-cent, a grassroots organization, took on the challenge of engaging New Orleans youth, in hopes of creating change by means of Music, Video, Photography, and now through Literacy.

4000 FREE books sponsored by Scholastic will be given away to all children in attendance. There will be food, local vendors, and performances by Dee-1, Lil Chuckee, Kourtney Heart, and Mannie Fresh with a special guest.

Among the numerous issues to be tackled in New Orleans, literacy is one of the most vital topics of concern. Studies have shown children whose parents read to them become better readers and



perform better in school. The National Institute for Literacy states: "Low literacy is strongly related to crime. 70% of prisoners fall into the lowest two levels of reading proficiency". Perhaps, getting to the root of the problem will help dissolve some of the other issues that trouble New Orleans.

Some of the Festival's sponsors

include Scholastic Read and Rise, Q93, the "Read and Rise" Program, Community Book Center, Youthnasia Foundation, IntheNowla.com, Metro and Richards Disposal and More.

2-Cent has been dedicated to giving this generation a voice. They have spoken on panels, created short films, held a summer camp and a host of other efforts. They were recently selected as one of the 15 Do Something Award Finalists out of over 500 entries. DO Something recognizes young people making positive impacts in their

thing recognizes young people making positive impacts in their communities and the people around them. Listen's ultimate goal is to inspire young people to be readers and writers, and have an active part in molding their future

Making Things Work In Spite of Lupus



Heather D'Marie

Model Heather D'Marie has much to fight for. She has Lupus. The former model was diagnosed 4 years ago, and since has been battling to defeat the disease and its effects on her life. Says D'Marie, "I was stopped earlier from doing what I loved, but I'm not letting it stop me anymore." To pay for her mounting medical expenses, D'Marie has produced 4th edition calendar with proceeds going to pay for her medical expenses. She will be walking in this year's

Annual Walk for Lupus Now! in Los Angeles. If you would like to support her efforts to raise money for Lupus, visit http://donate.lupus.org or for more information on how you can purchase a calendar, visit http://www.heatherdmarie.com.

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Data Zone

Shoot Va Best Shot

Zulu's Celebrate 102nd Anniversary











Friday, May 13, 2011 Kicked off Zulu's Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs 102nd Anniversary. The first of three activities for the weekend began with the party Friday night at 333 St. Joseph Street where the doors opened at 8:00 p.m. An Anniversary Zulu Committee Member, Cedric Givens surprised Zulu's guest and members with live performance from one of New Orleans local band, "The Kennections."

Zulu's Prestigious President, David Belfield, King 1994 and his Queen Angela K. Adams, Zulu's King (2011) Anthony Baker Sr. and his wife and Queen, Chanel Howard Baker. In addition, more Eminent members, Sam Smith (Ensemble) Queens, Mayors, Ambassadors, Grand Marshals, Witch Doctors, Governors, Dukes and Queens, Crew Members, Candidates, Terry Williams, (2012 Big Shot), Derrick Jarmon (2012 Witch Doctor), and Clarence Link (2012 King) and friends of Zulu, Eula Brown Lynch and Leatrice.

The festivities did not stop at the Anniversary Party, it was only the beginning. Day two, began Saturday afternoon at Easton Park where the Yellow and Black Softball Teams gathered for a beat down. The Yellow Team Crowned the Diamond Plate for a smashing victorious win over the Black Team.

The Anniversary Parade began Sunday at Sweet Lorraine and moved onto Sidney's Saloon on St. Bernard Avenue where members made a pit stop to pick up the famous "GO GETTERS".

The parade continued St. Bernard to "The Other Place", for more GO GETTERS, making several more stops to, The Autocrat Club, Seals Class Act, Mickey's Playhouse, Jackie's- Touch Of Class Lounge, Bertha's Place, and brining it home to the Zulu's Social Aid and Pleasure Club on N. Broad Street.

Photos By VALORIE BULL









For more pictures check us out on Facebook.

