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News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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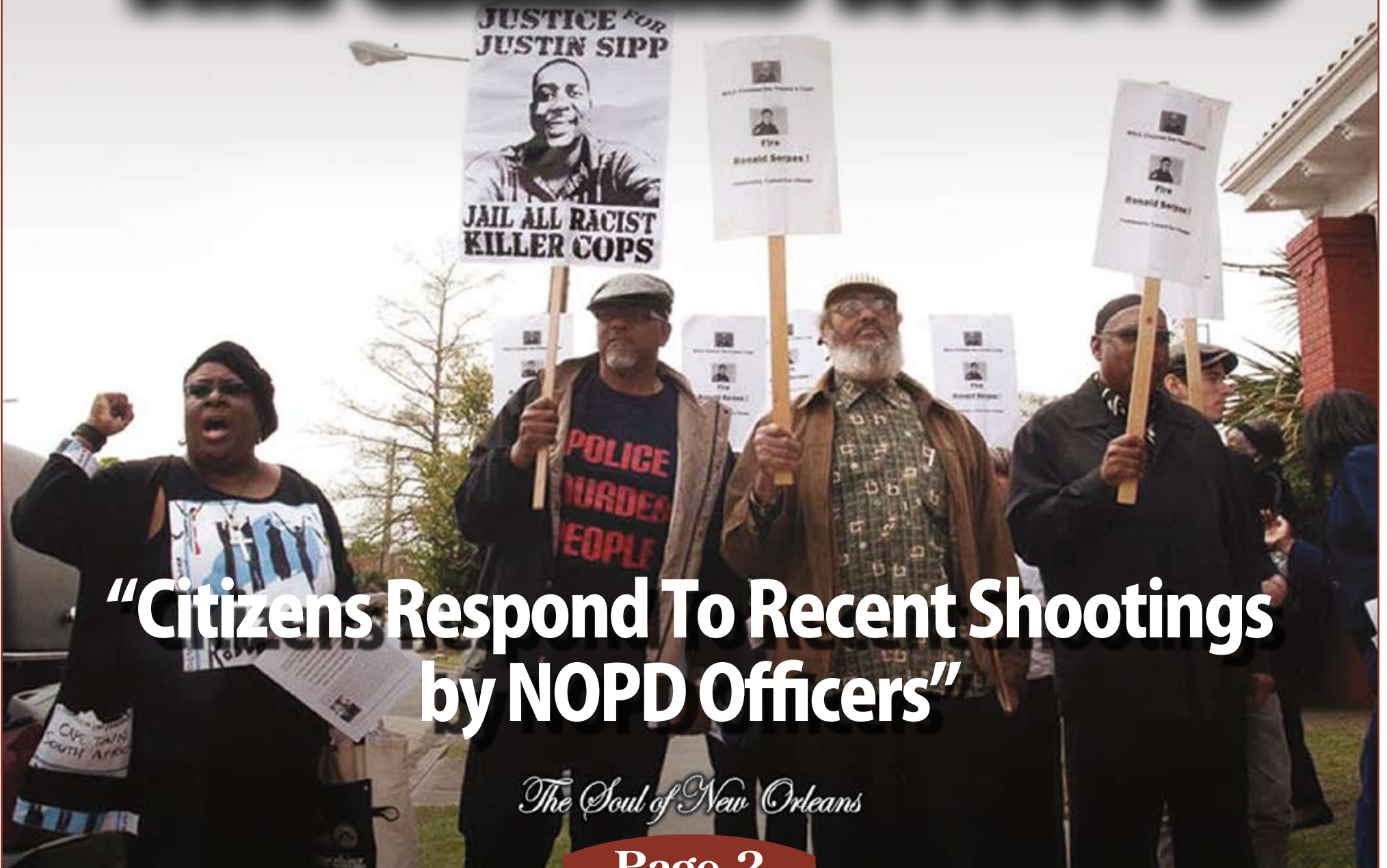


Data Around Town

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The Citizens v. NOPD



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The Citizens v. NOPD

"Citizens Respond To Recent Shootings by NOPD Officers"



Justin Sipp and Wendell Allen, two young men whose shooting deaths are at the center of controversy that has sparked protests surrounding police misconduct.



New Orleans activists protesting latest police shooting of young Black males.



Community organizer Parnell Herbert holding signs demanding the resignation of Police Chief Ronald Serpas

By Edwin Buggage

Two Fatal Shootings in Six Days

Tensions are ablaze in the African-American community over recent events surrounding the fatal shootings of two young men by officers of the New Orleans Police Department. Both of the victims were twenty years old. The first fatal incident

occurred when Justin Sipp and his brother Earl Sipp who was the driver of the vehicle were stopped on a routine traffic stop in the early morning hours while Justin Sipp was catching a ride to work with his brother. In the time between the stop and the shooting many questions are still unanswered in an incident that left Justin Sipp dead and his brother suffered wounds as well. In what Police Chief Ronald Serpas promises a transparent investigation.

