

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone Page 6

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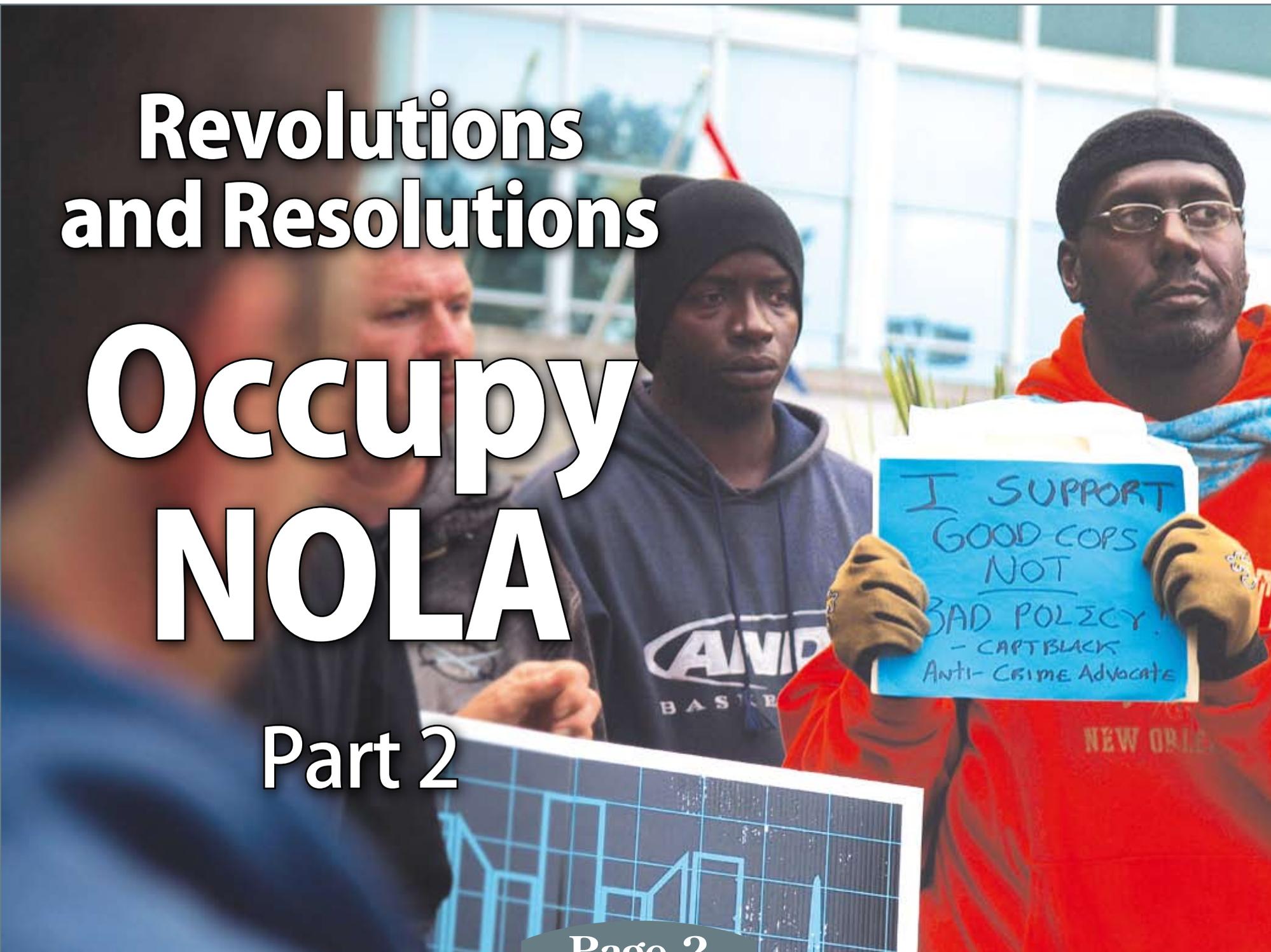
Festive Holiday Fun

December 24 - December 30, 2011 46th Year Volume 30 www.ladatanews.com

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Part 2



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Occupy NOLA and Civil Disobedience Part 2



Occupy NOLA Protestors at press conference on Dec 14, 2011

By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Rene Merino

A Question of Justice

Last Data News Weekly published a story on the Occupy NOLA Movement and their forced eviction from Avery Alexander/Duncan Plaza in a court ruling. This happened against a backdrop amidst controversy and allegations of misconduct on the

part of the Mayor's office and NOPD in their handling of the situation. We thought this issue needed more attention so we have published a follow-up in this week's issue.

Of the events surrounding the eviction the Mayor's Office Communications Director Devona Dolliole says, "The City moved forward with a well-planned, well-executed enforcement of City and State Laws in Duncan Plaza. We did so in a fashion that respected the First Amendment rights of those in the park within the bounds of the law that protected the common good. We gave multiple days of

notice- both verbal and written- to immediately and voluntarily comply with the law. Our actions—successfully cleaning the park, housing homeless individuals, and reducing the threats to public health and safety—were lawful, fair, and reasonable."

