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March 28 - April 3, 2015 49th Year Volume 48 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive



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What A 21st Century Black Woman?

By Robin G. Vander, PhD.

A Question Posed...

Last Friday, a few friends and I attended a dynamic staging of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, produced by the incomparable Carol Bebelle of Ashé Cultural Arts Center. Anyone attending the performances over the weekend would attest to a palpable energy filling the space, a sense of purpose, celebration, and ongoing concern about the well-being and status of women worldwide. The diversity in the theater, both in the audience and on the stage, reflected shared sensibilities that communities must remain engaged in conversations and reflections about women's experiences, challenges, possibilities, and the ways we might individually and collectively support efforts that allow each of us to reach her fullest potential—however defined. The life stories that comprised the performance text were the life stories too many women might readily find familiar. Stories of suppressing women's desires. Stories about women understanding then learning to love their bodies. Stories that condemn the violation of women's bodies. Stories reminding us of the grace and strength of women's bodies to birth another into the world. These stories warrant contemplation and they spark more conversations and questions about women's experiences.

Recently, I was asked the question: "What does it mean to be a woman in the Twenty-First Century?" But again, "What does it mean to be a 21st Century Woman?" A question posed to me, I extended to others. Perhaps, my own first response to the question is simply: To be a woman in the Twenty-First Century/a 21st Century Woman is to know that I don't have all the answers but that I have the intellectual tools to go in search of them. That when given a platform to speak my mind and to have a voice, it is more than okay to share the space and opportunity with others. I've done just that, here. What follows are short responses by a few extraordinary women who were generous, insightful, and joyous in responding.



Robin Vander, PhD.



Carol Bebelle

Well, I think a couple of things. You gotta look a little bit at what the age is and for someone who's a baby boomer, and that's who I am, it means that the world changed on you. You grew up when women were aspiring to be mothers, that blended families were the exception and not the rule. That women who didn't have children were women that couldn't have children for the most part. And, today, we live in a world where women are liberating themselves from work. Making the choice not to marry. Making the choice to be with other women. Making the choice not to have children. Navigating all

of that and often doing it not really coming from this central place of "What do I want?" Often, we're negotiating circumstances and not the pursuit of our heart's desire.

We're more clear about the fact that the world is in a stage where it is taking quantum leap after quantum leap in terms of how we're growing. I find it very exciting. We [Ashe Cultural Arts Center] had a young woman, Ytasha Womack, she's written a book called *Afrofuturism*, and she was here lecturing. Advising us about being intentional and present to the fact that we sit this moment, in the present, on the cusp of the future and are our steps being arced to continue the path that we're on or toward the thing that we want? Whether or not this day is about continuing what we did yesterday? Or, is this day about being able to aim toward what we want tomorrow?

I think that being a woman is just this really exciting thing. It's really full of love juice. And, the notion that we are putting forward, for instance, in the *Vagina Monologues*, is not that we would pull back on that, but that we would also understand that we're entitled to the showering of the love juice too. That we deserve it and that part of what we should be pursuing and taking care of is the notion that we're getting that as well.

Cover Story, Continued on next page.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
 Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Dr. Kimberly Chandler

Living Black and Woman in the 21st Century for me means living free. It means I have the choice and obligation to experience the full range of my humanity. It means I stand on the shoulders of others while I pioneer my pathway. It means owning myself. It means embodying every element of my Divine construction. It means hating when it is necessary. It means fighting when it is required. It always means living wholeheartedly. It means joy is my birthright. As I approach the half-century mark, I am keenly aware that

my Higher Power and I walk as one. And because She and I do, grace and mercy follow me, while truth and love lead me through this journey called life.



Eleanor M. Chapital

A 21st Century Woman can be characterized in many ways. She is evolved, intelligent, versatile, independent, politically and business savvy, faithful and faith-filled, conscientious, and autonomous. However, she may not be perceived as such. She serves in many roles such

as mother, wife, sister, lover, friend, entrepreneur, and caregiver of elderly parents and/or other family members.

The 21st Century Woman works full time, provides for her family (with a spouse or as single parent), volunteers in support of numerous causes, and serves as a role model for the next generation. In addition, she is at the forefront of society's most prominent issues; social justice, mass incarceration, technological and scientific advancements; and advocating for equal pay for equal work in comparison to her male counterparts.

The 21st Century Woman is often encouraged to care for and treat herself. Self-care is often the last thing on the woman's to do list! She is often challenged to find balance in her professional and personal life. She is no longer the traditional "girl next door," or the "be seen and not heard" woman. Instead,

she's the outspoken, assertive woman who makes a difference in her home, work setting and the community-at-large.



