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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Essence Fest 2015

Bigger and Better than Ever



The Essence Festival has grown from a one-time event to a summer destination with people coming from around the world to experience this amazing weekend.

Data News Staff Report

It is 2015 and it is again the time of year where time nearly a half-million people converges on New Orleans for the Essence Music Festival from July-2-5 “The Party with a Purpose.” The festival has grown from a one-time event celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the publication in 1995 and has evolved into a summer destination with people coming from around the world to experience this amazing weekend. In addition the

Essence Festival brings in over 200 Million Dollars in revenue to the City.

This year as always will be explosive, exciting and enlightening with something for everyone. From the daytime seminars and party series, to Empower U: a life coaching series, there is also a Day of Service, where people are invited to take part in a community service project. There is the marketplace where people can support small businesses many owned by African-Americans and of course the nighttime where

the best of Black music light up the stage for several nights of amazing performances.

With all that is going on in the City for these fun-filled days the Staff of Data News Weekly have compiled a list of recommendations during the Fest. We at Data News Weekly as an African-American Newspaper that’s worked with the fest since the beginning welcomes Essence its sponsors and most of all those who come from all over the country to support our great City.

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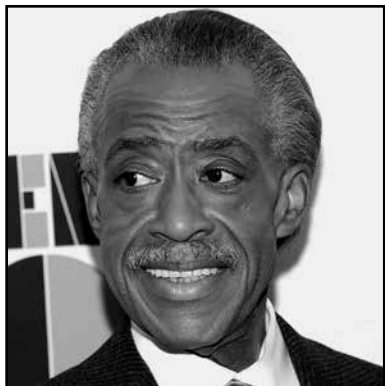
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Empowerment Seminars

All events listed are free



Rev. Al Sharpton

AL SHARPTON

Saturday Empowerment
Rev. Al Sharpton is the founder and President of the National Action Network (NAN), a not-for-profit Civil Rights Organization headquartered in Harlem, New York, with over sixty chapters nationwide including a Washington, DC Bureau and regional offices from coast to coast. Rev. Al Sharpton is currently the host of a daily television show on MSNBC that analyzes the top political and social news and features the country's leading newsmakers. "PoliticsNation" with Rev. Al Sharpton airs at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. [@theRevAl](http://www.nationalactionnetwork.net).



Iyanla Vanzant

Iyanla Vanzant

Saturday 5:35PM Empowerment
From welfare mother to New York Times' best-selling author, from the Brooklyn projects to two time winner NAACP Image Award, from broken pieces to peace, Iyanla Vanzant is one of the country's most prolific writers, public speakers and among the most influential, socially engaged and acclaimed spiritual life coaches of

our time. Executive Producer and Host of the breakout hit Iyanla: Fix My Life on OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network, Iyanla Vanzant's focus on faith, empowerment and loving relationships has inspired millions around the world.



Judy Reese

Judy Reese Morse

Friday 03:45PM Empowerment
Judy Reese Morse is Deputy Mayor for Citywide Initiatives for the City of New Orleans. Deputy Mayor Morse works closely with three priority initiatives: NOLA FOR LIFE, the City's comprehensive strategy to reduce murder among young, African-American men; Economic Opportunity Strategy, an effort that connects disadvantaged job seekers and businesses with opportunities to participate in the economy; and The Welcome Table New Orleans, an initiative on race, reconciliation and community building. Morse, who was a Presidential Management Fellow, has an undergraduate degree in Communications from Loyola University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from American University in Washington D.C.



Marvin Sapp

Marvin Sapp

Sunday 12:25PM Empowerment
Award-winning gospel superstar, author, and pastor, Marvin Sapp

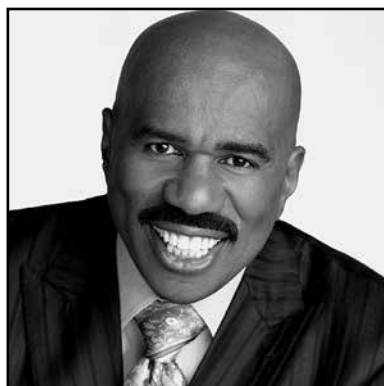
is set to celebrate his 10th solo album with the release of his highly anticipated new project, YOU SHALL LIVE, on RCA Inspiration (6/2/15). Known for his mega-selling single "Never Would Have Made It", which held down the #1 spot in gospel radio for almost a year, Sapp is currently touring the country preaching and promoting his new single "Yes You Can."



Soledad Obrien

Soledad O'Brien

Friday 04:45PM Empowerment
Soledad O'Brien is Founder and CEO of Starfish Media Group. She contributes reports for HBO Real Sports, National Geographic, Al Jazeera America, and other media organizations. She has anchored and reported for NBC, CNN and others, winning numerous awards, including three Emmys, the George Peabody, an Alfred I DuPont prize and the Gracie. O'Brien is also a critically acclaimed Author, a Speaker and Philanthropist. Follow her on Twitter: @soledadobrien



Steve Harvey

Steve Harvey

Saturday 12:30PM Empowerment
Steve Harvey is an Emmy-Award winning TV personality, Talk Show Host, Actor and Comedian. He currently serves as host of two popular TV shows in which he won Emmy Awards for in 2014; The Steve Harvey Show, which

premiered in 2011, and the game show, Family Feud, which he began hosting in 2010. He has hosted the nationally syndicated radio show, The Steve Harvey Morning Show, since its inception in 2000.