In the second fatal shooting to occur in a six day period Wendell Allen was gunned down with a single

bullet to the chest while standing atop the stairs of the home he lived in with his family unarmed while several of his young siblings were in the house. This occurred in what was two days of surveillance into a drug operation that was allegedly taking place at the residence. The 13 man raid amounted to confiscating 4 ½ ounces of marijuana (street value of approximately 540 dollars), and the arrests of Davin Allen and Brandon Boles booked with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. The shootings have led some in the community to cry foul and demand

Protest Photos by Louis Francis. File photos by AP.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Police Chief Ronal Serpas speaks to media



Activist Sandra Wheeler Hester speaks at protest



Co-worker of Justin Sipp distraught after finding out about his death.

justice and a change in how police deal with African-Americans.

Parnell Herbert is a community organizer and playwright and is working on several initiatives including the release of the Angola 3. He has been working closely with the Allen family since this fatal incident. "These shootings are affecting the African-American Community in a very negative way; we've had two police shootings of young men in six days. The first of the shootings the details are questionable. Some in the community are asking was there actually a shootout and there are no other witnesses but other NOPD Officers to verify this actually occurred and their credibility is questionable to put it mildly. And the second is the shooting of a man who was unarmed as an army of law enforcement officers came and murdered him, this has got to stop and these officers must be stopped and we in the community are making a stand to demand justice," says Herbert.

Police Misconduct in New Orleans: A Short History

There is a long and sordid history in the relationship between the NOPD and the Black community. Sandra Wheeler Hester is a long time New Orleans activist and is outraged about what she deems as the continuing practice of a blue wall of silence. "The relationship between the police and the African-American community is not simply strained as some said, it is broken. I can tell you of cases that spans years and decades; I can recall for example the case of the Algiers Seven; the police shot and killed several people, corrupt officers such as the Len Davis Case, Antoinette Frank, or more recently the Danziger and the Henry Glover case. I can go on and on and those are only the ones we know about," says Hester of a department she feels is rife with problems.

Susan Hutson works with the Independent Police Monitor's Office, "We are charged with com-

plaints from the public who are leery of dealing with the NOPD, we will take complaints over to Public Integrity Bureau. We deal with cases with use of force by officers and we roll out to all scenes where there are critical incidents, which include when an officer shoots their weapon, anytime somebody dies in custody, or if anybody is hospitalized by a use of force. We monitor investigations and see if they were handled properly and we make recommendations for whatever we see in the complaint, or their use of force," she says of what her office does. After working in the city of Los Angeles for many years, she says New Orleans has a high number of complaints of police misconduct compared to other cities, "When I got here in 2010 there were I believe 1636 complaints and that is a large number compared to the number of officers they have here, that's more than one complaint per officer and I've never been in a place where it has been more than a half complaint per officer. Some places are different in the types of complaints they take, but in this City the number is still high." In addition she says there are an unusual number of officers under investigation for misconduct, "There are a lot more officers here than in other cities that are either arrested or involved in criminal investigations."

These recent police firing fatal shots comes on the heels of Danziger and the Glover case where in both trials it has been shown that there were the practices of misconduct. False reporting, fake witnesses, planted guns and an all-around cover-up further widening the trust of NOPD by the citizens of the City. Sandra Hester sat through the Danziger trial and has also served as advisor to the Allen and Sipp families say these recent events need to lead to a shake-up at police headquarters. Leading the charge she says, "These two recent killings I feel will be the straw that breaks the camel's back, I attended the

funeral of Justin Sipp, and after these recent shootings about 40 of us that's a who's who of activist met and decided we are not going to take this anymore. We are mapping out strategy. We held a press conference that called for the immediate firing of Ronal Serpas, because he is the chief and he's set the tone, and since he's been the chief there have been scandal after scandal and mishaps."

Community Comes Together to Demand Justice

After this last round of shootings voices in the community are

getting louder for the ouster of Police Chief Ronal Serpas. Coming in with the nod of Mayor Mitch Landrieu there were high expectations for the new chief, during his time as chief he has found himself in the crosshairs of scathing critiques from some in the African-American community, "When the mayor hired Serpas he said he was the Drew Brees of police chiefs, I think it's an insult to Drew Brees," says Hester. Continuing she says "We are not going to sit idly by and watch NOPD kill our children."

The demand for action is beginning to resonate as communi-

ty leaders, organizers and activist are coming together in a unified effort against what they perceive as the injustices of the NOPD and feel that a change of leaderships is necessary even if it extends beyond police headquarters to City Hall. "The community is speaking loud and clear and we are asking for the termination or resignation of Chief Serpas. And now we may be asking for a recall of Mitch Landrieu, because some feel if he would have had a better handle on this situation with Chief Serpas these murders may not have hap-

Cover Story,
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Lusher Tops State in 2012 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

Lusher students receive 137 awards, 19 Gold Keys



Lusher Charter School students in grades 7-12 received 137 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Southeast Louisiana Region-at-Large Competition, earning more awards than any other school in Louisiana. The awards included one Personal Essay win, 19 Media Arts wins, 22 Visual Arts wins, and 95 Creative Writing wins.

