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Where did the black banks go?

By Patrice Gaines
Urban News Service

Part 1 of a two-part series

America has half as many black-owned banks as existed 15 years ago.

“People assume [black bankers] don’t know what they are doing,” said Alden McDonald, CEO of New Orleans-based Liberty Bank and Trust. “Put yourself in these shoes: We are located in communities in which all of the large banks have moved out of because it’s not profitable for them to do business there.”

The number of black-owned banks fell 54 percent between 2001 and 2016, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Historically, these banks have stimulated and revitalized their communities while also financing customers whom major banks have shunned.

“From 1888 to 1934, African-Americans owned more than 130 banks in the U.S., and the number of black-owned businesses rose from 4,000 to 50,000,” McDonald said at a January ceremony in which the U.S. Treasury Department named an annex the “Freedman’s Bank build-



Liberty Bank and Trust CEO Alden McDonald cuts the ribbon at Liberty Bank Sci Academy Senior Science Lab in New Orleans. Photo: Liberty Bank Facebook page

ing” after the bank Congress incorporated to help “freed” blacks transition from slavery.

Integration ended that economic boom. Black business districts disappeared as black consumers spent their dollars elsewhere. Many black banks, the institutions that extended loans for start-ups and renovations, disappeared as well.

Today, black banks are struggling to overcome the ripple effects of the Great Recession, in which they suffered more than larger banks. And only a few black banks qualified for the federal bailouts that major financial institutions gleaned.

“Even though we are now hearing some good news,” FDIC chairman Martin J. Gruenberg said to black bankers in 2014, “we know that in many of the communities you serve, the pace of recovery is lagging.”

Exactly why these banks have disappeared is complex, but black bankers say the cost of doing business, the financial instability of their communities and counterproductive federal policies have created overwhelming challenges.

While the number of black-owned banks plunged from 48 to 22

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Dallas ISD to address budget, SOC problems

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Fighting the spread of Zika virus

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Five steps to landing a better job

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Head to Fair Park on the Fourth!

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COMMENTARY

Saving community newspapers in the age of Facebook

By Denise Rolark-Barnes
Chairperson, NNPA
and Benjamin F. Chavis
President/CEO, NNPA

Hundreds of newspapers have disappeared in the last 15 years and readership is on the decline. No newspaper is immune from the migration of readership to online platforms, dwindling ad revenues, fragmented audiences and even reduced attention spans.

Even national-recognized newspapers with

celebrated histories like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have retrenched in the face of these mounting economic pressures. Many regional and community newspapers – including some members of the historic Black Press – are barely hanging on.

The ramifications of this can be profound. Local publications have long served as the glue that binds communities

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Anthony Coleman



Kewona Jones



Kane Brown

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Anthony Coleman

The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) released its diversity participation numbers and for the second year in a row contract spending with disadvantaged-, minority-, or women-owned business enterprises has surpassed 30 percent.

The NTTA implemented several outreach and diversity participation strategies beginning in 2009, including the Relationships and Opportunities Advancing Diversity (ROAD) program. "Through the ROAD program NTTA has paired



31 minority- or women-owned businesses with larger prime contractors in the mentorship program," explained Anthony Coleman, NTTA Director of Business Diversity. "The

NTTA diversity participation numbers are up 24 percent since the ROAD program started."

In 2008 NTTA spent \$432 million on road projects, awarding \$63 million to D/M/WBEs. Of that amount \$10 million went to D/M/WBE prime contractors. In 2015 NTTA spent a total of \$164 million dollars on contracts, awarding \$50 million to D/M/WBEs. Of that amount \$31 million went to D/M/WBE prime contractors.

"The ROAD program has increased the number of ready, willing, and able companies to compete for

projects in addition to creating a potentially larger subcontracting pool of construction services and professional services candidates," explained Anthony Coleman.

Under the ROAD program, mentors and protégés meet on a regular basis to build their strategic partnership. ROAD also has a networking component that allows all the prime contractors and sub-contractors in the program to become better acquainted through quality time at various events.

After six years the NTTA ROAD program is seeing a second generation of men-

tors ... subcontractors that started out in the program as mentees, have now become primes and mentors to other subcontractors in the ROAD program.

EJES has moved from mentee to mentor to smaller businesses. In 2014 it became a mentor to Design Consulting Engineers (DCE) through the ROAD program.

"EJES assisted us in developing marketing strategies and business development relationships with the City of Dallas and DFW Airport projects, said DCE President Mannan Abdul,

P.E.

"We provide added value to the mentoring program because of our understanding of the challenges small businesses face that larger firms are unable to address," said Edwin Jones, CEO/President of EJES.

"Since 2009, the volunteer-based Relationships and Opportunities Advancing Diversity (ROAD) program has helped build relationships between prime contractors and consultants who otherwise wouldn't have the platform to connect," concluded Anthony Coleman.

Kewona Jones

Kewona Jones is a young woman full of conviction and faith.

Ranked ninth in her class, Jones has thrived in the Lincoln High School Communication/Humanities Magnet where she has written and produced multiple films and documentaries, earning awards for her efforts.

Her ability to adapt to life's hardships and her maturity gives Jones the motivation to change her world, to break the pattern, and to be a role model for her nephew. Jones will attend the University of Texas this



fall, where she has been accepted into the radio-television-film department in the College of Communication.

Tell me a little bit about yourself and where you plan to go to college?

I'm the youngest of three raised in a single-parent home by my unemployed mother. With that being said we've been through some hard times, which is the reason I try to stay on track to ensure that my future does not end up being a vicious cycle. Five days a week, I ride the city bus from my home in Oak Cliff to my high school in South Dallas. My dream is to become a successful filmmaker and shine a light on the place I've come from and the experiences I've had.

What one bit of advice would you give to an incoming ninth-grader to

help them succeed?

I'd tell that freshman not to worry so much and to focus on what's important. Not everything matters so don't let the little things get to you.

What teacher has had the greatest impact on your life?

I'd have to say that I've had two teachers that impacted my life the most. Those teachers are Dr. White and Mr. Boone, my radio/television teachers. They've taught me things about the film industry that other young people my age won't know until later on in their career paths.

What's your favorite memory from your time in Dallas ISD?

My favorite memory is my group of amazing friends. Whenever I was going through some kind of challenge I can always depend on them to make me smile. It's something I'll never forget.

What's the biggest obstacle you've overcome in your life?

The biggest obstacle I've every overcome is when I lived in a shelter at the age 14. My mother, sister and I moved there a couple days after Christmas and stayed for about 3 months. I like to

call that the worst and best experience of my life because even though I was at my lowest point, I learned I will never be put in a situation that I can't handle.

The Communication/Humanities Magnet at Lincoln High School is located in "The Annex" which was built in front of the original LHS building in 1980. The original Lincoln High School building is a Dallas landmark, originally opened in 1939.