Sybrina Fulton

Friday 02:40PM Empowerment
Sybrina Fulton is dedicating her life to transforming family tragedy into social change. Since the death of her 17-year-old son, Trayvon Martin, Fulton has become an inspiring spokesperson for parents and concerned citizens across the country. Her message not only appeals to people's hearts as it relates to children, but is also one of hope and change, exemplified by her personal experiences and endeavors. As a mother, she inspires audiences to continuously educate their children about civil rights and to help them feel accepted as part of an ever-changing society. An honest and relatable speaker, Fulton always looks forward sharing her powerful message with everyone from colleges and legal professionals to community and family organizations, and all other proponents of social justice.

Marc Morial

Saturday 02:40PM Empowerment
Marc Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League, the nation's largest historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization. Morial served as the highly successful and popular Mayor of New Orleans as well as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He was a Louisiana State Senator, and lawyer in New Orleans with an active, high-profile practice. He is a leading voice on the national stage in the battle for jobs, education, housing and voting rights equity
Shows at the Superdome
As of press time tickets were still available for upcoming shows

Music

Charlie Wilson

Friday 09:25PM Main Stage
Charlie Wilson has been heralded as an icon and is sought after by today's chart topping contemporary artists. He has received multiple accolades during his career including nine Grammy nomina-

tions, a BET Lifetime Achievement Award and a Trumpet Award. He has performed his critically acclaimed concerts to sold out audiences both domestically and internationally. His latest album, "Forever Charlie" confirms that his 2015 Essence Festival performance will be bigger and better than ever.

Maze Feat. Frankie Beverly

Friday 11:15PM Main Stage
The tight Maze band, featuring Frankie Beverly with his smooth soulful vocals, has been bringing honest, raw soul music to fans worldwide for more than 40 years. This seven-member band began their rise in the mid-70's when Marvin Gaye heard them in San Francisco and took them on the road as his opening act. Treating audiences to heartfelt music from their many hit albums, Maze continues the tradition of being a crowd favorite at the Essence Festival.

Trey Songz

Thursday 07:45PM Main Stage
Tremaine Aldon Neverson was born in Petersburg, Virginia, a small town south of Richmond. Raised as an Army brat, Trey spent most of his earliest years moving from town to town. With his latest release, "TRIGGA," Trey Songz has found the true meaning behind his music and has prepared his most intimate album yet. The album is an honest and solidifies his bond with his adoring fan base. "TRIGGA" will extend the legacy of "I GOTTA MAKE IT" (2004), "TREY DAY" (2007), "READY" (2009), "PASSION, PAIN & PLEASURE" (2010) and the triumphant #1 RIAA Gold-Certified album "CHAPTER V" (2012).

Usher

Saturday 11:15PM Main Stage
This is a big year for Usher, as he continues his superstar journey from "Star Search" twenty years ago to movie star in 2015! He's currently on a world tour and finishing recording his eighth studio album. He's putting on boxing gloves to play Sugar Ray Leonard in "Hands of Stone," co-starring with Robert DeNiro, in theaters this year. And he's returning to

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Cover Story

New Orleans as a fan favorite at the Essence Festival! The eight-time Grammy winner has sold over 65 million records. His philanthropic endeavors include his New Look Foundation which empowers youth from impoverished communities to become leaders.

Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue

Sunday 08:00PM

Main Stage

Trombone Shorty, a guest star on Prince's 2014 Essence set, returns to the Essence mainstage in 2015 with his band, Orleans Avenue. Part James Brown, part Jimi Hendrix and all New Orleans, the Grammy®-nominated artist began his career as a bandleader at the age of six, was touring internationally by age 12, and joined the horn section for Lenny Kravitz' worldwide tour at the age of 19. In 2014 he backed Macklemore and Madonna on the 56th Grammy awards, performed the halftime show on the 63rd NBA All-Star Game and recorded "Feel Right" with Mark Ronson and Mystikal for Ronson's "Uptown Special" album.

Dee 1

Sunday 07:00PM

Art of Hip-Hop Superlounge



Trombone Shorty

Dee-1, a former middle-school teacher, first began making noise on the music scene several years ago. Since releasing his first studio project David & Goliath in 2009, he's earned international attention and acclaim from his passionate messages and his energetic live performances. Dee-1 signed with RCA Inspiration in 2013 and has continued to gain fans all over the world, as well as respect from his peers, politicians, college professors and teens. A 2014 BET Music Matters Artist, Dee-1 has toured with the likes of Macklemore, Lupe Fiasco and Lecrae. Featuring stand out singles, "Against Us" and "I'm Not Perfect," Dee-1's 3'S UP EP is currently available everywhere digital music is sold.