Of the events leading up to the melee of the night in question Alison McCrary talks of her attempts to try to quell the situation through peaceful measures, "I tried to contact Chief Serpas when the occupiers received these notices, the language was vague and people were concerned, they felt that their first amendment rights were protected;

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

we tried to schedule a meeting with the Mayor and he got called for jury duty; and we tried to re-schedule but his office would not reschedule, we were hoping we could have done it before he went into jury duty. We talked to several district commanders and I asked was there a planned eviction or enforcement." McCrary told Data News Weekly she received a phone call from Chief Serpas assuring her they would not be any evictions on that Monday.

Continuing recounting the events that led up to December 6th 2011, on the eve of a court hearing as to the right of the occupiers to continue staging their protest in Duncan Plaza she says it took a bizarre turn. According to McCrary "At 2:55 A.M. - I received a call from Captain Black who had been providing security, I rushed out to see what was going on with a few other attorneys to document what was happening and I saw Chief Serpas and representatives from the Mayor's Office; I asked each of them what was going on, I told them I thought we would have open and honest, professional communication with you and I said you haven't done that and we're trying to protect the best interest of everyone. It was within hours of court proceedings and they did not respect that process and this is happening when we are trying to reform the police department and the image of the City."

McCrary continues saying, "Within a few minutes the police began clearing Duncan Plaza they had their batons out going inside of tents, forcing people outside of the tents telling them to vacate or they would be arrested, people began asking can I get my things out of my tent and they refused, but if they had stuff in their hands that was fine." What happened next says McCrary if true seems like something from Apartheid South Africa or from Tiananmen Square in China where repressing voices of dissent and intimidation ruled muting the voices of the people, "A sanitation crew of about 80-100 people took the stuff and threw it into the truck and crushing it, they took no inventory or inspected anything. Whatever they saw they just threw in the trash." McCrary's account is one of many that have been documented in signed affidavits obtained by Data News Weekly, that have

been filed in court outlining the events regarding the actions of the NOPD and the Mayor's Office on December 6, 2011.

Abuse of Power and One New Orleans Questioned

Some have questioned the use of NOPD manpower as misguided and a misuse of City resources. Mayor Landrieu in one of his statements and what has become his clarion call is to stop the violence and crime that is plaguing the Crescent City. His office has spearheaded and is leading initiatives such as Save Our Sons; that addresses the crime issue in a holistic manner that engages the whole community in fighting crime. Activist Nadra Enzi, also known as Captain Black says that fighting crime is not the Mayor's highest priority he says it seems that he is more concerned about the monied interests of his backers and tourist coming into the City being one of the primary reasons he felt the occupation effort must cease in Duncan Plaza. And while the Mayor is touting that this is a victory for everyone, Enzi disagrees and says that Landrieu's handling of this situation has been an abysmal failure. "The City could have had social service there earlier and not the eve before the eviction took place; they could have been at the table as partners and talk about addressing problems such as income inequality, homelessness, joblessness etc." Continuing he says that if the City could deploy 150 officers to clear out a section where people were peacefully demonstrating; why they can't use the same effort in some of the most crime ridden areas where violence is occurring maybe that can be an effective tactic to curb some of the crime and violence in the City."

When Mayor Landrieu became the City's Commander-in-Chief he pledged to bring a divided City together under the banner of one New Orleans. According to some of his critics this hasn't been the case, "We would like to sit and talk about some of the issues but he refuses to sit down and talk about him. We sign up to see him and when they find out why you want to see him you will be denied access. I know what the city government can do and he seems to not want to listen to some of the people that helped get him elected. Recently, he even locked out

