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Texas economy doing well as Senate kicks off legislative session

By Richard Lee
Texas Senate News

Tuesday marked the beginning of the 86th session in the Texas Senate, a 140-day term in which state leadership has pledged to tackle the complex issues of public school finance reform and property tax reform. Governor Greg Abbott was on hand to welcome the members, new and current and promised to finally resolve these issues.

"We are going to step up and address it," Abbott said.

Other major issues facing the Legislature this session include state pension funds and contracting oversight, but like Abbott, Senate leader Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and newly elected House Speaker Dennis Bonnen have highlighted property tax and school finance reform as critical issues this session.

Nelson in the spotlight

Patrick was not present at Opening Day as he was called to Washington D.C. for a meeting at the White House. In his absence, Flower Mound Senator and Finance Committee Chair Jane Nelson led the largely ceremonial proceedings, which included the swearing-in of six new members and the nomina-



Texas State Senate opens for business for the 2019 Legislative Session (Image via Texas Senate News)

tion and election of Austin Senator Kirk Watson as President Pro Tem.

Nelson becomes the first woman to ever gavel in the Senate on opening day, and as the session closed, Nelson noted from the dais that with the newly elected members, the nine women now serving in the Texas Senate are more than ever before.

Nelson is also the first woman to chair the powerful Finance Committee, which crafts the Senate's version of the state budget for the upcoming biennium. This will be her

third session guiding the process.

Economic outlook better for this session

On Monday, she and other Senators learned how much they will have to spend when state Comptroller Glenn Hegar delivered his biennial revenue estimate. Because the Legislature meets only every two years, budgets are crafted prospectively and based on projected revenues. Every session, the Comptrol-

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People In The News...



Crystal King



Matrice Ellis-Kirk

On the GO??? But still need to be in the KNOW!!! Bookmark NorthDallasGazette.com on your phone or mobile device!!!



Crystal King

Family Gateway announces the appointment of six new members to its Board of Directors for 2019. New Board Members are Michelle Frymire, Crystal King, Kamini Mamdani, Joe Norville, Amy Warren, and Yulise Reaves Waters. Alex NK Sharma will serve as the 2019 Board Chair.



“We are very excited about our new Board Chair and the addition of these six individuals to our Board of Directors,” said Ellen Magnis, President and CEO of Family Gateway. “Their skillsets will bring a variety of new ideas and insights to

our agency and mission. As the point of entry for families with children experiencing or near homelessness in Dallas, we’ve seen an unprecedented increase in the number of families needing assistance. I am

confident these new board members will help us think creatively to meet the need in our community.”

Crystal King, National Director, Digital Assets, American Heart Association, is a 2002 graduate of Albany State University with a BS in Marketing, and a 2012 graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington with an MBA. King is responsible for driving health impact towards the American Heart Association’s 2030 Impact Goal through strategic marketing and the development of strategies rooted in addressing social determinants of

health to benefit communities across the U.S. Prior to joining AHA, Crystal began her career with Altria Group, Philip Morris USA and then served as Sr. Manager of Philanthropy for JCPenney. However, Crystal was largely known for her work in marketing for Susan G. Komen®, a global leader in the breast cancer movement; a cause that was a passion following a cancer diagnosis for both she and her mom within a period of 3 years. Most recently, Crystal and her husband launched the LoveKings brand. LoveKings is a relationship blog and web

series designed to provide lessons through relatable stories. Crystal is a proud wife and mother.

Yulise Reaves Waters Yulise is formerly an Assistant City Attorney and Community Courts Prosecutor for the City of Dallas. She is also the co-founder and lead planner of the Second Chance Community Improvement Program community court in Dallas County history. Waters earned her B.A. in English and in Spanish and her B.B.A. in Organizational Behavior and Business Policy as a Presidential Scholar

at SMU in Dallas. She also earned her J.D. from the Dedman School of Law at SMU. She has been named to the Dallas Business Journal’s “40 Under 40,” to Who’s Who in Black Dallas, and to the City of Dallas’ Wall of Honor for meritorious service to the citizens of Dallas. She is also a recipient of the History Maker Award of the Black Alumni of SMU. She is married to the Reverend Dr. Michael W. Waters, founder and Senior Pastor of Joy Tabernacle A.M.E. Church in Dallas, Texas. They are the proud parents of three children.

Matrice Ellis-Kirk

Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) announced Matrice Ellis-Kirk, Gunjan Jain, and Debra Brennan Tagg are new members of the foundation’s board of trustees and that Alfreda Norman will be its board chair-elect.



“We are fortunate to have outstanding business and community leaders who accept the call to be trustees,” said Jim Bass, CFT’s board chair. “The varied experience and knowledge that Matrice, Gunjan, and Debra are bringing to our board will help guide CFT as we work together to strengthen North

Texas and improve lives across our entire state and beyond.”

CFT trustees are selected for their wide-ranging knowledge of community needs, record of charitable

service, and fiscal responsibility. They serve as stewards of \$1.1 billion in assets across more than 1,000 charitable funds, overseeing the largest community foundation in Texas and one of the largest in the United States. CFT ranks in the top 20 nationally for assets managed, gifts received, and grants paid. CFT also operates Educate Texas, a prominent statewide education initiative. Since its founding in 1953, CFT has awarded more than \$1.8 billion in grants.

Dave Scullin, president and CEO of CFT, said new board members provide a

fresh perspective as CFT continues to expand its positive impact.

“Our community is a special place with a long history of caring citizens, rapid growth and economic opportunity,” Scullin said. “But as it continues to grow, so too do the needs of those facing imbalances in income, racial equity and education. Data suggest these needs are increasing. These new board members will help guide CFT as we work to build thriving communities for all.”

Matrice Ellis-Kirk is a senior member of the RSR Partners’ Board Recruiting and

Chief Executive Officers Practices. She also serves as a member of the RSR Partners Executive Committee.

She has over 20 years’ experience in the executive search industry. Before RSR Partners, Matrice led board and CEO assignments at two large global search firms. She began her career in the consumer goods and services and private equity practices, as well as the financial officers practice. In her early career, she served as an officer in commercial banking at MBank, vice president of the Office of Management and Budget at Dallas Area Rapid Transit, and leader of the

Dallas office for investment banking firm Apex Securities.

Matrice graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. She and her husband Ron Kirk, former City of Dallas Mayor and U.S. Trade Representative under President Barack Obama, are empty nesters living in Dallas. Her interests span the arts, education, and transportation. Matrice chairs the AT&T Performing Arts Center board and is a Dallas City Council appointed board member of the DFW Airport Authority. She has two daughters living in New York City.

NDG Readers Sound Off...

Rep. Johnson receives the 2018 Cleophus Steele Social Justice Award



Great article on Judge Cleophus Steele’s contributions to Dallas. But the article did not name one thing that Eric Johnson has done to advance’s Steele lifetime commitment to social justice. Barbara’s State Rep. Toni Rose has done more for social justice or is this award only for lawyers and since Eric is the only black house member from Dallas is an attorney, did he get it on default? is that it? Eric Johnson said nothing about

Jean Botham who was a member of Johnson’s home church and a constituent in District 100. At least Senator West did engage the Texas state agencies in the investigation.

-- Sandra Crenshaw

He lives in one of the poorest districts in all of

Dallas!!!

-- Rodolfo Guel

Hamilton Park Celebrates 60-year Legacy

When I was growing up there, there used to be a record store and all the Black performers would come in sign autographs. I wish I could remember the name of that record store. Does anyone know by any chance?

-- Precyous Williams

Editor’s Response: Our Facebook community pro-

vided two possible answers :

- Top Ten Records opened in 1956

-- Lynn Flower

- Hills Record Shop. The owner was William E. Hill

-- Donna Pierce’ Pipkins

Dallas Cowboys focused on the L.A. Rams, not history, in their quest for the Super Bowl

If Dak don’t run the ball!

-- David Clark via Facebook

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American Democracy and the Don Dictatorship



Straight Talk
Ed Gray
NDG Senior Columnist

The American government has slipped into elected anarchy.

The tweets from the 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue occupant remind me of a high school senior going through senioritis. Perhaps, what is wrong with President Donald Trump is the fact he is suffering from senioritis, in this case, old age impaired judgment. How else can you explain his actions? The inconsistency, the anger, the impulsiveness, and the inattention to detail.

President Trump has gone through so many cabinet officials it is as if he taking servant leadership Ex-Lax. There is a normal turnover rate every presidential administration experiences, normally it occurs during the second term. However, Trump hires and fires as if

the White House is a prop for The Apprentice. If our government was the television reality show, only Presidential spokesperson, Sarah Huckabee, and Vice President Mike Huckabee will be staying at Trump Tower.

General Jim Mattis, the now former Secretary of Defense recently resigned, he did not want to play army man with the Commander-in-Chief. The self-described great military leader, Commander-in-Chief Trump said “I think I would've been a good general,” graciously accepted Secretary Mattis' resignation letter.

Then he read it.