Lusher received 19 Gold Keys (the competition's highest award), 18 for Creative Writing and one for Media Arts. In Creative Writing, these included Alex Mandella's Gold Key Senior Portfolio (one of two in the region) and Cecilia McAlear's Gold Key for Poetry, which also received

an American Voices Award nomination (one of five nominees out of the top-scoring submissions in the region). Other Gold Key winners in Creative Writing include: Elaine Arendt, Bixby Boss, Daisy Huck, Ethan LeMaire, Daniel Lovett, Royal Mitchell, Margot Rieth, Alex Mandella and Lucy Tucker for Poetry. Britain Forsyth, Margaret Kates (2 awards), Madeleine LeCesne, Hannah Schumacher, Bhakti Singh and Madeleine Yates earned awards for Flash Fiction. Bryan Smith was awarded a Gold Key for Creative Writing-Science Fiction and Katherine Hogan won for Media and Visual Arts. (Gold Key winners in photo on left)

All Gold Key works are for-

warded to the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers in New York City for national adjudication. Scholastic Gold Key winners are eligible to apply for a range of scholarships, ranging from summer study to college.

"We are so proud of our students and the recognition they have received from Scholastics," said Lusher CEO Kathy Riedlinger. "Lusher's rigorous academic and art-based program has continually been recognized nationally and I applaud the hard work and dedication of our students and faculty."

Silver and Gold Medal winners will be invited to the awards ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City on June 1st.

Couple Launches New Website To Show How They Lost 300 Pounds Through BetterChoices

BetterChoices® website offers free healthy lifestyle tips, recipes, exercise videos and inspiration

Married couple Eric and Maleka Beal, who have collectively lost 300 pounds, today officially launched their new website to

help others create a healthy lifestyle through their BetterChoices® concept.

The new website, www.BetterChoices.com features health and exercise tips, recipes, cooking and exercise videos, lifestyle tools,

food facts and a BetterChoices Mindset blog. The website also features Eric and Maleka's inspirational story of how they lost and maintained a 300 pound weight loss for six years.

"Maleka and I are excited

about launching the BetterChoices website that provides lots of information, inspiration and tips to help others on their journey to creating a healthy lifestyle," said co-founder, Eric Beal. "There is something for everybody. It's not

just about health and fitness. It's not just about food. It's about better choices that can be applied to every aspect of your life."

"We wanted to create a comprehensive resource for people," said Maleka Beal, co-founder of BetterChoices. "We break down each topic and put it into a context whereby people can fully understand the concepts and apply them. We not only cover what you should do, but we explain the how and the why. You have all three aspects that make it easier to implement better choices."

Co-founded by the Beals, BetterChoices is designed to help change an individual's thought process and views about weight loss in order to create a healthy lifestyle. Collectively, the Beals have lost more than 300 pounds by making better choices every day. Eric and Maleka believe that once you change your thought process, you WILL change your life. In addition to free resources, the Beals offer fee-based coaching, seminars and webinars.

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Fashion Week New Orleans 2012



Design by Lawren Michele



Tracee Dundas



Tracee and The Team



Design by Kano Branon

By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Stewart Johnson

New Orleans is a place that has the splendor, beauty and magnificence that rivals cities across the globe. It has garnered an enviable reputation as a place that stimulates the visual palate rivaling the romance and architecture of Milan or Paris. It is truly an international City that people come to experience for its unique culture that is unmatched compared to other cities in the U.S. While New Orleans is known for its food and music, the City is poised to becoming a major player in the fashion industry. Fashion Week New Orleans is in its second year and continues to grow and is becoming a coming-out party for those who are on the verge of success and those already established staples in the world of fashion.

Tracee Dundas is the Creative Director of Fashion Week New Orleans. She is sophisticated, petite, pretty and full of humility as she talks about her brainchild and how it came to fruition, "I have a background in fashion and over the years I've kept my foot in the door in the industry in various capacities," says Dundas. Recalling the day when she envisioned producing a fashion event in New Orleans she says, "I was just looking at New York's Fashion Week and as time passed later I started to notice other cities that were not fashion meccas such as Portland, Charleston and others, I never thought that fashion weeks took place outside of the major fashion markets, Milan, Paris, New York. Continuing she says, "Of course I knew there were places like Atlanta or Dallas that produced events on

a smaller scale, but what I saw in these cities was success in small regional size markets filled a niche and I thought why not New Orleans. Because we are such a creative City, with our music, food, the appreciation of our architecture so I put some feelers out to some of my people in the fashion industry and asked if I put this together would I have their support in something that could have an economic impact on the City and they came aboard."

The event has grown adding several new things attendees can look forward to, "This is our second year producing FW NOLA and we can see the growth and excitement surrounding the event. It is from March 21-25 at the Sugar Mill," remarks Dundas, speaking of some of the new features of this year's event she says, "We've added a couple of new components, we will have a Bridal Showcase and we are also introducing a fashion career day that targets primarily college students who are studying various areas of the fashion industry and this as well as the bridal showcase will be taking place at the Westin Hotel."