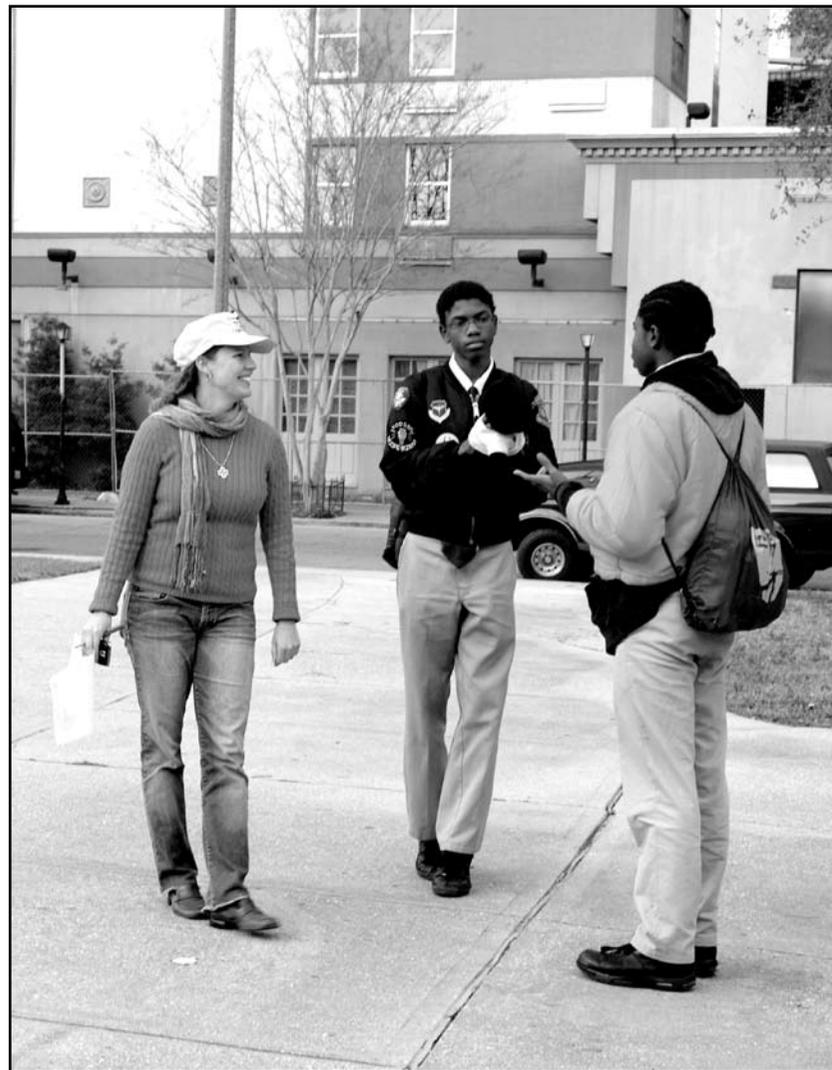
the NAACP in a meeting about the crime problem," says author and retired NOPD Officer Shaded Wali Muhammad who while an officer with the NOPD was known as Charles Kelly. Continuing his critique he says, "Occupy is about all of us and fighting for what's fair and just, and I have been out here since this movement began in October and I have not seen one elected official come out here to address us or our concerns, because they are in cahoots with the powers that be and maintaining the status quo." Captain Black agrees saying, "None of the social services providers in any great number came to address these issues until Occupy NOLA came out there although City Hall is only a few hundred yards away; and I feel the City does not care what happens to low income or homeless people."

On the question of access the Mayor's office refutes this claim saying it has maintained an open door policy and works vigilantly through many ways, through outreach in its attempts to provide access to the community to City Hall so that their voices can be heard, "The Mayor's office is always open to constituents and continues to meet with community groups, leaders and constituents frequently. Additionally, we have regular public community meetings. In fact, every year, the Mayor hosts 7 large community meetings where citizens have complete access and capabilities to ask whatever questions they like of the Mayor. And our Office of Neighborhood Engagement exists to directly facilitate partnerships between the City and community," says Devona Dolliole.

Revolutions and Resolutions

As the movement has been taken out of Duncan Plaza they vow to continue their fight for justice. One of the fights although not as far reaching as their larger stated goals as representing the 99% with dozens of sworn affidavits alleging police misconduct a court battle may ensue seeking damages for lost property surrounding the events of December 6th. While there is a class and race divide for the City to survive, thrive and prosper it has to get these issues under control and work together," states Dolliole.

While there is disagreement among the occupiers and the



Pictured is Activist Alison McCrary with two formerly homeless youth who are now honor roll students passing through to see the occupy site in Duncan Plaza on their way to the library.

Mayor's office both agree that steps to make the City a better place for all citizens is necessary. Agreeing on many of the problems but navigating different courses of actions and methods to get to their desired destination. "On the most pressing issue facing our City- murder and violence- it is going to take the entire community to be engaged. We're making progress in education, economic development, and a number of other fronts. But we have to come together to face this murder problem head on. It's an all hands on deck effort- the community and local, state, and federal law enforcement. That's why the Mayor launched SOS: NOLA. There are a number of things people and businesses can do to help in this effort from mentoring to volunteering to hiring ex-offenders," says the Mayor's Communications Director Devona Dolliole of efforts the Landrieu Administration are taking to improve the quality of life in the City of New Orleans.

Today the Occupy NOLA Movement has ceased to be a visible presence in the Avery Alexander/Duncan Plaza, but many of the issues of the occupiers continue to fight for still exist. And for countless Americans the days are getting worse as we enter 2012. An election year with

many issues to consider as citizens go to the polls, a year where there may be a continuing divide between people and worsening conditions may bring people closer together. Nadra Enzi (Captain Black) gives an interesting forecast that sums up the state of the U.S. that may sober up many of the zealots on both sides of these pressing issues that may cause calmer heads to prevail. "I am not surprised at the occupation at Duncan Plaza ceasing at some point, it was inevitable, but beyond the sound bites and issues that divide us like class, race, region we have to unite." Continuing he says, "Either we are going to unite as allies against something that is making us more poor and desperate or we will unite at the soup line, but we will be united one way or the other. It's not just one side of town being hit all sides of town are being hit, it is now educated and uneducated being hit, all people are suffering, when we occupied Duncan Plaza we had as many people with college degrees as with no degrees out there who can't get a job, moving forward this is about the future of our nation either we will sink together or figure out a way to work together to make this country a better place for all of our citizens."

New Orleans Earns “Most Improved City For Business” In 2011

Now in Top Third of Cities Nationally according the Wall Street Journal

City and local economic development officials touted the positive news that New Orleans has been named as having the most improved business climate in the country as part of The Wall Street Journal MarketWatch’s “Best Cities for Business in 2011” list, a survey looking at over 100 metro areas in the country using 15 different criteria. This year, the New Orleans region made the largest gain in the country, rising 44 positions, from 77th in 2010 to 33rd in 2011. As recently as 2009, the region was in the bottom 10 of the list.