Lisa Green-Derry

Yes, I am a Twenty-First Century Woman in the 21st Century, and that means for me that I'm prepared. I've been prepared by women who lived in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. My ancestors. My sister-ancestors. My mother-ancestors. So I'm prepared for everything.

For the good, the bad, and the ugly. I'm prepared to live, to enjoy, and to do what the ancestors have done for me. To pass it on to my sister-descendants, my daughter-descendants, my grand-daughter-descendants. That's what it means to be a woman, a Black woman, in the Twenty-First Century.



Saundra J. Reed

I've lived at least five different lifetimes and five different iterations of being a woman: The woman I thought I was. The woman I was at that time. The woman that I claim to be. The wom-

an that I am yet to be. I lived through segregation, civil rights, independence, and women's rights. Being married, being single, and being a mom. Always believing in the Higher Order and the power of God in my life. I know now what I didn't know then, and I don't yet know what I shall know—but I'm open to it. My life is consumed by things that continue to create and recreate me, and often times recreate me as well. Being a woman is being possibility itself. Just like in the dawn of time I was created as a creation to create. And that's who I am. I love children. I love laughter. I love music. I love men. I love being down for the cause; the cause of righteousness about other people, righteousness about ourselves. Education and the possibility that all things are at my fingertips. What is it like to be a Twenty-First Century Woman? It is yet to be discovered.

Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

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Black Congo Square New World Rhythms Festival

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation celebrated the music and culture of the African diaspora at the eighth annual Congo Square New World Rhythms Festival, March 21-22, in Armstrong Park. The free event celebrated the cultural diversity of New Orleans and the melting pot of traditions and featured the music and dance of Africa, the Caribbean, the American Gulf South and beyond in this two-day, family-friendly festival.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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Trailblazer

Kourtney Heart

Kourtney's Heart of Gold

by: Edwin Buggage

Many may know Kourtney Heart as a talented young singer who blazed upon the scene as a teenage sensation mentored by Producer and DJ Raj Smoove who a few years ago scored a hit record "My Boy" featuring the late Magnolia Shorty. She later signed to Jive Records and did a remix of "My Boy" featuring Soulja Boy. She is a true talent as an entertainer but what many do not know is that she has a heart of gold and is dedicated to giving back to the community.

"I'm a firm believer in spreading awareness and positivity, so whenever I have the opportunity to give back I never hesitate. I just recently teamed up with Pinkberry to help raise money for a wonderful foundation for young girls called PINKHouse. I was truly proud to be involved because I am a product of a youth program myself. That's how I started singing," says Heart. The month of March is Women's History Month, a time that we reflect on the contributions of many great women. While there have been many who have influenced and inspired her; she reserves the top spot for her mother.

"The first woman, and most important woman I



know, would have to be my mother! My mom is one of the strongest women I know, and she's the most supportive and dedicated person I know. She's literally like my hero. Just seeing everything that she's gone through in life and how she sacrificed her dream to help me chase my dream is so incredibly amazing. I love my mom so much!" Continuing she says, "I also ap-

preciate women who aren't afraid to be themselves in a world that's so opinionated and judgmental. I'm only twenty-one years old so sometimes I'm easily overwhelmed by overthinking, and I appreciate the women who aren't afraid to mess up. That reminds me that we all are hard-working. But most importantly, we're human, and it inspires me to continue to explore my

journey on earth."

Whether one desires to be or not when one is in the public space people look up to them. While some feel they do not have

a responsibility to be a role model Heart feels it is important to align herself with causes that uplift and inspire people.

"I have to be honest, because I know there are young girls watching the things I do. I do try to be careful of what I choose to display publicly. But at the same time, I just try to stay grounded and as honest as I could be. Growing up, I lived vicariously through people I admired. So, I hope I'm being a positive light to all the women who admire me," says Heart.

She spends a lot of her time speaking to young girls about how to dream big. And as someone who is making her dreams come true speaks about her journey to make them a reality.

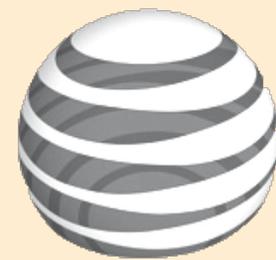
"I love to talk about my journey only because I see so many young women doubting themselves and lowering their expectations for their own lives. When I was younger I was always afraid to truly go after my dream. But with

great advice and comfort, I gained the confidence to grind. I love to tell them about my struggles just to remind them that we are all the same and they can do whatever they want as long as they work for it. I talk about self-esteem, confidence, dreams, and education, anything about life that I always wanted to talk about growing up."