Data News Weekly

Shoot Va Best Shoot

Freedom Riders at Ashé



Luther Gray announces Original Freedom Rider Charles Person as he joins the welcoming revelers who came to honor the Freedom Riders on their 50th Anniversary.



Carol Bebelle, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Ashé Cultural Arts Center welcomes the crowds that poured into Ashé on May 16, 2011, to honor some of the Original Freedom Riders who commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Rides.

On Monday, May 16, 2011, Ashé Cultural Arts Center was the site of the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Rides. From May until November 1961, more than 400 Black and White Americans risked their lives—and many endured savage beatings and imprisonment—for simply traveling together on buses and trains as they journeyed through the Deep South. The trip was intended to end in New Orleans, LA but was cut short of the goal in Jackson, MS due to violence.

WYES, the Louisiana Weekly and Ashé Cultural Arts Center partnered to bring the 2011 Student Freedom Ride event to New Orleans. Dubbed "Finishing the Ride," the event included festivities that honored the struggles of those individuals who forever changed the lives of African-Americans in the United States. Original Freedom Riders Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, Ernest "Rip" Patton, Jr., Charles Person, and Helen Singleton made the trip. The evening was topped off by a viewing of the PBS AMERICAN EXPERIENCE film entitled "Freedom Riders.

Speakers for the evening included Carol Bebelle, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Ashé Cultural Arts Center; Randall Feldman, President and General Manager of WYES, and Mark Samels, Executive Producer of the American Experience; and Mayor Mitch Landrieu.

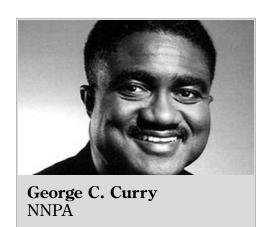


Mayor Mitch Landrieu takes time to hang out with some of the students who took part in the national freedom rides that ended in New Orleans.



May 21 - May 27, 2011

The Frivolous Attacks on Obama and Common



If you thought nothing could be more frivolous than conservatives questioning whether the President was born in the United States, think again. The recent criticism of Obama's decisions to worship Easter Sunday at Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. and invite Poet/Rapper Common to participate in a White House celebration of poetry illustrates how far his critics will stoop to manufacture a controversy.

Fox News was hysterical over the Obamas' decision to worship at the predominantly Black church founded in the 1800s by former slaves. Sean Hannity, co-host of Fox

News' *Hannity & Colmes*, aired a clip from the speech Rev. Wallace Smith, the Pastor of Shiloh, had given at Eastern University, in Davids, PA.

"It may not be Jim Crow anymore," said Rev. Smith. "Now, Jim Crow wears blue pinstripes, goes to law school and carries fancy briefs in cases. And now, Jim Crow has become James Crow, esquire. And, he doesn't have to wear white robes anymore because now he can wear the protective cover of talk radio or can get a regular news program on Fox."

After the clip aired as part of Hannity's criticism of the President, Rev. Smith said his church received more than 100 threats via telephone and e-mail.

"We received a fax that had the image of a monkey with a target across its face," he told the *Washington Post*. "My secretary has received telephone calls that have been so vulgar until she had to hang up."

On his show, Fox Host Bill O'Reilly tried to dismiss Rev. Smith as a "racial activist" and kept objecting to Smith's observation on Easter that the original U.S. Constitution was a flawed document that did not count African descendants as full human beings.

O'Reilly made the mistake of inviting



Actor, Hip Hop Artist and Poet Common

Rev. Amos Brown, Pastor of Third Baptist Church, in San Francisco and President of the local NAACP Chapter, to discuss the Obama decision to worship at Shiloh. Rev. Brown noted that Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton had attended the same church as President without being criticized.

When O'Reilly said they attended under different circumstances, Rev. Brown cor-

rected him: "It was the same church with the same pastor with the same views."

After Rev. Brown refused to back down, O'Reilly quickly ended the interview. But, Fox did not end its assault on President Obama and his wife, Michelle.

The First Lady hosted an event at the White House to celebrate American poetry and prose. Among the performers invited was Lonnie Rashid Lynn, the Poet/Rapper better known as "Common".