MarketWatch notes, “Six years removed from the near-apocalypse that was Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans thinks it

has picked itself up and dusted itself off. And now the City that got a lot of sympathy after most of it was deluged has rebuilt itself and gotten a new, pro-growth attitude. It’s showing up in the numbers. The Big Easy’s unemployment rate beats the national average, personal income growth is high, growth in economic output is above average and the City is beginning to attract businesses.”

“Once again, the rest of the nation is taking notice to the positive economic momentum we see in New Orleans,” said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. “Our work to foster a better business climate in the City, promote entrepreneurship, and grow jobs

here at home is paying off.”

“New Orleans’ recognition as the most improved City for business in the nation by the Wall Street Journal speaks volumes for the work we have collectively done to create an enabling environment for business,” said Rodrick Miller, President and CEO of the New Orleans Business Alliance, the City’s Public-Private Partnership for Economic Development. “Together with our partners in the civic and business communities, we will continue our trajectory of great economic improvements.”

District E Councilmember Jon Johnson stated, “The article in the Wall Street Journal clearly indicates that there is positive

movement in the New Orleans Economy as well as the image of our City. As an elected official in the New Orleans area who has had the opportunity to own and operate several businesses in the City and as Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee, I frequently hear encouraging comments from local and national business leaders regarding the City’s new direction. The acknowledgment by the Wall Street Journal of our improved business climate can be used as another tool in our efforts to attract new business to the area.”

This new ranking adds to a growing list of recent economic accolades including:

- Forbes named Greater New Orleans “America’s Biggest Brain Magnet;
- Forbes named the New Orleans region the “#1 Metro for IT Job Growth in USA” and “#2 Best Big City for a Job;”
- Site Selection Magazine noted the City’s turnaround, calling it the “New Orleans Miracle;”
- And Southern Business & Development named the New Orleans area as its 2011 Co-Major Market of the Year.

To view the full article and “BestCitiesforBusinessfor2011” rankings, click here: <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/new-orleans-business-most-improved-in-2011-2011-12-13>



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- Find out what doctors will be in each Health Plan. Be sure to bring a list of your doctors with you.
- Register to win in our prize drawing!

You can get help with choosing a Health Plan for each family member in your house, and our staff will be available to answer questions. If you need special assistance, please call 1-888-342-6207.

Next "CHOOSE HEALTH" Meeting:

Wednesday, Dec. 28 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

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3400 TULANE AVE., SUITE 1000
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Thursday, Dec. 29 from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Trudy St. Julien Birthday Party

Trudy St. Julien held her birthday party at The Prime Example on Friday, December 9th. Everyone had a great time and Data News weekly was there!



Pictured from left to right are Tammy, Trudy's sister, Trudy, the birthday girl and a friend.



Trudy pictured here with her husband Greg, her daughter, and her sons.

70s Party

Greta organized a 70's Birthday for herself. It was held at the Letter Carriers Hall. Most of the attendees honored her wishes and dressed in 70's style for the party. She had a great turnout, with lots of home cooked food and plenty to drinks and Data was there!



Above - Standing left to right are Keena Williams, Debbie Bullock, Shawnya Williams, Greta LaBranch - the Birthday Girl, Danielle Honor, and Shannon Bell

Right - Seated is June Hazeur, Copy Editor/ Billing & Accounts Receivables for Data News Weekly, standing left to right are Melisa Adams and the Birthday Girl - Greta LaBranch. We are best friends.

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NEW YEARS EVE PARTY AT THE PRIME

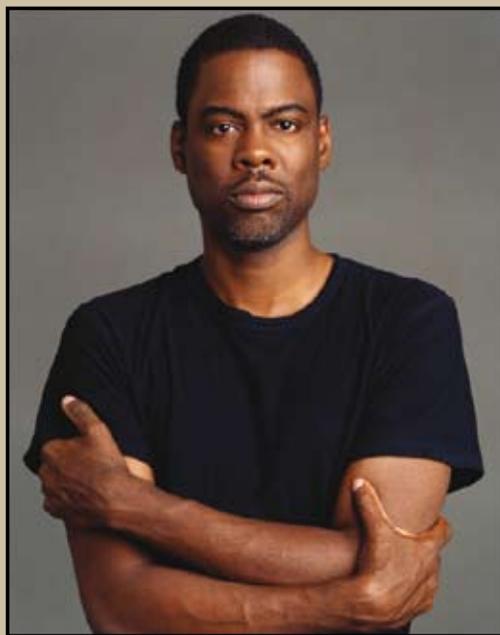
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NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

THE BLACK LIST

Photographs by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders



October 28, 2011, through April 22, 2012

Inspired to change the meaning of the term “blacklist,” Timothy Greenfield-Sanders created a visual “who’s who” of African American achievement. The portraits in this exhibition reclaim the historically negative term and showcase 50 men and women of accomplishment in fields from literature, performing arts and sports to politics, business and activism. Subjects include Sean Combs, Whoopi Goldberg, Beverly Johnson, John Legend, Toni Morrison, Susan Rice, Al Sharpton, and Kara Walker.