Mystikal

Saturday 07:20PM

Art of Hip-Hop Superlounge
The Billboard chart topping, Grammy nominated, "Prince Of The South" is back! With a career that's spanned over 20 years and multiple phases, from Big Boy Records, to Jive, to No Limit, and most recently Cash Money, Louisiana's own Mystikal is still going strong!

Tank and The Bangas

Saturday 07:00PM

Soul of R&B Superlounge
Have you ever been on a rollercoaster that you rode more than once? Still feel the same? Same rush? Well, get ready for that and

more with the thrill seeking, innovative, Tank and The Bangas. With a mixture of spoken word, zingy theatrics, and soul rousing music Tank and the Bangas have no problem going against the grain of what traditional New Orleans music is supposed to sound like. The Bangas create the perfect compositions for front lady Tank to take you somewhere. Going from the heart felt sunken words of spoken word to front row at a rock concert you'll be sure to experience what fans can only describe as "The best rollercoaster I've ever been on."

Tonya Boyd-Cannon

Saturday 07:55PM

Soul of R&B Superlounge

Mississippi-born, Louisiana-raised Soul Artist Tonya Boyd-Cannon began singing like many other daughters of preachers, in church. But unlike them Tonya possesses a fairly rare contralto voice which is almost identical to that of a countertenor. Tonya studied vocal performance in college to develop that gift. Focused on the road ahead, she continues to bring her distinctive voice and style to the stage and challenge the audience with amazing musical arrangements and lyrical content.

Robert Glasper

Sunday 09:30PM

Now Playing Superlounge
Persistently shunning genre boundaries, the Robert Glasper Experiment has cut a bold new sonic path with Black Radio and Black Radio 2. The GRAMMY-winning albums embody an amalgamation of sounds, pouring jazz harmonies over hip-hop rhythms, laced with R&B grooves and melodies. The Experiment's live show never ceases to change shape and form, always taking new angles on their already distinctive covers and originals alike.

Data News Weekly is Hiring

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

Editor/Reporters

About the Job

Journalists — tired of reading of layoffs, closings, the dire straights of the profession? Recent college graduates — think your job prospects are bleak? Not with us!

At Data News Weekly, we are expanding! This includes starting a print newspaper/digital endeavor in one of the most dynamic and exciting cities, New Orleans.

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If interested, send your resume, cover letter and at least three clips of your work to Terry Jones Publisher, Data News Weekly, 3501 Napoleon Ave, New Orleans, LA 70125, or via email to terrybjones@bellsouth.net. or call (504) 821-7421.

Sales Manager/Retail Ad Manager

About the Job

Data News Weekly Newspaper is the leading African American media company in New Orleans, publishing a weekly newspaper. Additionally, its website under ladatanews.com is the most read Black website in the region.

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- Identify, create strategies, develop influential contacts, and help close new digital products
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- Develop a team sales atmosphere

Our ideal candidate will possess the following education,

skills and experience:

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- Strong relationship building and client service background
- Strong organizational, communication and presentation skills
- Team player and leader
- Understanding of Analytics and ad serving technology
- Strong motivational skills
- Recruit talent

Our company provides a competitive salary, and an environment that encourages personal and professional growth. We are an equal opportunity employer.

If you are interested in a rewarding career, email a cover letter and resume to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net or mail to: Data News Weekly, c/o Terry Jones, Publisher, 3501 Napoleon Avenue, New Orleans LA 70125

Black Church Burnings May Be Backlash After Charleston Shooting

By Kate Briquet

One after another, predominantly black churches have burned down across the South in the wake of Dylann Roof's massacre. Some have been ruled arson—but are they hate crimes?

Days after the Charleston massacre, several predominantly black churches in the South have burned down. Now federal officials are investigating whether any of the blazes—three of which have been ruled arson—could be hate crimes.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, which highlighted the rash of fires, said the incidents “may not be a coincidence” in the wake of Dylann Roof killing nine people at a historically black church. Since the June 17 shooting, Southern states have also been embroiled in a debate over flying the Confederate flag.

“We’re in a very intense moment in which one man has tried to start a race war,” Mark Potok, a senior fellow at the advocacy firm, said in an interview. “We’re looking at the possibility of a violent backlash building.”

“Certainly we don’t know that they were hate crimes...but it’s possible one or more of these were responses to the defeat of the Confederate battle flag or white supremacists hoping to further the race war Dylann Roof wanted to start,” Potok added.

After the 3:30 a.m. blaze that destroyed Glover Grove Baptist Church in Warrenville, S.C., on Friday, the pastor told NPR he often discovered “KKK” scrawled on the building’s outside walls.

Pastor Bobby Jones, who lives



a few blocks away, could see the church’s flames from his house.

“It was devastating,” Jones told the Aiken Standard. “It was just an empty feeling. The more I talk about it, the more grievous I get.”

On Monday, state officials said the cause of the blaze was “undetermined” but that investigators “observed no element of criminal intent.”

The Federal Bureau of Investi-

gation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives are assisting South Carolina police with the case. The feds are also probing fires in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

The first fire was on June 21 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Police say vandals lit up bales of hay outside College Hill Seventh-day Adventist and the congregation’s church van. The incident was

ruled an arson, but officials don’t believe it was a hate crime.