Within days of reading, (or after probably watching the reaction to it on Fox News) and discovering the damning critique of his presidency from Secretary Mattis he decided to fire Mattis. Pushing Mattis out the door 60 days earlier than announced.

Then in a strange version of the movie Friday (the movie starring Ice Cube and

Chris Tucker), he fired the Secretary of Defense with the reminder, "As you know, President Obama fired him, and essentially so did I."

Meanwhile, the Republican Congressional leadership briefly found the nerve to criticize Trump for his handling of Mattis and surprise announcement of an immediate pullout of Syria. Naturally, they scurried back to their offices, in fear of The Donald's angry reaction.

This is not a democracy, this is anarchy. This feels like a bad movie which just keeps getting worse. The problem is Americans feel forced to watch this bad YouTube version of an American presidency while eating stale popcorn.

The Republican leadership's reluctance to criticize Trump is getting old. The hour has passed for Republicans, who have pledged to defend our Constitution, can continue to simply sit back and allow the many mishaps

of the Hapless Apprentice President continue to degrade our country.

It is time to wake up America, our democracy is in trouble. We have a President running the government as if it is simply a reality television show. President Trump has government officials entering and leaving the White House, repeatedly replaced by others waiting in the wings for their cameo appearance into madness, which is our government.

This is not a democracy, this is anarchy.

I am Ed Gray and this is Straight Talk.

Ed Gray is a presidential scholar at Southern Methodist University. He is the host of The Commish Radio Show airing Saturdays 3-5 p.m. on FBRN.net, can be reached at eegray62@att.net. NDG was awarded NNPA's 2018 Robert S. Abbott Best Editorial for Gray's "Confederate Statues: The White Man's Burden" column.

Women in the House

By Congresswoman
Eddie Bernice Johnson

The newly-elected House of Representatives has 102 women among its 435 members. Many of them hold significant positions of power and influence; including the Speaker of the House, Representative Nancy Pelosi from California, who would assume the presidency if its current occupant and the vice president were unable to continue their service.

These women who now find themselves at the very fountain of policy-making in the world's greatest democracy reflect the social, economic, intellectual and political fabrics of our country. They come from blue collar and white collar backgrounds. They are of a myriad of experiences and faiths. They are mothers, grandmothers, aunts,

spouses and friends.

Without exception, the women, each representing approximately 710,000 people in their congressional districts, are compassionate public servants who have sacrificed greatly to get to where they are today.

The founders of the American democracy would not recognize the legislative chamber that they created, one void of a female voice until 1917 when Representative Jeannette Rankin from Minnesota entered the all-male bastion.

No doubt, Representative Rankin, herself, would be greatly surprised if she were alive to witness the transformation of the legislative chamber in which she once served, now with nearly 25 percent of its members being female.

I believe that this new congressional reality bodes well for our country and its

people. A widely-circulated 2018 study on the composition of government concluded that there was less corruption when women were among the decision-makers.

“Women politicians choose policies that are more closely related to the welfare of women, children and family,” the study, published in the Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, stated.

“The research underscores the importance of women empowerment, their presence in leadership roles and their representation in government,” wrote Professor Sudipta Sarangi, one of the study's authors and an instructor of economics at Virginia Tech University.

Over the years, a number of academics who have studied women in political life have concluded that those countries in which

there is a significant presence of women legislators are less likely to get involved in conflicts that lead to war.

Women in political life are less likely to be polemicists and, more frequently, choose to reason with their colleagues rather than verbally assault them. They understand the art and the importance of compromise.

I am extremely excited about the number of women in the House of Representatives, as are a number of my male colleagues who believe, as I do, that the presence of greater numbers of women will only make our decisions wiser, more equitable and just for our nation, and its people.

Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson represents the 30th Congressional District of Texas in the United States House of Representatives.

How to stay healthy when the flu season strikes

Dr. Sarah E. Laibstain
NDG Special Contributor

As we enter the new year, flu season can still be a concern. While this is an accepted and anticipated part of every winter, influenza is an illness that can escalate to serious complications, hospitalization and even death. While cases are typically not this severe, it's still important to take active steps toward prevention, given the highly-contagious nature of the virus. In addition to getting vaccinated, there are several every-day measures that can be taken to ensure a healthy, flu-free start to 2019.

Studies show that annual vaccinations are the number one proven method of preventing the flu. In fact, the CDC recommends this as the first and most important step one should take. The vaccination is formulated based on the strain of virus that research predicts will be most prevalent each flu season.



Staff Sgt. Melissa Spicer, 374th Medical Group allergy and immunization clinic technician, administers an influenza vaccination shot at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season by causing your body to develop antibodies against these viruses. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Delano Scott/Released)

Getting vaccinated can reduce the severity of illness if you do become infected, resulting in less time spent away from school, work and other commitments. Young children, pregnant women and individuals 65 years and older are considered at high-risk of developing flu-related complications and are conse-

quently the most highly-encouraged to partake in vaccination.

While getting vaccinated is important, practicing healthy habits is also a beneficial component to protecting yourself and others from the spread of flu germs. Frequent handwashing, as well as avoiding the urge to touch

your eyes, nose and mouth will help decrease the chances of contamination. Other considerations to boost the immune system include getting sufficient sleep, being physically active, avoiding stress and staying hydrated. If you do become infected with the flu, stay home when possible to prevent spreading the infection. Additionally, cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing to protect those around you.

School and work quickly become breeding grounds for germs during flu season, so it's important to stay aware. If you have children, note whether or not classrooms

are routinely cleaned and provide tissues, anti-bacterial wipes and hand sanitizers. When it comes to the workplace, wipe down frequently touched objects such as your phone and keyboard to avoid spreading germs. If you do begin to feel ill, leave as soon as possible and limit contact with others until you are fever-free for at least 24 hours to prevent spreading the virus. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, cough, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. It is also possible to exhibit respiratory symptoms with no fever. Prompt antiviral treatment can mitigate severity of these symp-

toms and is especially effective when administered within 48 hours of infection.

Stay informed on steps you can take this year to protect yourself and the ones you love from the misfortune of catching the flu. Consider getting vaccinated, and incorporate these simple, health-conscious habits into your routine.

Dr. Sarah E. Laibstain is a general family medicine practitioner at Family Medicine Associates of Texas in Carrollton. She thoroughly enjoys improving the health and lives of individuals ranging from young children to adulthood.

Stuck on the couch? Good exercise habits derailed by common food additive

Inorganic phosphate, a food additive and preservative used in up to 70 percent of food in the American diet, may be contributing to couch potato behavior.

Phosphates occur naturally in many foods, including dairy products, meat, fish, and baking powder, but it is the consumption of fast foods, processed foods, and bottled drinks that can push phosphate levels up, said Dr. Wanpen Vongpatanasin.

For example, a block of Parmesan cheese contains phosphates, but when Parmesan is sold in a grated or shredded form, additional phosphates may be added to keep it from sticking. When examining food labels, look for anything that contains "phos-," such as calcium phosphate, disodium phosphate, or monopotassium phosphate.

"We should not consume more than 700 milligrams of inorganic phosphate per day, but about one-third of people consume three to four times that amount," said Dr. Wanpen Vongpatanasin, Profes-

sor of Internal Medicine and Director of the Hypertension Fellowship Program at UT Southwestern Medical Center. "Like any nutritional ingredient, too little phosphate is harmful, but too much is also harmful."

Adding to the problem is

the lack of information on inorganic phosphate. Looking at food labels won't help, Dr. Vongpatanasin said. "Currently there are no mandates or regulations for the food industry to label how much inorganic phosphate is in the food chain."

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Town Hall Meeting on Dallas Community and Police Relations

The Black Police Association (BPA) of Greater Dallas is hosting a community town hall meeting on Saturday, Jan. 12 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. This free and open event will be held at 211 Centre Street in Dallas. The agenda will feature an open panel discussion with elected officials, law enforcement officials and



service agencies in the community.

The Dallas Police Department will lead a planning session on improving our community and law enforcement relationships. The 292nd District Court Judge Brandon Birmingham will lead a discussion on alternatives to prosecution. The 305th District Court Judge Cheryl Lee Shannon will provide an

overview of the Juvenile Justice System. The Dallas County Sheriff Department Deputy Chief Patrick Bonner will cover jail questions, partnering with the community and police recruiting.

For the Black Police Association, community policing means being proactive about and developing solutions to the immediate prob-

lems contributing to public safety issues. The BPA hopes these type of events will encourage police officers to form relationships with the residents they serve resulting in programs focused on solving the needs of the communities. Also, their goal is to facilitate conversations on community-police relations.

Forming partnerships with community organizations and giving residents the opportunity to interact with law enforcement officers has proven that good relationships are essential to good police work according to BPA.

To learn more about the event, visit www.bpadallas.org.

Time, location changes set for certain City Council agenda meetings

The Wednesday, Jan. 9, marked the first city council voting agenda meeting of the new year to begin at 2 p.m. The meeting will be held in Council Chambers at Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla St.