Exhibition generously sponsored by



Smithsonian
Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture
National Portrait Gallery

8th and F Streets NW
Washington, DC
11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Open daily except December 25
npg.si.edu

Clockwise from upper left: Toni Morrison, Colin Powell, Serena Williams, Chris Rock. All images by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders. Brooklyn Museum of Art; promised gifts of Michael Sloane.
© 2007/2008 Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

Out of Touch with America



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

If you needed evidence that Republicans are out of touch with America, look no further than recent exchanges among candidates. Mitt Romney bet Rick Perry ten-thousand dollars over something in his book. I understand that Mr. Romney is disturbed that Mr. Perry has taken some of his work out of context,

but a ten-thousand dollar bet! Give me a break! With the average American household surviving on about \$50,000 a year, that ten grand represents nearly three months living expenses for the average family. Could Romney have figured out a way to make his point with Perry without thumbing his nose at the rest of us?

On a roll, Romney also took on now-front-runner Newt Gingrich for making more than a million dollars in a contract with Freddie Mac. He thinks Newt ought to return the money. I want to know what Newt was doing for the mortgage company that made him worth \$1.6 million. And it just goes to show how differently Newt lives than the rest of us. Of course, that point was made when he dropped a cool half-million dollars at Tiffany's.

There is a yawning gulf between the economic status of these Presidential candidates and the rest of us. Even the Obamas were still paying off student loans when elected in 2008! No wonder these folks don't want to tax the wealthy – they are the wealthy.

The Tea Party populists talk about the "little people", but not many little people make ten-thousand dollar bets or earn millions of dollars consulting for mortgage companies. It's enough to make you chuckle in dismay at how out of touch these people are.

Meanwhile, although the unemployment rate has dropped, there are still more than 14 million people officially out of work. Out of touch Republicans who refuse to pass legislation to put people back to work. The concerns of such ordinary working people are

a concern that certainly Mr. Romney has never had to experience. No wonder he can run around making five-figure bets.

Whenever the wealth of some Republicans is raised, others talk about "class warfare" and suggest that economic envy is at the root of talk of taxing the wealthy more. But folks like Bill Gates, Sr. say the wealthy should be taxed more, not less. Romney and Gingrich are using their wealth to finance their campaigns, and so I guess they need every nickel they can scrounge together.

Maybe this seems a little mean-spirited, but the audacity of a wealthy candidate to make a five figure bet has just flabbergasted me! It reminds me of Marie Antoinette, who probably never said, "let them eat cake", but was beheaded for her free spending

ways. I'm not suggesting beheading as punishment for Romney or Gingrich, but the French Revolution raises interesting parallels to the present time. The Occupy movement speaks to the deep economic frustration that so many people are experiencing, but there are probably more people who went shopping the day after Thanksgiving than occupied anything, even for a minute.

That's why Romney's bizarre behavior won't even raise eyebrows in some circles. Romney may be out of touch with America, but sometimes I think that we, too, are out of touch for electing people who have essentially told all of Americans who can't afford bread that they, too, can eat cake.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is President of Bennett College for Women.

New Generation of African-American Women Political Leaders Emerging



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

"Fearlessness is what it takes for a woman to run for elective office, especially a Black woman." Dayo Olopade, Journalist, writing in *The Root*

Only 30 African-American women have served in the United States Congress since Shirley Chisholm became the first in 1969. Today, of the 100 largest cities in

America, only one has an African-American woman mayor. But the impact that African-American women have had as political leaders has far exceeded their numbers. In addition to New York Congresswoman Chisholm, our nation has been greatly improved by the service of women like Representative Barbara Jordan of Texas, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois, and Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio. Today, a new generation of Black women leaders is picking up the gauntlet and making their voices heard. Let me introduce you to just three of them.

On December 6th, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was sworn-in for a full-term as Baltimore's 49th Mayor, becoming only the second African-American woman mayor in the City's history. Rawlings-

Blake had served as City Council President since 2007, before her appointment in February, 2010 to finish the uncompleted term of the previous mayor. In 1995, at the age of 25, she became the youngest person ever elected to the City Council. Recently, the National Congress of Black Women named Rawlings-Blake a Shirley Chisholm Memorial Award Trailblazer. In her inauguration speech she outlined an ambitious agenda for a city that is struggling to attract both jobs and citizens in these tough economic times. She said, "Our number-one goal in the next ten years must be to grow Baltimore—strengthen our neighborhoods, create new jobs, and attract new people"

In November of 2010, Kamala Harris won a hotly contested state-wide election to become the

first woman and the first African-American Attorney General in California history. Prior to the election, she spent virtually her entire career as a courtroom prosecutor. In 2003 she became the first woman District Attorney in San Francisco. She is a recognized expert in criminal justice reform and is currently a leading voice in the national fight to require mortgage lenders to restructure underwater loans for homeowners facing foreclosure.

Donna Edwards became the first African-American woman to represent Maryland in the U.S. Congress in 2009. She represents Maryland's 4th District which includes portions of Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties. A lawyer and long-time community activist, Edwards previously served as Executive Director of the Arca

Foundation and Co-Founder and Executive Director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. It was there that she led the fight for the passage of the Violence Against Women Act which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1994.

