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News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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**SPECIAL
REPORT**

2011

**More
Trying
Times for
Black
America**

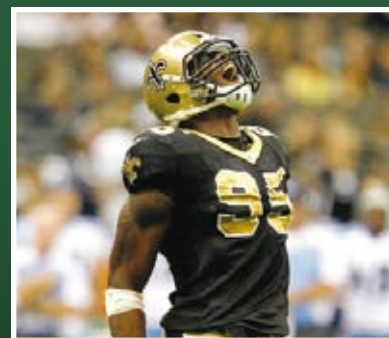
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SPECIAL REPORT

2011: More Trying Times
for Black America



The median wealth of White households is 20 times that of Black households according to reports released this year. Individual families were not the only ones experiencing a rocky year. Even the nation's oldest civil rights organization was faced with challenges.

By Starla Muhammad
NNPA(FinalCall.com)

For Black people 2011 reinforced the glaring reality that no matter who occupies the White House, overall conditions of the masses in the Black community do not change and in many cases, it worsens. Even for the Black family living in the White House, 2011 further revealed even they were not

immune to being disrespected, stereotyped and attacked.

For events and news stories affecting Black men, women and children, 2011 bears witness to the insight given by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad that no man or woman can rise above the condition of his or her people.

What lessons did Black America learn this past year and what did 2011 say about the state of Black America? The economy, health, crime, international events and politics took center stage this year yielding mixed results according to a cross section

of Black activists, analysts, leaders and commentators.

“Things have not gotten better for Black folks,” Dr. Boyce Watkins, Syracuse University Finance Professor, Author and Creator of yourblackworld.com told The Final Call.

“I think that our spirit of independence grows every year. We are learning how to create our own jobs or at least we now understand that’s going to be the solution and that really looking for state or government sanctioned solutions is only going to take us so far,” says Dr. Watkins.

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The Occupy Wall Street movement, morphed into Occupy (insert city name) all over the country bringing to light the struggles of the majority of American families. The movement in many ways mirrors the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom of 1968 (pictured right).

"You can't do a whole lot better than having a Black President and we found that our suffering actually increased under a Black President relative to what it was before," adds Dr. Watkins.

Despite the grim statistics, Dr. Watkins says 2011 was overall a good year for Black people because "we are always looking forward because we are survivors."

Dr. Watkins says Blacks have become increasingly more astute politically since the election of President Obama but channeling it into effective organizing has still fallen short.

"You really can't think of too many scenarios this year in which we actually organized toward a purpose and achieved our goals. You saw some of it happen maybe with the Troy Davis execution but that really wasn't as much of a Black thing as it was a liberal kind of human rights sort of thing that happened to correlate with African-American interests," says Dr. Watkins.

"I think that we have a lot of work to do when it comes to organizing effectively but I think in terms of learning how to think for ourselves, I think we made a lot of progress," he adds.

The Black community faced "everything" in 2011 says veteran, award-winning Journalist Bev Smith. "We faced every kind of critical problem a community can face, from illness to crime. But I think it would be the combination of crime and unemployment that are the two issues that have not thoroughly in my opinion been addressed by leadership across this country if there is any leadership," Ms. Smith told The Final Call.

She was hard pressed to find positive highlights for the year. "You can always look for positive things in our African-American community. You can look for young people that are graduating from high school and going to college. You can look for the three out of five young African-American men who are not going to jail who are not committing crimes. But the impact of the others who are, is as severe on the community as a whole that there is no portion of our community that isn't affected by it," says Ms. Smith.

One of the factors blamed for the disproportionate numbers of Black teens and young adults caught up in crime was unemployment which hit this group particularly hard. In some parts of the country, the unemployment rate for Black teens was anywhere from 40 to 50 percent.

For Black adults the picture was not much brighter with the average unemployment rate hovering at or above 16 percent most of the year well above the national average for Whites.