In addition to hosting the magnet school, Lincoln is also home to the 2016 UIL Boys 4A basketball state champions.

Kane Brown

Kane Brown, one of country music's new shining stars, will headline the next "New Faces" show at The Rustic in Uptown Dallas on Wednesday, July 20.

The free show, hosted by New Country 96.3 KSCS, will start at 8 p.m. All ages are welcome.

Brown is quickly rising in the country music scene. In 2015, he released his six-song EP titled Closer. During the first week of sales, he jumped to No. 22 on the Top Country Albums chart and peaked at No. 7. He closed out last year by debuting his hit single Used to Love You Sober, which received one



million views in less than three hours and reached 11 million views two weeks later.

"Our guests have come to expect a great show when a 'New Faces' artist comes to The Rustic's stage," said Kyle Noonan, co-founder and owner of

FreeRange Concepts, which operates The Rustic and other innovative restaurant concepts. "This could very well be the last time people in Dallas get to experience a concert by Kane Brown in such an intimate setting before he starts selling out bigger venues. And thanks to KSCS, the show is free!"

Guests are encouraged to arrive early at The Rustic and stop by the KSCS table to register to win great prizes and cool KSCS swag.

For more event information, please visit <http://therustic.com/event/KSCSKaneBrown/>.

With its casual atmosphere, live musical acts

and unique, full-service dining experience featuring farm-fresh, homestyle dishes and a Texas-sized selection of wines, spirits and 40 beers on tap, The Rustic has carved a distinctive niche among Dallas restaurants.

The concept is the brainchild of Noonan, Josh Sepkowitz and Texas country artist Pat Green, whose love of the outdoors and live music helped bring The Rustic to life. The result is a fun and relaxing dining and concert experience from a phenomenal patio, all under the big Texas sky.

The Rustic is located at 3656 Howell Street in Dallas.

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Congressman John Lewis is one of a kind

By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Wire Columnist

I have always had enormous admiration for Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) and that admiration increased exponentially when I watched him led dozens of his congressional colleagues to sit-in on the floor of Congress to force a vote on gun control. As the supercilious Paul Ryan called for “decorum” (where is the decorum in a man walking into a nightclub with an automatic weapon and gunning 49 people down), determined Democrats disrupted proceedings in the House of Representatives. I say, “Right on!”

Congressman Lewis tweeted, “Sometimes you have to get in the way. You have to make some noise by

speaking up and speaking out against injustice & inaction.” He is frustrated, as are many voters, about the fact that Congress has failed to take a position on background checks and the availability of assault weapons. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is equally frustrated, saying, “Moments of silence aren’t substitute for the action needed on gun violence.” Republicans have attempted to deflect, suggesting that the focus should be on ISIS and terrorism, not gun violence. But the Newtown, Conn., shooter was not a terrorist connected to ISIS. Indeed, troubled White men have perpetrated many of our recent mass shootings with access to guns, not ISIS loyal terrorists. No matter.

Can’t Congress walk and chew gum at the same time? Can’t they focus both on ISIS and on our out-of-control gun culture?

Nobody is talking about repealing the Second Amendment (though that might not be a bad idea). Still, the “right to bear arms” does not mean the unfettered right to bear all kinds of arms. Nobody needs an automatic weapon. And anyone deemed dangerous or mentally ill should never be allowed to purchase a gun. The National Rifle Association (NRA) is an irresponsible organization that elevates the right for any random citizen to own and bear arms over the right of other citizens to survive. Members of Congress need to cut the cord from that organization.

Voters need to back them up.

One might think the congressional sit-in has yielded few results. House Speaker Paul Ryan pulled the plug on C-SPAN coverage and dismissed the sit-in as a “stunt.” Still, responding to the fact that 90 percent of Americans support background checks those who sat in showed enormous courage. Taking advantage of social media, they broadcast their sit-in using Periscope, reminding Ryan that he might control C-SPAN, but he doesn’t control all broadcast.

Ryan was insulting and condescending in calling the sit-in a “stunt,” and he reminded me of the many reasons I so admire Con-

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together. They have served as the microphone for voices that would otherwise be marginalized and the spotlight on the stories that seldom make it onto the front pages of major newspapers and magazines. For African-American communities, the publications that make up the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) have served as that voice across the nation.

Yet, we are being told that the silver lining is that journalism isn’t disappearing – and won’t be any time soon. Rather, it has just moved to an electronic form. Not only that, there are also more opportunities to tell more stories and express more opinions than ever before. Some have said that we should not mourn the loss of the local newspaper and that we should instead explore the myriad possibilities offered by the new media. Or so goes the mantra.

In reality, this upbeat vision obscures the threat that new media poses to community journalism. And that threat is coming from a most unlikely place – the

popular social media platforms that so many of us love. Chief among them is Facebook.

Like many other publishers who have recently written on Facebook’s growing power over the media and what Americans read, we too are alarmed with one company having such dominance in news aggregation. Online hubs like Facebook are able to engineer which stories catch on. And they’re able to decide by algorithmic fiat, which bylines, viewpoints and subject matter is promoted to the masses.

This is a new kind of power. It is unlike any power a media company has ever had before. A study last year reported that Facebook drove 43 percent of all traffic to the top 400 news sites. That’s almost half coming from one powerful source!

What’s more, we don’t know how Facebook’s operations work. The tech company isn’t transparent in its methods. So we don’t know whether the viewpoints of Black publishers are heard or if there is a bias against our views. Without

knowing how Facebook’s “Trending Topics” or other algorithms are used in promoting stories, the owners of Black-owned newspapers, magazines and other media are left only to wonder why the stories our outlets produce are relegated to the margins – if they are acknowledged at all. Our readers are at the mercy of powers unheard and unseen as never before.

With 63 percent of Americans and 74 percent of millennials going to Facebook as their source of news, Facebook’s power is only likely to grow in the coming years. And there is something ironic about that. The mainstream media was once derided as unimaginative and monolithic, largely because it had long been dominated by three TV networks and a handful of newspapers in large cities. The Internet was supposed to change all that by bringing a diversity of viewpoints to the table. While this has indeed happened, the emergence of one or even a handful of powerful gatekeepers like Facebook raises profound questions about the nature of news in this country in the years to come.

With so much power in the hands of one company, we risk surrendering our own decisions about what is or isn’t newsworthy to a gatekeeper who may someday push only stories it deems worthy. And that’s a troubling possibility that should worry us all.

It is time regulators took a hard look at Facebook and its news aggregation and promotion practices in an effort to bring some much needed transparency to the new media king. The democratization of the media could be on a collision course with decidedly anti-democratic and arbitrary forces. Think of the proverbial tree that falls silently in the forest because no one is there to hear it. Will Facebook have the power to allow entire forests to fall without much notice?