Andrea Dew Steele, founder of Emerge America, a non-profit devoted to training more women for elective office says, "We don't feel as qualified as men; we're not recruited in the same numbers; we feel turned off by the mechanics; we have persistent family barriers; and we don't have the same networks as men." Despite these obstacles, women like Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Kamala Harris and Donna Edwards are fearlessly breaking through.

Marc H. Morial is the President and CEO of the National Urban League

Registration Opens for Mardi Gras 2012 Permit Lottery

The Department of Finance, Bureau of Revenue, will hold its 2012 lottery for Mardi Gras fixed locations at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 26, 2012 in the lobby of the Civil District Court Building. Fixed location permits allow individuals to sell sandwiches, cooked foods, drinks, candy, nuts, confections, and novelties.

Mardi Gras season will commence Friday, February 10, 2012 and conclude at 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, 2012.

Citizens interested in obtaining a permit must register for the lottery with the Bureau of Revenue between Tuesday, January 17 and Friday, January 20, 2012. All participants must submit both a completed Official Lottery Registration Card and a Sales Tax Deposit in the amount of \$1,000.00 in the form of a certified check or money order made payable to the City of New Orleans.

The registration deadline is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 20, 2012. Registration materials may be delivered in person or by mail

to the Bureau of Revenue, City Hall, 1300 Perdido St., Room 1W15, New Orleans, LA 70112. Mailed registration materials must be received no later than Friday, January 20, 2012 (regardless of the postmark date).

Only those registration materials received during the designated period will be accepted and used to prepare the Official Lottery Entry Card. Participants need not be present at the January 26 lottery. Participants not selected for a fixed location will be refunded their deposit. Lottery placements are non-transferable.

Those citizens selected in the lottery must attend the Fixed Location Selection Process at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 28, 2012 in the Bureau of Revenue at City Hall, Room 1W15. Names will be called according to their placement on the lottery board. A valid ID is required. Participants unable to attend the selection process must authorize a representative to attend in their place in writing ahead of time with the Bureau

of Revenue. Representatives must also have a valid picture ID. Each participant is allowed 10 minutes to select one fixed location.

Those individuals interested in obtaining Walkers Permits may go to the Bureau of Revenue office the week of February 8, 2012 to obtain the necessary permits. Walkers Permits are for those interested in selling items in a roaming location.

More information regarding both fixed location and Walkers Permits can be found on the City's website at <http://www.nola.gov/BUSINESSES/Bureau%20of%20Revenue/>. This information can also be found in the Mardi Gras Booklet which will be distributed in the Bureau of Revenue, Room 1W15.

For more information, please contact the Department of Finance, Bureau of Revenue, Application Unit, at (504) 658-1666, (504) 658-1643 or (504) 658-1645.

Wynton Marsalis Named CBS News Cultural Correspondent

CBS NEWS - Wynton Marsalis, Internationally Acclaimed Musician, Composer and Educator, has been named Cultural Correspondent for CBS. It was announced today by CBS News Chairman and 60 MINUTES Executive Producer Jeff Fager and David Rhodes, President, CBS News. In this role, Marsalis will provide insight into a broad range of cultural and educational developments on CBS THIS MORNING and CBS SUNDAY MORNING. His first CBS News appearance will be on Monday, Jan. 16, 2012, as the nation observes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday.

"Wynton Marsalis and CBS News have a strong connection that goes back many years," said Fager. "His appearances on 60 MINUTES, including his part in our tribute to the great Ed Bradley, were memorable, and the beautiful sounds of his trumpet adorn the network every single week with the fanfare that opens SUNDAY MORNING. Now our viewers will benefit from a regular dose of his insights and observa-

tions about American Culture."

"The world already knows Wynton as a Virtuoso," said Rhodes. "Less well known is his passion for education, for bringing together young and old, and for American Culture in general: a passion he's developed traveling across the country and the world over the course of his storied career."

"Walter Cronkite was a jazz fan and a Drummer," commented Marsalis. "Ed Bradley was a Mentor and treasured friend. I was an unabashed lover of Charles Kuralt's vision of America from the road and Dr. Billy Taylor's jazz segment on SUNDAY MORNING inspired us all. I am honored to be a part of the CBS News family. I look forward to sharing with viewers the incredible variety and richness of our national culture - from ballet to the blues, from barbecue to the backbeat."

Marsalis' first CBS News appearance will be on Monday, January 16, as the nation observes the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

LSU System to cut \$21 million from budget

The LSU System on Friday was ordered to slice \$21.2 million from its current operating budget as part of a \$50 million mid-year reduction for higher education statewide.

The cutback will be taken from the LSU System's \$415 million total of State General Fund dollars and is part of an overall \$251 million Deficit-Reduction Plan unveiled by the Jindal Administration and approved by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. A campus-by-campus breakdown of the cuts is attached. The reduction amounts to about 5.1 percent of each LSU unit's budget.

For the Main Campus in Baton Rouge, the reduction will mean a loss of \$8.1 million. At the LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, \$3.8 million must be trimmed. The LSU AgCenter is

slated to see its budget reduced by \$3.4 million; and at the Health Sciences Center in Shreveport \$2.5 million must be cut.