There are several holdovers from last year's Fashion Week New Orleans, Designers Kano Brandon and Xiomara Del Carmen will be returning with new collections. In addition FW NOLA will showcase several new designers including Travis Hamilton and his Negril Lebrum Line and Lawren Michele collections will make their way down the runway for one of the more than 35 shows. FW NOLA retail partners for the second year in a row include Saks Fifth Avenue, Brooks Brothers, Prima Donna's Closet and Voluptuous Vixen.

As Hollywood South has become a driving new force in the economy of the City and the state there is an environment in New Orleans that is beginning to nurture those involved in the creative arts. Dundas, who has worked in the movie industry as a stylist and costumer says New Orleans may become the place where emerging designers use to create a solid foundation for their careers in fashion, "Since the inception of FW NOLA we have been approached about becoming an incubator program for designers, right now we are seeing how we can do it in a cost effective way that can give support to emerging designers; in addition to giving them a place to sell their goods, because after they design these amazing garments the question becomes how do they get them to market as well as mass producing them?"

Throughout its history New Orleans has been a grand City where many creative souls have come to be inspired. Now the fashion industry is beginning to take root and bearing fruit adding to the already colorful tapestry that is New Orleans. On these developments Dundas says, "I think New Orleans can become a major hub for fashion, but like anything else it's going to take time. This is the reason for Fashion Week New Orleans; we work as a platform for designers as well as the boutiques giving all of them an opportunity to show their collections and trends of the season. But we are hoping to bring the industry as a whole to our City, I believe in the days to come we can be a viable market for fashion like Dallas or Atlanta and maybe grow into a New York or Paris."

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

University of New Orleans Hosts Festival Brasileiro Data Around Town

Photos by Kichea S Burt



Leah Chase performing Brazilian Music at The Old US Mint free concert series for Festival Brasileiro 2012



Valentine Pierce performing her poetry at The Gold Mine Saloon in the French Quarter for the 17 Poets series - free on Thursday nights with open Mic.

Keep-N-It-Real Second Line Parade Highlights

Photos by Kichea S Burt



Keep-N-It-Real Social and Pleasure Club 2nd Line Parade on a stop at Seals Class Act Lounge



Keep-N-It-Real Social and Pleasure Club 2nd Line Parade with youth

If you have photos of parties or events you would like to run in DATA, please send to datanewsad@bellsouth.net for inclusion.

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

University of New Orleans Hosts Festival Brasileiro

Photos by: Kichea S Burt

University of New Orleans hosted a free concert at the UNO Performing Arts Center featuring Brazilian Musicians COMPANHIA MARIOCAS here in their first performance outside of Brazil. They were joined by our own CASA SAMBA, for the finale of FESTIVAL BRASILEIRO 2012.



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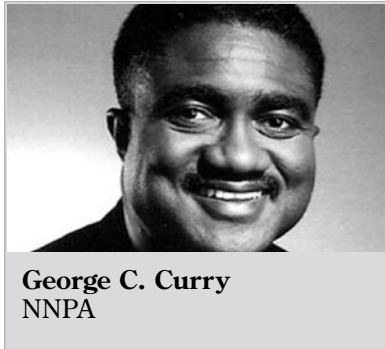
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The Vanishing Black Middle-Class



George C. Curry
NNPA

A chapter in the National Urban League's 2012 State of Black America report reached a sobering conclusion about the Black middle class.

"Our analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics will clearly establish that whether one looks at education, income or any other meaningful measure, almost all the economic gains that Blacks have made in the last 30 years have been lost in the Great Recession that started in December 2007 and in the anemic recovery that has followed since June, 2009.

"This means that the size of the Black middle-class is shrinking, the fruits that come from be-

ing in the black middle-class are dwindling, and the ladders of opportunity for reaching the Black middle-class are disappearing."

That's pretty strong language from the four authors: Chanelle P. Hardy, Valerie R. Wilson, Madura Wijewardena and Garrick T. Davis. But they provide strong figures to buttress their case.

The Black median household income in 2010 was \$32,106. That's 30 percent less than the comparable figure for Whites. In today's dollars, that's where the White median household income stood in 1980.

Even with the tremendous income gap, the Black median household income increased by 32 percent between 1992 and 2000. White income increased by 14 percent over that same time period.

The latest economic downturn has eroded many of those gains.

"The Great Recession and the recovery has led to a dramatic widening of the gap between White and Black middle-class income households," the report stated. "Although both Blacks and Whites suffered declining median household income dur-

ing and since the recession, the decline for Blacks has been considerably higher – between 2008 and 2010, White median household income fell by 2.9% while the Black median household income fell by 7.7%."

A similar decline can be seen in home ownership.

"Since the recovery, Black home ownership has been falling at just under twice the rate of White home ownership – from 2009 to 2011, Black home ownership declined by 1.4 percentage points while White home ownership declined by 0.9 percentage points. This means that almost all the gains in Black home ownership have been lost and now we are at a point where there are real reversals in Black home ownership."

Education, the ladder to upward mobility, is also going in the wrong direction.