"Our Black community has been suffering from unemployment from the first four years of the Bush administration. Now the country's talking about unemployment but our numbers are triple those of the average person in America. So, was there anything good to report? I'm usually optimistic and I usually can say there's something good coming out of everything but I don't see it in 2011.



"Things have not gotten better for Black folks," Dr. Boyce Watkins, (pictured) Syracuse University Finance Professor, Author and Creator of yourblackworld.

I see us more disenfranchised, disorganized, not committed to each other, more selfish than ever before," says Ms. Smith.

As President Barack H. Obama enters campaign mode for the upcoming 2012 presidential election, the euphoria and optimism felt by the many voters that helped sweep him into office three years ago has turned to skepticism and frustration. For Blacks, 95 percent who voted for Mr. Obama in 2008 this year left little to smile about.

The median wealth of White households is 20 times that of Black households and the average median hourly wage for Black men working full-time is \$14.90 per hour compared to \$20.84 for White men, according to reports released this year.

Individual families were not the only ones experiencing a rocky year. Even the nation's oldest civil rights organization was faced with challenges.

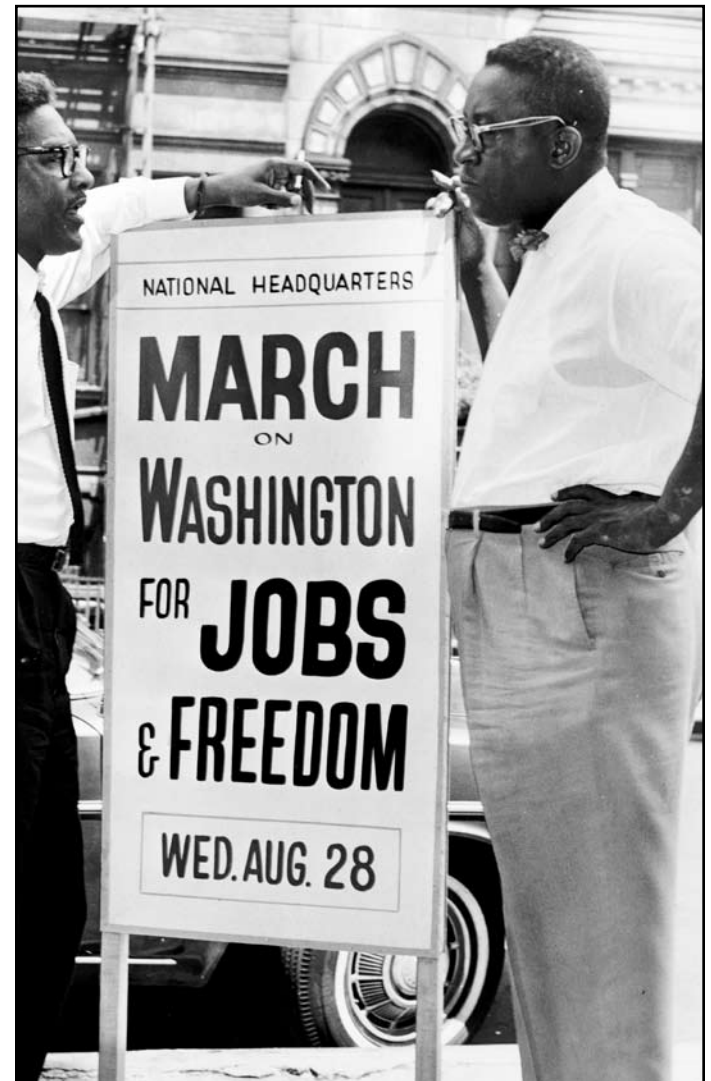
Hilary O. Shelton, Senior Vice President for advocacy for the NAACP, says the good thing about 2011 is that Black people were able to hold on.

"After a slew of victories from 2009 through the end of 2010, 2011 began on a really challenging note...this year was tough," admits Mr. Shelton, referring to trying to move aspects of the NAACP agenda through Congress and to the President for signature.

The 2010 mid-term elections saw the majority in the U.S. House of Representatives change from Democrat to Republican.

