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New Orleans

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News Weekly

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Data Zone Page 6

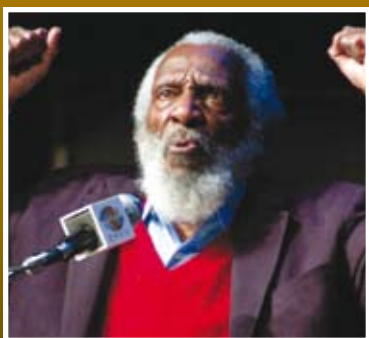
MLK Day March

January 21 - January 27, 2012 46th Year Volume 34 www.ladatanews.com



National Newspaper Publishers Association Winter Conference in New Orleans

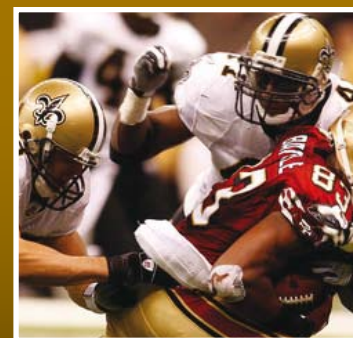
Page 2



Newsmaker
Dick Gregory
Fights BP

Page 4

Sports
WOW..Really?



Page 11

National Newspaper Publishers Association Winter Conference in New Orleans



L to R Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones, LA Sentinel Publisher, Danny K. Bakewell and Arizona Informant Publisher and NNPA Chairman, Cloves Campbell, Jr. at the 2012 NNPA Mid Winter Workshop in New Orleans. (photo by Kichea S. Burt)

By Edwin Buggage

The importance of African-American Newspapers as being the voice of the voiceless or the organs that has given the clarion call to social

movements in our storied history has always been the case. From its early beginnings in 1827 when John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish started the Freedom's Journal, the first Black newspaper owned by African-Americans, with their

mission to fight the issues of the day which was the abolition of slavery.

It is in this historical backdrop that the continuation of the tradition of African-American newspapers that presses on in the 21st Century.

Cover Story, Continued on next page.

INSIDE DATA

Cover Story	2	Data Zone	6
Newsmaker	4	Commentary.	8
State & Local News . . .	5	National News	10
Opinion	5	Sports.	11

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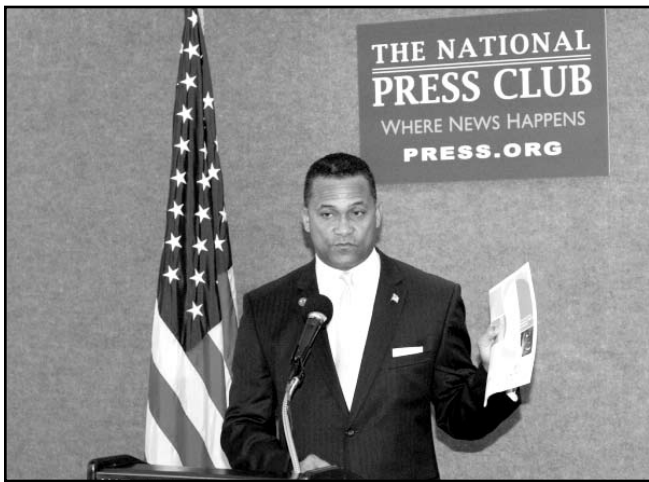
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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Cloves Campbell, Cheryl Pearson McNeil, Danny K Bakewell



NNPA Chairman Cloves Campbell at the National Press Club



NNPA Chairman Cloves Campbell, Jr.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) is a federation of more than 200 community papers across America and has for nearly seven decades served their respective communities giving their readers news they could use.

The members of this August body have converged on the City of New Orleans for their Winter Conference. "We selected New Orleans because it is a great destination and many of our member's papers are located in the South, and we wanted to also make sure we would get a high number of attendees," says Cloves Campbell, NNPA Chairman and Publisher of the Arizona Informant. Continuing he remarks, "Our convention is where we bring our member publishers together and their staffs to meet and discuss what is going on in the industry and offer workshops on how to make their papers better serve their communities. In addition to giving them information about what is going on with Black newspapers as a whole and Black media. It is a chance for us not only to get together but to deal directly with issues that effect our respective papers."

Board Member and Convention Committee Chair Terry Jones and Publisher of New Orleans Data News Weekly is honored that New Orleans was chosen as the host city, "I feel good about our conference coming into the City, especially as we rebuild we are showing the value of the Black dollar and with our collective resources, we will hopefully draw attention to African-American events to the City and its economic impact whether it is in New Orleans or any of the cities of all our members/publishers," remarks Jones who has

also held posts as the organization's Second and First Vice-President.

In the 21st Century newspapers are facing challenges, as the digital age threatens their existence. Many mainstream publications are fighting to stay afloat in this changing digital landscape, but according to Chairman Campbell Black Newspapers because of their hyper-local focus are at an advantage to stay relevant in both their print and digital editions. "I feel our biggest issue is how to navigate between the print side as well as incorporating that with the digital side."