City Council approved a resolution on June 13, 2018, to begin the second Wednesday City Council voting agenda meeting at 2 p.m., with public hearings to begin no earlier than 6 p.m. This was part of

an effort to provide increased access for residents to attend or speak at council meetings. The resolution also included holding certain meetings at locations throughout the community. Beginning in Febru-

ary, the Dallas City Council agenda meetings will be held at the following locations:

Feb. 13 - Park in the Woods Recreation Center, 6801 Mountain Creek Pkwy, Dallas TX 75203

May 8 - Kleberg-Rylie Recreation Center, 1515 Edd Rd, Dallas TX 75253

Aug. 14 - Bachman Lake Branch Library, 9480 Webb Chapel Rd, Dallas TX 75220

Nov. 13 - Campbell Green

Recreation Center, 16600 Park Hill Drive, Dallas TX 75248

The start time for City Council briefings will remain at 9 a.m. in the Council Briefing Room.

State housing agency reports Texas Ending Homelessness Fund exceeded \$128,000

(AUSTIN) — In January 2018 the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles successfully launched the Ending Homelessness Fund (the Fund). Its aim is to help counter the effects of homelessness through an easily-made voluntary donation, which can be made when renewing a vehicle registration online at www.texas.gov or when registering or renewing vehicle registration at a county tax assessor-collector office, substation, or subcontractor,

such as a participating grocery store.

From the launch date through November 2018, TDHCA reports that donations totaled \$128,460, averaging more than \$11,000 each month.

Maximizing every dollar graciously donated by Texans, TDHCA is working to leverage contributions with the current federally-funded Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program and state-funded Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP), with the dollars tentatively scheduled for

distribution in 2019.

“The Fund allows Texans the opportunity all year long to make a difference in the life of one individual or family,” said David Cervantes, Acting Director of TDHCA. “The donations given this year will do much to help counter the ill effects that homelessness has on our communities and state, and deliver crucial resources to help families and individuals most in need.”

Contributions to the Fund will help enhance the number and quality of emergency shelters, prevent fam-

ilies and individuals from becoming homeless, encourage self-sufficiency behaviors and secure stable housing. At such time when contributions will be distributed, a Notice of Funding Availability will be released

with equal amounts directed to TDHCA-approved and active ESG providers, including current city or municipality providers.

While figures vary, the annual point-in-time count from the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development estimates that more than 23,000 Texans are considered homeless, including approximately 7,000 living on the streets and more than 16,000 living in shelters and transitional housing.

Registration Now Open for Carrollton's 3rd Annual Run for Rover 5K

Mark your Carrollton Pet Calendar: the City will host the furriest 5K benefiting our four-legged friends in the 3rd Annual Run for Rover race on Saturday, February 16 at 8:30 a.m.

Sign up your pup for a dog-specific race supporting the Carrollton Animal Services & Adoption Center. The City is excited to offer this race to walkers, runners, and their dogs directing all proceeds to the animals at the center. Come to run wild and watch as these doggies dash to the finish line.

The race will start at McInnish Dog Park (2241

Sandy Lake Road) and will route through the adjacent sports complex for a full 5K. A shorter fun run/walk route will be offered to smaller or older dogs, or dogs who are still working off some holiday weight. Don't have a dog? You can still participate. Or even better, swing by the Adoption Center (2247 Sandy Lake Road) where your new best friend is waiting for you.

“Run for Rover will simultaneously raise money for a great cause and provide families and dogs in our community with an opportunity to have fun to-

gether doing something active,” Parks & Recreation Director Scott Whitaker said.

This parade of canines aims to continually build awareness and resources for the animals in Carrollton. The City advocates responsible pet ownership and encourages those who can to provide homes to the animals.

“Fundraisers like Run for Rover play an integral role in our efforts to save the animals in our care and place them in happy and healthy homes,” Animal Services

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Equity v. Equality: Giving students the tools they need to succeed

By Naomi Shelton
Director of K-12 Advocacy
United Negro College Fund

Equity has been a huge buzzword in the field of education this year. Education advocates and politicians alike have called for an increase in educational equity, but what does the term really mean? Equity is not Equality. Equity creates equality by prioritizing resources to students who need them the most.

For example, think of a typical track meet. There are five runners – each in their own lane. Each runner must run one lap around the track. The first runner to complete the lap, wins the race. Now let's use this analogy to inform our understanding of equity.

Equality would mean that every runner would start the race at the exact same spot



NeONBrand / Unsplash

in their lane. However, the track is oval-shaped. If each runner began at the same spot, each runner's distance to the finish line would be different. The runner in the innermost lane would run a shorter distance than the runner in the outermost lane. Sure, they would both start in the same spot (EQUAL), but the runners in the innermost lanes would have an advantage – in distance – than their

counterparts in the outermost lanes.

This is precisely why track meets do not operate this way. Since the track is oval-shaped, each runner begins the race in their own lane, at different, equal distance, spots along the track; ensuring that each runner, runs the exact same distance needed to complete the race.

Now, think of our current public education system in

this same context. Students – regardless of race, geography, household makeup – start on the same marker on the track. Some students, like the runner in the outermost lane, have to run harder and faster to get to the finish line. The barrier here is distance. In the real world, barriers include low-income, resource deprived neighborhoods, disabilities that require additional expertise, culturally negligent curriculum, outdated technology, inexperienced teachers or access to critical supportive services.

Meanwhile, the runner in the innermost lane has it a lot easier. They don't have to run as fast or as hard to get to the finish line because of their initial position in the race. The barriers here are fewer in number. In terms of education, these innermost runners attend schools

in affluent neighborhoods with a surplus of resources. These students have the advantage of local tax-based funding formulas, parent lead fundraising efforts and/or private funding, and state-of-the-art technology.

What we need is education reform that promotes fairness. Fairness equals equity. As Debby Irving in her book *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* states, "Equality means giving all students the exact same thing to meet the same expectations. Equity means holding people of differing needs to a single expectation and giving them what they need to achieve it." In other words, the playing fields need to be leveled. It's critical that our public educational system undertakes reform – changes so that each student is given

what they need to succeed.

Our education system should support students by allocating the most resources to students who are most in need, just as track athletes arrange themselves for fairer competition. The national education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) targets dollars to the highest poverty schools and districts.

Under No Child Left Behind, schools could lose funding if they failed to meet statewide standards. But under ESSA, states cannot reduce funding by more than ten percent from year to year despite school performance. ESSA also attempts to ensure that low-income students are not disproportionately taught by ineffective, inexperienced, and/or out-of-field teachers.

See ESSA, Page 7

Financial education could ease student loan stress

Estimates indicate that a quarter of American adults currently have student loans to pay off, and most don't have the financial literacy to manage their debt successfully. The average student in the Class of 2016 has \$37,172 in student loan debt.

More needs to be done to educate borrowers about managing debt as well as the various repayment options that might be available to them, says Lu Fan, assistant

professor of personal financial planning at the University of Missouri.

"A majority of borrowers, 55 percent, reported being worried about their student loans; however, only 30 percent of borrowers said that they had received financial education about paying off their student loans," Fan says. "Moreover, only 40 percent of borrowers reported having financial influence from their parents.

Given the number of people who need student loans to attend college, we need to do better at educating borrowers."

Using the 2015 National Financial Capability Study dataset, Fan and Swarn Chatterjee, professor at the University of Georgia, found that having student loan debt caused mental stress for borrowers. The researchers looked at more than 2,600 responses from the dataset,

focusing on respondents who had a student loan, were between the ages of 24 and 65, were no longer a student, were employed, and were the primary decision makers in their household.

The researchers found that women were less likely to be late on student loan payments but were more likely to feel worried about their student loans. Men were less anxious about their debt and more likely to submit pay-

ments late. They also found that people with loans who did not complete college were more likely worry about paying off loans than those with degrees.

Fan believes that borrowers are not receiving the information they need to make the best financial decisions, and that policymakers and loan providers should do more to educate borrowers.

"My hope is that policymakers use this information

when developing financial educational programs," she says. "Better educational resources created for specific audiences—parents, young adults, women, and households that have experienced a drop in income—will lead to more educated borrowers."

The research appears in the *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*.

Source: *University of Missouri*

ASALH hosting annual luncheon in February

The W. Marvin Dulaney Branch (WMD) will host its 4th Annual Dr. Carter G. Woodson Luncheon at the 4th Avenue Church of Christ Family Life Center on Feb. 2 at 3220 Park Row Ave. in Dallas. The luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m. and tickets are \$10 per person which includes a boxed lunch from Two Podners Bar-B-Que & Seafood Restaurant.

The WMD Branch's annual Woodson luncheon is just one of the recurring, signature programs mandated for all local branches by the

national office of The Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. (ASALH). Established on September 9, 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, ASALH is the organization founded by "the Father of Black History." Over a hundred years later, ASALH continues Dr. Woodson's legacy. ASALH's mission is to create and disseminate Black History as the premier Black Heritage society. This vision is accomplished through a strong network of branches throughout the na-

tion.