"The toughness was we've lost a good friend as the speaker of the House that helped us move our agenda through. And unfortunately the person that replaced her was someone that was strongly opposed to much of the agenda that we were trying to continue to get through as well as many of the victories that we had accomplished in the 111th Congress which ran from 2009 to 2010," Mr. Shelton told The Final Call.

There was an immediate move in January 2011 in the House to try and rollback the Affordable Care Act that af-



Bayard Rustin (left) and Cleveland Robinson (right), organizers of the March on Washington on August 28, 1963

forded millions of Americans health care coverage, says Mr. Shelton. The move to repeal the act was halted in the Senate so it is still in effect. "It's still there and now we're working to get more African-Americans registered to be covered by the Affordable Care Act. When we started this fight, 47 million Americans had no health care insurance and over 30 percent of those are African-Americans," notes Mr. Shelton.

The fight keeping health insurance for millions of uninsured was one of many battles the NAACP waged during the year.

International events also impacted Blacks in America, according to Chicago-based activist Pat Hill. The Obama Administration's military intervention in Africa, especially Libya was of great concern to many activists and the killing of Col. Muammar Gadhafi was pivotal, she says.

"His (President Obama's) wars have been focused on the continent and so I think unwittingly we don't realize the effect it's having...the economic situation is really a bi-product of the wars because war is very expensive," argues the long-time activist and former Chicago police officer.

Ms. Hill says prices for everyday items have increased and much needed services have been cut, impacting the Black community. "The money to pay for the wars has come from somewhere else and you can look at the cost of living just all around, how expensive everything has gotten and it is a direct impact of the wars," says Ms. Hill.

"People act as though this crisis is happening in a vacuum. There's a cost for everything. It's almost like we've accepted being in a war but not understanding the economic impact that it has on a society, on a country, on a people. And so if that were eliminated, you would be sur-

Cover Story, Continued on page 9.

City Shows Progress in Fighting Blight

Releases Blight Strategy Report on 2011 Progress

It has been over one-year since the City of New Orleans launched a new, aggressive blight strategy aimed at reducing 10,000 blighted properties by 2014. Since then, the City has conducted 28,024 inspections, demolished 2,280 blighted units, moved over 1000 properties to code lien foreclosure, and collected over \$1.5 million in blight liens and fines. The City has also held 29 BlightStat performance management meetings.

"We've accomplished a great deal this past year—making our neighborhoods a better, safer place to live by reducing the number of dangerous, blighted properties in our neighborhoods," said Jeff Hebert, Director of Blight Policy and Neighborhood Revital-



The City has conducted 28,024 inspections, demolished 2,280 blighted units over the past year.

ization. "But in order to meet and surpass our mutual goal of revital-

izing the neighborhoods of this city, we have a long road to go."

According to the 2011 report, the City has already shown improvement in performance and results:

Revenues: Up by more than 100%

As a result of stricter enforcement and aggressive lien foreclosure, the City has dramatically increased revenues from previously uncollected blight fines.

Sheriff's Sales: Over 1,000 writs filed

With increased financial support for fighting blight, the Law and Code Enforcement departments executed over 1,000 writs of seizure against blighted property owners to get properties out of the hands of irresponsible owners and back into commerce.

Demolition: 200% increase in blight removal

The City jumpstarted the Strategic Demolition program and re-engaged FEMA to demolish Katrina-damaged properties as well as directed the Louisiana Land Trust to demolish blighted structures sold to the State through the Road Home Program.

Nuisance Properties: Creating New Solutions

The City accelerated the Interim Nuisance Abatement Program and created the pilot Lower Ninth Ward Lot Clearing program employing local residents and ex-offenders. Since launching the program in September 2011, nearly 900 lots have been cut.

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FEMA





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If you or a family member is enrolled in Medicaid or LaCHIP, please attend "Choose Health," a special meeting about changes being made to Medicaid and LaCHIP and how they affect you.

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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:

Tuesday, Jan. 10 from 5-7 p.m.