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) is a trade group that represents more than 200 Black-owned media companies in the United States. As the largest and most influential Black-owned media resource in America, the NNPA delivers news, information, and commentary to over 20 million people each week. To learn more about the NNPA, please visit NNPA.org.

High-tech mosquitoes could be used to combat Zika virus

By Josh Peterson
Urban News Service

Genetically modified mosquitoes could mean curtains for the Zika virus.

New U.S. cases of Zika virus infections are continually being discovered as the Food and Drug Administration looks to these high-tech mosquitos as a possible solution.

Zika's potential to spring from mosquito "nurseries" in the American South could hammer poor minority communities as summer heats up. Atlanta has the nation's worst mosquito problem, according to Orkin, the pest control company. Mosquitoes only need standing water to spawn.

Scientists believe Zika spreads when a female mosquito feeds off of an infected person and later bites a new victim. Harmless male mosquitoes feed on flower nectar.

Zika also can be transmitted through sexual intercourse with an infected partner. Symptoms, while rare, can last for a week and range from a mild fever to muscle and joint pain.

Concerns rocketed after last year's discovery that Brazilian babies with unusually small skulls and brains were born to mothers who contracted the virus while pregnant. Brazil's Zika woes continue as athletes, fans, journalists and



Oxitec's modified male mosquitoes released in Jacobina, Brazil. (Photo: Oxitec)

others from around the globe prepare to converge on Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Fulton County, which includes Atlanta, is battling potential local Zika infections.

The *Aedes aegypti*, which lives in the Deep South, is one of several mosquitoes that scientists believe spread the virus.

Specialists with Fulton County's Department of Health and Wellness, according to the agency, are working with Georgia's Department of Public Health and the Atlanta-based U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor outbreaks and educate the community.

"The mosquitoes that

spread Zika virus will bite four or five people before they are satisfied," said Nancy Nydam, spokeswoman for Georgia's health department. She said people should use insect repellent, eliminate standing water around their homes and stay indoors during dawn and dusk, when mosquitos are most active.

An \$85-million fund is available to states, cities and territories at risk of Zika outbreaks, the CDC announced on May 13. The money would finance Zika-prevention efforts only temporarily, said Dr. Stephen C. Redd, a director at the agency. More money from Congress is needed, he said.

The CDC reported that between January 1, 2015

and May 18, all of the 544 U.S. Zika cases are travel-associated, meaning the virus was originally contracted abroad. To date, 157 pregnant women in the U.S. have reported symptoms.

New York logged 114 travel-related cases, the highest number in America. Florida was second with 109, and California's 44 cases put it in third. Texas was fourth, with 35 reported infections. These states all have high black and Hispanic populations, foreshadowing what this disease could do to these communities.

Among 836 Zika cases in U.S. territories, 832 were contracted locally. These include 803 infected people in Puerto Rico, 15 in the Virgin Islands, and 14 in American Samoa.

Oxitec, a British biotechnology company, is testing its genetically modified male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in Key Haven, Florida.

Oxitec's male mosquitoes mate with wild female *Aedes aegypti*, producing offspring that "have a very high probability of dying before they reach adulthood," according to its website.

Mosquitoes generally live about two weeks.

The company's experiments "have resulted in re-

duction of the wild population by more than 90 percent," said Oxitec spokesman Matthew Warren. "Existing methods to control the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, such as insecticides, are only 30 to 50 per-

cent effective, at best."

More than 150 million Oxitec mosquitos have been released, Warren said, with no reported adverse effects.

Oxitec's mosquitos were

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LEWIS, continued from Page 2

gressman John Lewis. Was the Atlanta Congressman's skull fractured in a "stunt" in 1965 on Bloody Sunday, when his civil rights activity caused rabid Whites to attack him? Lewis pulled no stunt, he stood for what he believed in then. He is standing, firmly in his belief now, and using the time-honored tactic of protest to bring attention to the important cause of gun control.

Congressman Lewis and his colleagues were not successful in forcing votes on gun control. But they were

successful in shutting the House down. Speaker Ryan was forced to adjourn Congress before he planned to, and Republicans sulked off like thieves in the night. Democrats held the floor hours after the Republicans scurried away, like hungry rats. No vote was forced, but a point was made.

Congress goes back to work on July 5. People should urge their representatives to take an appropriate vote to reduce access to guns, especially for those on a "no fly" list. People should

also give Congressman John Lewis a "shout out" and appreciation for his leadership. He has taken the tactics of the 60s and taken them into the 21st century. He has reminded us that "stunts" have their purpose. His unassailable moral courage is admirable. Thank you, Congressman Lewis, for your activism in the 1960s and now. You are much appreciated!

Julianne Malveaux is an economist and author. Her latest offering "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" is available via juliannemalveaux.com or amazon.com.

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Dallas ISD meeting focuses on SOC and upcoming budget cuts

By: Michael Watts II
NDG Special Contributor

Problems involving the conditions of South Oak Cliff High School and budget headlined the June 23 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) school board meeting.

South Oak Cliff High School conditions are unacceptable

The citizens of the Oak Cliff area expressed their concerns about the safety of their kids being in an unsafe environment.

"We have been fighting hard to get a new school,"

said Reverend Horace Bradshaw. "Teachers and students have gotten ill because the ceiling tiles are being removed in the classrooms. We have fire, insects and electrical problems across South Oak Cliff High School. All we want are the basic necessities like a clean and safe classroom."

Members of the community continuously pleaded with the school board to make improvements to South Oak Cliff High School.

"We are being continually ignored by the school board for our request for a

new school in South Oak Cliff," said Rakeem Balogun. "We have bathrooms in the school that don't flush, but some countries like Nigeria have public schools whose bathrooms flush. We need to do something about it."

One parent compares the condition of South Oak Cliff High School to the country of Haiti.

"Some of the school communities around the Oak Cliff area are just as bad as the communities in Haiti and Haiti is a low developed country", said Danielle Ayers.

Dallas ISD's new fiscal budget includes job cuts

If the school board does plan on eventually improving the conditions of South Oak Cliff High School and other campuses, money is required. As a new school year prepares to unfold, Dallas ISD adopted their \$1.4 billion fiscal budget for the 2016- 2017 school year, which reflected a cut of approximately \$17 million.

Dallas ISD plans on spending \$61,902,510 for early childhood education programs and \$13,835,640 on early college programs.

The next focus is accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) program which focuses on their poorest performing schools. Earlier this week, the district announced success of the ACE's program for their youngest readers. A 30 percent increase for the reading level of the kindergarten through second grade students was achieved.

However, the news was not all good. According to the district's Proposed General Fund Budget, payroll costs for this school year was \$1,088,989,523. The

proposed budget shows \$1,126,356,624 for the upcoming 2016- 17 school year.

