

New Orleans Picayune

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010

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SPIRIT 'N SPICE
Marilyn Stewart

St. Charles Ave. church honors new pastor

St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church, 7100 St. Charles Ave., will honor its new pastor, the Rev. G. Travis Norvell, in a special installation service Sunday at 3 p.m. Norvell is the 18th pastor for the historic church founded in 1888. He joined the staff in July 2009.

Guest speaker for the event is the Rev. Kirk Byron Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church, in Tewksbury, Mass., and the founding pastor of Beacon Light Baptist Church of New Orleans. The service will be held in the sanctuary.

Norvell will welcome to the pulpit the Rev. Darin Collins, pastor of Berean Baptist Church of Harrisville, R.I., as the speaker for Sunday's 11 a.m. worship service.

A West Virginia native, Norvell holds degrees from Marshall University of Huntington, W.Va., and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School of Rochester, N.Y. He has served churches in Athens, W.Va., and Lincoln, R.I., as pastor.

Lois Norvell, his wife, is an artist, teacher and a stay-at-home mother. Their children are Seneca, 8; Glen, 6; and Johnny, 3. Jones is a New Orleans native, graduate of Loyola University and holds doctorate degrees from Emory and Drew universities. His 20 years of pastoral ministry include service at Calvary Baptist Church in Chester, Pa., Ebenezer Baptist Church in Boston and others.

Formerly the Kelsey-Owens Professor of Black Ministries and assistant professor of ethics at Ancker Newton Theological School, Jones serves now as an adjunct professor of ethics and preaching.

"The Jazz of Preaching: How to Preach with Great Freedom and Joy" is one of Jones' popular works on ministry and preaching. He has served on various religious and civic committees at the local and national level.

The church is located at streetcar stop No. 33 on St. Charles Avenue. All are invited to attend. For information, call the church office at 504.861.9514 or visit www.seabc.org.

Gloria E. Johnson, wife of the late Chester A. Johnson and member of Edgewater Baptist Church, 5800 Paris Ave., recently shared a story about meeting Martin Luther King Jr. for the first time at her own wedding reception.

Johnson wed her husband in 1953 at Union Bethel A.M.E. Church, 2321 Thalia St., before traveling to Montgomery, Ala.,

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GETTING IN TOUCH

To report community news, call the New Orleans office at 504.826.3310
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GOSPEL FLAVOR



Lyle Henderson leads members of the Pinnacle Gospel Choir in a verse of 'Oh, Happy Day' during a meeting Jan. 19 at Ignatius Chapel on the Loyola campus. Among the members present were, from left, Candace Ransom, Darian DeCoux, Gerreida Davis, Nathan Weatherby, Karen Hence, Lyle Henderson, Veronica Downs-Dorsey, Veronica Brown and Earniesha Lott.

Choir adds local flavor to Disney film

Singers put gospel touches in Randy Newman song

By Timothy Martinez
Contributing writer

For members of the Pinnacle Gospel Choir, the first time they were asked to participate

in the Disney film "The Princess and the Frog," they were eager and in disbelief.

"When I first got that call, I thought it was a joke," said Darian DeCoux, a professional backup singer.

For the local New Orleans choir, it was not a joke. A producer of the film had asked them to add local flair to "Dig a Little Deeper," a song written by musician Randy Newman.

The Pinnacle Gospel Choir, which has performed off and

on for more than 10 years, has come together numerous times to do special events, conventions and parties. But choir organizer Lyle Henderson said the film is by far the largest honor.

"It was almost surreal," said Henderson, who by day is the office manager for the chemistry and physics department at Loyola University. "It was a great opportunity for us and an opportunity to allow New Orleans to shine."

Their involvement in the film came about from Henderson's longtime professional relationship with trumpeter Terence Blanchard, who had previously worked in the studio with Henderson, Blanchard, director of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz on Loyola's campus, already had been cast to play music in the Disney film and recommended the choir when producers needed

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Judges impressed by science projects

Abramson hosts second annual fair

By C.J. Lin
Contributing writer

You'll save more gas if you stay in the same gear and same position on the road.