BRIDGE CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1805 BRIDGE CITY AVE.
WESTWEGO, LA 70094

Saturday, Jan. 14 from 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

DELGADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
615 CITY PARK AVE.
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70119

Tuesday, Jan. 17 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

GRACE KING HIGH SCHOOL
4301 GRACE KING PL.
METAIRIE, LA 70002

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Happy Kwanzaa to All!

Lest we forget, many of us also celebrate Kwanzaa this season. Pictured below are scenes from the Kwanzaa Celebration held last week at the Craige Cultural Center. Photos by Glenn Summers.



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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

A Big Happy New Year!

Celebrators at The Zulu Big Shot, a new black owned business in New Orleans East welcomed 2012 at a New Years Eve Bash. Pictured are Ray Bonnee with Terry Williams, D. J. Riculfy and his wife of Millenium Limousines who sponsored the party, Terry Williams & "Lady Shot" Kim Lange with Nia and the Zulu Big Shot Staff.



CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH DATA NEWS WEEKLY

Hosting an event or special presentation for Black History Month? Tell everyone about it in Data News Weekly's Black History Month Event Section.

Send your event information to datanewseditor@bellsouth.net, by January 25th and include in the subject line BHM Event Announcement and Data will run your information during Black History Month.

Shoot Ya Best Black History Month Shot
Got photos to show off of your BHM or MLK Day event, then send them to Data News Weekly at datanewseditor@bellsouth.net and we will run it in Shoot Ya Best Shot. Please make sure that your photos are at Hi-Res, and large sized, and send in jpeg format as an attachment.

**Data is proud to support our community
as we celebrate our culture and
heritage during Black History Month.**

Remembering and Recognizing Pioneers Who Have Passed

Data News Staff

Happy New Year!

The Staff at Data News Weekly like most of you spent the last few weeks getting ready for and then celebrating the Holiday Season. Our staff is made up of many traditions, each one unique from the others, but at the heart of them all, live the same thing. Honoring the spirit of the season, and celebrating the health and happiness of our family and friends.

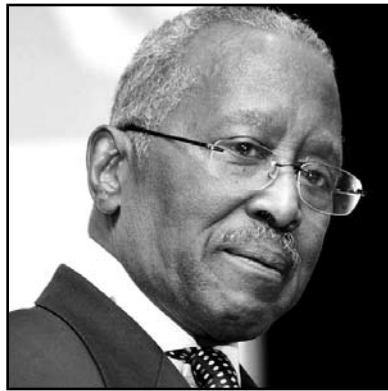
It is with this in mind that we take this opportunity to give recognition to three distinguished individuals who made their transition during the Holiday Season. To voice our gratitude for the roads they paved and our condolences and comfort to their family and friends.



Katherine M. Clark

Katherine M. Clark passed away in November in Katy Texas. She is the daughter of the Late Paul E. Martin and Mary C. Martin. She was preceded in death by her husband Peter W. "Champ" Clark and daughter Ann Clark Bonner. She is survived by daughter Mary Frances Clark and sons Peter Clark Jr., John Clark, Paul Clark and Mark Clark. Katherine

was a retired Orleans Parish School Teacher, a 71 year alum of Xavier University and a long-time member of St. Raymond Church in the 7th ward.



Sam Logan

With great sadness and deep regret that we acknowledge the passing of Sam Logan, Publisher of the Michigan Chronicle News-

paper. Mr. Logan's contributions to the Black Press of America and the citizens of Detroit, Michigan are immeasurable. Besides chronicling the rise of the Black middle-class and a city known for strong Black political power, The Michigan Chronicle was also heralded for its role in keeping the entire city informed when the city's major daily publications were on strike for over a year. Mr. Logan's participation within NNPA (National Newspaper Publishers Association) spanned over 50 years. He was a truly great leader in the industry.

Ofield Dukes

Ofield Dukes, the Veteran Public Relations Adviser to Presidents, Civil Rights Leaders and Elected Officials, died Dec. 7, 2011 in Detroit. Dukes was renowned in



Washington, DC as the first Black giant in public relations, and he helped shape the messages of some of our most beloved leaders. Dukes' Memorial Service will be held in Washington, DC, where New Orleans native Former Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman is scheduled to speak.