Contracted services were set for a budget expenditure of \$235,044,744 during the last school year. This upcoming school year they are proposing a budget of \$207,778,724. One approach for saving money was eliminating the 175 permanent sub positions and returning to the plan to hire subs as needed. Also an estimated 50 assistant principal positions will be eliminated.

UTRGV School of Medicine holds first class

By Jennifer L. Berghom

RIO GRANDE VALLEY –The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has officially welcomed its #First-Class of 55 students to its School of Medicine, with a first roll call and full day of orientation.

Students got instruction on using their new iPads, sat in on information sessions, and were fitted for the white coats they will receive



The first cohort of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine came together at 8 a.m. Monday, June 27, 2016, for roll call, shown here. In all, 55 students from across the Valley, Texas and the country comprise the first class of future physicians. (UTRGV photo by David Pike.)

next month at the formal White Coat Ceremony, a longtime medical school tradition that welcomes new students.

The 55 students were selected from among 2,784 applicants for admission to the UTRGV medical

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Irving native receives special honor from Chief of Navy Reserve

NORFOLK – An Irving, Texas native was one of 37 civilian employers from across the nation honored by the Chief of Navy Reserve for their exceptional support of America’s Navy Reserve Sailors during a ceremony in Norfolk, Virginia, June 24.

Ric Wilson, VP of Flight Operations at Envoy Air received a Certificate of Appreciation during the Chief of Navy Reserve Navy Employer Recognition Event (NERE) for his dedication and support of employees who serve in the Navy Reserve, ensuring that their



Ric Wilson and John Dixon, on behalf of Envoy Air in Texas, receive a Navy Employer Support Certificate of Appreciation from Chief of Navy Reserve Vice Adm. Robin Braun during a ceremony in Norfolk, Va., June 24. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brian McNeal/Released)

Sailors are “Always Ready. Anytime, Anywhere.” “Employer support is ab-

solutely critical to the Navy Reserve’s mission,” said Vice Adm. Robin R. Braun,

chief of Navy Reserve. “We currently have 2,100 Reserve Sailors deployed around the world. Making sure those Reserve Sailors have a job when they come back from that year-long mobilization is critical, and

that’s why this event is wonderful. We’re recognizing employers who have given outstanding support to their Navy Reserve Sailor. In fact, many of the employers here have Sailors who are deployed right now overseas.

So this is a great opportunity for us to recognize them for the outstanding support they give.”

Companies invited to this year’s event were nominated by their employees who are also Navy Reserve Sailors.

UTRGV, continued from Page 6

school.

UTRGV School of Medicine interviewed just 226 applicants and ranked 182 of them for admission into the medical school. Those applicants, as well, ranked the medical schools they visited for interviews. The medical school and applicant rankings were then sent to a national matching service to match the schools with the applicants.

Dr. Francisco Fernandez, founding dean of the UTRGV School of Medicine, said the medical school was meticulous in

finding the right students to be a part of this inaugural class.

“These new students may have committed today to us, but that commitment is mutual,” Fernandez said. “As part of a university family, as part of the Rio Grande Valley community, and as part of an ever-changing world of challenges and needs, we in turn commit our resources, our expertise and our dedication to helping them succeed as the physicians of the future.”

Of the 55 chosen for

UTRGV, 20 are from the Rio Grande Valley, comprising 36 percent of the inaugural class. Fifteen are from Hidalgo County and five are from Cameron County.

The White Coat ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m. July 23, 2016, at the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg Campus.

ZIKA, continued from Page 4

one possible approach within a larger program, said FDA spokeswoman Theresa Eisenman. “However, it is too early to say with any certainty whether such an approach would be successful.” The agency approves and regulates biotechnology treatments, including vaccines.

“The FDA is acting responsibly with its mosquito pilot approach, and we’re glad to see that the CDC has activated the resources to respond,” said Adolph Falcon, executive vice president for the National Alliance for Hispanic Health.

Oxitec’s solution, however, only targets one mosquito species. Also, pesticides no longer could be

used against the insects, since they would kill both the dangerous female mosquitoes and the modified males.

Mosquito breeding habits show Zika disproportionately could affect poor countries and communities with inadequate sanitation.

A still-undiscovered Zika vaccine and improved sanitation would be more effective solutions, said Jaydee Hanson, senior policy analyst for the Center for Food Safety.

“People like magic,” said Hanson. “We want easy answers and we like technology. I’m a big fan of technology, but it needs to be assessed for it what it can do.”

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- 14 Games / 30 Rides (costs vary)

Food Trucks / Concessions open at 2 pm

Dallas Wind Symphony, 7 pm, Hall of State

Visit Texas Discovery Gardens 9 am - 7:30 pm,
Children's Aquarium at Fair Park, 9 am - 7:30 pm,
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Fourth of July Festivities in Dallas

By McKenna Wierman
NDG Contributor

You've waited all summer, and at last the weekend has arrived. The time has come to grab your picnic blanket, your hot dog buns and your bug spray because the Fourth of July Weekend is here. Be sure to get out and have some fun this weekend, watching the sky light up with your closest buddies, good food and good memories.

Check out these patriotic party zones all around the



saeru / Flickr

metroplex to celebrate your independence day.

Friday July 1 - Monday July 4 - 9 a.m.-5p.m. Fourth of July Weekend at the Arboretum

America, the beautiful: a nation brimming with natural beauty and brilliant life. Come out and enjoy the glories of the of the outdoors at your favorite floral stop. This

weekend, grab the whole family and head outdoors to the Dallas Arboretum, where you'll find music and American flags among the flowers and foliage. Active and retired members of the armed forces will receive free admission.

Friday - July 1 - 7:30 p.m. - The Princess Bride Outdoor Screening at the Modern Art Museum at Fort Worth

What better way to celebrate freedom than to appreciate the freedom of true love while experiencing the free-

dom of the outdoors? Enjoy one of the greatest love stories of all time at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth this Friday. Be sure to arrive early to snag the best seat by the Reflecting Pond and grab a bite at the cafe before the movie starts at 8:45 p.m. Grab your true love, a blanket and enjoy the night as you wish.

Sunday - July 3 - 4:50 p.m. - Addison Kaboom Town!

If you've never been to Kaboom Town!, have you

ever really celebrated the Fourth?

Kaboom Town! really is your one-stop Independence Day destination. You've got food, you've got fun, you've got an Air Show - and to top it all off, come dusk you've got one of the top fireworks shows in the entire nation. The Addison Circle watch party is the heart of the celebrations, but the works can be seen from pretty much anywhere in Addison, so there's lots of ground to cover!

Enjoy a Fair Park Fourth for food, music and the best fireworks viewing

The City of Dallas, Friends of Fair Park, and the State Fair of Texas invite local families to celebrate America with a day of family fun and fireworks at Fair Park Fourth.