Contrasting the mainstream press to community papers and the differences in how they've responded to these changes in the industry he says, "In the mainstream they say print is on the way out, but in our communities that is not the case, we still look towards these types of publications as a community resource, we will survive and thrive, we can have both the print for the streets and a web presence to reach more readers with our content." Continuing on that note he says, "We tell the stories that's not in the LA Times or USA Today. We not only report news but we also do historical pieces that are relevant to our community and we are chronicling our history and what is important in our community and recording Black history every week."

The importance of African-American newspapers and their roles in the community is not lost on Terry Jones, "I believe we provide an invaluable service to our communities in telling our story and giving our readers an unfiltered voice," says Jones, Continuing he says, "We are about giving recognition to people

who are doing great things in our community as well as being the voice and the watchdog for our communities and with the new tools available online we can better coordinate our efforts at the NNPA and reach more people with our content."

While many newspapers are seeing decreases in revenues because of a down economy, Campbell feels because of the smaller size of African-American Newspapers they are at a competitive advantage and can adjust their business model that can lead to greater profits, "We have to make sure that all our papers have an online presence that can draw readers in, that can take readers from the print side to the digital side. We have to use social networking tools and other things that will add value to our respective brands and we will be looking at ways to maximize our years of credibility in our communities to increase revenues. Also we have to transfer those eyeballs who desire to get our news both on the print side and the digital side because we have over 19.5 million readers with our 200 different publications."

The strength of NNPA and its nearly 70 years of existence is evident in its reach as it continues to leverage its collective resources where all its members publications benefit, "This is key to all of us prospering moving ahead" says Terry Jones, "Our strength is in our numbers and that's why we are meeting here in New Orleans to share information to help each other grow and continue to stay relevant in our communities and that is what is ultimately important to continue to reach our readers wherever they are."

Government-Mandated down payments could block home buyers



by Kathleen Day

As federal regulators consider setting down-payment standards on new mortgages, a new study shows such rules could push 60 percent of creditworthy borrowers into high-cost loans or out of the market altogether.

A proposal by regulators to define a high-quality mortgage as one with at least a 20 percent down-payment, or possibly 10 percent, would hobble a healthy segment of the housing market. While higher down-payments do result in fewer defaults, the pay-off is small relative to the number of creditworthy households who

could be shut out of the market, the study shows. For the full study, go to www.ccc.unc.edu/QRMunderwriting or www.responsiblelending.org/mortgage-lending/research-analysis/balancing-risk-and-access.html.

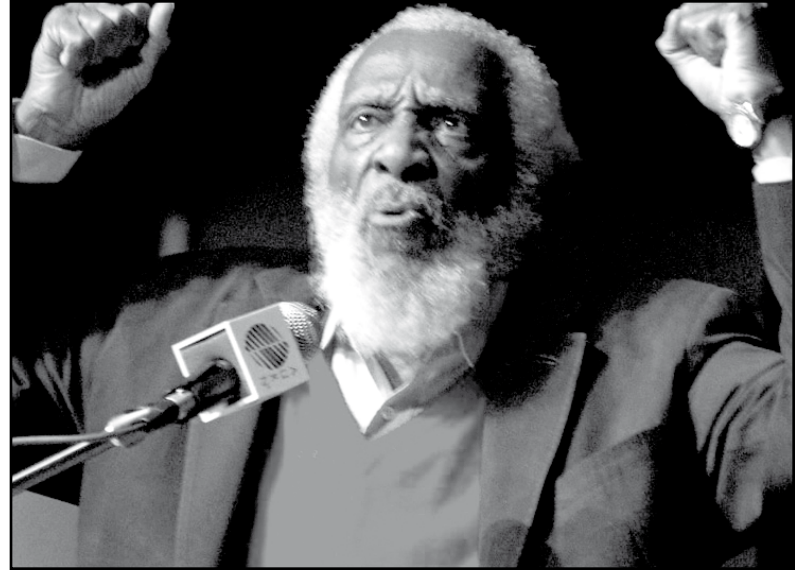
The results are particularly striking for African-American and Latino home buyers. A mandatory 20 percent down-payment requirement would exclude about 75 percent of African-American and 70 percent of Latino borrowers who could be successful homeowners from obtaining fairly priced mortgages.

The working paper, "Balancing

Risk and Access: Underwriting Standards for Qualified Residential Mortgages," was produced by the UNC Center for Community Capital and the Center for Responsible Lending. Researchers look at mortgages originated from 2000 to 2008 and what would have happened if a 20 percent down-payment and other underwriting criteria had been imposed beyond those already mandated by the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Law.