We join with our readers in remembering these three great individuals.

Let The Games Begin



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Most Americans have been enjoying the holiday haze since House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) folded and allowed the two-month extension of unemployment insurance and the Social Security tax cut, and other key matters. Indeed, if the French take the month of August off by law, we almost do the same in the period between Christmas and New Year. Except for retail establishments that support the great American pastime – shopping – few businesses got substantive work done in the last week.

Now that Kwanzaa and New Year's Day have past, the games will begin again. The House of Representatives is back January 17th and the Senate returns on January 23rd. House Republicans will be hell-bent on finding ways to pay for the legislation passed on December 22nd, and Boehner, whose humiliating concession to President Obama had to irk him, will probably be ready to rumble when he returns to Washington.

In the time between now and January 17th people ought to be writing, calling, and visiting members of Congress in their home offices, urging them to minimize cuts to things like education. If we need to make budget cuts, perhaps those cuts can be concentrated on our defense budget. Indeed, as the Occupy Movement is reorganizing itself (I hear they plan to Occupy the Rose Bowl), perhaps they could target key offices, including Boehner's, for a demonstration. While I've been critical about what I call "Occupy outcomes", I salute the organiza-

tion for reminding us of the income inequality that riddles our nation and has gotten worse, not better, in recent years. To begin the occupation on Wall Street, and to spread out to hundreds of cities all over the world, was a brilliant, headline-grabbing move. Now, perhaps, our friends can get more practical and Occupy some congressional home office to remind some of these tone-deaf folk what many of their constituents are thinking and feeling.

Congress will have less than six weeks to decide if the two-month tax cut will be extended through the rest of the year. Given their penchant for taking deadlines to the last minute, and refusing to compromise with President Obama, we are likely to find ourselves in the same position on February 20th as we were on December 20th, at an impasse. The brinkmanship is getting old, yet we can expect nothing else unless a few House Republicans change their minds about the way this matter will be handled when Con-

gress reconvenes. Otherwise, and most likely, let the games begin.

The games may have new rules this time around. President Obama is rising in approval polls, while Congress is falling. The public is fed up by the obstructionism that seems to dictate almost every interaction between the White House and Capitol Hill. Congress seems to exist in a Washington bubble, disconnected from the rest of the world. Recent data about the number of Congressional millionaires – many are part of the one percent – suggest that our legislators don't share our concerns about the cost of groceries, gasoline, or health insurance. It is virtually impossible for an ordinary person to be elected to Congress, because ordinary people don't usually have the finances to fund a campaign. The Obama Campaign proved to be an exception, with frequent Internet requests for small amounts of money – \$5 or even \$3. Wealthy legislators need not employ those tactics. Their campaigns are ei-

ther self or lobby financed.

Occupy's momentum suggests, perhaps, that the Occupy movement, if organized, can be a significant political force. Could there be an Occupy candidate, or two, in key 2012 political races? 'Could the street heat turn into the kind of Congressional heat that would give another perspective to these frequent impasses? WE expect to see all kinds of games in the first six weeks of this legislative session. But the games desperately need new players.

The official games begin January 17th or so. But some of us need to start playing now by reminding our vacationing Congressional leaders, of both parties, what is at stake with continuing high unemployment and increasing poverty. Don't let Congress come back to Washington without hearing from you. These high-stake games affect the economic status of most of the 99 percent.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is President of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina.

A New Year Resolution for Consumers

Say 'No' to High-Cost Lending

By Charlene Crowell

The New Year's tradition of making resolutions is sometimes an opportunity to turn dreams into specific goals and efforts - like losing pounds gained during holiday excesses. When it comes to financial matters, now is a perfect time to also assess lending habits and ways to develop greater financial security. In a downturned economy, where jobs are scarce and dollars are short for many Americans, learning how to keep a greater portion of your monies is a resolution worth the effort. If changes in consumer financial habits can begin in the New Year, chances are there will be a big and better difference by this time next year.

