## **O**PINION

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## Hope Floods My Soul

BY SUNSHINE DIXON

This trip has made my love for New Orleans Rise up like the mighty waters and flood my soul with hope.

You see

We saw the headlines ... Amazed Sat staring at the television for days As 'Help me' 'Diabetic here' signs waved But higher powers seemed unfazed

And can you tell me WHY during the flood the ninth ward bridge was RAISED?

When the worst was over by all accounts Still seemed like no one came to help out We saw huge traffic lines but even cars didn't get far And if you had just a bus pass, and tennis shoes

Well baby you really had the blues

In a dome

Away from home Those waiting out the storm...were soon overcome By lack of food and too much heat Folks were running out of food to eat

And the chants The tears

The rants

The cheers All seemed to fall on deaf ears

One t-shirt read Been let down By Mr. Michael FEMA Brown

This trip has made my love for New Orleans Rise up like the mighty waters and flood my soul with hope

You see when the levees broke It released tears I didn't know I had I sat paralyzed by the pain I'd witnessed

I mean Who could imagine HOPE being dried up by TOO MUCH WATER?

Honestly unbelief sat beneath the grief And tides of anger rushed in like water A little on the floor Then coming through the back door And



Sunshine Dixon of Portland and Gov. Ted Kulongoski join a group of Portland leaders who went to New Orleans on a "Flight of Friendship" goodwill mission

BAM up the stairs in full stride Fleeing for life to the attic With an ax and a pick Cut holes through rooftops Waving sheets for someone to stop All the time Hoping the water would stop its climb

Then time and Rita passed by

It's been over 500 sunrises since the dévastation Now we're focused on Relief Recovery and Restoration Relief Recovery and Restoration The next stop and our final destination

To get there will take a village and then some Combining our united wisdom Creating solutions and working together Some say it will all work out for the better And speaking of WORK There are some She-roes I met There's no way I will ever forget

Starting with our Lower Ninth Ward Powerhouse Sister Named Trisha

In order to get King School on track Dr Hicks and 95% of the teachers came back.

With a team of just three to process them in NENA hopes 8000 will come back again Tracking neighbors by colored push pins

Red-SOLD Yellow-ONHOLD White - Trailing right and working through the night

Green - green like the grass is a hopeful sign That it's gonna be tough but we're gonna be fine

The levee broke in three places Bringing on these phases Close to 1600 died first Thousands of others were dving of thirst And though the lower ninth ward seems desolate and flat There are thousands of residents dying to get back

And that's the thing I have to say They may have waded in the water but they're coming back to stay

Another group who suffered great loss was the Association from Holy Cross Pam with Sustainable Restoration sees District 8 As a shining example to the rest of the state

And need I say more about programs galore, diversity restored, in fact "insured" in Broadmoor. Little did I know before coming this way that I would meet so many She-roes in just one day La Toya the president, longtime Broadmoor resident her passion was evident

I can't leave out the magnificent men Pastor Bruce, Pastor Gilbert, Charles, Darryl and Hal Let's get back to the ladies now

Deborah first lady, all the members of H.I.V. Linda at Steamboat, Mignon I adore and the whole wonderful team of MercyCorps.

This trip made my love for New Orleans rise up like the mighty waters and flood my soul with hope.

I 'm just one voice from our one hundred and ten who believes New Orleans will thrive again.

## Lesson from Virginia Tech: Gun deaths too common for many of our youth

BY MARC H. MORIAL

Ryan Clark, the 22year-old residential adviser from Martinez, Ga., and senior with a triple major in psychology, biology and English, had great expectations of his future after graduating

from Virginia Tech. He had already ation - with hopes of earning a

ber but was intent on crossing the graduation stage in May for all his family and numerous friends to see.

known as Stack to his friends, had set his sights high after gradu-

SEASONS

finished his coursework in Decem- Ph. D in psychology with a focus time

in neuroscience. It is ironic given that his dreams were cut short by a mentally ill loner by the name of Seung-Hui Cho, whose deadly shooting spree claimed 32 lives, Clark, otherwise including that of Clark who stumbled across the shooter in his own efforts to assist one of his residents - 19-year-old Emily Hilscher - the massacre's first vic-

> Clark lost his life rushing to the aid of another student, which did not come as a huge surprise to

those who knew him. A member of Virginia Tech's Marching Virginians band for five years, he spent his summers as a counselor at a camp for disabled kids.

In some ways, Ryan Clark, a young black man who appeared to be defying the less-than-spectacular odds faced by a large percentage and on the fast track to prosperity and prominence, died much the way young black men living in the inner cities - by gunshot wound.

As the fallout from the Virginia Tech tragedy begins to clear, we must remember that the same kind of wanton violence that put Blacksburg, Virginia on the world's radar screen happens everyday albeit on a smaller scale in terms of victim count -- in the streets of our nation's urban areas.

According to the National Urban League's The State of Black America 2007, black men are nine times more likely to be murdered by firearms than white men. Those between the ages of 15 to 24 years old are nearly six times more likely to die by gunshot wound - whether accidentally or purposefully - than their white counterparts.

The bottom line is that black men are still making up a disproportionate percentage of murder victims in America-regardless of where they live and the extent of gun control employed.

But, what makes Clark's case rare for a black man is that he died at the hands of a man who was not of his own race.

According to the Bureau of Justice's 1976 to 2004 assessment, an average 94 percent of black murders were committed by blacks. For whites, 86 percent of white

murders came at the hands of other whites.

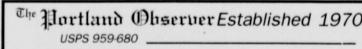
In The State of Black America 2007, we concluded that blacks held two-thirds the status of whites in the area of social justice, which consists of two categories - equality before the law (which makes up 80 percent of the social justice index) and victimization and mental anguish (which makes up 20 per-

Some of the responsibility for our victimization ultimately comes back to the African-American com-

We cannot fully blame social, economic and political disparities within our country for the violence we inflict upon ourselves. We must address the issue of our young men dying way too young from the inside as well as from the outside.

Whether they live on a college campus or in the inner cities, whether they are murdered by a drug dealer of their own race or a madman of another race, our community's future leaders don't deserve to die so senselessly so early in life.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.



4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington EDITOR: Michael Leighton PUBLIC RELATIONS: Mark Washington CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Neufeldt Office Manager: Kathy Linder REPORTER: Sarah Blount REPORTER: Nicole Ronal Hooper

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CALL 503-288-0033 FAX 503-288-0015 news@portlandobserver.com

ads@portlandobserver.com subscription@portlandobserver.com



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