The study finds Dodd-Frank's ban on loans with the highest risk of default—for example, those with prepayment penalties or no income documentation—fixes the bad underwriting that caused the housing crisis. Adding a down-payment threshold set by the federal government would do little to reduce defaults relative to the large number of creditworthy home buyers it would push from the market. These findings are particularly significant because the stalled housing market has been a key obstacle to economic recovery.

Dick Gregory Vows to Continue Fight Against BP



Activist Dick Gregory

On the heels of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Legendary Civil and Human Rights Activist, Dick Gregory, went to trial on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 after having been arrested last September while representing claimants from several southern states who are not being paid by Kenneth Feinberg. Feinberg is the BP CZAR who was appointed to pay claimants affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill from April 2010. The case was heard at the District of Columbia Superior Court before Judge Marissa Demeo. http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/01/judge_dismisses_charge_that_di.html

The case was dismissed by Judge Demeo. Mr. Gregory's attorneys, Johnny Barnes and E. Faye Williams, were prepared for trial and had submitted several motions to the government's attorneys; their witnesses, Art Rocker—Chairman of Operation People for Peace— and Mr. Gregory were present and prepared to testify; however, the government's attorneys had filed no responses to Mr. Gregory's motions and presented no extenuating cir-

cumstances to the court for not doing so. When they appeared before the judge, Mr. Gregory's attorneys requested a dismissal. The judge granted the motion and the case was dismissed.

Art Rocker said "Our 2012 campaign against BP started on January 13, 2012 with the kick-off of having Dick Gregory speak on the Tom Joyner Morning Show. We have fought for the claimants to be paid over 1 ½ years. We are having a petition signed by all of the Gulf Coast Ministers who support the movement to carry to the two Presidents; Bob Dudley, who is President of BP and the President of the United States, President Barack Obama, in a few days."

Mr. Gregory, Mr. Rocker and Dr. Williams have vowed to continue their effort to get the underserved and the underrepresented paid for the damages they suffered from the April 2010 Gulf Oil Spill. The BP office in London, England has said that Kenneth Feinberg in Washington, DC is the person responsible for making those payments.

Dr. Robert J. Spears, DDS General Dentistry



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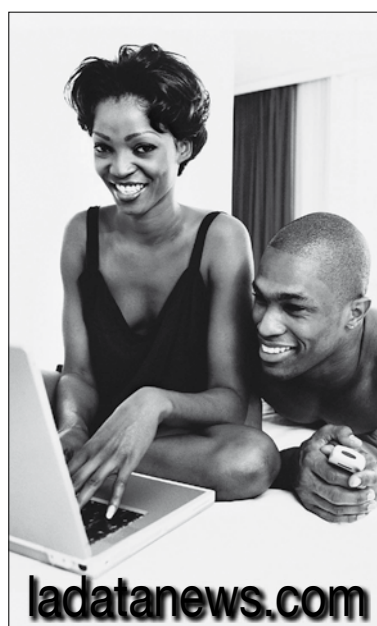
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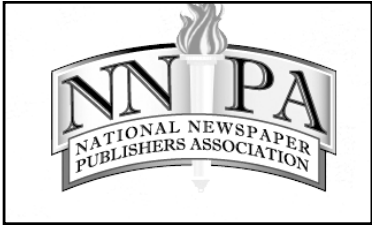
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Social Media Marketing Strategist and International Speaker To Deliver Social Media Keynote at National Newspaper Publishers Association Mid-Winter Event



Crystal Washington, co-creator of the Socialtunities social media training brand, will deliver the keynote, Monetizing Social Media, at the NNPA Conference.

NNPA Newswire - The National Newspaper Publishers Association, a 69-year-old federation of more than 200 Black Community Newspapers from across the United States, announced today that Crystal Washington, Social

Media Marketing Strategist and International Speaker, will address how to monetize social media in the publishing industry at their Mid-Winter Conference taking place January 18-21, 2012 at the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. This conference unites Black Community Newspaper Publishers across the country to gain valuable knowledge from industry experts and thought leaders.

Crystal Washington is a recognized expert on strategic social media usage and her client list includes Google, Microsoft and MD Anderson Cancer Center.

"I count it an honor to have the opportunity to speak to NNPA.

The member publications of this organization have been a driving force in American communities, educating and issuing calls to action, for generations. I'm excited to provide them with tools that will help them further their mission."

NNPA's Mid-Winter Conference will feature an exciting mix of keynotes and breakouts addressing digital technology, revenue streams, small business issues and political action. Attendees will have the unique opportunity to exchange ideas, network with peers as well as corporate and political figures. For more information on NNPA, please visit www.nnpa.org.

RTA co-hosting Opportunity Conference

Agency forecasts 2012 procurement opportunities

The RTA will host the 2012 Opportunity Conference, co-hosted with the Black Chamber of Commerce on January 25, 2012, to inform the public about bid and purchasing opportunities from the RTA and Veolia Transportation. Attendees will also learn about the new "E-Bid" Procurement Software System for business owners to become registered vendors with the RTA. In addition, the conference will educate attendees about federal and state public bid laws and regulations.