Next came a June 23 arson at God’s Power Church of Christ in Macon, Georgia. Authorities are offering a \$10,000 reward for information on the fire, which gutted most of the building.

At the time of the blaze, the front doors were locked and wired shut, but a side door was not secured, officials said. The church had been

burglarized twice in recent weeks, with thieves stealing a sound system and air conditioners.

On June 24, authorities say arson destroyed Briar Creek Road Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. The three-alarm fire took an hour, 14 engines, and 75 firefighters to put out, The Charlotte Observer reported.

Aside from smoke damage, the church’s sanctuary was spared.

There were fires last week at Fruitland Presbyterian Church in Gibson County, Tennessee, and Greater Miracle Temple in Tallahassee, Florida.

Authorities believe the Gibson County fire was caused by a lightning strike and the Tallahassee blaze was sparked by electrical wires.

Officials are also investigating a fire at College Heights Baptist Church in Elyria, Ohio.

Richard Benton, chief of the Elyria fire department, said arson was ruled out in the blaze that destroyed the baptist church’s sanctuary.

Potok, of the Southern Poverty Law Center, told reporters he doubts most of the cases were racially motivated. But for now, it’s important to “sit back and wait” for the results of the investigations.

“This is striking a real chord of fear, especially in the African-American community and for perfectly legitimate reasons,” Potok said, adding that black churches have been targeted for almost their entire history. “There’s a deep well of feelings and fears.”

Kate Briquet writes for *The Daily Beast*.

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Jack'N for Beats Stops Through New Orleans

Offering Unsigned Hip-Hop Artists a Chance to Win \$10,000 and a Studio Session with DJ Khaled

Jack'N for Beats is coming to New Orleans in search of a new winner for its national competition. From now through July 19, aspiring MC's from across the country (21+) can enter for a chance to win the prize package consisting of \$10,000 and a studio session with DJ Khaled.

As part of the national search, the all-new mobile studio is stopping through

New Orleans to host live auditions. The following day, top contenders will be invited to participate in a live cypher performance at the tour finale event at Eiffel Society.

The contest is hosted online at www.JackNforBeats.com, where consumers (21+) can view the official rules, tour schedule and submit a video entry. Upon review and approval, the top videos are uploaded for online viewing, sharing, and public voting. Following a two-week voting period from July 20-31, the contestant with the most votes will be crowned the winner, receive the grand prize package and take the next step towards hip-hop stardom.



Top: New Orleans area hip-hop artist, Lyrical AI (mic in hand), walked away with a cash prize and a slot as a semifinalist during the Jack'N for Beats local finale for its national competition. His local win puts him in the running to win \$10,000 and a studio session with DJ Khaled. Jack'N for Beats will visit more cities this summer. Visit www.jacknforbeats.com for more details. (Photo provided courtesy of CT Films.)

At left: New Orleans area Jack'N for Beats national competition semi-finalists pictured with Jack'N for Beats host/A&R AJ Ahmed (mic in hand). They are all in the running to win \$10,000 and a studio session with DJ Khaled. Jack'N for Beats will continue throughout the summer. Visit www.jacknforbeats.com for more details. (Photo provided courtesy of CT Films.)

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

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Honoring A Protector of Community and Humanity

Photos by Glenn Summers

Slain NOPD Veteran Officer Daryle Holloway's mother Olander Belfield Holloway, Grand Mother Eunice Lucille Belfield and Great Uncles Anthony and Alvin Petit and a host of family and friends, joined with thousands of mourners whose lives he touched as a great civil and community servant. All gathered together to commemorate the life and legacy of an honorable son, brother, father, and protector of humanity. Rest In Peace Officer Daryle Holloway.



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To Be Equal

One Nation, One Flag



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

"A house divided against itself cannot stand...I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other." — President Abraham Lincoln, House Divided Speech, June 1858

During a South Carolina gubernatorial debate last year, when the topic of the Confederate battle flag on the State Capitol grounds came up, Gov. Haley insisted there was no need to remove the flag. Eight months later, in the aftermath of last week's racism-fueled, shooting massacre of nine innocent people at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston by a White supremacist seen in pictures posing with

the same flag that flies at full-staff on statehouse grounds, Governor Haley finally called for the flag's removal:

"We know that bringing down the confederate flag will not bring back the nine kind souls that were taken from us, nor rid us of the hate and bigotry that drove a monster through the doors of Mother Emanuel that night. Some divisions are bigger than a flag...But we are not going to allow this symbol to divide us any longer. The fact that people are choosing to use it as a sign of hate is something that we cannot stand. The fact that it causes pain to so many is enough to move it from the Capitol grounds. It is, after all, a Capitol that belongs to all of us."

I applaud Gov. Haley's swift and resoluteness in calling to remove the flag—a powerful symbol and reminder of a dark time in our shared American history—from Capitol grounds. Already, South Carolina lawmakers have agreed in large numbers, and across the aisle, to debate the removal of the flag this summer. This is an important step, but it is only a first step.