Although just 21 years of age Kourtney Heart has become an inspiration for people of all generations who have dreams. Through her hard work she's shown that hard work and perseverance pays off. Saying of what one can learn from her life's journey.

"I think what women can take away from my journey is that I'm still not where I want to be. I'm a colorful, confused, emotional firecracker, but I'm still here chasing my dream, and I live everyday like it's my last. Dreams do come true as long as you work hard and pray harder."

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I Had a Heart Attack

By George E. Curry
NNPA Columnist

Nothing was more startling than when a cardiologist looked me directly in the eyes and said matter-of-factly: "It looks like you had a heart attack." I was dumbfounded. When? Where? How much damage was done? Why didn't I know it?

It certainly didn't feel like I had suffered a heart attack.

I had just covered and participated in the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, Ala. The ceremonies had special significance to me because as a senior at Druid High School in Tuscaloosa, I had participated in the last day of the march in Montgomery, where I saw James Baldwin and Harry Belafonte for the first time.

Ann and I arrived a day early,

had dinner with Susan Gandy, the youngest of my three sisters, who had driven over to Montgomery from Tuskegee with her husband, Iverson, Jr., and my niece, Rachel.

In addition to covering the president's speech Saturday, I had received a Freedom Flame Award that night and on Sunday morning was one of the speakers at the Martin and Coretta King Unity Breakfast. I walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Sunday and completed my writing and editing for the NNPA News Service on Monday.

We stopped in Buford, Ga. Tuesday en route back to Washington, D.C. to visit Ann's son, Derek Ragland; his wife, April, and our grandkids, Austin, 5, and Autumn 1.

On Wednesday night, I felt a slight pain in my chest, but dis-

missed it as indigestion. It continued Thursday night. When the pain persisted Friday night, Ann insisted on taking me to the hospital and I acquiesced.

We ended up at Emory Johns Creek Hospital. To Ann's disbelief, I grabbed my iPad mini, a book, my charger, and a notebook as we headed out of the door. I know how long the wait can be in emergency rooms and did not want to be without reading material if I became trapped in the waiting lounge.

But once my symptoms were shared with the intake nurses, I was whizzed through the paperwork and placed in a room to wait for a doctor, to be administered an EKG and, of course, give blood.

"We're going to keep you overnight to see what's happening," the attending physician told me.

From the way he said "keep me," I deduced that they were not keeping me around just to get to know me better. Something was amiss and I wasn't sure what it was. I was wheeled into a private room in the Intensive Care Unit, where I was closely monitored around the clock, had blood extracted – usually at ungodly hours – and hooked up to a series of instruments. A hospital is not place to get sleep; it's the only place in the world where they wake you up to give you a sleeping pill.

I was told around midnight that at 7 a.m. Saturday, a stent would be inserted into my heart to unblock a clogged artery. At the age of 50, I had a triple bypass. I had played quarterback at Druid High and Knoxville College and neither drank – not even wine – smoked nor used illicit drugs. Yet, an ath-

letic past and clean living were not sufficient. I was the son of the South and I had grown up in a family where our grease was cooked in grease.

Now, 18 years later, I was told that of the three bypassed arteries, one was completely blocked, one was 97 percent blocked, and one was functioning fine. The surgery itself was not as dramatic as the bypass, which required the heart to be stopped temporarily. This time, the cardiologist made an incision in my groin, placed a stent over a balloon catheter and slid it into the heart muscle to improve blood flow. I was awake, but did not feel any pain.

From there, the ICU nurses – especially Glenn, Rene, KayLee and Shig – took fantastic care of me.

Commentary,
Continued on page 7..

March Madness, Race, Sports and Money

By Everett L. Glenn
NNPA Columnist

The NCAA men's basketball tournament, better known as "March Madness" is back.

A total of 68 teams compete in a single-elimination game format highlighted by the "Sweet 16," the "Elite 8" and the "Final Four" from which a champion is crowned.

The 31 conference winners are awarded automatically berths. Another 37 teams are determined by a selection committee that chooses the best of the remaining teams. Forbes estimates that each victory is worth roughly \$256,000 and a trip to the Final Four is worth \$9.5 million for three weeks of basketball.