Regional Transit Authority co-hosts conference with New Orleans Black Chamber of Commerce

Open to the public: Small Business/DBE, Local Businesses

The event takes place on Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 11 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. at the RTA Board Room, 2817 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70119

For more information about E-Bid, visit www.ebidexchange.com/norta or call 504-827-8408 for Small Business/DBE or call 504-827-8347 for procurement inquiries. For more information about the RTA, visit www.norta.com or call 504-248-3900.

Opinion

Locked Out of the Grammys Again

Grammys denies Black press credentials ... AGAIN!

The inference here is that Black folks can entertain (sing and dance) but they are not allowed to report

**By Brandon I. Brooks
Assistant Managing Editor
Special to the NNPA from the
Los Angeles Sentinel**

For the last 53 years, the Grammys have been the premier awards show celebrating the outstanding achievements and performances of people in the music industry in Los Angeles, where entertainment is the #1 industry.

For most of those years, African-Americans have figured prominently in both the nominations and in the win column.

So when Los Angeles' largest, most revered African-American-owned and -operated newspaper—a weekly publication that shines a spotlight on issues of interest to its 150,000 primarily Black Readership—received the invitation to apply for Grammy credentials this year, it should have been a shoo-in to cover the industry that not

only defines Los Angeles but also defines the music industry.

And yet, this, the standard "Credential Request Decline Letter":

"The Recording Academy regrets that we are unable to accommodate your media request to cover the 54th Annual GRAMMY(R) Awards on Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012, in Los Angeles.

"Due to extremely limited space within the Media Center and Arrivals, we were only able to credential a small fraction of the hundreds of media outlets that applied..."

"Your understanding is very much appreciated ... ?"

That made it official: For now, the second year in a row (yes, we were rejected last year too), the Recording Academy and Rogers & Cowan has denied the request of The Los Angeles Sentinel to cover the music industry's main event (and even the pre-awards ceremony) — the 54th Grammys — the awards presentation to be held on Sun., Feb. 12th.

While we understand that hundreds of media outlets must be

denied credentials "because of limited space," it defies incredulity that our publication would be among those.

Why?

There are many reasons

we say that; here are just two:

1. In virtually every major Grammy nomination category, there is at least one, and many times, two African-American nominees.

2. Traditionally, a great number of Grammy-nominated artists have significant ties to the local African-American community, because they live here, they record here, they have close family relatives who live here — and/or they read our paper.

That would include two of the five of this year's Lifetime



Achievement Award honorees: Diana Ross and Gil Scott-Heron.

Thus, given the sheer number of African-Americans who are nominated, who perform at the Grammys, who work at the Grammy Awards Show and/or who cheers for the Grammy nominees during their arrival on the red carpet, African-Americans in Los Angeles have a vested interest in coverage from their community newspaper.

That is not to say that other media outlets cannot adequately cover the events. But it does mean

they are not necessarily equipped to adequately describe the cultural nuances of the Grammy show like that of the local newspaper that is dedicated to, and more capable of, examining how events, broader issues and trends affect the lives of African-Americans.

Events like the annual Grammy Awards deserve coverage by a representative sampling of all media—including one from a decidedly African-American point-of-view.

No doubt the Los Angeles Times and Billboard will be there. But so should the Los Angeles Sentinel.

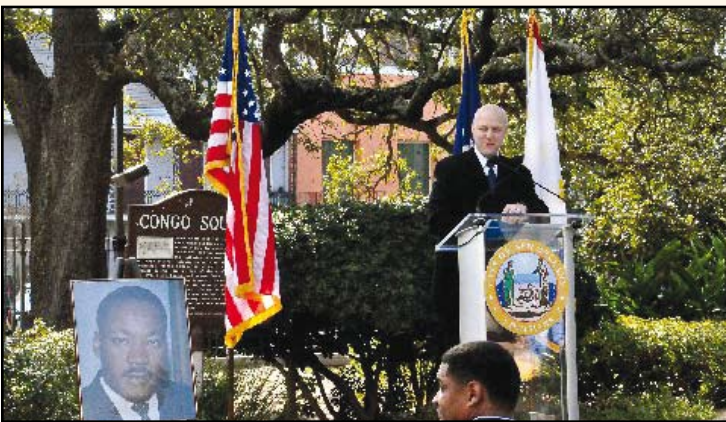
Finally, by press time, the Sentinel had spoken to a representative of the Recording Academy by phone, and after a brief conversation, she answered the question as to whether or not the Sentinel, the number one Black Newspaper on the West Coast, will be able to report the 2012 Grammy Awards directly to its readers.

The Recording Academy's answer was a resounding "NO."