"An especially troubling trend can be observed by looking at the fortunes of those with a 4-year college degree," the report observed. "The most significant impact of this trend has been on Black college graduates who saw their unemployment rates skyrocket to an average of 7.1% in 2011.

"This led to an unprecedented widening of the gap between Black and White college graduates – in 1972, the gap between the

unemployment rates of Blacks and White college graduates was 1.4 percentage points and in 2011 it had increased to 3.2 percentage points."

Middle-class can be defined generally as having income that places one in the middle of overall income distribution. And because White household income is more than 1.5 times Black income, a White family must earn more than African-Americans in order to be considered middle-class.

Even though Blacks still trail Whites in income, there was no significant Black middle-class before the modern Civil Rights Movement.

"...The Civil Rights Movement of the last 50 years forced open the door of full-fledged American prosperity to all those who had been barred from its many comforts in decades past, either through economic, legislative, a racial apartheid, or some institutionalized combination of all of the above," the report said.

After the Civil Rights Movement and affirmative action opened the doors of opportunity, they are now being slammed in our face. The National Urban League chapter on the Black middle-class did not address the issue of Black net worth, which has also been pummeled.

The Economic Policy Insti-

tute, analyzing data collected by the Federal Reserve, found that in 2004, the median net worth of White households was \$134,280, compared with \$13,450 for Black households. By 2009, the medium net worth for White households had declined by 24 percent to \$97,860. Over that same period, the medium net worth for African-American households had fallen 83 percent to \$2,170.

Despite the Republican crusade for smaller government, the National Urban League report argues that the federal government must be an active partner if these blows to the Black middle-class are to be reversed.

"Programs such as targeted job training, Pell grants, small business lending, pre- and post-purchase housing counseling, and Medicare and Medicaid provide the foundation which makes middle-class life possible," the report stated. "These programs should not, and must not be sacrificed in the hyper-partisan debate designed to produce political winners and losers."

George E. Curry, former Editor-in-Chief of Emerge Magazine and the NNPA News Service, is Editorial Director of Heart & Soul Magazine. He is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. Curry can be reached through his Web site, www.georgecurry.com you can also follow him at www.twitter.com/curry-george.

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What is Cancer?



Danyell S. Wilson, PhD
Guest Columnist

different groups of people).

The goal of this column is to decrease these health disparities by providing the science behind cancer.

So, let's discuss the science behind cancer. When I define cancer, I like to compare it to X-men. Think about it, what are X-men? They are mutants. How did they become mutants? There was a change in their DNA also known as their genes. Well, people who have cancer are similar to X-men. A mutation occurs in their DNA that is not corrected by their body and their normal cells become mutated cells. Now, normal cells in your body divide, grow, and die. Mutated cells do not die like normal cells. They continue to grow, and mutate, and grow and mutate on top of each other, until they form a mound or a tumor. The tumor then connects to the blood vessels to gain nutrients from its surroundings (your body). This starves the normal cells in the area. Parts of the tumor can

then break off and travel to other parts of the body. This process is known as metastasis (excellent 2 minute video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1Fkdt-2veM&feature=related>). The process of metastasis lets doctors know if a tumor is malignant (cancerous) or benign (not cancerous).

Now, just like the mutants in X-men, their name came from their mutated abilities (Wolverine looks like a wolverine and has claws in his hands, Storm controls the weathers etc.). Cancer cells mutate normal cells affiliated with specific organs. For instance, breast cancer equals mutated breast cells, lung cancer equals mutated lung cells, and prostate cancer equals mutated prostate cells and so on. Metastasis explains why some patients may be diagnosed with lung cancer that the doctors find in the liver or another part of the body.

There are tons of different symptoms and treatments for can-

cer and they depend on the stage, type, and individual. One way to not worry about treatment is to do your part on the front end to try and prevent the development of cancer. Believe it or not but according to the American Institute of Cancer Research, AICR (www.aicr.org) 35% of cancers in the USA, and 37% in the UK are preventable. By knowing risk factors, one could prevent or decrease the chances of developing cancer. Risk factors are different environmental, behavioral, lifestyle, and genetic things about a person that increases the risk of them developing cancer or other chronic diseases. Risk factors can lead to the development of mutations in the DNA that can lead to mutated cancer cells. By decreasing some of the risk factors, you can decrease your risk of developing cancer. To find out more about cancer risk factors, please visit: <http://www.cancer.gov/cancer-topics/causes>. If you think you may have any type of cancer, DO

YOUR RESEARCH: see if there is an available screening, talk to your doctor and nurse, and DO MORE RESEARCH to be more informed about your body.

To learn more about the science behind cancer, please visit:

<http://www.aacr.org/home/survivors--advocates/educational-series-on-science-and-advocacy/scientists-on-science/scientists-on-science-basic-biology-and-cancer.aspx>.

In this year's series of the Science behind Cancer, I will address individual cancer types, provide screening, treatment, prevention, and evidence based resources covering the following cancers: Prostate, Colorectal, Breast, Brain, Leukemia, Cervical, and Lung Cancers.