LSU System President Dr. John Lombardi issued the following statement on the latest round of cutbacks to hit the ten-campus system:

"The institutions of the LSU System genuinely appreciate the administration's efforts to lessen the impact of budget reductions for higher education and the state's health care enterprise.

While our institutions have absorbed reductions of approximately \$191 million over the past three years, we understand that those cuts, although painful, could have been much deeper and more destructive were it not for the determination of the Governor and Legislature to diminish

the impact on our faculty, students, staff, and patients.

We all look forward to participating in efforts to rebuild the state's economy and anticipate that the ongoing progress will make possible significant future investments in higher education and health care.

In the interim, the LSU Institutions will operate effectively, reducing costs where necessary. We know that these reductions, although significantly less than anticipated, will nonetheless require careful management to ensure that LSU's institutions can continue to provide high quality services to the people of Louisiana."

Budget reduction plans are due to be submitted to the Louisiana Board of Regents by December 29th.

Stay Comfy, Save Money with Winter Weather Tips from Entergy

'Simple Steps' helps customers manage energy expenses

When most New Orleanians think of high energy bills, they naturally think of summer, when air conditioners run seemingly nonstop to fight the heat. But colder temperatures can also lead to increased energy use, which in turn can result in bills that are higher than expected.

"One thing many customers may not realize is that they use as much energy in the winter trying to keep warm as they do in the summer trying to keep cool," said Melonie Hall, Director of Customer Service for Entergy New Orleans, Inc. "We are trying to help our customers know that, by using less energy, they have the power to save on their monthly bill. We're sharing energy saving ideas to help keep our customers from being caught off guard when those winter bills arrive. These suggestions give our customers the power to save on their energy bill."

Entergy New Orleans offers a variety of tips and tools to help customers use energy more efficiently and control energy costs more effectively. Lowering the thermostat to 68 degrees in the winter and setting water heaters on medium (or 120 degrees) are two simple ways that customers can conserve energy. Tools like Level Billing and Pick-A-Date can help customers better manage their energy accounts.

"There are a lot of things we can do during cold weather to keep energy costs lower without having to compromise comfort," Hall said. "Many are inexpensive, do-it-yourself strategies that really add up over the long run with cost-savings on energy bills."

Customers can find more information about ways to use energy more efficiently online at www.energyneworleans.com/save-money. Incentives and rebates are also available through the Energy Smart program. For more information on how to participate, visit www.energysmartnola.info.

FAMU Students Confront Florida Gov. Rick Scott at Governor's Mansion

NNPA Newswire
Special from the Florida
Courier

A crowd estimated at approximately 2,000 people, mostly students of Florida A&M University, Florida's largest Historically Black University, staged a non-violent, spontaneous nighttime protest march on the home of Florida Gov. Rick Scott, demanding that he rescind his decision requesting that FAMU's Board of Trustees immediately suspend FAMU President Dr. James Ammons.

The FAMU Board scheduled a meeting for Monday, following a request by Scott that the school suspend Ammons amid an investigation into alleged hazing and questions about the finances of the school's band.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement announced Wednesday that its investigation into the death of Robert Champion, a 26-year-old Band Leader who died after what police say appears to have been a hazing, was widening to include the finances of the school's famous "Marching 100" band. Champion died after



Brandon Mitchell rallies the students in front of the Governor's Mansion on Thursday night. Hundreds of FAMU students and Ammons supporters brought their voices to the front gates of the Governor's Mansion Thursday night to protest Rick Scott's request that Ammons be suspended.

the Annual Florida Classic Football Game between FAMU and Bethune Cookman on Nov. 19.

"I called President Ammons and I suggested that at this time, that he step aside during the investigation, make sure that everybody is comfortable that the right things are happening there, that there's complete cooperation,"

Scott told reporters Thursday evening. "I hope the President wasn't involved in anything, but I think it's the right thing at this time."

The Governor also confirmed that he spoke with FAMU Board Chairman Solomon Badger to request the board suspend Ammons. Until Thursday, Scott had largely refrained from passing any

judgment on Ammons, saying his fate should be decided after FDLE concluded its investigation.

Scott's change of mind upset thousands of FAMU students. Even though thousands of students had already left Tallahassee for Christmas break, thousands still remain who are taking finals, are set to attend Friday's Fall Commencement Ceremony, or both. Many of them converged on the Governor's Mansion late Thursday night.

Scott, accompanied by former FAMU Board Member Rev. R.B. Holmes and former State Sen. Al Lawson, among others, spoke directly to the students from the front yard of the Governor's Mansion which was ringed by uniformed police and, according to one student who relayed the event via Twitter, the Tallahassee Police Department's SWAT Team.

Scott waded into the middle of the crowd and began answering questions about the decision to suspend Ammons (the decision stands) whether FAMU would be merged with Florida State University ("I've heard nothing about

that," Scott replied) and increasing educational funding (Scott's focus is on jobs).

A Florida Courier Reporter who heard live cell phone audio reports that the crowd was generally impatient with Scott's answers. For example, when a student asked Scott a question about educational funding, Scott began responding with, "I come from public housing," to which one student responded, "Not all of us are poor!" The crowd did not give Scott a chance to finish his response to the question.