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

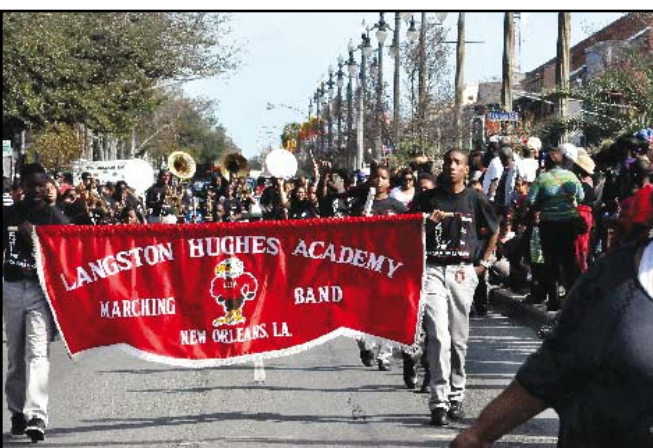
City Leads MLK Day March

Citizens and City Officials gathered to commemorate The Martin Luther King Holiday at Armstrong Park and Data was there.



Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Data Zone, Continued from page 6.



HIS EFFORTS CONTINUE TO MOVE US FORWARD TODAY.

He fought for justice with courage and integrity. He stood by his policy of nonviolent resistance through the most dire times. And he devoted himself – body and soul – to end racial oppression. Regions salutes Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, a man whose dedication to equality for all continues to inspire us, humble us and move us forward today.

In honor of Black History Month, Regions is proud to offer the Regions Riding Forward Scholarship Essay Contest.*

Twenty-five \$5,000 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors in Regions' banking areas who will attend college this year. To enter, write a 500-word essay about an African American, past or present, who has inspired you. For more details and to enter, visit regions.com/ridingforward.



MEMBER FDIC © 2012 Regions Bank. *NO PURCHASE OR BANKING RELATIONSHIP REQUIRED. PURCHASE OR BANKING RELATIONSHIP WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. The 2012 Regions Riding Forward Scholarship Essay Contest (the "Contest") begins on 01/15/12 and ends on 02/29/12 at 11:59:59 PM Central Time (the "Contest Period"). The Contest is open only to legal U.S. residents of AL, AR, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KY, LA, MS, MO, NC, SC, TN, TX, and VA (the "Eligible States") who at the time of entry: (a) are 13 years of age or older; (b) are enrolled in 12th grade in a public or private school (or home school) located in one of the Eligible States (and have not yet graduated 12th grade); (c) have (and maintain through graduation) a minimum 2.0 grade point average in school; and (d) plan to attend an accredited college or university in the Fall of 2012. To enter, Contestants must submit a completed Official Entry Form, a current high school transcript, and a 500-word essay that addresses how an African American individual (living or deceased) has been an inspiration in the Contestant's life. Please visit www.regions.com/ridingforward for Official Entry Form, entry/essay requirements, full Contest details, and Official Rules. Twenty-five (25) Contest Prizes will be awarded. Contest Prize consists of a check in the amount of \$5,000 made out to winner's college/university (ARV: \$5,000). Sponsor/Operator: Regions Bank, 1900 5th Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203. Regions salutes Rev. Shuttlesworth and is pleased to have been able to contribute to his Foundation. Rev. Shuttlesworth's name and image are used with permission of the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth Foundation.

Photos are by Kichea S. Burt

"Civil" Rights Gone Wrong



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

As we recently observed the MLK Day, a time where people across the country pay homage to a man whose mission in life was to break down social barriers and bring people together. In recent years since Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans this day has at times shown just the opposite. Of how the racial and class divide is still

evident in the Crescent City. In the 2006 MLK Day Celebration then Mayor Ray Nagin made his "Chocolate City" comments. Something that gave the City a black eye in the court of public opinion creating a firestorm and perhaps widened the gulf that is the racial divide in New Orleans; fast forward to 2012 the City again is faced with one of these moments.

In recent months Mayor Mitch Landrieu and his administration has been embroiled in what seems to be a feud with certain segments of the African-American activist community. This includes what has become a slugfest with the local chapter of the NAACP and its President, Attorney Danatus King. This issue came to a head making national headlines when the City's official MLK Day

Celebration excluded the NAACP from its opening ceremony, a first since the its inception over a quarter century ago. Ironically, this year's theme is "United in times of Challenge."

The City as well as the NAACP has told their versions of the story and it has made national news, it has become an issue of Black and White both literally and figuratively. But let's look beneath the surface of the issue because usually in the gray areas are where we find truth. As clear as the eye can see yes we are facing challenging times and more than ever we should try to be united. But the larger question is that unity does not mean uniformity or total conformity. I believe that the Mayor's office was short sighted in trying to keep the peace and create a façade of togetherness in a city that

is sharply divided in the areas of race and class. And in doing so he excluded an organization that for over a century have been fighting against injustice.