Enjoy live music and access to rides, games and concessions within the State Fair of Texas Midway, starting at noon on July Fourth. Throughout the afternoon (3 p.m. to 7 p.m.), music will be performed around the Midway by the celebratory Razzmajazz Dixieland Band, and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. guests can experience a concert by the multi Grammy Award-winning ensemble Brave Combo, near the fireworks viewing area and Top o' Texas Tower on the Midway.

Admission to the Midway is \$5. Approximately 30 exhilarating rides, 14 games and 19 concession stands, including Fletcher's Corny Dogs, will be available on the Midway. Ride, game and concession costs will vary. All proceeds from the Midway during Fair Park Fourth will be donated to the State Fair of Texas Youth Scholarship Program. For more information on the State Fair of Texas, visit BigTex.com.

Free and open to the public, this family-friendly event will feature patriotic performances, entertainment,



Fourth of July at Fair Park features plenty of fireworks, music and food. (Image: BixTex.com)

food trucks and concessions, plus a spectacular fireworks show at approximately 9:45 p.m. Access to the Swan Boats and additional concession stands will be available

in Cotton Bowl Plaza starting at 11 a.m. and several food trucks will be set up in Big Tex Circle starting at 2 p.m. Starting at 6:50 p.m. along the Esplanade, a lead singer

from the Dallas Summer Musicals will sing our national anthem followed by a performance from the Dallas Winds (formerly the Dallas Wind Symphony).

View the fireworks show, sponsored by Oncor, from inside the historic Cotton Bowl Stadium, on the State Fair of Texas Midway, or from various locations

throughout the Fair Park grounds.

For more information on Fair Park festivities, including museum information, visit FairPark.org.

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Seek independence from a cliché Fourth of July

By McKenna Wierman
NDG Special Contributor

You really can't beat the traditional Fourth of July celebration; backyard Barbeque, cold drinks from the cooler, chips and dip, and maybe even a splash in the pool. But it seems like every other backyard party

is morphing into more or less the same one. The white American flag cake decorated with strawberries and blueberries? Seen it. Pitchers full of red and blue sugary juices for the kids? Yawn.

Don't turn your backyard party into just another red, white and blue sugar fest

with too much food coloring and not enough substance. Here are a few tips on how to keep your party patriotic without overdoing it.

Go red, white and blue without going overboard:

Just because something has an American flag printed on it does not mean you ab-

solutely have to put it somewhere in your backyard. That's not to say you shouldn't have some fun while you're decorating- by all means,, hang up your flags like the proud American you are, bust out that patriotic tableware and dress your kids in matching star-spangled swimsuits.

But if you take a look around your party, and it looks like some kind of red, white and blue storm has just blown through, you might want to tone it down just a little. Remember, less is more.

There was no "Fruit Punch" in 1776: Here in America, we are free to

serve whatever beverages we want to at our Independence Day soirees, so don't think I'm telling you to toss that powder-drink mix you're about to mix with 8 cups of water and put out for the party. I'm merely suggesting you ditch the

See **FOURTH**, Page 13

The Conjuring 2 is one terrific film to watch

By McKenna Wierman
NDG Special Contributor

I am a huge horror movie fan. If it's scary and has at least a decent (not over-the-top gory) plot line, I'm game to watch just about anything. Most of the time I'm pretty tough about it, too. I'm a big girl, I know better than to be afraid of the dark. I enjoy the thrill of horror movies, I like seeing all the scary special effects, the ghouls, ghosts and monsters.



That being said, "The Conjuring 2" was so scary I thought I was going to die.

I can't remember the last time I put my hands over my eyes during the build

up to a jump-scare, let alone screamed in a movie theater. I'm actually pretty ashamed of how much this movie terrified me, but it's been a good week since I saw it in theaters and I still get anxious walking around my house in the dark.

The story is based off the real-life story of a family in Enfield, a borough in London, who in the late 1970s, who claimed to have experienced paranormal activity and phenomena brought about by a poltergeist. It was one of the most docu-

mented hauntings in history, though many believe it to be nothing but a hoax.

But hoax or no hoax, the story the "Conjuring 2" is far more sinister than whatever true-life events may or

See **HORROR**, Page 16

Does the company that bought EBONY really have a plan?

Chicago Crusader Staff Report
NNPA Member

The new owners of EBONY magazine and JET-Mag.com emerged on June 21, unveiling their plans for the iconic Black publications. The announcement came nearly a week after the Chicago Crusader published a story on the sale that was shrouded in mystery.

On Tuesday, a story published on EBONY.com described Clear View Group L.L.C. (CVG), the company that purchased Johnson's magazines, as a Black-owned investment firm based in Austin, Texas led by Michael Gibson and Willard Jackson, the chairman and vice chairman, respectively. The partners started the firm in 2015.

In the story, Gibson said purchasing the two publica-

tions was a "no-brainer."

The new owners said that "EBONY," EBONY.com and JETMag.com will be part of the newly formed group called the Ebony Media Company (EMC). Johnson Publishing Company Chairman Linda Johnson Rice will serve as Chairman Emeritus of EMC. Kyra Kyles, who led the EBONY's digital operations, will be the magazine's editor-in-chief and senior vice president of digital editorial.

Gibson will serve as board chair of the new Ebony Media Company.

"Ebony's always been a part of our families, so it had always been an attraction," Gibson said in the EBONY.com story. "But this opportunity was introduced to us ... and it didn't take us very long to make a decision

that this was something unique, it's the most iconic image in the African American community and it's a platform that we think is really important for us and all of our community."

CVG is still mum on the terms of the deal and the sale amount for EBONY and Jet-Mag.com, two magazines that were founded by John H. Johnson, who used his mother's furniture as collateral to start Johnson Publishing Company. The sale ended an era of EBONY and Jet, which were both family-owned since Johnson founded the company in 1942.

According to EBONY.com, CVG specializes in private equity acquisitions. Gibson and Jackson are Clear looking to transform the Ebony Media Company into a "mul-

See **EBONY**, Page 11

Cheryl Smith's

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DART to host gathering of minority transportation leaders

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and COMTO Dallas will host the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials 45th Annual National Meeting and Training Conference. The event showcases more than 400

professionals in the transportation industry gathering at the Dallas Omni Hotel, July 8-12, for five days of networking, showcasing, learning and collaboration.

Attendees to COMTO's conference will include

transportation agency leaders, government officials, principals and employees of Historically Underutilized Businesses, as well as private-sector business executives and professionals.

DART last hosted this annual event in 2009. Honored guests in 2016 include Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings and Former Dallas Mayor and U.S. Ambassador Ron Kirk. Confirmed speakers include top officials from the Federal Transportation Administration and Federal Highway Administration.