Various Fox News personalities criticized "Common" for his work titled, "A Song for Assata" written in honor of Assata Shakur, the Black Panther Party member who was convicted of the 1973 murder of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster. The trooper was shot twice in the head with his own gun. Black Panther Party member Zayd Malik Shakur was also killed in the New Jersey Turnpike shootout. Both Assata Shakur and another State Trooper, James Harper, were injured in the exchange of gunfire. Assata Shakur escaped from prison in 1979 and has been living in Cuba in political asylum since 1984.

In his tribute, "Common" wrote: "Assata had been convicted of a murder she couldna done. Medical evidence shown she couldna shot the gun." Although Fox

Commentary, continued on page 10.

Urban Jobs Act

A Powerful Weapon in the War on Unemployment



Marc Morial President and CEO National Urban League

To Be Equal

"Now that I have my second chance, I'm taking it to the max, taking advantage of it to the fullest." Ida DeLeon, 21-year-old participant in the Urban League of Rochester's Job Training Program.

Last week, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, of New York, enlisted in the war on urban unemployment with the introduction of the Urban Jobs Act. Gillibrand's Urban Jobs Act is the Senate version of House

Bill, H.R. 683, which was introduced earlier this year by New York Representative Edolphus Towns. Both bills would provide federal grant funding to the National Urban League and other non-profit groups to offer job training, education, and other support services for urban youth. The legislation will especially target those who have dropped out of high school or who have had some involvement with the criminal justice system.

The Labor Department's April jobs report confirms the urgent need for this legislation. While overall unemployment is back up to 9 percent, African-American unemployment has now risen to 16.1 percent. Even more disturbing, African-American youth unemployment has now climbed to 41.6 percent, the highest rate of any group in the nation. In many urban communities, roughly one-third of minority youth are unemployed. For several years now, the National Urban League has been leading the call for targeted action to address the urban jobs crisis. Our 12-point Jobs Rebuild America Plan lays out specific strategies to achieve that goal. But Washington has been largely silent, until now.

Upon introducing the legislation, Senator Gillibrand said, "Supporting education and training for our youth is a smart investment that will pay dividends over the long-term." We agree. We know that youth employment not only helps put food on the table of struggling families, a job can literally turn a young person's life around and provide the skills, work ethic, and experience necessary to grow into productive adulthood.

The Urban Jobs Act would create an Urban Jobs Program and allocate \$23 million in grants to national non-profit organizations to provide a comprehensive set of services designed to prepare youth, ages 18-24, for the job market. These services include job placement, mentoring, internships, and on-the-job training as well as GED preparation, reading and math remediation, educational enrichment, and post-secondary education. Support services include child care, health and nutrition referral and transportation and housing assistance.

The Urban Jobs Act will provide desperately needed resources to give young people who need it an all-important second chance. It will reduce the disproportionate incarceration of minority youth and prepare eligible young adults for entry into the world of work.

While the Senate bill has just been introduced, we need to build more momentum in the House. We are urging citizens to follow the link below to sign a letter urging your Representative to join the current co-sponsors of H.R. 683, who include Edolphus Towns (NY), Robert Brady (PA), Corrine Brown (FL), Steve Cohen (TN), John Conyers, Jr. (MI), Alcee Hastings (FL), Jesse Jackson, Jr. (IL), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Gregory Meeks (NY), Donald Payne (NJ), Charles Rangel (NY), Cedric Richmond (LA), Albio Sires (NJ), and Betty Sutton (OH).

Empower yourself, empower your community, and join us in the "War on Unemployment"!

http://www.iamempowered.com/article/2011/05/05/join-us-war-unemployment

Marc H. Morial is the President and CEO of the National Urban League. **Data News Weekly**

Of Mice and Men



Louella Givens

BESE Member Louella Givens on Louisiana Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek's resignation

Without notice, Paul Pastorek, Louisiana State Superintendent of Education, resigned from his office on Monday, May 9, 2011. However, it seems that the Superintendent was exploring outside job opportunities as he set the wheels into movement to maintain his newly created educational dynasty long before any outside his imme-

diate circle were aware that change was imminent.