These changes can especially benefit consumers with modest incomes as well as those living on governmental assistance and fixed incomes. In fact, the fewer the financial resources, the more important it becomes to avoid high-cost lending and derive greater use of your own money.

For example, if your bank has begun to charge service fees for checking accounts, review the fine print that announced those changes. Payroll direct deposits

or maintaining minimum balances may be available options that could spare consumers pesky monthly fees. If you earlier opted in for overdraft coverage, now is a great time to opt out of it and the accompanying average cost of \$34 per transaction. Surveys have shown that the vast majority of consumers would prefer to have a transaction declined rather than incur these fees.

If your bank does not currently offer these kinds of cost-savings options, it might be time to shop around with area competitive banks or credit unions. As non-profits, most credit unions offer lower rates than commercial lenders. Lower rates and fees translate into significantly cheaper financing costs for major purchases such as homes and vehicles.

Although bank and credit union accounts are widely used, approximately nine-million Americans have no bank account at all, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. FDIC estimates that one in five Black households is unbanked and relies upon fringe financial services to transact their personal business. A sure way for these consumers to begin building savings



would be to avoid fee-based and high costs of check-cashing services, pre-paid debit cards as well as payday and car title loans.

Typically, check-cashing services charge a percentage of the check being cashed. As an example, if a Social Security check of \$1,000 is cashed at a cost of \$24.75, in a year's time, the store will take \$297 from the recipient. Even with a bank account monthly service charge, the recipient would keep more of their money. If a bank or credit union charged \$7.00 per month for an account or \$84 per year, the difference the

consumer would keep is \$213. That amount of money could be better used for utilities, groceries or even savings.

Pre-paid debit cards, a growing financial product may also be a more expensive way to transact personal business as well. Whether offered online or from a growing list of major retailers, pre-paid cards frequently come with multiple costs. Beyond converting money into plastic, activation fees are often charged. If ATM use is allowed, additional costs may be incurred for using these conveniently-located machines.

Further, if a consumer wants to 're-load' the card once original funds have been depleted, another fee could kick in. In short the fee totals deny consumers full use of their own money.

Perhaps the highest cost of fringe lending occurs with payday and car title loans. Each year, the 12 million Americans using payday loans generate \$4.2 billion in fees alone. According to research by the Center for Responsible Lending, most payday customers borrow an average nine loans per year at 400 percent interest; 76 percent of these loans represent repeat borrowing on the same principal.

The 17 states and the District of Columbia that have enacted a double-digit rate cap on payday loans have together saved their consumers \$1.4 billion in fees.

While the legislative battles over these high-cost loan products continue, right now every consumer can say no to high-cost lenders. It is one time when saying 'no' will mean 'yes' to improving your own financial future.

Charlene Crowell is a Communications Manager with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at: Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

Cover Story / Continued from page 3.

prised as the money flows and the jobs come back," she says.

While some pundits still contend having a Black family as the first family of the United States the past three years points to a "post-racial" society, 2011 ends pointing out even the President and First Lady cannot escape the racial animus that continues to permeate the very fabric of the world's most powerful nation.

Congressman Jim Stensensbrenner (R-Wisc.) was recently overheard making inappropriate remarks about First Lady Michelle Obama's backside, harkening back to the days when White slavemasters commented on the physique of Black slaves as they stood on the auction block prior to being sold off. In a separate incident, former Tea Party political candidate Jules Manson was visited by the Secret Service after reportedly calling for the assassination of President Obama and his "monkey children" on his Facebook

page as reported by the New York Daily News.

Incidents like these show racism is still a virus in society even in 2011. Rev. Marcia L. Dyson told The Final Call, "I think we haven't come as far in race relationships. Electing a Black man for President is about choosing one Black man but it has nothing to do with how they really may think about African-Americans in general," says the ordained minister and lecturer.