Conference sessions will address transportation industry issues covering operations and maintenance strategies, leadership development, legislative and advocacy strategies, and solutions for HUBs

Visit comto.org to register for this year's conference or for more details.

Visit comto.org to register for this year's conference or for more details.

Five ways to better market yourself to land your dream job

(StatePoint) Employers report a lack of skilled talent as one of the biggest threats to meeting business objectives in 2016. Job seekers who take note of what skills and characteristics companies are seeking could have a competitive advantage.

"With companies reporting job vacancies that are threatening productivity levels, candidates have a tremendous opportunity to land their dream job," says Jim Link, chief human resources officer, Randstad North America, one of the largest HR services and staffing companies in the



U.S.

The 2016 Workplace Trends Guide by Randstad US reveals how employees can better position themselves for success during their job search. Whether you're an active or passive

job seeker today, here are the top five considerations:

1. Use staffing/recruiting firms to maximize your chances. As the most effective method to recruit full-time and contract workers, job seekers should take ad-

vantage of staffing firms to gain access to a wide range of opportunities at no cost. Working through a staffing or recruitment firm is oftentimes the best entry point for some of the country's most desirable employers.

2. Market skills based on desired assets. As companies move beyond recession recovery and enter growth mode, their ability to hire great talent is arguably the most important driver for success and profitability. Do the necessary research to understand the skills and expertise companies in your industry are looking for and

See JOB, Page 12

EBONY,

continued from Page 10

timedia platform" that will include existing print and digital operations. Clear View also said there is also a possibility of expanding into broadcast operations as well.

"We see bringing additional programs, activations, events...to further satisfy what we think is a need out there for African American content," Jackson said in the *Ebony* story.

Given the new ownership team, some former employees and fans believe *Ebony* won't be the same. With little to no media experience and EBONY's financial woes, there is also concern that restoring the magazine will be too difficult in a tough industry where advertising dollars have been declining for years.

The *Chicago Crusader* is a member publication of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Learn more about becoming a member at www.nnpa.org.

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1786	Lucky Multiplier Overall Odds are 1 in 3.79	\$3	8/1/16	1/28/17
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1700	Wild 1's Overall Odds are 1 in 4.42	\$1	8/31/16	2/27/17
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JOB, continued from Page 11

take every step to market yourself with those desired job requirements in mind.

3. Use multiple sources to find available positions. On average, the companies surveyed report they are currently understaffed by 10 percent with an average of 137 open jobs. Hiring decision-makers report using a

wider range of recruitment methods, which include social media, digital networking, as well as working with local universities and colleges.

4. Don't rule out the importance of work ethic and soft skills. Decision-makers cite work ethic (36 percent) and soft skills (33 percent)

as two of the top areas candidates are lacking. Don't leave any question in the hiring manager's mind about your willingness to work hard. During interviews, make eye contact, communicate effectively and demonstrate your ability to adapt to any work environment.

5. Don't rule out contract work. On-demand talent is

needed. More workers are choosing contingent or temporary work as the economy embraces an "on-demand" workforce. In fact, it's estimated that more than 40 percent of the U.S. workforce will be contingent by the year 2020. Sixty-eight percent of companies surveyed believe a variable workforce model with a mix of temporary

and permanent employees allow for more agility to meet customer demands. This can mean increased benefits for job-seekers, including broader job opportunities, flexible work schedules and greater income potential.

For an inside perspective of what companies are looking for and how they go about searching for talent,

access the Randstad 2016 Workplace Trends Guide at RandstadUSA.com/workforce360.

By doing your research and taking advantage of opportunities like working with staffing firms and utilizing social media connections, you can improve your chances for a successful job search.

BANKS, continued from Page 1

over the last 15 years, Hispanic banks grew from 31 to 39, such Asian institutions from 69 to 78, and Native American ones from 14 to 18, the FDIC reports. Overall, the number of non-minority banks dropped 37 percent, from 2001 to 2016 — 9,549 to 6,020.

"It was very unfortunate that major financial institutions — big banks — received a large portion of the TARP money when institutions like Capitol Bank received none or very little,"

said George Andrews, former CEO of Capitol Bank & Trust in Atlanta, which closed in February 2015. "To add insult to injury, big banks received TARP money after they played a large part in creating the downturn in the economy with the unscrupulous lending practices they engaged in."

The Troubled Asset Relief Program, nicknamed TARP, empowered Washington to purchase assets and equity from financial

institutions to strengthen that sector. Few black banks qualified for these funds.

A Harvard Kennedy School study found last year that smaller banks also lost substantial market share after 2010's Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, designed to prevent the collapse of major financial institutions. Meanwhile, larger banks dramatically increased their market share.

Dodd-Frank adds compliance costs to black bankers' day-to-day operations, they say.

"But I would say it's the overall impact of the economy that has hurt black banks most," said Michael A. Grant of the National Bankers Association.

Black bankers also say some federal policies have created an environment in which black banks are losing business to larger, more stable institutions.

Grant cites the Treasury Department's New Markets Tax Credits program. It has given tax credits as incentives to invest in underserved neighborhoods since 2000. But larger banks swoop in, make invest-

ments, then receive tax credits, black bankers say. Meanwhile, their own applications get rejected, never mind their service to poor communities.

Some \$3.5 billion in New Markets Tax Credits were allocated to 76 entities across America, Black Enterprise reported last July, but "no funds were awarded to the nation's minority banks."

If these tax credits were issued "in a more fair and equitable way, it would cause millions of dollars to flow to these [black]

banks," Grant said.

"Meanwhile, my expenses are twice as much because I have to do more counseling to my borrower," said a frustrated McDonald of Liberty Bank. "I may have to have guard service because I am in a high crime area. My deposits are much smaller.

"We have tried speaking to everybody we could, but no policy changes have been made. I don't want lip service and talk about I'm doing a good job. Help me do a better job and I can help twice as many people."



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Venturize empowers black business owners with new loan comparison tool

By Freddie Allen
NNPA National News Editor

In an effort to level the playing field for Black-owned small businesses, the Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), recently launched a service that makes it easier to comparison shop for the best loans.

Miti Sathe, the senior vice

president of Small Business Initiatives at OFN, said that small business owners can go to Venturize.org, answer a few questions like loan amount, age of business and personal credit score and, in less than 15 seconds, the calculator will generate a range of loan options.

Sathe said that OFN, a na-

tional network of community development financial institutions, wanted to create a tool similar to the travel website Expedia.com, but for small business lending.

Venturize.org features tutorials on borrowing, a loan application checklist and establishing credit for your business, but the service does not

lend money or recommend loans.

Minorities own about 8 million small businesses in the United States. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that, Black-owned businesses have received less than 2 percent of loan money furnished through the Small Business Administration.