Each branch is rooted in its own local history, offering programs, events, activities, etc. that promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to their own immediate communities. This structure assures that The Association operates "on the ground," integrating local histories into national as well as global conversations; and, the founding of the W. Marvin Dulaney branch in Dallas, Texas recognizes the unique

work and contributions of our city to the field of Black History.

The chair of the WMD's 4th Annual Woodson Luncheon is Mrs. Joan Bouldin, veteran educator and retired Dallas ISD administrator. She has confirmed Mrs. Diane Tucker's luncheon address will be: "Black Migrations and the Southern Roots of American Popular Music." Mrs. Tucker, a playwright and owner/operator of Tucker's Blues, holds a Master's Degree in Humanities from Southern Methodist

University (SMU).

Mrs. Tucker's address will be flanked with the singing of "The Negro National Anthem" by the South Dallas Concert Choir and the public presentation of the branch's official charter as an affiliate of ASALH by ASALH's Executive Director, Mrs. Sylvia Cyrus.

Branch members are soliciting ads for their Woodson Luncheon souvenir program book. All proceeds from ad sales as well as ticket sales are being donated to the Kathryn Joy

Gilliam Museum (KJGM) Elementary Debate Program in support of the D/FW area elementary school students who travel each spring to Atlanta, GA for an annual elementary debate tournament. To help the KJGM debaters you may purchase your \$10 luncheon tickets online by clicking the "DONATE" button on the WMD Branch website: <https://wmdasalh.com/>.

For more info about placing in ad, please email aroberts1003@gmail.com or call 214-507-7172.

Indian Creek anticipates Summer 2019 completion for course renovations

CARROLLTON— Thanks to a May 2018 bond election, the City of Carrollton Parks & Recreation Department was awarded \$22 million earmarked for facilities and parks. Of this, Indian Creek Golf Club was approved \$4 million to update the 80-acre Lakes Course.

Golfers can look forward to a grand scale makeover to include new cart paths, a



modern irrigation system, leveled and smoothed out tees and fairways plus

brand new greens. This renovation will result in a more sustainable maintenance program and will dramatically enhance the recreational experience and enjoyment for all golfers who visit the Lakes Course at Indian Creek Golf Club.

Work for Phase I began Friday, December 14 and will continue through March 2019, with much of

the focus on deconstruction of tees, greens, cart paths and the existing irrigation system.

The second part of Phase I will continue with grading and shaping tees and fairways, installing mainline irrigation, as well as constructing 7' concrete cart paths. The project also includes greens reconstruction per United States Golf

Association (USGA) specifications to uphold healthy sustainable turf conditions; in addition, this will restore the intended design and shape of each green complex as mowing patterns and time tend to deterioration of original features.

Phase II is scheduled to begin in March 2019 and will primarily involve finish work. A hole-by-hole sys-

tems check will prompt the reseeding effort for all renovated turf areas.

As a final step, after reseeding is completed, Indian Creek's maintenance team will manage the grow-in process.

For more information on these exciting improvements, visit indiancreekgolfclub.com.



City of Plano

Is a backyard cottage a fit for your property?

PLANO - You may have thought about building additional living space on your property to host family and guests or to serve other needs. Some Plano residents have tried to do this by building a second, smaller living space in their backyard. We call these structures Backyard Cottages.

Under the current zoning regulations, only 141 Plano

properties can accommodate this housing style. If the City allows more homeowners to have Backyard Cottages, benefits would include:

- additional housing options for seniors and others in need
- independence for a dependent adult family member
- improved use of property and living space

In response to homeowner requests, the Planning & Zoning Commission is reviewing city zoning regulations that apply to this housing style. This process begins with a work session to discuss potential design standards. If the Commission elects to move forward, a public hearing will be held on a future date to consider zoning updates.

Join the Backyard Cottage discussion in person at the Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m. at the Plano Municipal Center (1520 K Ave.).

You can also watch the meeting live on the City of Plano Facebook page.

Learn more about Backyard Cottages at plano.gov/backyardcottages.

Art brings added dimension to Brookhaven's Windmill Garden

A display of student-created sculptures is the latest addition to the Windmill Garden located on the west side of the Brookhaven College campus. The four pieces provide visual enhancements to the serene, natural surroundings of the garden without harming the delicate ecosystem.

The sculptures, Urban Topiary, by Michael Duncan; A Little Off Center, by Joy Kees; Untitled, by Barbara McQuarrie; and Beginning to End, by Jim Tompkins, will be on display through the spring 2019 semester.

The students, from Natalie Macellaio's fall 2018

sculpture class, designed, fabricated and installed each piece. The project was born through a collaboration between Macellaio, Amy Monroy, garden coordinator, and Carrie Schweitzer, director of sustainability, as a way to bring visitors to the garden and use it as a teaching opportunity.

"I really enjoy working with people across campus to collaborate on projects," Macellaio said. "I am interested in finding new ways to create work out of recycled materials or use the environmental materials instead of creating more waste."

Before the project began,



"A Little Off Center" (above) is one of the new sculptural art pieces added to Brookhaven's Windmill Garden. (Courtesy photos)

students met with Monroy to learn about the garden and the types of animals

and insects that would be interacting with the artwork. Additionally, she pro-

vided insight as to what the birds and monarch butterflies would do on perches in

protected areas.

In designing their pieces, students had to consider weather conditions, species of the surrounding plants, cost of materials and time constraints. Materials had to withstand being out in the elements and not harm the delicate ecosystem that was developing. Students also had to purchase their materials and complete their pieces in only four weeks.

"The students did a really nice job with this project and I think the collaboration worked out well," Macellaio said. "I hope to do more projects like this in the Windmill Garden and throughout the campus."

ESSA, continued from Page 6

ESSA requires that state and district report cards include the percentage of inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders as well as teachers with emergency credentials, and teachers teaching subjects out of their range of expertise. ESSA also seeks

to relieve some teacher angst surrounding evaluation systems by ending the requirement for state teacher evaluation systems to focus significantly on student test scores.

ESSA gives power back to the states to control education policy. Now, mem-

bers of the community must hold their school leaders and elected officials accountable to implement system-wide and school-specific measures that ensure equity in our schools.

Furthermore, UNCF's 2017 community resource, Lift Every Voice and Lead Toolkit: A Community Leader's Advocacy Re-

source for K-12 Education, offers step-by-step analysis of African American Education and highlights organizations that have effectively engaged in education efforts at a local level to support efforts in improving the quality of education for all students.

Naomi Shelton has experience in education related

community engagement both at the national and local levels and public administration. Currently, she is the Director of K-12 Advocacy at UNCF (United Negro College Fund), the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. There, she focuses on national education initiatives and community

engagement efforts to ensure more African-American students are college and career ready. Naomi is currently a member of the DC Public Charter School Board, appointed by Washington, D.C. Mayor, Muriel Bowser. Her passion is educational equity. Follow Naomi on Twitter at @NaomiSheltonDC

Arlington

Watch **Chris Watson** perform at BoomerJack's live on January 16 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at BoomerJack's Bar & Grill, in Arlington. Come listen to live music and enjoy enclosed, heated and dog-friendly patio. You can sit back, relax and catch your favorite sporting event on one of our 125+ HD televisions. Also enjoy \$1.95 domestic bottles, \$3 Tito's Vodka, \$3 House Wines, \$3 Sam Adams Pints and \$.25 cent boneless wings all day.

DSLR Photography 101 will be held on Jan. 12, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at River Legacy Living Science Center, in Arlington.

ton. Have no idea what to do with your new DSLR camera you just got for Christmas? Join photographer Arno Knapen for a roundtable discussion on the basics of photography. Discussion topics will include F-stops, shutter speed, and how to measure light, among other things. Practice your photography skills on specimens indoors before heading outdoors, weather permitting, to take photos along the trails surrounding the Nature Center. Please bring a camera, fresh batteries, empty memory card, and user manual. FREE. Space is limited. RSVP to 817.860.6752. Adult workshop for ages 12 and up.

Dallas

The **Controversial History of MLK Day** will feature a panel to discuss the 15-year struggle to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday on Jan. 14, starting at 6 p.m. at Martin Luther King Jr. Branch Library, in Dallas.

Grand Prairie

You are invited to the **Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark birthday party** on January 12, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. at 2970 Epic Place, in Grand Prairie. Epic Waters is turning one year old and wants you to be a part of the epic celebration! Join the festivities anytime be treated to birthday cake, dance con-



Epic Waters / Facebook

tests and hourly raffles for Epic Waters passes, parties, and swag - plus all the sliding, surfing, splashing and swimming you can handle. The party will also feature the introduction of the new Epic Waters mascot, and

rumor has it that characters from other popular North Texas attractions will be dropping in to join the fun.

Kraig Parker: The King Lives! Elvis Birthday Celebration will be held on

Jan. 11 starting at 7:30 p.m. at The Irving Arts Center, in Irving. Celebrate Elvis with tribute artist Kraig Parker and his 10-piece Royal Tribute Band. Parker will be introduced by Charles Stone, Elvis's tour producer from 1970-77. Tickets start at \$27.