Pastorek during his four year tenure has become one of the most volatile figures to emerge in the changing Louisiana educational landscape. With support from a confirmed partisan BESE majority and the governor's office, he has driven a train that seems determined to turn public education into private enterprise. Most alarmingly, the Recovery School District in particular and the Department of Education in general, are now staffed with upper level managers who were selected solely by the Superintendent and who are pledged to implement the Pastorek vision for educational excellence. Without the visionary, fidelity of implementation becomes problematic.

Throughout the K-12 universe, stake-holders are concerned about the process that many fear are left for others to figure out. According to Don Whittinghill, "the most recent Southern Media & Opinion Research state-wide poll, released last week, reveals that 59.1 percent of New Orleans area respondents believed there was little to no public education improvement during the current administration's tenure. Another, unscientific poll conducted on-line

by the Times-Picayune revealed that 51.21 respondents agreed that Pastorek had not done a good job for local schools."

BESE members will be asked shortly to select an interim Superintendent of Education without formal notice that Mr. Pastorek has resigned. Overlooking the Board has become a calling card for the Pastorek administration and is an affront to the men and women who serve the State often at personal cost. However, Mr. Pastorek has never been one to show consideration or respect for those not pledged to follow him blindly. What is clear is that the interim Superintendent must be someone who is familiar with all the cards and all of the players who are involved at this critical juncture.

According to Nolton Senegal, Sr., Executive Director of the Louisiana School Boards Association, requisite "criteria for this job are trust, a respect for local public schools, a proven record of achievement in education, dedication to kids learning, and a demonstrated ability to improve troubled schools. Looking beyond Louisiana's borders for this key candidate doesn't guarantee a quality candidate."

Mr. Senegal's assessment is shared by

Jill W. Saia of the East Baton Rouge Parish Schools System who adds, "We need someone who can look past the numbers and know that teachers see the children in front of them as partners on a learning journey and not as instruments of pay increases.," said Jill W. Saia of the East Baton Rouge Parish Schools System.

The new superintendent should be mindful that local districts are doing their homework and are well informed about the thinly veiled attempts promoted by the governor and Mr. Pastorek to privatize education through a series of policies that strangle democratic representation through the elimination of local control.

We must remember that whenever despots usurp the rights of the people, the logical response will be the development of networks that are united in purpose regardless of ethnicity or regionalism. Educational leaders across the State have united their voices and formed an independent body, the Coalition for Public Education, to respond in an organized manner to those who would eliminate one of the most basic civil rights of Louisiana residents, the right to public education. After all, is not that the difference between mice and men.

In New Orleans, Many Have Yet to Travel the Road Home

By James Perry Executive Director, GNO Fair Housing

Everyone knows that the Road Home Program, though well intentioned, has been deeply flawed since its inception. In 2007, working with the National Fair Housing Alliance, my staff at the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Center and I set out to right at least one of the major program flaws.

The Road Home Program was designed to provide rebuilding grants to residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina based on the value of their homes, rather than the cost to repair the damage. This policy choice had the dramatic affect of impeding New Orleans' struggling recovery.

Because pre-storm home values were significantly lower in African-American neighborhoods than in White neighborhoods, homeowners in African-American neighborhoods consistently received far smaller Road Home grants than homes in White neighborhoods; and they were far more likely to have large gaps in the resources needed to rebuild.

This was true even when a home in a predominantly Black neighborhood was essentially identical to a home in a predominantly White neighborhood and had identical storm damage. The end result is that communities like New Orleans East and

the Lower 9th Ward are far from rebuilt.

Since day one, our request has been the same-that all homeowners receive rebuilding grants based on the cost of rebuilding, rather than pre-storm home value. In other words, homeowners with the exact same rebuilding costs should be treated equally.