In my view I respectfully say Mayor Landrieu made a grave error in judgment. Placing himself at the stake to receive a firestorm of criticism and by his actions seemingly dishonored the legacy of the great freedom fighters of our City that fought alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Thurgood Marshall and many others who fought for Civil Rights. It is unfortunate that by him having a stage managed event it has placed him squarely in the crosshairs of his critics that feel these staged events have become a cornerstone of his administration. In excluding the NAACP from the opening ceremony whether knowing or

unknowingly he to some is disrespecting the legacy of A.P. Tureaud, Lead Counsel of the fight for equal rights and Ernest "Dutch" Morial who was President of the local chapter of NAACP from 1962-65 and eventually became the first African-American Mayor of the City of New Orleans and many others who put their lives on the line in the struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

While both men are involved in this melee that is dividing a community I feel this day could have been used to begin a moment of healing. Hypothetically speaking could the mayor have added NAACP to the opening ceremony and showed although they disagree on some things they could

Civil Rights, Continued

on page 11.

What is the State of the Dream?



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

I always feel inspired and elated, but also challenged and chagrined, at some of the celebrations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. There are those, too many folks, who want to sanitize Dr. King and turn him into a dreamer. Too many only quote the part of his "I have a dream" speech that talks about character content and skin color. Too few remember that in the same speech he said, "We have come to the nation's capital to cash a check, and the check has been marked insufficient funds." Dr. King was an

Economic Populist, an Anti-War Activist, as well as a classically trained Theologian. Too many put emphasis on the latter, without acknowledging the former.

That's why each year, I am excited to receive the State of the Dream report from United for a Fair Economy. This organization does great work in talking about the wealth gap, and their annual foray into exploring the dream has looked at joblessness, homelessness, and austerity. Last year their report shared facts on the relative pay that people of color earn in the public and the private sector and concluded that austerity programs that cut government jobs disproportionately affect people of color.

This year's report focuses on the Emerging Majority, and concludes that unless policy shifts are made, the wealth gap will grow even wider than it is today. Additionally, they project that by 2042, just 30 years from now when people of color are a majority in our society, nearly 5 percent of the

African-American population and 2 percent of the Latino population will be in prison if current incarceration trends continue. The report's set of policy recommendations includes a recommendation to end the war on drugs. Indeed, more than half of those currently incarcerated are casualties of the drug war, some with very minor offenses, and others with conditions that warrant drug treatment, not incarceration.

"Economic inequality between Whites and people of color will persist unless bold and intentional steps are taken to make meaningful progress towards racial equity, to sever the connection between race and poverty, and ultimately to eliminate the racial economic divide altogether," the report says in its Executive Summary. But such bold words are belied by the growing gap, increasing poverty, the unemployment rate differential, and continuing barriers to educational access in communities of color and among those who are low income. While our

international competitors are investing in education, we are simply divesting. It is almost as if we have made a decision to devolve into a developing country.

What would Dr. King say about all this? I think he'd be outside with the folks from Occupy Wall Street, and I think he'd be directing them to a 21st Century version of the Poor People's Campaign. I think he'd be standing outside some of the banks, asking why they deserve the bailouts that ordinary people can't get. Just as he occupied a housing project in Chicago, I bet he'd camp out with a family experiencing foreclosure. I know he'd be challenging us all.

There have been significant changes since Dr. King was assassinated in 1968, and the signs don't say White or Colored any more. The signs don't have to say it – in some instances outcomes do. In other words, there are no signs on dollars that say White or Colored, but African-American people have pennies to the dollars of wealth that Whites hold. There

are no signs that say White or Colored on executive employment, but you can count the African-American CEOs in Fortune Five Hundred companies on one, or on a good day, maybe two hands. The signs don't say segregation, but too many still experience it, and while few in polite company use racist expletives to describe people of African descent in this country, when a talk show host and a Congressman have the utter temerity to describe the First Lady's body in disparaging terms, it takes me back two centuries, to echoes of the Hottentot Venus, Sarah Bartjee.

The dream is certainly a work in progress, but the dream won't work unless we do. We cannot afford to be smug, glib, or complacent. The UFE report suggests that if we don't act now, it will get worse later.

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



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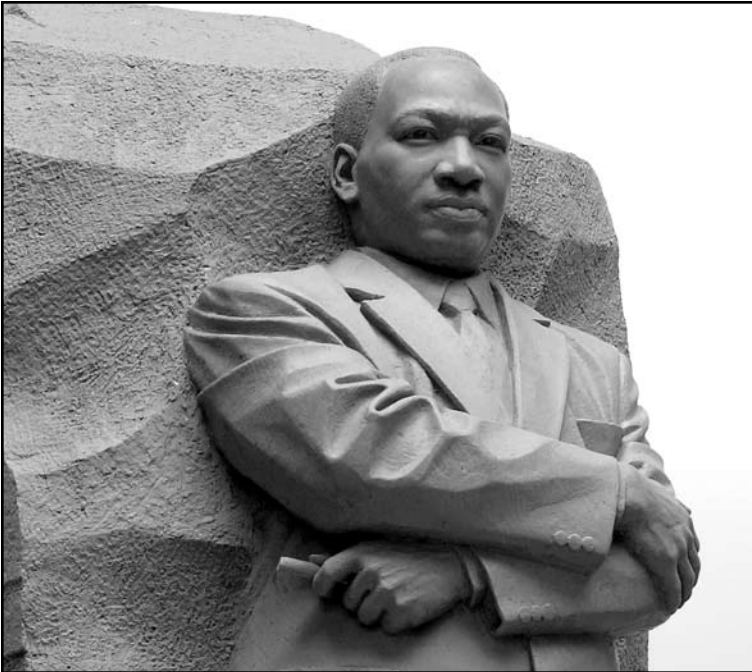
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Inaccurate Inscription on MLK Memorial to be Corrected