CBS and TBS paid the NCAA \$10.8 billion for joint broadcast rights to the tournament. Along with the steep price tag comes revenue from broadcasting the tournament, both on television and via other media outlets. CBS is estimated to have raked in about \$620 million from TV advertising alone, while revenues from "non-traditional" sources were reportedly up 20 percent. TV money for the NCAA basketball tournament is on top of conference deals. The Big-10 deal

will pay each school \$45 million annually. Pac-12 schools will each receive between \$25-30 million annually under their new deal. Big 12 schools will each receive \$20 million and each ACC school \$17 million under their new deals.

Conference tournament play leading up to March Madness is also lucrative. The ACC tournament will generate more than \$25 million in economic impact to Greensboro, where more than 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty level. The Pac-12 basketball conference will create an economic impact between \$25 million and \$27 million. The Big-10 tournament will generate double digit-millions for Indianapolis, ranked ninth among the poorest cities in the U.S.

On the mid-major level, the MAC tournament is predicted to generate \$14 million in economic impact to the city of Cleveland. A decade ago, Cleveland was considered the poorest big city in the U.S. and today, just one city of at least 250,000 people has a higher poverty rate than Cleveland. The MVC tournament is projected to generate more than \$16 million in economic impact to the city long regarded as

one of the poorest cities in the U.S., with a 32.3 percent poverty rate also considered one of the nation's most dangerous cities.

Led by the highest single-season payout in history, Duke's Mike Krzyzewski at \$9.6 million, 35 coaches are pulled down more than \$1 million in 2014. Most of them will also pocket 6-figure bonuses tied to remaining with the school and tournament performance. Virginia's Tony Bennett leads the way with a maximum bonus of \$1.4 million on top of a \$2.2 million base salary. A dozen or so coaches, all White, earn \$2.5 million or more per season, not counting benefits, incentives or any of the perks coaches routinely receive.

On the first Monday in April one coach will emerge with a celebratory strand of net and the national championship. Many more, if history holds, will cash in with new or considerably sweetened contracts. In 2006, for example, the coaches of six of the tournament's Elite Eight teams parlayed their success into new deals.

In addition to direct economic benefit, success in the tournament also translates to indirect economic impact. The unexpected NCAA

tournament run by mid-major Virginia Commonwealth University in 2011 translated into a 219 percent bump in licensing royalties, an increase of 25 licensees from 126 to 151. It has been reported that between \$100 and \$227 million will be wagered legally on tournament games through licensed sports books with another \$2.5 billion in illegal betting.

Mo' money, mo' money. The engine: Black basketball players. The majority institutions have parlayed Black athletic talent and college sports into big (\$8 million or more) business.

Today, Black players account for 58 percent of Division 1 college basketball players, while making up 2.8 percent of all students on the campuses of the teams from which the tournament champion will be crowned. The rosters of the 68 tournament teams will likely be even more colorful. According to Sonny Vaccaro, upwards of 99 percent of the star players are Black. Vaccaro should know. After signing his pioneering shoe contract with Michael Jordan in 1984, Vaccaro built sponsorship empires successively at Nike, Adidas, and Reebok. Nevertheless, Whites held 85 per-

cent of all head coaching positions in all three divisions (Division I, II and III) of men's basketball. Blacks held 22 percent of the head coaching positions, up from a low of 18 percent in 2012.

There was a gap of nearly 25 percent in graduation rates between White (89 percent) and (65 percent) Black players in last year's tournament.

The salary of a dozen or so White coaches is nearly half of the total athletic operating budget for the teams in the CIAA, MEAC, SIAC, SWAC and GCC, which cover everything from coaching salaries to equipment, game operations and scholarships. No wonder most HBCUs are struggling to stay afloat.

If it's "madness" in March, then what do you call the year round disparities resulting from the commercial exploitation of Black athletic talent?

Everett L. Glenn, an attorney and former sports agent, was one of the first agents to represent multiple NFL and NBA first-round draft picks in the same year. His clients have included three NFL Hall of Fame inductees and 11 first-round draft picks. He can be reached at eglenn@thensa.org.

NUL Report

Black America Remains in Crisis

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Senior Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NPA) – When it comes to the equality in America, a new report by the National Urban League says that Blacks are missing nearly 30 percent of the pie.

The annual State of Black America (SOBA) report compared how well Blacks were doing in economics, health, education, social justice and civic engagement.

In the introduction to the report, Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, wrote that “on many fronts, Black America remains in crisis – and we see justice challenged at every turn.”

Morial added: “The world watched as non-indictments of the police officers responsible for the deaths of unarmed Black males including Eric Garner, Michael Brown and John Crawford signaled that police accountability for taking Black lives was reaching a modern-day low – and that the widespread and dangerous mistrust between law enforcement and too many communities of color in America was reaching a new high.”