FOURTH, continued from Page 10

sugary processed non-sense, and celebrate the U.S.A. with a twist. Try instead serving up a nice pitcher of homemade lemonade, something the kids and the grown-ups will enjoy. (Especially if the grown-ups can splash in a little adult beverage to spice up said lemonade.) Another American-inspired treat might be a pitcher of sweet tea. If you're really after that red aesthetic though, you could always try cherryade or strawberryade...there's less

food coloring and therefore less red-stained teeth and mouths.

Serve your Apple Pie with a slice of Cheddar Cheese: Declare independence from a melty messy this year by ditching the vanilla ice-cream and serving your favorite pie in the U.S.A. with a slight twist. Do you think Martha Washington served her Apple Pies with a side of high-fructose corn syrup? No. She served her Apple Pie with a big ole slice of Cheddar Cheese. I'm

telling you: it's the traditional way to eat apple pie, and you won't love it till you try it.

Don't feel married to "Born in the U.S.A.": The Fourth of July Playlist has been played, and played and played some more. We get it, Bruce, you were born in the U.S.A. This year, be independent, be free, and play whatever music you want. Play some Jazz, some Blues or some Grassroots: all American made and American proud. There's so much American music you can explore this Fourth of July, you

might even encourage your guests to play their favorite American band or genre at your party this year--share the Aux cord and share the liberty.

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July 3, 12 Noon

How do you impact others? Join us Sunday at noon in Bible Study; Senior Pastor Woodson or Pastor Brenda Patterson will teach a series on "Design for Discipleship, Book 3 and Chapter 4."

Learn how to introduce others to Christ and make Him known to them; to help others know and grow in God's word; and to give others clarity and direction.

July 6, 7 p.m.

Join us in Wednesday's Prayer and Bible Study Class with Senior Pastor Woodson and Pastor Brenda Patterson teaching a series on "Design for Discipleship, Book 3 and Chapter 4." Spiritual maturity is God's desire for you. It's Time to Grow; Ephesians 4:12 & 13.

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July 6, 7 p.m.

Join us at 12 Noon with Rev. Viveca Potter teaching on the Word of God; come

back at 6:45 p.m. for Corporate Prayer and stay for Senior Pastor Autry at 7:30 p.m. teaching on the Word of God. Our youth will come for Food and Fellowship at 7 p.m. followed by Bible Study at 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Terrence Autry, Senior Pastor
701 Centennial
972-991-0200
Richardson, TX 75081
www.Christcommunityrichardson.org

FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN CENTER CHURCH IN ALLEN "THE SHIP"

July 3, 8 a.m.

Every 4th Sunday

Calling All Youth! Join our Hype Sunday Worship (first service only) on our main campus at 200 West Belmont Drive and be blessed; followed by our Sunday Worship Services at Bolin Elementary School in Allen, Texas 75002 and bring someone with you, you will be blessed.

July 6, 12 p.m.

Join us in our Wednesday's 12 Noon-Day Live, Prayer and Bible Study and/or our Wednesday Night Live, Prayer and Bible Study at 7 p.m. to learn more about God's Word at the Joycie Turner Fellowship Hall, 200 West Belmont Drive in Allen. Be encouraged by God's plan for your maturity and His glory; and most of all, be prepared to grow.

Dr. W. L. Stafford, Sr., Ed. D. Senior Pastor
5705 Cheyenne Drive at Bolin Elementary School in Allen 75002 for Sunday Morning Worship and the Admin. Building Address is 200 W. Belmont Drive Allen, TX 75013
972-359-9956
www.theship3c.org

INSPIRING BODY OF CHRIST CHURCH, Let's Go Fishing! MATTHEW 4:19

July 3, 7:30

and/or 11:30 a.m.

You're invited this Sunday as we praise, worship, honor and magnify God's Holy name.

July 6, 7 p.m.

Join us in Monday School as we grow in God's Word and learn what God has to say to us.

Pastor Rickie Rush
7701 S Westmoreland Road
Dallas, TX 75237
972-372-4262
www.Ibocchurch.org

MT. OLIVE CHURCH OF PLANO (MOCOP)

July 3, 10 a.m.

Join us for Worship Service as we praise and worship God for His Honor and His glory; and don't forget to comeback at 7 p.m. for our Brazilian Church.

July 6, 7 p.m.

You're invited to our Wednesday's Bible Study class; you will learn what God has to say to us. Come to be encouraged by God's plan for your spiritual growth and His glory.

Pastor Sam Fenceroy Senior Pastor and Pastor Gloria Fenceroy
300 Chisholm Place
Plano, TX 75075

972-633-5511
www.mocop.org

SHILOH MBC IN PLANO (WHERE COMMUNITY BECOMES FAMILY)

July 3, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Please join us for Sunday Morning Worship Service and be blessed by God.

July 6, 7 p.m.

You're invited to our Wednesday's Bible Study to learn more about God's Word. Come and be encouraged by God's plan for your maturity and growth;

it's all for His glory and His honor.

Our church ministries offer opportunities for motivation and growth; join us and see.

July 10, 8 a.m.

And 11 a.m.

Join us for Friends & Family Day for Worship Services and fellowship as we give God all glory, honor and praise.

Dr. Isaiah Joshua, Jr. Senior Pastor
920 E. 14th Street
Plano, TX 75074
972-423-6695
www.smbcplano.org



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Short stories and poetry



Send email to: businessoffice@northdallasgazette.com to sign up for Sister Tarpley's weekly electronic newsletter.

In The Valleys I Grow: Sometimes life seems hard to bear, full of trouble, sorrow and woe. It's then I have to remember, that its, "In The Valleys I Grow."

If I always stayed on the mountaintop and never experienced pain, I would never appreciate God's love and would be living in vain.

I do not always understand why things happen as they do, but I'm very sure of one thing, my Lord will see me through.

My little valleys are nothing when I picture Christ on the cross; He went through the valley of death, His victory is our gain and Satan's loss.

Forgive me Lord for complaining when I'm feeling so very low. Just give me a gentle reminder that

it's, "In The Valleys I Grow."

Lord, continue to strengthen me and use my life each day, to share Your love with others and help them find their way.

Thank you for the valleys, Lord. For this one thing I know, the mountains are glorious, but, it's "In The Valleys I Grow." – Anonymous.

"Remember that it's takes two mountains to make a valley; therefore, you've been blessed more than you've been in the valleys."

"Because": Just because no one has been fortunate enough to realize what a gold mine you are, doesn't mean you shine any less.

Just because no one has been smart enough to figure out that you can't be topped, doesn't stop you from being the best.

Just because no one has come along to share your life, doesn't mean that day isn't coming. Just because no one has made this race worthwhile doesn't give you permission to stop run-

ning. Just because no one has realized how much of an awesome man/woman you are, doesn't mean they can affect your masculinity/femininity.