Second Sunday Funday: I Have a Dream will be held on Jan. 13, starting at 1 p.m. at Irving Arts Center, in Irving. Adults and children can experience art together at the Irving Arts Center with hands-on art projects inspired by art on display in the gallery, and celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. and the power of creative vision.

City of Dallas expands the MLK Celebration

(Editor's Note: NDG will feature a listing of MLK Events in Dallas online next week. Visit NorthDallasGazette.com for more details.)

The City of Dallas has celebrated the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) for over 30 years through an annual, weekend celebration. For the first time in the City's history there will be a longer commemoration which will begin on Jan. 9 and will run through Jan. 22.

This year's theme is Reconciliation: Moving the Dream Forward and all events will touch on various issues Dr. King championed during his lifelong career of activism. The MLK Community Center Board planned all of the celebration events and the 2019 MLK Celebration Planning Committee, which consists of community members and supported by City staff.

"Dallas is very fortunate to be comprised of many different cultures, nationalities and diverse backgrounds," said Jessica Galleshaw, Director of Office of Community Care. "It is important that, as a City, we look for ways to grow this celebration and continue to plan events that are meaningful and reflect the diverse needs of our community."

Dallas' MLK week will in-



Dr. Martin Luther King at the Washington Monument on August 28, 1963 (Image via National Park Service)

clude long-standing community traditions like the Candle Lighting Ceremony, MLK Celebration Gala and the MLK March/Parade.

New for 2019 are events geared towards younger generations. There will be a Youth Summit for high school students and events for millennials including a networking event and a community service day called Millennial Action Day. A full list of events and information on how to purchase Gala tickets can be found at <https://dallasmlkcenter.com/mlk-celebration-week/>.

A few of the special events planned include:

- The MLK Birthday Celebration on Tuesday, Jan. 15 at the MLK Center at Noon. The keynote speaker for this event is Dr. Michael W. Wa-

ters, former MLK Advisory Board Chair, social activist, and Pastor of Joy Tabernacle AME Church.

- The 37th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Gala, featuring Keynote Speaker Dr. Michael Eric Dyson on Saturday, Jan. 19

- The Dallas Holocaust Museum will host a screening of Selma at 4 p.m. on Jan. 20.

- Also, TBAAL is hosting the 36th Annual Black Music & Civil Rights MLK Movement Concert also on Jan. 20. NDG Readers have an opportunity to win tickets for two to attend the event. More details on our website.

Citizens seeking opportunities to volunteer to help make the week successful can register at <https://www.volvy.org/causes/mlk-2019.html>.

THE BLACK ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS

36th BLACK MUSIC AND CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT CONCERT

Friday, January 18, 2019 @ 10 am // Student Performance // \$5
 The Black Academy of Arts and Letters - Naomi Bruton Main Stage
 1309 Canton Street, Dallas, TX 75202

Sunday, January 20, 2019 @ 7:30 pm // Public Performance
 Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center
 Downtown Dallas Arts District
 2501 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 75201
 \$35, \$25, \$15 plus applicable fees

FOR TICKETS CALL, TBAAL BOX OFFICE 214-743-2400 OR TICKETMASTER (800) 745-3000

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 Featuring MELANIE FIONA and DORINDA CLARK COLE
 Conducted by PAT KESSEE, CLARK JOSEPH, JOHN TATUM
 Hosted by TBAAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS and members from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; MARY AUSTIN, JACQUELINE HOYT, ALISA JONES, SHERYL NORTHGUT, DARLENE PETIT, KIMBERLY REED, TIA SIMMONS, OSCAR FAYE WILLIAMS.

The Black Academy of Arts and Letters Inc., 2009-2019 42nd Season program are supported in part by the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, 095-1175A-32, West Dallas, Dallas SPD, Urban Radio-Dallas and Ocean Exploring. Media partners: The Dallas Weekly, The Downtown Business News, 11 Magazine/Press.com, The Dallas Journal, Texas Water News, Dallas Black Business Directory, Dallas Gospel Community, The Dallas Journal, The North Dallas Gazette, Southern Dallas Business & Living Magazine and AllAbout.com.

OH 21 AARP Texas Office of Cultural Affairs DALLAS M

Dallas Cowboys focused on the L.A. Rams, not history, in their quest for the Super Bowl

By Dwain Price
NDG Sports

FRISCO – It's been 23 years since the Dallas Cowboys played in the NFC championship game. But they'll reach that milestone for an amazing 17th time if they're able to defeat the Los Angeles Rams on Saturday night in LA.

Such an accomplishment wouldn't be lost on running

back Ezekiel Elliott, who was a mere six months old the last time the Cowboys were only one step away from reaching the Super Bowl.

"It'll mean a lot just to accomplish that, especially here at the Dallas Cowboys' prestigious organization," Elliott said. "But our goal is not to get back to the NFC championship, it's to get a Super Bowl win.

"That'll be cool, but we want to win a Super Bowl."

The Cowboys and Rams will kick off on Saturday at 7:15 p.m.

If the Cowboys beat the Rams, and the Philadelphia Eagles win in New Orleans on Sunday in their semifinal game, the Cowboys will host the NFC championship game on Jan. 20 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington. But the Cowboys know there's a

lot of work to be done between now and then.

First, the Cowboys will have to win a playoff game on the road for the first time since they went to San Francisco and defeated the 49ers in the NFC championship game in January of 1993. While Elliott understands why historical references resurface around this



DeMarcus Lawrence (at right) closes in on Kirk Cousins during previous action against the Redskins. The Cowboy defense is getting high marks for their late season efforts. (Photo: Keith Allison / Wikimedia)

See COWBOYS, Page 11

Mythology, politics, and romance combine for Bishop Arts Theatre's La Llorona

The Bishop Arts Theatre Center (BATC), Oak Cliff's multicultural and multi-discipline center for the arts, continues its 25th Anniversary "Silver Threads" season with playwright Kath-

leen Anderson Culebro's La Llorona: A Love Story. The production previews on February 7th with opening night Friday, February 8th and continuing performances through February 24th.

La Llorona: A Love Story features a cast full of Bishop Arts Theatre Center debuts including Nolan Spinks as Jeffrey, an American businessman sent to Mexico City to oversee the opening

of a new fast-food chain with his wife, an Anthropology professor played by

Janae Hatchett. They are joined by Coy Rubalcaba who is making his profes-

See LLORONA, Page 12

SLAVERY AT JEFFERSON'S MONTICELLO

PARADOX OF LIBERTY
SEPTEMBER 22 - JANUARY 21, 2019
African American Museum at Fair Park

Presented for the first time west of the Mississippi River, this landmark exhibition uses objects from museum collections and archaeological excavations to examine slavery through the lens of Jefferson's plantation and the experiences of six families living at Monticello.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO PURCHASE TICKETS, GO TO
MonticelloInDallas.com

Logos for sponsors: Monticello, Humanities, Dallas, DART, etc.

Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
"Reconciliation: Moving the Dream Forward"
January 15-22, 2019

Realizing the Dream Healthy Living Expo
Building strong, healthy communities - physically, mentally, financially, spiritually, holistically and socially

January 21, 2019
African American Museum - Fair Park - Dallas, TX
Immediately following the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade

Also enter the Sweet Potato Pie Baking Contest
214-941-0110 for vendor or sponsor information
10am - 6pm

I am the MESSENGER

Logos for sponsors: Texas, Smoothie 1057, db, KISS FM, K104, 97.9 THE BEAT, MAJIC, BLACK BUSINESS DIRECTORY, City of Dallas, etc.

Enter to Win! Ticket Giveaway NDG Entertainment Ticket Giveaway!!! Visit us on Facebook to win tickets to the the hottest events in Dallas/Fort Worth!!!!

NDG Entertainment: Best of Fests Film Festival, Shakespeare and the Mavs this week

By Tiffany Gilbert
NDG Entertainment

Life is settling down into a regular routine with everyone back at school and work. Now we live for the weekend and in Dallas/Fort Worth there is always plenty of entertainment to choose from. This week after we finish cheering the **Dallas Cowboys on to the NFC Championship game**, we can go out for laughs, screams or Elvis!

First, a one-of-a-kind event, 22 local film festivals are coming together to create a film festival called **Best of the Fests**. The film to put at the top of your list to see was submitted by the Denton Black Film Festival. **STEPS** tells the story of Brian Coleman, who has not had the easiest of lives. He was robbed and shot fourteen years earlier, and it goes downhill from there.



Steps is a powerful tale of loss and redemption showing at the Best of the Fests Film Festival this weekend (Courtesy image)

All the way down to a life filled with addiction before he finally uses the love of his life and the gift of knowing his only child. It's a story of recovery, redemption, love, and forgiveness and the steps people must take in their lives to get to these places.

