

# OPINION

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## New Orleans Still Struggling

Hold government leaders accountable

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Most people, locals, tourists and the media alike, see the city of New Orleans in two distinct and separate lights: pre-Katrina and post-Katrina.



and securing financing for bigger and fancier homes, other residents - black and not all of them poor - wonder why no one

stood before the flood waters rushed in, killing thousands and causing billions of dollars in damage is decidedly different. And many doubt it will ever be the same.

has come into their neighborhoods to help them.

Why then, with all the problems still plaguing the Big Easy are government funds promised to the city being held up?

To see New Orleans now, if you knew it before, is like seeing it for the first time.

How is it that thousands of volunteers, and actor Brad Pitt, have been able to repair and build more homes in poor areas of the city than the government that promised to 'uplift the poor'? Why are charter schools now doing more to educate the city's children than the local public school system?

Pre-Katrina, New Orleans had black folk and it had white folk - mostly black folk - with a small Vietnamese population. Now, nearly four years later, there is a growing Latino population, made up of mostly day workers and their families who traveled to the city to find work right after the storm.

Over the last few years, many politicians used New Orleans as a springboard for their campaigns and pet issues. Now that the votes have been cast, very few have returned to the city to deliver on their promises. Perhaps we should write them and ask when they plan to make good on those verbal checks.

Many black men in the city feel they are losing out on repair jobs, not to mention low-paying jobs in restaurants and hotels, as the city's new residents can be hired at a lower pay rate.

The government continues to fail New Orleans, as it fails most urban areas.

Even before the storm, New Orleans wasn't a captain of industry. Most people worked for the government, at one of the hospitals or universities or were employed by small business owners. Since many small companies chose not to reopen after Katrina, this left many residents out of work, with few prospects for employment.

*We showed the world in November that we as a people were looking for a new type of leader. We can use that power once again to move our elected officials into action. It is never too late for them to do the right thing.*

The housing situation is no better. Large developers are working to rebuild the city, but only in more upscale neighborhoods, like Lakeview.

Judge Greg Mathis is vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

While upper middle class residents are getting help sorting out their insurance claims



## Murdock Apology Falls Short

Policies and hiring practices must change

BY BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS



News Corp. owner Rupert Murdoch's statement that his New York Post will endeavor to be more sensitive to the communities it serves is welcome, but unfortunately his apology fails to answer how the Post will do so.

Mr. Murdoch could resolve this unfortunate situation in 15 minutes by meeting to develop substantive measures to ensure that this type of incendiary incident does not happen again.

His apology comes only after almost a week of tens of thousands of expressions of outrage and disgust from people across the country. The offenders are still on staff and there are no measures being taken to increase diversity in its newsroom. Mr. Murdoch must take the steps needed to assure that the New York Post can practice more responsible journalism and truly be sensitive to its community, in the future.

Murdock's New York Post and Fox News have a history of racially insensitive reporting. With the support of the

editor in chief, the cartoonist Sean Delonas has published numerous vile cartoons tinged with racism.

Fox News was widely criticized during the elections for calling Michelle Obama "Obama's baby mama" and terming the affectionate and common fist bump between then-candidate Obama and his wife, a "terrorist fist jab" at a time when death

threats against the candidate were at an all time high for any presidential candidate.

*The offenders are still on staff and there are no measures being taken to increase diversity in its newsroom.*

The New York Post stands alone from most daily newspapers in refusing to report its diversity numbers to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. One has to wonder how many Hispanic or African American reporters and editors are working at the New York Post?

Clearly, with more diversity in its newsrooms, it's likely the paper would have been able to understand the deeply offensive nature of the cartoon. Our guess is that the numbers are abysmally low for a newspaper serving a city with a popula-

tion as diverse as New York. It is hard not to interpret the cartoon, which was juxtaposed to a photo of President Obama, as an encouraging sign to those who would assassinate our 44th president because of the color of his skin.

The depiction of two police officers shooting down the primate is deeply troubling to communities who struggle daily with suspicious police killings. The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives has also condemned the cartoon calling it "despicable, insensitive and easily interpreted as racist."

Good police officers all around the country should be dismayed by this slur on their character. African Americans have historically been compared to primates as a way to dehumanize the entire group.

We were called monkeys while we were being brutally lynched and denied equal civil and human rights. In fact, a 2008 study published by the American Psychological Association found that an association between primates and African Americans still exists among many white Americans.

We hope that Mr. Murdoch will make good on his apology and agree to make the needed changes in the newsroom and its policies.

Benjamin Todd Jealous is president and chief executive officer of the NAACP.

## Better to Stimulate Peace than War

Military spending is a jobs loser

BY TOM H HASTINGS



Our state, like all states, is suffering from the economic 'downturn' and many of us fear for our livelihoods. With each new day comes more bad news. Will this reach our home, my

job, my savings, and will I have health care and a roof over my head by this time next year?

In the swirl of this economic

We have just finished eight years of massive overspending on the military. During this period, more defense dollars

*It's time to make our economy run on sweat and the bright light of good ideas.*

shifted from paying personnel to paying corporate contractors than any other period in U.S. history.

While some jobs are created in this way, it turns out that far fewer of them are created than when investments are made in other sectors of the economy like health care, education, mass transit and infrastructure—thus a net loss of jobs.

So we spend on the military and it loses jobs, produces many U.S. casualties, causes massive numbers of dead Iraqi and Afghan civilians, and wrecks infrastructures.

Is it any wonder that our economy is drained flat?

George "the decider" Bush, a man who inherited the largest surplus ever left us where we sit today. He didn't even have the guts to include all his wars in his budget, since it would have looked even more lopsided than it did.

Instead, he came to Congress once or twice each year with a ransom note for hundreds of billions of your dollars. All wasted. All gone. All the worst investment possible.

And now, as we sit bloody on

the pavement after the crash of the economy, the Pentagon and its contractors have the unimaginable gall to tell us how much we need to keep spending on Cold War relics, on overseas bases, and on contractors so no one in the armed forces has to peel a potato.

They claim it creates jobs. They think we are unutterably stupid. With 'protectors' like these, who needs foreign enemies? Oh, that's right: they do.

As someone who works in a field that creates healthy, knowledgeable minds—education—and in a field that generates about twice as many jobs per billion dollars invested as does our war machine, I'd say it's time to crunch the numbers and be the deciders to invest in our nation's future.

Put our money in mass transit, education, infrastructure and conservation. Support a civil society that can produce good food, efficient transport, excellent health care for all and a new generation of talent to compete in the global marketplace for our goods of life, not our tools of death.

It's time to make our economy run on sweat and the bright light of good ideas. Enough blood has been spilled. We can do so much better for ourselves and everyone else.

Tom H. Hastings is professor of conflict resolution at Portland State University, director of Peace Voice, and a founder of Whitefeather Peace Community in Portland.

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