We know that our work on this pressing issue will not be done until

the flag comes down. That is why the National Urban League and its South Carolina affiliates have launched the "One Nation, One Flag" campaign. The campaign will support the efforts of South Carolina's legislators to end public displays of the Confederate flag in its state; it will advocate for the removal of the Confederate flag from all public spaces around our nation; and it will promote the United States flag as a symbol of unity, tolerance and justice. Our campaign has adopted the social media hashtag #OneNationOneFlag as a companion to #TakeItDown, and we are also urging like-minded people to sign the petition for the flag's removal at IAmEmpowered.com.

National debate and division over this flag is nothing new and it has been re-ignited in the wake of this shocking and tragic hate-crime. The flag—born from the violence of division as southern states fought to secede from the United States—was first raised atop South Carolina's Capitol dome in 1962, ostensibly as commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. But many historians agree that the flag was

raised in to demonstrate South Carolina's defiance of desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement.

Still, there are those who revere the flag as a symbol of the unique heritage of the southern states and a symbol of the battle for states' rights, but for many others—the flag flown as a preeminent symbol for slave-holding states—it is a vestige of human bondage, brutal oppression, racial hostility and the ideology and violence of white supremacy. The public sanction of any symbol of hatred and torture will serve only one purpose: to keep our nation—our house—divided. Now is the time for reconciliation. Now is the time for the flag, and all flags that do not promote unity, to come down.

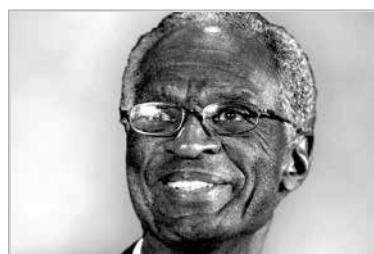
Public officials and lawmakers across the South are adding their voices to the growing chorus of those calling for the removal of these Civil War vestiges from their capitals and public spaces. In Alabama, the governor has ordered Confederate flags to be taken down from the state Capitol grounds. In Mississippi, a Republican legislator has publicly called for the removal of the Confederate emblem from

the state flag. Major retailers across the country (Walmart, Amazon, eBay and Sears) have announced bans of the sale of any merchandise displaying the confederate flag. An eBay spokesperson explained it was banning the sale of the Confederate flag and items with its image because the flag has "become a contemporary symbol of divisiveness and racism."

If you believe symbols of hate and division have no place in our public spaces: take action. If you believe that right now—through horrible circumstances—we have a meaningful opportunity to make those nine lost lives matter and to unite our divided house and form that elusive "more perfect union": take action, join our campaign. The National Urban League will not rest until the final vote is taken in South Carolina's statehouse. We will not rest until these vestiges of slavery become our nation's past and stop dividing us in the future.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Parent Choice Programs Can Work



By Howard Fuller
Data News Weekly
Guest Columnist

I have been and continue to be a strong supporter of the fight to provide low income and working class parents with the power to choose the best educational options for their children. I joined this fight over 25 years ago because I believed it is one of the levers that addresses the systemic inequities so many poor students face. I became involved in this noble struggle to ensure that low income

and working class Black families had greater access to quality educational options for their children. So, while I believe that all students deserve a quality education in a school that best meets their needs, I also believe that publicly funded parent choice programs should be used primarily as a tool to empower communities who face systemic barriers to greater educational and economic opportunity. I did not join this movement to subsidize families like mine, which may not be rich, but have resources and thus, options. I joined the late Polly Williams in 1989 in her courageous fight to make sure that poor families were afforded some opportunity to choose schools in the private sector for their children.

Since then, I, along with many others, have fought tirelessly for

parent choice programs and policies for low-income and working class families throughout the nation. From the beginning, some critics of the parent choice movement claimed that Republican lawmakers and other conservative individuals who have strongly supported parent choice policies and programs over the years were only using poor children. The real agenda, these critics have charged, has been that at some point these programs would be hijacked to offer universal vouchers or other types of similar programs to even the wealthiest citizens.

I reject this sweeping generalization of people's motives. I know for a fact that many of the individuals who have supported parent choice over the years did so and continue to do so, because they believe, as

I do, that we should not have an America where only those of us with money are able to choose the best schools for our children. Unfortunately, Nevada's Education Savings Program fits the pattern that these critics have asserted for years. It is a gift to the opponents of the parent choice movement.

Separate from the argument above, some of our allies in the choice movement have made no secret of their desire for universal vouchers or programs that give everyone access to public dollars to be used to access private schools, and I have been just as clear that I could never support such programs. I hold no malice toward them, but I will never support a plan that will no longer give low-income families a leg up and will instead give those of us with means even greater means

to leverage the limited number of private school options to the disadvantage of low-income families.

So, I will not join the celebration of the Nevada Education Savings Account Program. While some may view it as a "landmark" victory for the parent choice movement, I do not. At least it is not a victory to those of us who are focused on helping low income and working class families in their quest to find better options for their children.

While I hope that I am proven wrong, I believe Nevada's SB302 will do very little to help low-income and working class families find better options for their children.