The final scene in the trailer will rip your heart out and have you running to the box office to be at the front

of the line for the showing at the Studio Movie Grill on Northwest Highway, Saturday, Jan. 11 at 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Join **Big Friday Show Interactive Improv** for big laughs on Jan. 11, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Dallas Comedy House, in Dallas. This interactive improv show happens every Friday at 8P at Dallas Comedy

House. Tickets are \$10 online and \$15 at the door.

Don't miss out on **Golden State Warriors at Dallas Mavericks** on Jan. 13, starting at 7:30 p.m. at American Airlines Center, in Dallas. For more information, and to purchase tickets visit Mavs.com.

You can watch **Hamlet** on Jan. 11, at various times at Moody Performance Hall, in Dallas. For its inaugural indoor winter season, Shakespeare Dallas will perform Hamlet, directed by Executive and Artistic Director, Raphael Parry. Hamlet returns to Denmark when his father, the King, dies. Upon his arrival, Hamlet discovers that his mother, Gertrude, has already married his uncle Claudius, the new King. When the ghost of Hamlet's father appears and tells the prince that he was murdered

by Claudius and Gertrude, Hamlet must choose between passive acquiescence and the need for a vengeance. Hamlet's mission to expose the truth is a perilous journey of madness, murder, and lost love. For more information and tickets visit <http://www.shakespearedallas.org/indoorwinterseason/>.

Get out and celebrate **Kraig Parker: The King Lives! Elvis Birthday Celebration** on Jan. 11, starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Irving Arts Center. For the last 20 years Parker has wowed audiences across America and Europe at casinos, performance halls, cruise ships and other top entertainment venues including sold out headline shows in Las Vegas. Kraig Parker's powerful voice, electric moves and tasteful charisma will leave you 'all

shook up' and screaming for more! Unlike many imitators, Parker travels and performs with his very own 10-piece group, the Royal Tribute Band. Parker is personally managed and will be introduced by Charles Stone, Elvis Presley's tour manager from 1970-1977. For tickets visit Irvingarts-center.com.

Don't miss out on **Repticon Dallas** on Jan. 12, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Grapevine Convention Center, in Grapevine. The reptile and exotic animal showcase returns with reptile pets, supplies, feeders, cages, and merchandise, as well as live animal seminars and frequent free raffles for coveted prizes. Repticon is exciting, educational, family-oriented fun for everyone. To purchase tickets visit <http://repticon.com/texas/dallas/>.

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SNOWY DAY attendee



Texas Business Leadership Council Optimistic as 86th Legislature Convenes

AUSTIN - As the 86th Legislature convened on Tuesday, the Texas Business Leadership Council (TBLC) indicated they are optimistic there is a real opportunity to create and improve upon public policy to promote Texas' competitiveness.

"The divisive tone that has overshadowed many of our state's policy debates cannot continue if Texas is to stay the economic engine of this country," according to TBLC president, Justin Yancy. "I do believe that a great majority of our elected officials understand that, are tired of the animosity, and are ready to return to a time where leaders can work on issues - sometimes disagree - but remain civil and respect the shared goals for a

more competitive state." The TBLC will continue advocating for the critical issues the state must address for Texas to continue growing in a strategic way. Those issues include education and workforce, economic development, state infrastructure, and cybersecurity policy. TBLC priorities include:

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

- Support efforts to enhance high quality Pre-K programs.
- Support funding for full-day Pre-K programs.
- Expanded educational choice for families.
- Support comprehensive school finance reform.
- Support differentiated pay scale for teachers.
- Strengthen K-12 and

postsecondary linkages to improve educational opportunity and outcomes.

- Improve efficiency and transparency with regard to portability of credits and credentials.
- Improve and strengthen education and workforce alignment.
- Support outcomes based funding in higher education.
- Support the adequate funding of state financial aid programs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Preserve competitive tax incentives used to support corporate expansion, corporate relocations, and job growth by reauthorizing Chapter 312 of the Tax Code (the Property Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act).

• Maintain a competitive Texas Enterprise Fund with a minimum balance of \$200M for the biennium.

- Support legislation preempting cities from enacting local employment and labor ordinances that are detrimental to business and job growth.
- Maintain a tax and regulatory environment that encourages innovation and job growth.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support public-private partnerships and regional authorities' ability to add infrastructure capacity through user pay models such as managed lanes and dedicated toll lanes.
- Foster a climate for innovation, additional investment, and modernization of Texas transportation infrastructure.

structure.

- Accelerate the deployment of smart infrastructure investments by updating policies and practices that impede progress.
- Support continued fiscal stewardship in managing the corpus of the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT), and continued implementation of projects included in the State Water Plan and financed through SWIFT.
- Support statewide coordination to plan for and respond to floods impacting Texas.
- Through science and innovation, strive to implement strategies that capture excess flows resulting from floods, to increase water supply, needed during times of drought.

- Support an investment in science necessary to address water challenges facing the state. Specifically, support an investment of state fiscal resources to update maps related to flood plains, as well as the updating of Groundwater Availability Models and Water Availability Models.

CYBERSECURITY

- Continue to improve state agency preparedness through modifications to the Texas Cybersecurity Act (HB 8).
- Support legislation that increases cybersecurity preparedness, education, and training throughout state government.
- Support legislation that mitigates cybersecurity risks to election and voting systems.

City of Dallas seeks public input on the use of federal funds

The City of Dallas will hold a series of public meetings and a Telephone Town Hall meeting to receive resident input on how the City uses federal grant funds to address community needs and the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The Five-Year Consolidated Plan directs how the City invests federal grant funding over the next five years.

The public hearings began last week at Dallas City Hall and will be held

at various locations throughout the city until Jan. 16.

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan and the FY 2019-20 Action Plan (annual budget) will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in August 2019.

More information on the Five-Year Consolidated Plan is available at: <https://dallascityhall.com/departments/budget/communitydevelopment>.

Thursday, January 10, 2019	Willa B. Johnson Rec. Center 12235 Wilbroad Dr., 75289	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Thursday, January 10, 2019	Terrellton Rec. Center 3313 Terrellton Rd., 75229	6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 12, 2019	Ludwood Library 1-221 Ludwood Blvd., 75214	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Monday, January 14, 2019	Franklin Center Library 9000 Lakeview Rd., 75247	6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 15, 2019	Acacia Road Library 19043 Acacia Rd., 75238	6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 16, 2019	Beckley Senior Recreation Center 154 W. Garrison Ave., 75224	6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, January 17, 2019	Tekapote Tennis/Multi-Use 7801 W. Cedar Rd., 75207	6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

COWBOYS, continued from Page 9

time of the year, he noted that it's not something he's focused on.

"We're not trying to break some streak or whatever," Elliott said. "We're focusing on going to win the Super Bowl."

The Cowboys and Rams are similar

And reaching the Super Bowl entails the Cowboys first taking care of a Rams team that's very similar to theirs.

One of those similarities involves Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott and Rams running back Todd Gurley. Elliott used his power, grace, grit and elusive abilities to lead the NFL in rushing this season with 1,434 yards, and Gurley used his power, grace, grit and elusive abilities to finish third with 1,251 yards.

But Elliott, who rushed for 137 yards and a touchdown in the Cowboys' 24-22 victory over Seattle in this past weekend's wild card playoff game, was quick to point out that Saturday's semifinal is not a showdown between he and Gurley.

"Playoff football is about

the team, it's not really about individuals," Elliott said. "It's about trying to go get that Super Bowl."

"Yes, it's going to be great facing against him. But I'm not going to put too much emphasis on that."

Maybe not, but Cowboys coach Jason Garrett took the time to point out a parallel between Elliott and Gurley.

"He can beat you with speed, he can beat you with power, he can beat you cutting back, he can beat you with a hand on the ball, he can beat you when they throw him the ball, he's great with the run after the catch," Garrett said. "In some ways I probably did describe Ezekiel Elliott."

"They're both big-time players who can really do everything you want on the field and embrace carrying the burden for their team."

Offensive guard Zack Martin also has noticed that the Cowboys and Rams have similar offensive styles.

"I think both teams like to run the ball," Martin said. "I think both offenses are better when they do run the ball successfully, so it's no

surprise we're going to try to run it and it's no surprise they're going to try to run it. "It's just whoever executes better."

Cowboys facing familiar face on Rams sidelines

While running their offense to the best of their abilities is one of the Cowboys' primary goal, they must do so while trying to out-think a very familiar face.

Rams defensive coordinator Wade Phillips was the Cowboys' head coach from 2007 until he was fired by the team on Nov. 8, 2010 and replaced by Garrett, who was the Cowboys' offensive coordinator at the time.

"Wade is such a great person and such a great coach and had been coaching for a long, long time," Garrett said. "So for me it was, as much as I could, just to be quiet and listen and watch and see how he handles so many different situations."

"Very specific football situations - I tried to get knowledge from him there. But also just how you handle a team and how you interact with coaches, how you interact with players

and the environment you're trying to create. So my time with him was incredibly valuable, and I have the utmost respect for him."