Special to the NNPA from the Afro-American Newspaper

An inaccurate inscription etched into the Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington D.C. will be changed to provide the correct context of a quote by the Civil Rights Leader.

The Washington Post first reported Jan. 13th that Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar had ordered the quote changed.

According to the Associated Press, the side of the granite memorial currently bears the inscription "I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness," taken from a February 1968 sermon known as the "Drum Major Instinct," made just two months before King's assassination.

However, King's original words made him seem more modest: "Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a

drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter."

The altered quote has drawn criticism since the memorial's opening in October, including from poet Maya Angelou, who according to the AP said the inscribed version makes King sound like "an arrogant twit."

Salazar said he has ordered the National Park Service to consult the memorial's organizing foundation and the King family, and report back within 30 days with a plan to correct the memorial.

"This is important because Dr. King and his presence on the Mall is a forever presence for the United States of America, and we have to make sure that we get it right," Salazar told the Post.

U.S Unemployment Rate Reaches 3-Year Low

Special to the NNPA from the St. Louis American

The U.S. job market strengthened in the second half of 2011 and added 200,000 jobs in December while the unemployment rate fell to 8.5% from a revised 8.7% a month earlier.

December's biggest growth came in transportation, especially courier services that staffed up for the holidays, and in health care and manufacturing, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Economists had forecast that employers added a net 150,000 jobs last month, according to

a survey by Factset. They also had predicted that the unemployment rate ticked up to 8.7% from November's 8.6%, which was the lowest rate since March 2009.

The better-than-expected monthly gain of 212,000 private-sector jobs means American businesses have replaced more than 3 million of the 4.2 million private-sector jobs lost the past 13 months. The private-sector jobs gained since employment bottomed in February 2010, in percentage terms, is the strongest recovery since the rebound after the 1990-92 recession, when U.S. businesses added 4.2 million

jobs in the same amount of time by late 1993.

President Obama still could face voters in November with the highest unemployment rate of a sitting President seeking election since World War II. Unemployment was 7.8% when Obama took office in January 2009.

But he could benefit if the unemployment rate continues to dip. History suggests that Presidents' re-election prospects depend less on the unemployment rate itself than on the rate's direction in the months preceding Election Day.

Information from USA Today contributed to this report.

USPS to Introduce Changes in Next Day Delivery Mid-Spring

By Alexis Taylor
Special to the NNPA from the Afro-American Newspaper

The United States Postal Service is an American institution that has simply always been there. However, after weathering a bitter recession, competition from private mail companies and deeper cuts to an already stretched budget, the age old organization is struggling to survive. This year will see the introduction of record breaking reductions in service as well as price increases for basic USPS materials such as stamps.

Fighting to keep their heads above water, continue to employ its 574,000 career employees, and provide adequate health benefits to its workers, the USPS has taken major hits in the few years.

"The U.S. Postal Service must reduce its operating costs by \$20 billion by 2015 in order to return to profitability," said David Williams, Vice President of Network Operations in a press release.

"The proposed changes to service standards will allow for significant consolidation of the postal network in terms of facilities,

processing equipment, vehicles and employee workforce and will, when fully implemented, generate projected net annual savings of approximately \$2 billion."

Processing on average 563 million pieces of mail a day, in 2010 alone the USPS had to cut back 75 million work hours, which is roughly the equivalent of 42,800 full-time employees. Jan. 22, Americans will see a one cent increase on first-class stamps to 45 cents, and a three cent increase on postcards to 32 cents.

"Mail from Baltimore to Chicago takes 2 days today and would take 2 days if the proposed changes occur, but mail from Baltimore to Baltimore that is overnight today would take 2 days if the proposed changes occur," said Sue Brennan of the USPS Mail Processing and Mail Delivery Divisions.

These changes, which are set to take place in Spring 2012, have already caused a national uproar, as readers who have not ridden the wave of new technology are now facing major dilemmas on how to receive their news promptly, or at least

while still relevant.

Customers of newspapers and periodicals such as the Afro-American Newspaper have already seen major changes in their service, with subscribers who usually receive their papers the next day after printing now waiting two weeks.

Slow to sign up for Internet subscriptions, the elderly and the disenfranchised with limited computer access will suffer the most from the proposed cuts.