For everyday healthy lifestyle tips, please check out the Campaign B.E.W.E.L.L on Facebook and Twitter @BEWELLnotGETWELL. For questions about the science behind Cancer follow me on Facebook (Danyell Wilson), www.Danyellswilson.com or email me at contact@DanyellSWilson.com.

Where We Enter: Black Women and HIV-Prevention Research

by Dazon Dixon Diallo

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a Black woman's issue—a clear-cut, yet complicated, consequence of Black women's disempowerment, sexual and reproductive oppression and high rates of gender-based violence. Poverty and violence are key drivers of Black women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. More than 23 percent of U.S. Black women live in poverty, and Black women and teen girls experience disproportionately high rates of community and intimate-partner violence. The epidemic also disproportionately affects Black women because they have been getting infected with HIV since the U.S. AIDS crisis began in 1981, but the epidemic raged unchecked for 10 years before public-health experts acknowledged this truth. So while we comprise less than 7 percent of the U.S. population, we comprise 66 percent of women living with HIV, or about 20 percent of the U.S. HIV-positive population.

These facts beg the question: When and where do Black wom-



Only the Black woman can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole...race enters with me.' — Anna Julia Cooper, born enslaved in 1852 but in 1924, the fourth Black American woman to earn a doctorate degree.

en enter the fight to end the epidemic in our communities?

In the past several years, scientific advances in how to use pharmaceutical medications to prevent HIV transmission have occurred rapidly and yielded remarkable results—and some of these discoveries have involved Black women.

We know that behavior interventions do work, but not effectively enough alone to reduce rates of new HIV infections. And anti-retroviral drugs—the medicines that help HIV-positive people stay healthy and live longer—can also be effective in preventing HIV transmission. By combining be-

havioral approaches with the biomedical tools being developed, the end of AIDS now lies within our reach, the HIV advocacy and scientific communities and U.S. government agree.

But thus far, studies on Black women have been conducted in Africa in ideal clinical-trial conditions. Other than small safety studies, very few Black women in the U.S. have participated in these clinical trials. Our incidence rates are high for the U.S., but not high enough compared to the rates in other countries to enroll Black American women in big, international trials. Given this scenario, how will U.S. Black women utilize these drugs in real-world settings—and will these drugs actually reduce their vulnerability to acquiring HIV? That remains to be seen. The studies currently underway do not reduce women's need for: effective, culturally relevant behavioral interventions; reductions in gender inequities and more community-level interventions; or female-controlled prevention options such as fe-

male condoms and microbicides. But they do provide opportunities to increase women's health and research literacy; spotlight the intersections of HIV, reproductive health and violence against women; help the U.S. achieve the aims of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy; and advance advocacy on special populations of women, such as sex workers and victims of intimate-partner violence.

When women learn to take charge of their health—whether about HIV or other chronic or life-threatening issues—powerful and inspirational transformation takes place. I have witnessed even the most marginalized women become leaders and advocates, pressing critical matters that Black women need to hear and to heed, and demanding that research strategies, such as the ones that are soon to impact them, include them from the beginning.

Dazon Dixon Diallo is the Founder, President and CEO of SisterLove, a Reproductive-Justice Organization for women, with a focus on HIV/AIDS.

Daughters Of Charity Services Of New Orleans Reachs Agreement On New Orleans East Site

NEW ORLEANS, LA - Today, the Orleans Parish Hospital Service District "A" (HSD Board) announced that it has reached a cooperative endeavor agreement with Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans (DCSNO) regarding primary care services for the New Orleans East community.

The agreement will allow the HSD Board to provide land to DCSNO through a long term lease, where a 15,000 square foot Primary Care Facility will be built. Mobilization and construction will be-

gin this summer, with completion scheduled for Fall 2013. DCSNO will begin providing primary care services at a temporary facility in New Orleans East within 60 days.

"Delivering a full-service hospital to residents in New Orleans East has been a top priority of my administration, and this agreement with DCSNO marks another milestone towards that goal," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "Primary care operations are critical to the operation of a full-service hospital."

"This is an important develop-

ment for citizens of New Orleans East, who are one step closer to having a full service hospital," said Ronnie Burns, Chairman of the Hospital Service District Board.

"For more than 175 years, the Daughters of Charity have provided access to compassionate health care for all members of our community," said Michael Griffin, President and CEO of Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans. "We are dedicated to improving the health status of the community, with special atten-

tion to the poor and underserved. And, we are especially committed to delivering the same high-quality care to residents of Eastern New Orleans as we do at our sites in Bywater, Carrollton and Metairie."

The new Primary Care Facility will be funded through an arrangement that leverages public and private investments from DCSNO (\$2 million), a settlement from a charitable healthcare fund (\$1 million), and CDBG funding from the HSD Board through the City (\$2 million).

Once built, the new state-of-the-art facility will offer primary care, pediatric care, pharmacy services, behavioral health and prenatal care to over 20,000 individuals in New Orleans East annually.

The HSD Board meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at the Liberty Bank Center, 6600 Plaza Drive, 5th Floor Training Room. Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend these public meetings.