Although this is a road game for the Cowboys, since they hold their training camp in Southern California - in Oxnard, CA, up the street from Los Angeles - they know their legions of fans will be on hand for Saturday's game. Just ask former Rams wide receiver Tavon Austin, who is in his first year playing for the Cowboys.

"We're over there," Austin said, referring to the Cowboys' fans. "And that's a fact from when I was on the Rams and we played the Cowboys."

"But for the most part, we're over there and they're going to show up."

And show up expecting the Cowboys to prevail and win for the ninth time in their last 10 games.

"I expect Cowboys Nation to show up anywhere we go, and they do," defensive end Tyrone Crawford said. "We've had a strong Cowboys presence in a lot of stadiums this year, and I appreciate it."

"It's America's team. The star is definitely alive."

California Congresswoman Maxine Waters makes history as first Black, first woman to chair House Financial Services Committee

By Charlene Crowell

As 2019 begins, there is also a new Congress with leadership in the House of Representatives that makes history for people of color and women alike.

Long-time California Representative Nancy Pelosi returns as Speaker of the House – the first time in 50 years that a Member of Congress has achieved this feat. On a gender note, Speaker Pelosi becomes the most powerful woman on Capitol Hill and the only female in the nation's history to do so.

There's also another key woman and legislator that is making history. Congresswoman Maxine Waters is now the first Black and the first woman to chair the powerful House Financial Services Committee. Having served on this committee

since 1995, and its Ranking Member in the previous Congress, Waters will set the committee's agenda in key areas affecting the economy, banking, housing, insurance and securities.

The House Financial Services Committee oversees the activities and responsibilities for major financial regulators, agencies, and the nation's central bank, the Federal Reserve. These agencies include but are not limited to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation – that insures monies in depository institutions, as well as the Securities and Exchange Commission that is charged with maintaining fair and efficient investment markets.

In other words, the fiery and bold Black lawmaker

who earned a reputation for challenging Wall Street and major lenders during the housing crisis will now set the direction for a range of financial players, regulators, and institutions. From monetary policy to the production and distribution of currency, and expanding financial access to affordable housing options, a progressive and principled committee chair is running the show. She is also expected to set standards of performance that level the financial playing field and hold lenders accountable when they take advantage of consumers or discriminate in their lending.

A December 2018 report by the Asset Funder's Network analyzed racial and gender disparities in wealth and found that Black and Latina women have "lost

substantial amounts of wealth in the last two decades".

From 2007 to 2016, Black women ages 45-65 had a 74 percent drop in median wealth, compared to that of White women who experienced a 28 percent drop. Further, the Asset Funders Network concluded the median "quasi-liquid" savings for single Black and Latina women aged 45-50 was \$0.

Earlier in 2017 the Federal Reserve found that nearly 1 in 5 black families have zero or negative net worth — twice the rate of white families. Additionally the median net worth of Black families was one-tenth of that held by White families.

For all of Black America, as well as consumer advocates and others who believe

financial fairness should be the nation's watchword, an expectation of a new era of accountability, access and transparency is hoped to soon unfold.

Charlene Crowell is the Center for Responsible Lending's Communications Deputy Director. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

Paid Internship opportunity for writers, college students in the Dallas Area

The *North Dallas Gazette* has an internship position available. The goal is to provide students and aspiring writers an opportunity to gain published clips, experience and professional feedback.

The position is for up to 20 hours a week at \$8.00 per hour. Applicants must have reliable transportation.

Send resume and writing samples to: businessoffice@northdallasgazette.com



ROVER, continued from Page 5

Manager Carl Shooter said. "Your participation creates opportunities for animals to become family pets that they may not get otherwise."

Pre-register by Monday, February 11 to receive the \$25 rate for the 5K or \$15 rate for the Fun Run/Walk for humans and the \$8 rate for dogs. Pre-registration guarantees a race T-shirt, race bag, and timing chip for humans. A special gift will also be given to all dogs who are registered early. The prices increase by \$5 for humans and \$2 for dogs on race day.

Packet pick-up will be Thursday, February 14 from

noon to 8 p.m. and Friday, February 15 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Rosemeade Recreation Center (1330 E. Rosemeade Parkway).

Awards for the 5K will be given to overall male and female winners, and medals will be awarded to the top three male and female finishers in each age category (5-10, 11-14, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+). The overall dog and top three dog finishers will also receive awards.

There also will be plenty of playtime, treats, giveaways, and water after the run.

Race Day Schedule

Race Day Registration & Warm-up: 7-8:15 a.m.

5K Run: 8:30 a.m.
Fun Run/Walk: 8:35 a.m.
Awards Ceremony: 10 a.m.

To register and for more information, visit cityofcarrollton.com/runforrover.

Can't run in the race, but still want to contribute? Visit cityofcarrollton.com/ASdonations to donate a fixed amount of \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100, or express your generosity with an amount of your choosing. You can also stop by the Carrollton Animal Services & Adoption Center with a donation of \$10 or more and receive a free tumbler. The year is still new, so make sure to pick up a 2019 Carrollton Pet Photo calendar at any City facility; the price is \$10 including tax

and all proceeds go directly to the animals in Carrollton's care.

LLORONA, continued from Page 9

Carlos who with his wife Irma, played by Nicole Romero, have been forced to rent out their home to make ends meet.

La Llorona is directed by Bishop Arts Theatre Center Director of Marketing & Community Engagement Adam Adolfo who is also

designing Costumes and Sound. The production features Scenic & Lighting design by Jorge Flores. Stage management is by Katelyn Kocher. Teresa Coleman Wash serves as Executive Producer.

Following every performance, Bishop Arts Theatre

Center will be hosting a series of "Stay & Say's"; audience discussions on ideas and themes within the production such as mental health, social injustice, and race relations. These post-show discussions will last 15 to 20 minutes and will be led by local experts, artists, and community leaders guiding the conversation.



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Please visit our website: www.edbellconstruction.com/careers Or email your resume to: careers@edbellconstruction.com

Upcoming DFW area job fairs

Jan 12 Profession Pursuit Job Fair

The Profession Pursuit Job Fair will be held on Jan. 12 from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the center court in Irving Mall. Sponsors will include: Desoto ISD, UPS, Fedex, Active LLC, YesThrive, and more. For more information visit Eventbrite.com.

Jan 17 MLK Celebration Job Fair

The MLK Celebration Job Fair will be held on Jan. 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at your nearest workforce center. RSVP now and get connected. Multiple employers will be available to meet you and conduct onsite interviews. Save time by registering in www.WorkinTexas.com today and bring your WorkinTexas confirmation page to the event for a faster check-in!

Jan 19 Schneider - Driver Recruiting Event

The Schneider - Driver Recruiting Event will be held on Jan. 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Comfort Inn Dallas Park Central, in Dallas. You will have the opportunity to speak to one of their knowledgeable and personable recruiters about obtaining a CDL, driving opportunities, pay and benefits, military programs, requirements, terminology clarification, and any other questions you may have. For more information visit Careerbuilders.com.

Jan 23 Dallas Job Fair

The Dallas Job Fair will be held on Jan. 23 starting at 6 p.m. at Hilton Garden Inn, in Irving. Be sure to arrive on time, dress business professional, bring 10 to 15 copies of your resume, and display an engaging attitude. Sales and marketing professionals of all skills are invited to attend. For



more information, visit UnitedCareerFairs.com.

Jan 24 Dallas Job Fair

The Dallas Job Fair will be held on Jan 24 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Dallas Market Center, in Dallas. Open the doors of opportunity when you meet and interview with the top hiring companies in Dallas. This career fair will allow you to learn about the businesses that are hiring and what their hiring needs are. Tired of sending your resume over the web to get no responses back? Put a face with a name and make a great first impression. Register today at Eventbrite.com and you

could get hired live at the next career fair in Dallas.

Jan 31 Dallas Career Fair

The Dallas Career Fair will be held on Jan. 31 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Plano Event Centre, in Plano. You'll meet face-to-face with hiring decision-makers from some of the areas top employers. Dress professionally and bring plenty of resumes, because they're here to hire. Walk in and start interviewing, it's that simple. Save time, money and effort interviewing with multiple companies in one day at one location. Many of these companies have several openings and are eager to meet with you. You're no longer just a piece of paper. Attend the career fair and get in front of decision makers. To register and for more information visit choicecareerfaairs.com.

Feb. 13 Arlington Job Fair

The Arlington Job Fair will be held on Feb. 13, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Holiday Inn Arlington NE-Rangers Ballpark, in Arlington. Open the doors of opportunity when you meet and interview with the top hiring companies in Arlington. This career fair will allow you to learn about the businesses that are hiring and what their hiring needs are. To register and find out more, visit Eventbrite.com.

Feb 27 Dallas Job Fair

The Dallas Job Fair will be held on Feb. 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Embassy Suites Dallas Market Center, in Dallas. Open the doors of opportunity when you meet and interview with hiring managers at companies ranging from small local businesses to Fortune 500

corporations. This career fair will allow you to learn about the businesses that are hiring and what their hiring needs are. Tired of sending your resume over the web and not receiving any responses

back? By attending this event, you will be able to meet directly with hiring managers and get instant feedback on your resume and possibly even be hired on the spot.