Highlighting a need for "a line of posts be appointed under the direction of the Postmaster General, from Falmouth in New England to Savannah in Georgia, with as many cross posts as he shall think fit," the Second Continental Congress of this Country established the United States Postal Service (USPS) in 1775.

Since then, mail has been moved by pony, steamboat, rail, truck, airplane, and other effective modes of transportation to get checks, gifts, news, and unwanted bills where they need to go in a timely fashion.

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Wow... Really?

By Kingfish

Five turnovers, really? I am at a loss for words. Well maybe not the kind of words I can put in print. After a game like this I would normally say that a team that performed in this manner couldn't handle the big stage. However, I can't say that because we're talking about Super Bowl champs and to be quite honest it should have been the other team that was shaken by the stage and the bright lights. Yes, it was said that the 49ers had a great Defense and they played hard, but this was a first year coach with an underachieving Offense with a sub-par QB. The Saints on the other hand, were the highest-powered Offense in the land with a complimenting Defense, well an adequate Defense. This was not supposed to happen. The Saints committed more than half the amount of turnovers they have committed the entire year. Even though the Saints had an impressive record-breaking year, to lose in the playoffs and not make it to



the Super Bowl is a disappointment.

I could go the route of missed calls by the refs and the Defense failed at the end, but I'm not going to go there. Truth of the matter is the Saints Offense and special teams lost the game. The Defense played well enough to win. The Offense did well to come back but the game should not have been that close at the end. This is truly one of those

situations where you say it was a team loss.

Now the Saints are in a very interesting situation with the departure on Defensive Ooordinator Greg Williams and contract negotiations with Drew Brees, Carl Nicks, Marques Colton and others. No matter who the Saints bring in as the new defensive coordinator they still have major issues on Defense as for as talent

goes. The 49ers' secondary was big physical and athletic. Their linebackers were extremely fast and physical and there D-line got pressure with three and four man fronts. None of these characteristics can be attributed to the Saint's Defense. There is the problem in a nutshell. The Offenses as we know are explosive but in the NFL the name of the game is balance.

Unfortunately the Saints are far from it. I know the die-hard fans will disagree, but that is an illusion colored in rose painted glasses the same ones Coach Payton probably shares. I hope the sting of this loss clears it up a bit for everyone. That harsh reality break needs to be embraced if the Saints want to be the NFL team to host and play in the same Super Bowl. It's a tall order to say the least. Until next year enjoy whatever sports you can, if you can. We all know its football or death!

Peace, Holla!
Kingfish

Civil Rights / Continued from page 8.

come together in a sign of unity that they both want what is best for this City? That on this day a new dialog could have begun where more people can be involved in what direction the City is going in moving forward as opposed to certain voices being muted because they do not jibe with those at City Hall?

Today if we are to be united in times of challenge we must not be afraid of voices of dissent. It is those voices that have brought us to where we are today. It is something that is in the DNA of a nation fueled by the quest to build a more perfect union. It is the spirit of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence that lit the wick that exploded into the nation we are today. It is the courage of MLK and many others who sought these same goals. A more perfect union and some tried to mute their voices at the time and stifle a movement that has expanded the freedoms

of so many people across America and inspired movements across the globe.

It is time for a City that is divided both by race and class to move into corrective action as opposed to attempting to make nice with public relations gestures and get serious about correcting the wrongs of a City that is experiencing a renaissance in some parts of town and sinking deeper into the abyss in others. And of a City where hopefulness and hopelessness dance a strange tango every day.

It is also time for a City that is still majority African-American for citizens to not stand idly by on the sidelines. It is time to get aware and get involved in the molding of the future of this City. Have a hand in choosing your leaders and hold them accountable, because if you don't vote you don't count. But civic involvement does not end at the polls; it is a 24-7-365 day proposition.

It is true that this City is changing, but it is important that we not forget and respect those who sacrificed before us, so that all can dine at the table of democracy and prosperity. That we must not forget the progress this City has made to become the City it is today. So let those who are in elected positions know that progress does not mean to regress to a time where missionary posturing and proselytizing nor business interest need to lord over the Black community and choose who or what organizations are legitimate and credible. Let us insist this is unacceptable moving forward. But regardless of where we stand whether it is in the penthouse or the outhouse it is time for us to side with our better angels and find common ground, that today we are in the same boat trying to rebuild our great City. It is then and only then can we be united in times of challenge.

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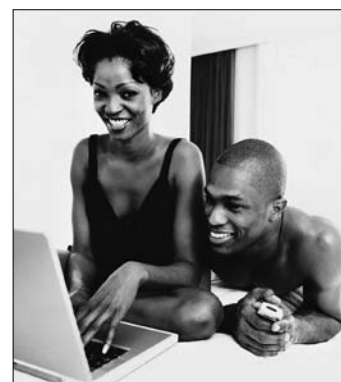
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