Regrettably, after months of fruitless aggressive advocacy, in 2008 we were left with no choice but to pursue litigation against the State of Louisiana and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). While HUD and Louisiana mounted vigorous defenses, the U.S. District Court refused to dismiss the case. In August 2010, the District Court ruled that the Road Home Program was likely to be found unlawful and enjoined the State from using pre-storm value to issue new grants. A month later, a Federal Appellate Court froze all unspent surplus federal Road Home funds so that all homeowners could later receive non-discriminatory grants based on the cost of damage. Shortly thereafter, HUD and Louisiana agreed to engage us in active settlement talks.

Settlement, however, was no easy task. There were no more than \$150 million in federal Road Home funds remaining. And all parties agreed that the full remedy the Plaintiffs sought–grants based on the cost of damage–would cost many times the amount of remaining funds. In spite of the lack of remaining funds to provide all Road

Home recipients with non-discriminatory grants, we all worked cooperatively to reach a mutually agreeable solution that would address the plaintiffs' concerns over discrimination and also advance Louisiana's priority of reducing Katrina-related blight.

Unfortunately, a few weeks ago, the Federal Appellate Court lifted its injunction, and sent the case back to the district court so that it could proceed to trial. Shortly thereafter, communication between the parties slowed–and settlement talks have ceased. Even worse, the Obama administration's leadership at HUD is taking legal positions in this case that threaten to undermine the Fair Housing Act and other Federal Civil Rights Laws.

On Friday, the State released proposed Action Plan Amendment 51. The amendment draws heavily from solutions produced in settlement talks, but falls significantly short of our hard-fought aim to right the wrong created by the Road Home Program's use of the discriminatory pre-storm home value.

The State and HUD have come a long way since they started the Road Home Program. In response to our advocacy, they have adopted an amendment allowing all low-income homeowners to receive non-discriminatory grants based on the cost of repairing their homes up to \$150,000. As a result, more than 13,000 low-income homeowners have received over \$469 mil-

lion in additional grants. And they have more heavily targeted program activities to communities harmed by the discriminatory pre-storm value formula. Further, I am thankful that the State has largely drawn from our shared efforts in drafting Action Plan Amendment 51 to give supplemental grants to homeowners who have not yet returned to their homes.

However, our work is far from done.

I urge Louisiana and HUD to come back to the negotiating table and see this process through. I believe that the State and HUD's decisions should not be led by litigation stances. Instead, their steps should be guided by principles of fairness and equity. Further, additional protracted litigation may only delay progress. Both the State and HUD should immediately re-open settlement talks and work with the plaintiffs to achieve the best result for homeowners who are still struggling to repair their homes and their communities.

I stand firm in my belief that together we can fashion a resolution that eliminates the Road Home Program's discriminatory effects to the greatest extent possible, addresses blight and confronts the many unmet housing needs in our community. New Orleans' success depends on it.

Follow James Perry on Twitter: www.twitter.com/jameshperry

The Accidental Activist

By Marvelyn Brown **Author & Activist** Special to the NNPA

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I stood in the huddle during a time-out of a vicious basketball battle against a rival high school as the coach told us that the game-winning shot should go to our team captain. Once the time-out was over, I in-bounded the ball to her. Our captain was heavily guarded yet ran the play. When she realized that I was wide open and had the better shot, she passed the ball back to me. As the clock wound down, I looked at the basket, then I passed the ball right back to her. Before she caught my pass, the clock ran out. They won. I'd blown the game.

I had been capable of making the game winning shot, but I hadn't had confidence in myself. In those days I was not a leader: The captain had more faith in me Author & Activist Marvelyn Brown than I'd had in myself. And, winning felt uncomfortable to me. I would rather cost us the game than win.

As a result of consistently hearing that I was not good enough from teachers and my Mom, I felt like a failure back then. The fact that I was one of the best defensive players in the State of Tennessee just wasn't enough for my



Mom. She would overlook that and tell me that I was not excelling on offense. She wanted me to excel at both. No matter what I did, I heard only what I was doing wrong. In many areas of my life, I became scared to succeed, and comfortable with failing.

Then, at 19, I found out that I

had HIV. Not knowing about the stigma that surrounded the virus, I told five people, but within weeks, hundreds knew of my HIV status. Immediately, family and friends disowned me, and before I knew it I was alone. People went from telling me that I was not good enough to telling me my life was over.