Therapeutic hypothermia is more successful at saving victims of cardiac arrest and should be more widely used in the U.S.

Human hair could be an environmentally-friendly way to suck up oil spills in the ocean.

Those were some of the findings presented at the second annual science fair at Abramson Science and Technology Charter School in eastern New Orleans, which drew 100 projects from sixth through 11th-grade students.

Twenty-four awards were given out Saturday for projects in a variety of areas including math, computer science and engineering, life science, physical science and behavioral and environmental science.

"The reports are brilliant and absolutely well done," said state Sen. Ann Dupluis, D-New Orleans, who helped present awards to the students. "I am very happy to know that we're

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Laura Bush helps local schools rebuild libraries

She visits high school, check in hand

By Mary Rickard
Contributing writer

Band members in green-and-gold uniforms formed a drum line at John McDonogh Senior High School last Friday, thunderously greeting former First Lady Laura Bush as she presented more than \$1 million in grants to 23 Gulf Coast school libraries, including 15 local schools.

To date, the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries has donated more than \$5.7 million to Gulf Coast school libraries to help replace books destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, Rita and Ike. Hers is the largest foundation benefiting American libraries.

"Reading and books are the reasons my foundation exists, and they're the reasons that I'm here today at John McDonogh," Bush told students, faculty and administrators from several Gulf Coast schools assembled in the auditorium. "And I just wanted to say that I didn't actually bring

books. But I brought checks."

Since its founding in 2003, Bush's foundation has granted \$12 million to 1,245 schools in 50 states. The Gulf Coast has received special attention because it lost so much, said Pam Willeford, foundation chairwoman and former ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

"We are especially fortunate to have her passion — her passion for reading, for literacy, for schools, for school libraries and especially for students," said Willeford, a former Dallas schoolteacher who was appointed by then-Gov. George W. Bush to serve on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Laura Bush has visited the Gulf Coast 30 times since Hurricane Katrina, eight times on behalf of the foundation. This is her first trip since her husband left the White House.

"She was very specific with me," said Willeford about the direction Bush gave her. "She told me that even though they were out of Washington that did not mean it was the end of her concern for what was happening in the Gulf Coast — that meant that our work down here was not finished."

As a result of flooding following Hurricane Katrina, John McDonogh lost its entire collection, 13,000 volumes. In February 2007, the school library reopened with a basic collection provided by the Recovery School District, in addition to donations from individuals and libraries across the country.

Bush quoted the grant application submitted by Brenda Chapital, McDonogh's librarian: "The reopening of the school library provided a quiet place to think, study and read. For many students and faculty members, reading books allowed them to take a detour from their 'new normal' and venture into different worlds and experiences. This bibliography was needed to help them heal, focus and get back on track. So much was lost during the storms and personal libraries and favorite books were among the lost."

Bush noted that 90 percent of the 2009 class graduated. "Especially on this trip, I'm very heartened by how great things are starting to look across New Orleans. ... I'm proud of the great progress that you all have

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Former First Lady Laura Bush, left, shares a laugh with John McDonogh High School senior Darrion Crawford during her visit to the school Friday.

WHERE I'M AT IN NEW NEW ORLEANS



RIGHT: Brandon Joseph Mitchell, 4, blows out a few notes on his pocket trumpet at the event. His father, musician Brandon Michael Mitchell, said his son has been teaching himself a few notes on the instrument. LEFT: Kevin Diggs was among those marching along Loyola Avenue.



MLK DAY MARCH

New Orleans celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 18 with a march beginning at City Hall and ending at the King statue on South Claiborne Avenue. The event featured politicians, marching groups and school bands.

PHOTOS BY ELIOT KAMENTZ / THE TIMES PICAYUNE