Howard Fuller is Founder and Director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University

It Really Ain't About You



James Washington
Guest Columnist

Sometimes my human arrogance allows me to think that I can work out the answers to life's simplest problems without any help, only to confuse the situation and myself worse. More, importantly there are still times when I'm sure I'm looking for all of the right things in all the right places only to realize I'm wrong on both counts i. e., wrong thing wrong place. I tend to act without consciously understand-

ing that God has worked all of this out. He doesn't need any input from me. I mean there was a time when I thought there must be something I'm not getting because the more I searched for the meaning of my own salvation, the more lost I became. You see I now know it's really easy to fool yourself when you're arrogant enough to think you have all the answers, or you're capable of getting out of any situation using your own devices. Because of an enlightening Sunday service, I can tell you unequivocally that I am not the primary source of knowing why things unfold the way they do. And neither are you.

Spiritually speaking, my mistake had been to think that somehow I would one day, through my own volition, discover the best way to serve God. My "calling," my life's

work would become clear because after all, I was actively searching to get to what I was supposed to be doing with the gifts the Lord had given me. Wrong! That's not letting go and letting God. That's holding on and giving yourself way too much credit. The message during service was so simple that I can honestly say it was God's way of giving me insight into His destiny for me via a sermon about independence. I clearly understand that I cannot accomplish anything without acknowledging Christ first. I really do realize I don't function well outside of the boundaries of faith and a belief in Jesus' intercession on my behalf. For me that means getting as close as I can to wallowing in the Word of God via prayer, bible study, meditation or what ever you want to call it. I exist because He exists. In

this regard, my calling, my vocation is to receive, listen, accept and obey.

Scripture says lean not on my own understanding but seek God always. If I do that I'll find what I need to know. So wherever I am, He is. Personally, I am now convicted that my job is to accept what is shown to me. I cannot speak for you but for me I need quiet time in the Word. My prayers have become requests for the Lord to allow me to fulfill His destiny for me, whatever that might be. I'm convinced that He has so much more for me than I could ever imagine. I believe it's Deuteronomy that says when all else fails, return to God and obey Him. He will be merciful. Now I know finding God in the context of man's understanding can seem impossible at times. Listening to Him is tough at times because the world

is constantly after your attention. But the simple truth is God so loves me that He sent His son so that I might live eternally. There is really not much more to it than that. My job then becomes clear. Seek Him out and don't worry about the rest. Let go and let God. This column may seem a little more self serving than usual, but I'm declaring what works for me, deliberate and regular reaching out. That act alone guides my thoughts and in many ways determines my behavior. As long as you realize you can't figure it out, then you don't have to try to anymore.

May God bless and keep you always, James,
jaws@dallasweekly.com

Health News

Belly Fat: Gotta Go

by **Valecia Weeks**

Let's face it ladies... SUMMER IS HERE! What does that mean? – more FAT to have to deal with because what do we do during graduation celebrations, June 19th, family Reunions, etc? We eat, eat, & eat some more. And we all know that the fat tends to head straight to our abs and just sit there. How can we get rid of our belly fat? It's really hard to say because our wonderful bodies have a mind of their own. Each individual body decides where it wants to burn off the fat and in what order.

The best way to lose our belly fat is by doing cardiovascular exercises like running, ZUMBA, and aerobic style exercises. It is very important to spice up and change your abdominal exercises. Make sure you include crunches to keep your core strong. One unfortunate thing is until the excess fat is gone in the midsection, you will not see the muscle definition. Therefore, if you are not doing cardio, crunches will not help.

If it's difficult to run, join a ZUMBA class, or participate in aerobic exercise. Walking is an ideal exer-



cise that nearly anyone can do to help burn that excess fat. The lower belly is a natural holding place for fat and an extremely stubborn spot to tone, so it can be quite challenging to get rid of lower belly fat. Regular crunches and sit-ups won't be enough to get rid of lower belly fat. The key is in targeting the lower abdominals with specific exercises to tone the muscles and erase the fat. The proper exercises, coupled with a healthy diet and cardio routine, will help to conquer that stubborn belly fat. Here a few instructions to help you burn belly fat and tone belly muscles (abdominals):

Instructions:

Add more vegetables and lean proteins and less fat and sugar to your diet. The proteins will help you to build muscles and will burn

fat in your lower belly. If you are like me, you loooooove sweets/sugar. In that case, cutting your sugar intake in half will make a big difference in your fight against lower belly fat.

Just 30 minutes of cardio three times a week will work wonders. Pick your choice, either walk, jog, ride a bike or even dance. Either are great choices. Doing cardio will help you lose that ugly layer of fat that keeps that nice six pack hidden.

Do a few reps of scissors. These are done by lying on your back with your hands underneath your buttocks. Lift your legs about a foot off the ground. Tighten your lower ab muscles and move your legs in a crisscross motion: first move your right leg over the left; then open your legs apart and move your left leg over the right. Make sure you don't bend your knees. Do this about 10 to 15 times.

Maintaining a healthy diet, and doing these exercises about three times a week, or every other day will help you to be able to show off your six pack and enjoy your summer meal all at the same time. The barbecue is all good but do it in moderation.



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LA State Treasury Forced To Shift Trust Fund Money To Plug Deficits

BATON ROUGE, LA - The Louisiana Department of the Treasury has been directed by the legislature to move \$30.5 million from dedicated trust funds to fill deficits in this year's state budget, according to State Treasurer John Kennedy.