But, even though people counted me out, God did not. God believed in me when I did not believe in myself.

Now that no one was around to give me their opinion, the only person's opinion that mattered was mine. Being alone helped me come to terms with my true self. I was okay with who I was; it was everyone else who had the problem. They say that you don't know how strong you are until you have no choice. Well, I grew tired of being told, "You are dying" and "You are getting skinny and ugly." The fighter in me came out.

Since so many people knew my status and everybody had something to say about it, I decided to put my story in the statewide newspaper. I wanted to prove them wrong: I was growing into a beautiful young woman, and I was healthy. Looking back on it now, putting my story in the paper was selfish. But, I was tired of listening to other people's negative thoughts and knew that if I told my story myself, I could stop all the gossip.

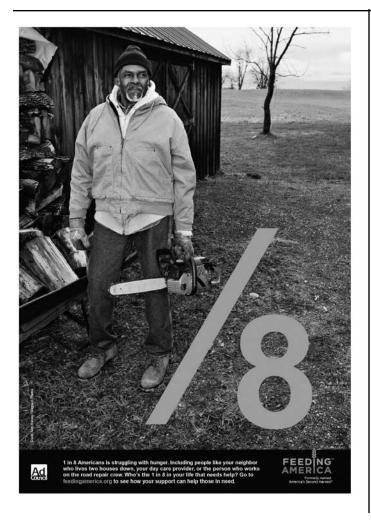
The story was published in October 2003. I used my real name, and the article included pictures of me participating in everyday

life, from me at the gym to me sitting and thinking. The rumors stopped, and people started getting educated about HIV. I'd thought, if anything, that because of the article, people would find more negative things to say about me. I'd had no idea that they would call me a hero and an inspiration.

For much of my life, I had fed upon negative energy. I'd been unaware of my strengths and too scared to tap into the ones that I knew about. But once the article came out, my purpose became clear and I discovered that I am a born leader. I began to grow more confident. Today, I use my personal story as a tool for helping others.

Sometimes I think back on that basketball game that I blew and how far I've come as a result of this big disease with a little name. I now understand that I had the potential to lead-we all do. I just did not have the heart that I do today. Take me back to the game now-five seconds on the clock, ball in my hand-and I guarantee you, we win!

Marvelyn Brown, the Author of The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and (HIV) Positive, has been living with HIV for seven years.



Commentary, Continued from page 8.

led the recent campaign against "Common", the network's Jason Robinson told "Common" last year: "Your music is very positive. And you're known as the con-

Fox also sent out birthday greetings to Rapper Ice-T whose song, "Body Count", celebrated the murder of police officers. And, it never criticized Sarah Palin, who sees nothing wrong with placing shooting targets around photos of liberal Democrats.

On the Aug. 24, 2007 edition of Hannity & Colmes, co-host Sean Hannity introduced a video of Ted Nugent, a musician and right-wing activist, calling President Obama "a piece of s—" and referring to Hillary Clinton as a "worthless b—."

When Bob Beckel, a guest on the program, challenged Hannity to disavow Nugent, he declined, saying: "No, I like Ted Nugent. He's a friend of mine."

It is unfair to hold Obama responsible for the lyrics of "Common" and not apply the same standard to other presidents.

Daily Show Comedian Jon Stewart drove home that point when he cited the lyrics of Johnny Cash: "Early one mornin' while makin' the rounds/I took a shot of cocaine and I shot my woman down." Cash was invited to the White House by Presidents Nixon, Carter, Reagan, and Clinton.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush invited Rapper Easy-E to the White House. His group, NWA, released a song titled, "F— tha Police". Among its lyrics:

A young nigga on a warpath

And when I'm finished, it's gonna be a bloodbath Of cops, dyin in LA

... Taking out a police would make my day Where was the outrage from conservatives then? Again, there was no public outrage.