"Obviously if a non-Black said it, they still have a fixation on the Black female body, something that they can no longer have as chattel. So since you can't lock it down in iron you can try to throw straws at it. But Michelle Obama is a fierce Black woman from the South Side of Chicago and has more grace to even be insulted by the ignorance of a few in America," says Rev. Dyson when asked about the comments made by Rep. Stensensbrenner.

Individual organizations are

working to improve the conditions in the Black community but the organizational skills and unity demonstrated by these same groups working together is lacking and has to change next year, says Ms. Smith.

"There are people individually working themselves crazy trying to help. One is of course Ben Jealous from the NAACP, the other one is Marc Morial from the Urban League. They're all working but they're all working within their own group...they're working to get things done but unfortunately we do not have the grassroots organization that we had in the '60s, '70s, '80s and into the middle of the '90s, we just don't have it," says Ms. Smith who challenged churches and other religious organizations to become more involved in collectively solving problems.

Ms. Smith added that the critical analysis of issues raised by Minister Louis Farrakhan at the 2011 Anniversary of the

Million Man March in Philadelphia is needed. "Are the leaders more concerned with their own agenda than they are with the agenda of the African-American community? I don't know. The community has to answer that question. My answer is I think we've become very selfish as Black leaders and we don't have the commitment of the leaders in the past," says Ms. Smith.

In his address, Min. Farrakhan reminded the audience that the success of the historic Million Man March in 1995 was because of courageous religious and political leaders and various groups that rose above

their differences to make it a success. The Minister said the same level of unity and commitment among Black leadership is required today.

"What is our call today? It is for us to rise above the things that we differ about, because the future of our people depends upon our ability to mobilize for

action to bring about the results that we've been begging others for, which will never come to us! We have got to do it ourselves! And if we don't have the mind and the spirit to bring ourselves out of the condition that we are in, then we deserve whatever chastisement Allah will bring upon us for our refusal to accept our responsibility," Min. Farrakhan told the audience Oct. 9.

Rev. Dyson says as Black Americans head into another year, the upcoming 2012 Presidential Election is time to once again become actively engaged in the workings of the political process.

"I hope that we become better citizens in 2012 and not so much choose a man or a woman but to choose the issues into which we will fight for to make sure once the elected official is in office that the things that are relevant to us, that we let them know who is the boss," says Dr. Dyson.

Xavier Students Participate in NYU Exchange Program

Three Xavier University of Louisiana students will be spending Spring 2012 in the "Big Apple" at New York University participating in the NYU/Xavier Student Exchange Program.

Participating in the program are: Jade Crutch, a Sophomore Political Science Major from Garland, TX (Lakeview Centennial High); Shaniese Foster, a Junior Political Science Major from Houston, TX (Westside High); and Breanna Thompson, a Junior Art Major from Pass Christian, MS (Pass Christian High).

"The student exchange program at Xavier gives students an opportunity to study and learn in a new and different environment at no additional cost, as well as a chance to take courses not offered here," said Dr. Kenneth Boutte, Associate Dean for Summer Programs and External Initiatives. "Just as importantly, it enables students to explore post-graduate programs offered at those institutions."

Students pay regular Xavier tuition, fees, and room and board using their financial aid and financial resources. They are re-



BITE OF THE APPLE: (from left) Breanna Thompson of Pass Christian MS; Jade Crutch of Garland TX; and Shaniese Foster of Houston TX, are all smiles after meeting with Dr. Kenneth Boutte, XU Associate Dean for Summer Programs and External Initiatives, about their forthcoming trip to the "Big Apple" where the trio will be attending New York University through the NYU/Xavier Student Exchange Program next spring.

sponsible for their travel and educational materials such as books. Exchanges usually take place in the spring semester and eligible students are required to have a minimum 3.00 grade point average (GPA).

"It's a two-way street because students at the other institutions have the option to spend a semester at Xavier," said Boutte, noting

that several NYU students have attended XU in past years.