"We were forced to make these transfers because this was the administration's plan for resolving the deficits. By making these transfers, we're diverting money from roads, coastal protection, education and health care," said Treasurer Kennedy. "The sad thing is we don't have a revenue problem. We have a spending problem."

In accordance with this directive, the transfers will be \$2,188,473

from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund, \$22,755,498 from the Transportation Trust Fund, \$3,123 from the Oil Spill Contingency Fund, \$3,821,250 from the Conservation Fund, \$669,411 from the Education Excellence Fund and \$1,100,306 from the health care-related Louisiana Fund. All of these are constitutionally protected funds.

"We're depleting vital trust funds because we can't get our spending in check," said Treasurer Kennedy. "We're draining the Oil Spill Contingency Fund a month after California mopped up oil from its coast. We can do better than this."



Pictured above is Louisiana State Treasurer John Kennedy

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Second of Three NOPD Pay Raises In Effect

By January 2016, NOPD Officers' Pay Will Have Increased by More Than 15 Percent

Earlier this week, the second of three pay raises for the New Orleans Police Department went into effect, boosting the pay for officers of all rank by five percent. This month's pay raise follows a five percent increase from Jan. 1, 2015, and precedes a third five percent increase that will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2016. In total, when compounded, the Landrieu Administration will have increased police salaries by 15.8 percent since taking office in 2010, which means a police officer making \$45,000 in 2010 will be making \$52,093 in 2016.

"Our dedicated police officers put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our com-

munity, and they deserve these pay raises," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "After turning around our city finances when we took office, we have been able to stabilize our budget and give NOPD what it needs to grow and help keep our streets safe, which is my top priority. Along with an aggressive recruitment campaign and millions of investments in the police department, these pay raises are intended to boost both officer retention and recruitment."

When fully implemented, the new salaries will bring NOPD pay in line with the Louisiana State Police and make NOPD officers among the highest paid officers in the state.

Since 2010, Mayor Landrieu has also dedicated more than \$41 million to rebuild and improve NOPD facilities, including new 5th and 7th District stations. He also pledged to fully fund the five-year, \$55 million

consent decree for better training, equipment and police. He purchased more than 500 body worn cameras, 400 new police cars and 50 motorcycles. He has also funded another 150 police recruits for 2015 and dedicated more than \$300,000 for an aggressive NOPD recruitment campaign.

"We asked for help to make the NOPD a better place to work and the Mayor has delivered," said NOPD Superintendent Michael Harrison. "Combined with major investments made in new technology and equipment, these pay raises show that the City is committed to investing in the men and women of the NOPD. Now I'm calling on the New Orleans community to step up and join our ranks. Together, we will rebuild the NOPD and make it the best department in the country."

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The Black Church and the Strength to Forgive

By Jazelle Hunt
NNPA National
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – For many outside the Black community, they had never seen anything like it. Though suffering and deep in pain from the loss of loved ones at the hands of Dylann Roof at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., they reflected the finest reflection of Christian values.

A daughter Ethel Lance, 70, one of the nine killed at Bible study, struggled to find the right words.

"I will never be able to hold her again. But I forgive you and have mercy on your soul," she said, her voice trembling with emotion. "It hurts me, it hurts a lot of people, but God forgive you and I forgive you."

Speaking for her family, a sister of Rev. DePayne Middleton-Docotor, 49, had a similar message.

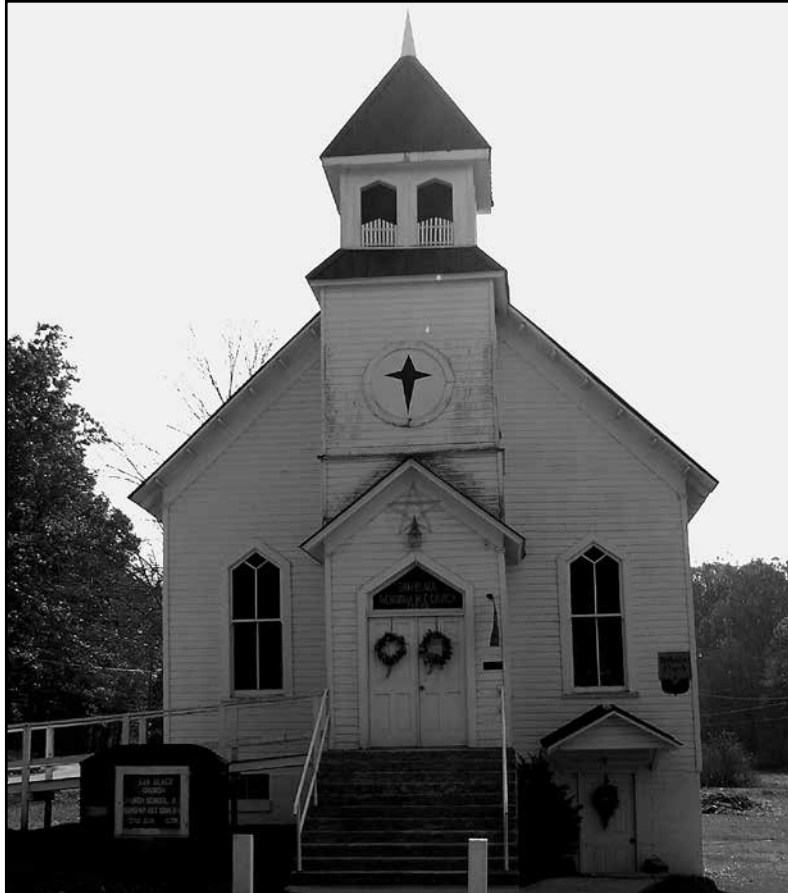
"We have no room for hate," she said softly. "We have to forgive. I pray God on your soul. And I also thank God that I won't be around when your judgment day comes with him."