At the end of his five to seven-minute appearance, Scott retreated back to the Governor's Mansion as one student yelled, "We will stay here until you change your mind!" As of this writing, students are reportedly still assembled on the front yard of the Governor's Mansion, and are prepared for an overnight stay.

The Florida Courier will update the story as events occur.

The News Service of Florida contributed to this report.

A First Family Christmas

NNPA Newswire
Special from the Afro
Newspapers

First Lady Shares Spirit and Wish List with Kids at the Children's National Medical Center

"It's a Wonderful Life" is her favorite Christmas movie, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," her favorite Christmas program, "Twas the Night Before Christmas," her favorite story and her family eats pie – "lots of pie" – during the holidays.

Those were some of the tidbits that First Lady Michelle Obama shared during a visit this week to the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where she visited the neonatal intensive care nursery and was joined by first dog Bo and Santa Claus as she read her favorite story with children at the hospital.

Afterwards, the children asked



First Lady Michelle Obama, accompanied by Santa Claus, reads "The Night Before Christmas" at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, Monday, Dec. 12, 2011.

what the first family does on Christmas Eve (have dinner, wait for Santa), what the First Lady was giving the President for Christmas

(it's a secret) and what was on the Christmas day menu (Sometimes turkey, sometimes steak and lots of veggies, especially broccoli).

"Well, we have a tradition. My husband grew up in Hawaii, right? That's where his family is; and that's hometown for us. And we've gone there every year for 20 years. So every year, we go to Hawaii. And by the time Christmas Eve comes around, we put out the cookies for Santa. We usually have a fun Christmas Eve dinner, and all the kids get around – they're playing, they're really excited, and they don't go to bed right away because they're too excited, and then we have to make them go to bed. It's a big hassle. And then we wait for Santa. It's pretty simple," Obama said, according to a White House transcript of the visit.

Similarly, the First Lady asked the children what they did on Christmas Eve, what they ate and acknowledged the excitement and anticipation of waiting for Santa to put gifts under the tree.

"All right, so you know, with your dinner, having a little meat and having some vegetables is a good thing. We do it at our house, okay? And then we have dessert. And we have pie. Lots of pie. The President loves pie. (Laughter.) All kinds of pie."

Obama was chided after admitting she had yet to put together her list for Santa this year. "You got to get on that," one child told her.

"I got to get on it. It's true," the First Lady said. "But what I really, really want is for all kids to grow up with the chance to be healthy and happy, and to live a good life, and to get a good education, and to grow up and be anything they want to be. And if every child could have just that simple gift of life that would be a wonderful Christmas present for me."

Brees in Rare Air

By Kingfish
Data Sports Columnist

Drew Brees is in rare air. At this point with his passing numbers he is in a league of his own, as they say "he's in a zone". As of Sunday, Brees has thrown for 4780 yards, only 305 yards from breaking Dan Marino's single-season record for passing yards (5084 in 1984). Brees became the first player ever to pass for 400 yards and five touchdowns while compiling a completion percentage of at least 80. It is also the 11th game with at least 300 passing yards this season, which is yet another NFL record. This was Brees's sixth career game with five passing touchdowns, which ties Marino and Payton Manning for the all-time record. To bring it home, these stats are just part of the stats he has compiled in this record setting season and with two games left he can set even more. It goes without saying that Drew Brees is the best free agent actuation in NFL history next to the great Reggie White. Since coming to New Orleans six years ago he along with Coach Sean Payton has changed the face of the New Orleans Saints formerly known as the "Aints".

The Saints are on a six game winning streak after dominat-



ing the Vikings this Sunday. The Saints controlled all three phases of the game Offense, Defense and Special Teams. The Defense shut down Adrian Peterson this week as they did Chris Johnson last week. Between the two, they arguably two of the best runners in the NFL, the Saints held them under 100 yards combined. That is outstanding. I know I have been critical of the Saints D this entire year. Even though the D got four sacks this week, they still lack a good pass rush from

their four down linemen. But their run D has vastly improved. The Saints D held Minnesota to 207 total yards and much of them were garbage yards at the end of the game.

Next week's Monday night game against the hated Falcons is for all the marbles. The Saints will be playing for the NFC South Division title and second seed in the NFC playoff bracket. The Falcons are playing extremely well at this point of the season. They are getting great play from their

rookie wide receiver Julio Jones. The Saints are undefeated this year in the Superdome and will need to continue that on Monday night. I can't put any more importance on this game that isn't already understood.

They need at least one home game in the playoffs. The way the Saints play in the Dome it is almost a guaranteed win. That win would put them in the NFC Championship, yes that's right one game from the Super Bowl. If that scenario works out, I like the Saints chances of winning that game even in Green Bay. In the Sean Payton's tenure with the Saints is 8 and 2 against the Falcons. One would think this game is a given, but when these two teams come together all records go out the window. The Falcons are coming in trying to solidify a playoff berth. Not to mention, wanting revenge for the loss they received from the Saints in their Georgia Dome in overtime earlier this season. If the Saints are able to pull off this win under the lights and immense pressure, there is no doubt in my mind they are Super Bowl bound.

Let's Geaux Saints, the time is now!!!!

Kingfish- Holla!

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