To learn more about the HSD, please visit www.hsdeast.org.

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pened," says Parnell Herbert.

In a statement issued by the Louisiana Justice Institute in a show of unity among different constituencies in the community it states, "Wendell Allen's murder raises significant Civil Rights issues, again, and reminds this community that nearly one-year since the U.S. Department of Justice's report concerning severe dysfunction within NOPD, that system has regressed," according to Attorney Tracie L. Washington, Director/Counsel for Louisiana Justice Institute. The assembled groups and community members have sent their letters to NOPD, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Justice, District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro, and Mayor Mitchell Landrieu, calling for immediate access to critical information and actions to redress systemic problems within the Criminal Justice System.

In it lists several demands: That District Attorney Cannizzaro immediately convene a Grand Jury to investigate the fatal shooting of unarmed Wendell Allen by NOPD Officer Jason Coclough, and request appropriate criminal charges. That the U.S. Department of Justice and Office of Civil Rights open an investigation immediately into any NOPD officers' involved shooting and allegation of excessive use-of-force, and allow public access to all findings at the earliest appropriate time, and that Mayor Mitchell Landrieu attend a meeting of community groups to

discuss his plans to address the growing sea of distrust between the NOPD and the people of New Orleans they are sworn to serve.

The statement by the groups of citizens and organizations also reads, "The tragic fatal shooting of Wendell Allen by the NOPD, the unanswered questions regarding the investigation of this calamity, the outstanding questions regarding the shooting of Earl Sipp in police handcuffs and the fatal shooting of Justin Sipp - these events alone are alarming enough; but when considered with the surge of violent crime, and the mounting credibility challenges facing Superintendent Serpas; and the fundamental failure of the NOPD command to respectfully and effectively engage the public in the fight against violent crime have resulted in a toxic and volatile atmosphere of distrust that threatens the peace and safety of every New Orleanian. It is imperative that leadership act immediately and transparently to begin to address the evaporation of public confidence in the NOPD and City government leadership."

Justice or Just "Us"

Race and inequality in the Criminal Justice System has been at the forefront of many of the incidents that have happened throughout the history of a nation where racial animus is still an ongoing problem in the U.S. and is ingrained into the system and many of its institutional practices. While citizens' complaints



Sandra Wheeler Hester, "My son is 20 years old and he's a Black male, it really touches home for me because that could be my son lying in a casket."

are still high, the number of fatal shootings while alarming are still low according to Susan Hutson citing statistics on shootings she says, "Last year there was only 2 fatal shootings in 2011, and there was only 3 in 2010, so this year we already have 3. We usually have between 40 and 50 officer discharges per year whether they hit something or not. 42 in 2010, 45 in 2011 and those aren't large numbers."

But as the number of complaints and outcry from the community is sounding the alarm of what they have had to endure for many years as what they allege is standard practices by some offi-

cers within the NOPD, "First of all they don't have any respect for us and they show it in the way they deal with us. While they may have had sensitivity training usually they conduct themselves in ways that are very unprofessional. I am more afraid if I were stopped by the police while I am driving than the criminals on the street," says Hester.

Hutson in her work with the IPM data supports these claims and says that most of the claims of misconduct of officers that are accused of being unprofessional and rude, "The most common complaint is about the lack of professionalism and are discourteous," says Hutson. "There is just a lack of respect for Blacks when it comes to those in law enforcement and our rights; and there is a history of these practices that supports this and it must stop now; we are committed to changing what we see as unfair treatment of the Black community" says Herbert.

Unity and Community

Members of the community are incensed at what they felt was unthinkable on the part of the Landrieu Administration where they allege that Mayor Landrieu

offered the Allen family that the City would pay for Wendell Allen's funeral. Sandra Hester who says she was one of those who advised them to not let the City pay for the funeral and stated that the community would instead, "I was one of the people who advised the family not to take the offer, Ms. Allen told us the City offered to pay for the funeral and it didn't sit right with me, as far as I'm concerned if this problem with Serpas would have been dealt with that woman's child would still be alive. If he would have wrung him in, some of this may not have happened." Herbert also was part of the group advising the family not to take the offer says, "Why of all these cop killings of citizens why are they offering to pay for this one, because they know they are dead wrong and they are trying to do everything they can to smooth that situation over."

Today the gulf between the police and the citizens are at a boiling point and the temperature is rising. But those who are activist in the community note that they are not in any way anti-police. They are anti-corruption and want the police to do what they are charged to do and that is to serve and protect the community. "Don't get me wrong we have a lot of people out here who are committing heinous crimes against each other that need to be locked up. And recently more

Gloomy Outlook for Black America, Scholars Conclude

By Herb Boyd
Special to the NNPA
(New York Amsterdam News)

A group of leading Black intellectuals met at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to discuss the current plight of African-Americans in the United States.

Curiously, at the recent forum, which took place Feb. 26th and was entitled "Black America: A Prescription for the Future," alongside their programs, attendees were given an article published in the Journal of Negro Education in 1936.

That conference apparently ended without the delegates accepting any of the proposed solutions.