One-by-one, they took turns, sharing their grief, but not any rancor. How could they be so forgiving?

In order to understand the answer to that question, experts on religion say, you have to understand the role the church plays in Black America and how the nation's most religious group – African Americans – take the teachings of Jesus' literally.

"To understand the Black Christian tradition and faith that has nurtured Black people for centuries is to know that they live by a deep, resilient faith that God is on the side of justice, God is on the side of love," explained Rev. Forrest Harris, president of American Baptist College in Nashville, Tenn. and a scholar on the Black Christian church. "And that ultimately, though people will tragically experience what we saw happen at Mother Emanuel, ultimately love will prevail and hope will prevail."

Rev. Susan K. Smith of Columbus, Ohio says that Scripture shows that it's reasonable to feel and wrestle with difficult emotions, instead of jumping straight to forgiveness.



"If you don't deal with your real, strong feelings, it's almost impossible to get to a place where you can forgive," she said. Smith points to Psalm 13, saying, "The Psalmist, who expresses his pain...then at the end of the Psalm there's a 'but, I will praise you anyway.' This is vital, because what we have with God is a relationship, and in relationships there are always times when you don't get it."

Rev. Amos Brown, pastor of the Third Baptist Church of San Francisco and NAACP national board member, said Blacks should not bear the brunt of suffering – or forgiveness – in the U.S.

"I do not feel in my spirit that Blacks should have to be the sacrificial lambs all the time," he explained. "The pain is so great and it's insulting that America has still not confessed to its wrong and its evil. And that evil is racism."

Relatives of the nine slain in Charleston refused to be overcome by the evil of racism.

"In this particular context, we're all deeply moved by the family offering up forgiveness, and I want to honor that supernatural manifestation of grace," says Pastor Michael McBride, leader of The Way Christian Center in Berkeley, Calif., and director of the PICO Network Live Free Cam-

paign, which uses faith to fight mass-criminalization.

"The process of forgiveness first has to acknowledge the offense... the gravity of the offense...the pain that's been caused. Then it requires an analysis made in very clear terms the kinds of grievances that have been done, so as to not allow those grievances to continue to be perpetrated."

According to a 2009 Pew Research Center report, nearly 80 percent of Black people say religion is very important in their lives, with 53 percent attending church every week (compared to 39 percent of the overall population). Church is especially important to Black women who are unrivaled in their dedication to their faith (84 percent say they are) and attend church each week (nearly 60 percent do).

Pastor Jonathan Newton, executive minister at Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C., points out that the lesson of forgiveness is not only God's way, but also served Black Christians well during the Civil Rights Movement by lending moral weight to the cause.

On the other hand, Pastor Newton explains that forgiveness is not necessarily passive.

Like Mother Emanuel, Metropolitan A.M.E. was founded in

the early 1800s and has a storied legacy within the course of Black history. On Friday, hundreds gathered to pray for its sister church in Charleston – later, the church received a bomb threat in return. The previous day, a few other A.M.E. churches in South Carolina were threatened as well.

"[After the shooting] one of our A.M.E. bishops sent around to the churches a litany to explain that the church doors will remain open; we will continue to do what God calls us to do. But while we forgive, we still step up security," he says.

"Our [A.M.E.] tradition starts with the concept of social justice. The disparate treatment of people is not to be quietly tolerated. That we forgive doesn't mean we forget, it just means we release the hold that bitterness and hatred has on us."

The A.M.E. church is indeed grounded in resistance. Free Blacks in Philadelphia founded the denomination in the late 1700s when White Methodist Episcopalians refused to pray along side them and used force to interrupt their worship. The Black parishioners began their own church and successfully sued for the right to be an independent congregation.

This is not the first time a White supremacist had targeted a Black church.

According to one study, there were more than 300 racially-motivated church bombings or burnings in the 1960s, and an additional 200 between 1989 and 1996. In 2008, two White men were convicted of burning down a COGIC church in Springfield, Mass. in reaction to President Barack Obama's election.

Pastor Newton and others maintain that emulating Christ's example of love does not conflict with seeking justice and true reconciliation.

"This sounds trite, but the first thing is prayer. We believe that prayer changes things, but also prayer brings calm, reasonable, rational thinking."

"[Then] we deal with it, and not try to suppress...we talk about the anger, the hurt. Our faith is what makes us strong through using political actions and our educations ...in our strides to social justice."

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