Morial also expressed concerns about separate and unequal resources in schools, double-digit unemployment in the Black com-



munity and continued attacks on voting rights.

The Black equality index increased from revised score of 71.5 percent in 2014 to 72.2 percent in 2015. In 2005, the Black equality index was 72.9 percent.

Higher scores in social justice (56.9 percent reported in 2014 report vs. 60.6 percent in the 2015 report) and health (78.2 percent vs. 79.8 percent) fueled the rise in the index. The economic indicator also rose slightly from 55.4 percent to 55.8 percent.

“The education (from 76.7 percent to 76.1 percent) and civic engagement (from 104.7 percent to 104 percent) indexes both declined slightly,” stated the report.

The report said that fewer Blacks are falling victim to violent crimes and a lower number of Black high school students are carrying weapons, which had a positive affect on the social justice index. The report also credited the Affordable Care Act and a decline in binge drinking for helping to improve the health index.

However, the report found that gaps in unemployment and homeownership widened.

“With an index of 65 percent, the smallest Black-White unemployment gap was in the Providence-Warwick, RI-MA metro area, where the Black unemployment rate was 13 percent and the white rate was 8.5 percent. Last year’s

most equal metro—Augusta-Richmond County, Ga.,-S.C.—fell to #13 this year as the Black unemployment rate increased from 13.3 percent to 16.5 percent and the White unemployment rate was essentially unchanged.”

Toledo, Ohio’s Black unemployment rate was 22.6 percent, the highest rate among the metro areas in the study.

The National Urban League also reported that the, “Black and white incomes were least equal in San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, Calif., where the gap was 42 cents on the dollar.”

Morial wrote that 2014 was a catalytic year propelled by cataclysmic circumstances, “little accountability for law enforcement responsible for killing unarmed Black men, teenagers and children; a continual assault on voting rights; widening economic inequality gaps; and an increasingly partisan education debate far more rooted in political agendas than in putting our children first.”

Morial continued: “While we celebrate the tremendous progress and transformation of our nation, we have a continuing need to be vigilant, to persevere and to protect past gains. We must not allow the forces of division, intolerance and right-wing extremism to turn back the hands of time.”

Commentary, Continued from page 6.

They could not have provided better care, even if that meant waking me constantly.

I had a follow-up visit and a stress test with Dr. Jigishu Dhabuwalla at the North Atlanta Heart and Vascular Clinic before being released to the care of Dr. Boisey O. Barnes, my regular cardiologist in Washington. I spoke with Dr. Barnes during this period and before I returned home, he had already discussed getting me into a heart rehabilitation program and enrolling me in a Harvard study to prevent second heart attacks.

After writing about my bypass 18 years ago, Bill Pickard, a Detroit businessman, said I had probably saved his life because he took some immediate steps to improve his health after reading about my challenge in Emerge magazine.

At the urging of “Uncle Mike” Fauvelle of Setauket, N.Y., I am writing about my second close call with death, hoping that it, too, will prompt you to not only pay closer attention to your health, but be aware of the small signs of trouble and do something about it immediately if you sense something is awry.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA) and BlackPressUSA.com.

Dillard’s Brain Food Lecture to Feature Sil Lai Abrams

On Tuesday, April 7th, Sil Lai Abrams, National Association of Black Journalist (NABJ) award-winning writer, inspirational speaker, and domestic violence awareness activist, will deliver the next Brain Food Lecture in Georges Auditorium at 7 p.m. on Dillard’s campus.

Sil Lai Abrams is founder and CEO of Truth in Reality, a media advocacy organization dedicated to changing the manner in which women of color and violence are portrayed on reality television programs. Through public awareness and educational campaigns, including digital media, specifically her weekly #RealityTVCheck tweet chat, Abrams engages audiences in conversations



about real-life social issues regarding gender-based violence. She also launched “Redefining HERstory, a campus-based educational and social action program that is currently in place on several college campuses. The organization seeks to mobilize individuals in a collective effort to changes the narratives and negative depiction of women of color on reality TV.

Abrams is a living testament of transformation through self-empowerment

as she has overcome addiction, mental health issues and domestic violence to become a nationally recognized expert on relationships and domestic violence. She has appeared on a number of TV shows including ABC, CNN, MSNBC, Al Jazeera, FOX, BET, and TruTV, to name a few. She has also been featured in national magazines such as Modern Woman, Oprah, Redbook, EBONY, Black Enterprise and Sister 2 Sister.

The event is free and open to the public. Seats are on a first come basis. For more information go to @DUBrainFood, visit www.dillard.edu or call 504.816.4800. There will not be a book signing after the lecture.

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