By today's standard, Common's lyrics are mild. So mild that The Gap featured him in an ad for its 2006 fall collection. He has also appeared in such movies as American Gangster, Terminator Salvation, and Date Night, featuring Tina Fey and Steve Carell.

Lost in the controversy over "Common" was the purpose of the White House event, which was to honor

As President Obama said at the event, "The power of poetry is everybody experiences it differently. There are no rules on what makes a great poem. Instead, a great poem is one that resonates with us and challenges us and teaches us something about ourselves."

George E. Curry, former Editor-in-Chief of Emerge Magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site, http://www.georgecurry.com/ You can also follow him atwww.twitter.com/currygeorge.

National News

Congresswoman Waters Amendment Requiring Report on Diversity in Intelligence Community **Accepted by House**

Washington - The House of Representatives adopted an amendment offered by Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) to H.R. 754, The Intelligence Authorization Act. The Congresswoman's amendment requires the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community to report to Congress on racial and ethnic diversity in the intelligence community. She offered the following statement from the House floor in support of her amendment:

"A diverse workforce is essential to intelligence work. People from a variety of backgrounds bring a variety of perspectives to the table to understand the world in which we live. A diverse workforce provides intelligence agencies critical insights into different cultures around the world where information about potential threats to our national security is being collected and analyzed."

Many leading intelligence officials understand the importance of a diverse workforce. The website of the Central Intelligence Agency includes the following statement:



U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA)

"In order for the CIA to meet our mission of protecting our national security interests, we need to employ a workforce as diverse as America itself—the most diverse nation on earth. Diversity reflects the unique ways we vary as Intelligence Officers—our nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, culture, sexual

orientation, education, values, beliefs, abilities, and disabilities. These assorted attributes create different demographic, functional, and intellectual views, which are so vital to our innovation, agility, collection, and analysis."

"CIA Director Leon Panetta had this to say:

"In virtually every aspect of

our mission, CIA relies on diversity for success. We operate in a wide range of environments and tackle an even wider range of problems. If we all look the same, our mission suffers. If we all think the same, failure is certain. To reach our full potential as an intelligence service, we must draw from the same source of strength that makes America great: the limitless energy and creativity inherent in the diversity of its people."

"Unfortunately, there is virtually no data available to Congress and the public regarding the degree of racial and ethnic diversity in the intelligence community. The most recent publicly available report that discusses this subject is a 1996 report by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) on personnel practices at intelligence agencies, which focused on equal employment opportunity practices. The report concluded that intelligence agencies have workforce diversity programs but results lag behind other federal agencies.

"This report was written more

than five years before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 15 years before the death of Osama Bin Laden. Needless to say, both the intelligence community and the world in which it operates have changed tremendously since then.

"My amendment states that within 180 days after the enactment of this bill, the Inspector General shall submit to Congress a report on the degree to which racial and ethnic minorities in the United States are employed in professional positions in the intelligence community and barriers to the recruitment and retention of additional racial and ethnic minorities in these positions. The amendment requires that the report be submitted in unclassified form but allows the Inspector General to include a classified an-

"It is long past time for Congress to re-evaluate the diversity of the intelligence community's workforce.

"I urge my colleagues to support my amendment."

The White House Celebrates American Poetry

The White House Celebrates American Poetry: First Lady Michelle Obama hosted a workshop for students from California to New York at the White House to celebrate American poetry, which she said "helps us see the world in an entirely different way." The workshop was designed to educate and inspire talented young people, who met and worked with the First Lady's invited guests, including prominent writers, former poets laureate Rita Dove and Billy Collins, Elizabeth Alexander, who wrote and delivered the poem at President Barack Obama's inauguration, Musician Jill Scott, and Grammy Award Winning Rapper and Actor Common, who drew strong criticism from Republicans, who contended the rapper advocated violence against former President George W. Bush and the police. Common later tweeted: "... The one thing that shouldn't be questioned is my support for the police officers and troops that protect us every day."



First Lady Michelle Obama during celebration of American poetry. Photo By Fred Watkins



L to R - Elizabeth Alexander, Rita Dove, and Billy Collins - Photo By Fred

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