Just because no one has shown up who can love you on your level doesn't mean you have to sink to theirs.

Just because you deserve the very best there is, doesn't mean that life is always fair.

Just because God is still preparing your Queen/King, doesn't mean that you're not already a King/Queen.

Just because your situation doesn't seem to be progressing right now doesn't mean you need to change a thing.

Keep shining, keep running, keep hoping, and keep praying, keep being exactly what you are already. Complete! Being a man/woman of God! --Bishop T. D. Jakes.

Heavenly Father, You knew me before I were in my mother's womb; You knew that I would be coming soon. Thank You Heavenly Father for all that You do. Thank You for bring me through.

Trials and tribulations come and tough times too, but all I have to do Heavenly Father is call on you. You kept a roof over my

head and even a warm bed. If it wasn't for You; I would have been misled.

Thank You, Father for all that you do, Oh Lord, I'm learning to depend on You. Thank You for all that You've done; You gave your only Son.

You're everything to me, and I want You to know it; I'm going to work harder Lord, and I'm going to show it.

Thank you for all that you're going to do, Your Son is coming back for all of them and me too. (Job 1:21-22) --Bobby J. Tucker



Sister Tarpley with former student, Meredith Lowrey Irving, originally from Carrollton, Texas

Inspiring Body of Christ
Pastor Rickie G. Bush



7701 S. Westmoreland Rd
Dallas, TX 75227
972.674.1000 (1000)
www.iboxchurch.org

Worship: Sunday 10:00am & 11:00am
Monday School 7:00am & 8:00am

NDGtv North Dallas Gazette takes a moment to reflect on the past with **Historical Perspectives from Sister Tarpley**



Hear what it was like growing up in a very different Dallas when Booker T. Washington was a black school. Sister Tarpley graduated from there and went on to college and later became a city councilmember in Carrollton.

Look for NDGTV at NorthDallasGazette.com

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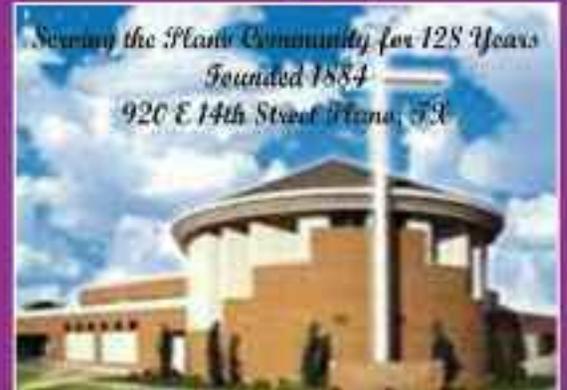
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Wednesday Night Live
200 W Belmont Drive Allen, TX 75013 7:00 p.m.



Pastor Dr. W. L. Stafford, Sr.

NDG Book Review: *I Almost Forgot About You*

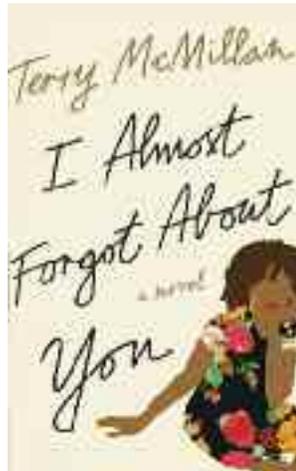
By Terri Schlichenmeyer

In every love life, there's always The One That Got Away.

He got away because you were both too young, too scared, too broke, or too different. Things were said that couldn't be unsaid, done that shouldn't have been done. It just did not work out then, but now...? In the new novel, "I Almost Forgot about You" by Terry McMillan, he'll never get away twice.

It should have been an ordinary run-of-the-mill Monday.

That's the way it started for optometrist Georgia Young: new prescriptions,



return clients, follow-ups, and one new Monday-morning patient who – big surprise! – turned out to be the daughter of a man Georgia dated in college and had fallen for. She never told the guy she

loved him, though, and she never would... because he was dead.

Shaken to the core, Georgia began to think about all the men she'd slept with, and the ones she'd fallen in love with. How would life have changed if she'd stayed with any one of them? She'd been divorced twice; would that number have been higher or lower? Would she have more than her two daughters, live somewhere other than San Francisco, travel, cook for two?

At nearly 55 years old, she figured she'd never find love again, but she at least needed closure. With

the urging of her BFF, Wanda, Georgia made a list of the men she'd once loved, and she promised herself she'd find them – not because she wanted to rekindle anything, but because she had so many questions for them and for herself.

Finding her ex-husbands was easy. Michael happened to be moving back to California, and Niles was out of jail for his white-collar crime; both were happy and had moved on with their lives. Georgia was even able to stop hating them.

But Abraham wouldn't be easy to find. Neither would Lance. There were

two Jameses, two Harolds, Thomas, Horace, and others, and one white guy that Wanda remembered, and added to the list. Georgia knew she'd never find them all, especially since she had a business, a busy family, and a life to live.

Still, they were all men she'd remember forever. But would they remember her?

Show of hands: who hasn't spent girlfriend-time talking about boyfriends? Probably nobody, so "I Almost Forgot about You" is a comfortably familiar story.

That's not to say that it's same-old, though. Like she did in many of her other

novels, author Terry McMillan gives readers a cast of strong-minded, smart women who lean on other strong-minded, smart women. In this book, however, we see a few more bruises from living, rather than from relationships: Georgia and her friends are looking toward retirement, a little less stress, and no more drama. Even so, they get drama anyhow, and you'll be glad for it.

Definitely, this is a novel for anyone who's lost a love and wondered, "What if...?" It's a book you'll want to share with your BFFs. "I Almost Forgot about You" is a book you shouldn't let get away.

HORROR, continued from Page 10

may not have transpired in Enfield.

In the movie, after a young girl named Janet Hodgson and her family have been subjected to the terrors of an evil presence (to put it lightly) in their home for months, paranormal investigators Ed (Patrick Wilson) and Lorraine Warren (Vera Farmiga) come to London to try and determine what exactly is happening to the Hodgson family.

However, all is not as it seems when it becomes clear Janet is not the only one being threatened by a demonic force.

Watching this movie was like being on a never ending roller-coaster of terror and fright. Sure, there were corny special effects and way too predictable jump-scares, -not to mention so many "Don't Go In There!" moments I almost exploded- but for a horror movie, this was good. Oscar worthy? No, of course not. Date night? Yes, please!

So what if maybe Ed and Lorraine's 'perfect ghost-hunter couple love' gets a little old after, like, four

seconds, or if the ending is so predictable it's literally given away in earlier scenes, plain as day? "The Conjuring 2" still scared

the living daylights out of me, and I'm an adult.

Take your friends, take your date, take your parents -- just get to this movie and have a terrific time.



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