Those participants might have benefited from the work of the panelists at the Schomburg, particularly the remedies offered by Dr. Bernard Anderson, Dr. William Julius Wilson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and Dr. Richard Kahlenberg.

In 1936, with the solutions seeming unacceptable, the delegates agreed that a next step was necessary and they called for a National Negro Congress under the auspices of the great labor leader A. Philip Randolph.

More than 75 years later, Norman Hill provided a living connection to Randolph at the Schomburg as President Emeritus of the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI).

Hill's task was to set the stage for the panelists with an overview of the Civil Rights Movement, and he did that quite elaborately, covering from 1896 to 1965.

Hill delivered his presentation after a general welcome from the moderator, Professor Jerald Po-

dair, and greetings from Vincent Alvarez, President of the New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Clayola Brown, President of the APRI; and a representative from the NFL Players Association standing in for Executive director DeMaurice Smith.

To address the problems facing Black America, Hill said the renewed movement would be wise to follow the principles and credo of his mentor, Randolph.

"At the banquet table of nature," Hill began, quoting Randolph, "There are no reserved seats. You get what you can take and you keep what you can hold. If you can't take anything, you won't get anything, and if you can't hold anything, you won't keep anything."

And you can't take anything without organization." A barrage of statistics came from Anderson and Wilson, with only the cogent words of Sharpton providing a pause. An esteemed economist, Anderson's analysis is often found in the National Urban League's Annual State of the Nation Report.

He shared some of that information with a fairly sparse but attentive audience.

On the question of jobs, Anderson said, "Blacks comprise 20 percent of the unemployed."

And that number may be even higher if you include those no longer looking for work and the underemployed. "When you stop looking for work, you are no longer listed among the unemployed," he said.

His was a litany of despair as he compared the prospects of Blacks to a train's caboose. "No matter how fast the train is going, the caboose [Blacks] will never catch

up to the engine [Whites]."

Sharpton's main thesis had less to do with comparing Blacks to Whites and more to do with the expanded Black middle and upper-class and the poor or lower-class they've left behind. "What we did during the Civil Rights Movement was to empower and create a Black upper-class while ignoring the Black lower-class. Our Black billionaires sold their businesses and cashed out.

"We have to get back to a bottom-up movement," he continued. "It's time to get back on track."

Getting back on track, he insisted, would entail paying attention to the GOP and its aim to suppress the Black and minority vote and, with the help of the Supreme Court, put an end to affirmative action.

"I agree with Dr. Anderson: We must, in the tradition of Frederick Douglass, agitate, agitate, agitate!"

Many of the dismal conclusions recited by Wilson merely confirmed what Anderson had already presented.

And like Anderson, he said "it will take generation for the Black family to catch up with the White family" in terms of wealth and income.

"Seventy percent of Black children who now live in poor communities will continue to live there as adults," Wilson added.

The shift in demographics, he explained, has created largely African-American core centers in our major cities. "The Black middle-class has abandoned the inner city and now populates the suburbs," he said.

So what's to be done? "President Obama, rather than specifying a bill that would target Black

Americans, needs to create a bill designed to create public sector jobs," Wilson said.

Of course, most of the people who would benefit from such a bill would be Blacks.

Kahlenberg's report was equally depressing as he focused on the gross disparities between Black and White school children.

He observed that since Black primary and secondary students attend schools in poor areas, they are less likely to receive a quality education and not get the same books, new technology or audio-visual equipment as a White school district.

Unlike one of the conclusions reported by Wilson, Kahlenberg said that Black students perform "better when given a chance to attend better schools."

His solution to some of the problems hindering Black empowerment centers around what he calls "a new type of affirmative action," one based not on race but on class.

"Blacks would still be the greatest beneficiary of an economic approach, since they are the worst off," Kahlenberg concluded.

After four hours, with other pressing engagements, it wasn't possible to hear Velma Murphy Hill's summary, but it's conceivable that she arrived at a conclusion very similar to the one in the article back in 1936, which declared that another step is necessary for a better "prescription for the future."

In other words, past is prologue—or the more things change, the more they remain the same.

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people have been cooperating with the police in these crimes, but with these recent shootings it has the potential of breaking down in trust between the citizens and NOPD," says Hester.

"We have a long way to go in the area of the police and citizens working together, right now the situation is very polarized with these recent shootings, we must

now work even harder to get past this because we need the police and we need the public for community policing and we've got a long way to go to bridge that gap," says Susan Huston.

Sandra Hester is not only an activist but a mother and her words sum up what a lot of people are feeling in the community after these shootings where two young

men under questionable circumstances have lost their lives after encounters with the NOPD. "We have quite a situation here, there is no reason these things should have happened, and another thing that got to me is that my son is 20 years old and he's a Black male, it really touches home for me because that could be my son lying in that casket. I talk to him and

a lot of kids in the community about what to do when you have an encounter with a police officer. Remain calm, try to stand as still as possible, don't argue with them, just comply with whatever they say because they can kill you and take your life away."

Send comments about this story to ebmediagroup3@yahoo.com or datanewseditor@bellsouth.net



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