Boutte said Xavier currently also has active student exchange agreements with Howard University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and is actively negotiating with other institutions to establish new programs that will provide even more student exchange opportunities.

Adult Literacy Center to present Job Preparation Workshops, January 12

The New Beginnings Schools Foundation Adult Literacy Center of Greater New Orleans presents job preparation workshops to assist adults seeking to enter the workforce or find a new job. Workshop topics include:

- Interviewing skills
- Resume writing techniques
- Applying for jobs online

WORKSHOPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC

Call (504) 598-6535 to register or receive additional information.

Thursday, January 12th
9 to 11 a.m. at Medard Nelson Charter School, 3121 St. Bernard Ave., New Orleans, 1 to 3 p.m. at Gentilly Terrace Charter School, 4720 Painters St., New Orleans

1st Annual Literacy Benefit to Honor Mr. Stanley Schofield as Mentor of the Year

In honor of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, Mother's Helpers Mentoring Company is hosting a "Literacy Benefit" to raise money for their building fund, student scholarships and classroom technology.

The event will take place on Friday, January 13, 2012 at Crystal Magnolia Country Club, located at 7221 Curran Rd.

The dessert reception will include entertainment and show-

case some of the City's talented youth. The Board of Directors will also be presenting the Lifetime Achievement Award to a member of the community selected for service and dedication to our youth, and honoring Mr. Stanley Schofield as Mentor of the Year.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact Antrelle Banks at 504-508-5844 or email mhelpers@yahoo.com.

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For the Record!



By Kingfish
Data Sports Columnist

What more can you say that the records don't already say? The Saints are now the most prolific Offense ever in NFL history. Eclipsing the Rams greatest show on turf for the most yardage in an NFL season is absolutely remarkable. Brees breaks Dan Marino's single season passing yards. Darren Sproles breaks the single season all-purpose yards. Brees most completions in a season and breaking his on record for the highest completion rate for a season with 71.6 percent; tells us the Offense is operating on another level, heck another planet!

The funny thing is these aren't all the records the Offense has broken this year. With all that said, what I love the most is the attitude of the team. They are very focused on the end goal, which is another Super Bowl win.

In the '09 season I was worried with the three game losing streak going into the playoffs. I worried that the Saints lacked the mental toughness to stay focused on a stage which they had never won before. They proved that year they were up to the challenge. This year I feel no fear of any of those issues, plus there's a lot to be said for "been there done that".

The Saints performance against the hot Carolina Panthers was stellar. Chris Ivory is healthy and running like a beast, gained 127 yards on the ground to close out the record setting day. If you don't know, one of the biggest signs of a possible championship team is the ability to get a lead and then grind the game out on the ground. It gives a team the ability to take time off the clock and keeps the ball out of the opposing team's offensive hands. The

three-headed monster running game, which is Thomas, Sproles and Ivory are healthy going into the post-season unlike last year. Coach Payton vowed not to have that be an issue this year and has played it masterfully. The major reason for the success of running the ball is mainly due to the offensive line playing extremely well. They were banged up early this year, which called for a lot of subs to play, but as of now with three games to the Super Bowl they are strong, dominating and controlling at the line of scrimmage.

The Saints Defense is improving at the right time. The rookie Cam Jordan had his best game of the year. Martez Wilson did very well getting his first sack of the year. Malcolm Jenkins was out but his replacement did really well and Dunbar has done a great job filling in for Vilma. The Defense gave up some early points

but shut them down after making adjustments. If they continue to improve the sky is the limit for the Saints.

The first Playoff game for the Saints is Saturday at 8 p.m. against the Detroit Lions. Yes the Saints dominated them early this year but the Lions are clicking right now. They gave the Packers all they wanted this past Sunday. This game is not by any means a gimme for the Saints. No Playoff game is a gimme in the NFL, just ask the Saints about Seattle last year. There are two major factors in the Saints favor in this game. One, they're at home; and two, it's in prime time and we all know this year with those factors in place the Saints have dominated. I look for the Saints to keep that going in this game.

Let's Geaux Saints!!!!

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