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NDG seeks Intern Video Producer

The North Dallas Gazette is a community-driven newspaper with a digital presence seeking a new Video/Audio Producer Intern for our new video platform and to assist with the growth of our media company through quality video production.


The Producer will be responsible for recording, editing and preparing final draft of our video content in our in-house studio. The producer will record and broadcast via Facebook weekly shows. Afterwards using Final Pro Cut and other related tools, the footage will be finalized and uploaded to our YouTube channel.

The right candidate will have the following skills:

- Experience using video and audio production and post production techniques and software for live streaming and final YouTube videos.
- Experience using digital content software.
- Basic graphic design experience.
- Create content based upon agreed criteria.
- Understand how to use various social media platforms for live video events.
- Good time and project management skills.
- Attention to detail as it relates to spelling and grammar.
- Provide regular status updates to stakeholders and management.

The work will be completed at our studio located at Regal Row & Stemmons with a schedule of up to 15 hours a week. Pay rate is \$12-15 per hour.

Resumes must be sent to ngarcia@northdallasgazette.com to be considered.





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NOTICE: New year, new you, Pastor Woodson serves the community by providing "Professional Therapy and Counseling Services" on a "Sliding Fee" scale. To schedule an appointment call the Pastoral Counseling Center at 972-526-4525 or email the church at www.bethelbible-fellowship.org

January 13, 2019, 9:45 a.m.

Please join us in our quiet time, "Prayer and Meditation" followed by Morning Worship. You will be blessed and inspired as we celebrate service to God, our community and all mankind.

January 16, 2019, 7 pm

Join us for Wednesday's Prayer and Bible Study Class with Senior Pastor Woodson, Pastor Larry Gardner and others as we complete the book "Boundaries" when to say yes or how to say no by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend with supporting chapters and verses. Spirituality is God's desire for you; it's Time to Grow in the Word of God.

Dr. Terrance Woodson, Senior Pastor
1944 E. Hebron Parkway
Carrollton, TX 75007
972-492-4300
www.bethelbiblefellowship.org

FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN CENTER CHURCH IN ALLEN "THE SHIP"

January 13, 2019, 9:45 a.m.

You are invited to join us in our Sunday Morning Services as we praise and worship God in the Joycie Turner Fellowship Hall, followed by our Worship Services; and bring someone with you, you will be blessed. It's for God's glory and honor.

January 16, 2019, 7 pm

Join us in our Wednesday's 12 Noon-Day Live, Prayer and Bible Study class and/or our Wednesday Night Live, Prayer and Bible Study at 7 p.m. to learn more about God's Word. 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
2450 K Avenue #300
Plano, TX 75074
972-379-3287
www.theship3c.org

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

January 11, 2019, 8 p.m.

All men are invited to Men's Ministry meeting each Friday night at 7 p.m., (IBOC promotes proactive male leadership.)

January 13, 10 a.m.

Please join us for our Baby Christening Service. And, don't forget to invite family and friends to join us for our Morning Worship as we celebrate our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

January 14, 7 p.m. You are invited to Monday School to see what God has to say to us and to ring in the New Year.

Pastor Rickie Rush
7701 S Westmoreland Road
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972-372-4262
www.Ibocchurch.org

MT. OLIVE CHURCH OF PLANO (MOCOP) (Uniting the Body of Christ for World Impact)

January 13, 10 a.m.

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

January 16, 7 pm
You're invited to our New Year 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.

Dr. Sam Fenceroy, PhD 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)

Come and connect to God through Shiloh; grow in Christ through the study of God's Word; and Serve God through service to each other and to the world.

John 12:26.

January 13, 10 a.m. Unity Worship Service
There will be only ONE unity worship service at 10 am. Sunday School will start at 8:45 a.m.

Our church ministries offer opportunities for motivation and growth; join us and see. Be blessed of the Lord.

January 16, 7 pm
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.

Dr. Isaiah Joshua, Jr. Senior Pastor
920 E. 14th Street
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To make additions or corrections to the calendar, contact:
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Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Sister Tarpley

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

January 15, 1929, is the day that Martin Luther King came into this world, and on January 19, 2015, our nation will celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1968 at age 35, for his contributions to our nation and to the world.

Dr. King (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr., but later he had his name changed to Martin. His grandfather began the family's long tenure as pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta honoring and praising God, he served from 1914 to 1931.

Dr. King's father served from then until his death; and from 1960 until his death Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. acted as co-pastor.

Dr. King attended segregated public schools in Georgia, graduating from high school at the age of 15; he received his B. A. degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, a distinguished Negro institution of Atlanta from which both his father and grandfather had graduated.

After three years of theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania where he was elected president of a predominantly white senior class, he was awarded the B.D. in 1951. Dr. King received his doctorate degree in 1955.

In Boston he met and married Coretta Scott, a young woman of uncommon intellectual and artistic attainments. Two sons and two daughters were born into the family.

In 1954, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama and he was a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People, the leading organization of its kind in the nation. In December 1955 he accepted the leadership of the first great Black nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States; the bus boycott lasted 382 days.

On December 21, 1956, after the Supreme Court of the United States had declared unconstitutional the laws requiring segregation on buses, Blacks and Whites rode the buses as equals. In 1957 he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization formed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. The ideals for this organization he took from Christianity; its operational techniques from Gandhi.

In the eleven-year period between 1957 and 1968, Dr. King traveled over six million miles and spoke over twenty-five hundred times,

appearing wherever there was injustice, protest, and action; and meanwhile he wrote five books as well as numerous articles.

In these years, he led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world, providing what he called a coalition of conscience.

Dr. King planned voter registration drives in Alabama and he directed the peaceful march on Washing-

ton, D.C., of 250,000 people to whom he delivered his address, "I Have a Dream", he conferred with President John F. Kennedy and campaigned for President Lyndon B. Johnson.

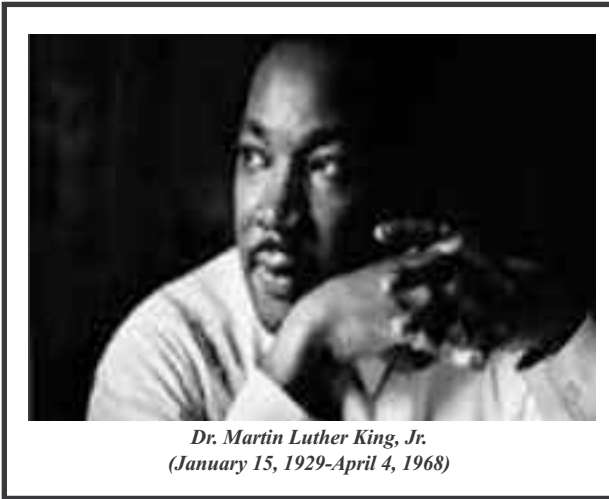
He was awarded five honorary degrees; was named Man of the Year by Time magazine in 1963; and became not only the symbolic leader of American Blacks but also a world figure. At the age of thirty-five, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was

the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified of his selection, he announced that he would turn over the prize money of \$54,123 to the furtherance of the civil rights movement.

Christian Wisdom and Quotes by Dr. King: It is impossible for a person not

to be puffed up by his good works unless he has first been deflated and destroyed by suffering and evil to the point that he knows that he is worthless and that his works are not his but God's.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." — Martin Luther King Jr.



*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
(January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968)*

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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NDG Book Review: *Blended* is a good read for youngsters 9-12

By Terri Schlichenmeyer



One plus one is two. It's simple: all you have to do is add or count, easy-peasy, a trick you probably learned shortly after you could talk. One plus one is two but as you grow up, you'll notice that math can get funny and, in the case of the new book "Blended" by Sharon M. Draper, one plus one might suddenly become more.

Eleven-year-old Isabella Badia Thornton has two homes.

It's not like she's rich or anything. It's true, though, that one house is like a man-

sion and the other is really small, but the first one is her Dad's house and the second belongs to her Mom. Isabella has a bedroom in each home because her parents got divorced when she was a little kid and it's been a mess

ever since.

What she doesn't like: the "slicing in half every seven days" thing when her parents exchange custody at the mall. Ugh. What she loves: her tall, funny, cocoa-skinned dad who bought her a baby grand because Isabella is obsessed with playing piano; and her beautiful, blonde mother, who noticed Isabella's talent back when Izzy was almost still a baby. Isabella would never choose between parents but sometimes, standing with one foot in two homes, between two races, is really, really hard.

Her friends are super-understanding and her parents'

friends are cool. Her BFFs, Heather and Imani, let Isabella vent. Her Mom's boyfriend, John Mark, has sunburned skin, tats, and a big truck and he makes Mom happy. Anastasia, Isabella's Dad's "lady friend" is elegant and sweet and Isabella likes Darren, Anastasia's college-age son. So it's not like she doesn't have people who love her, right?

But when you're eleven years old, there's a lot to figure out. Other kids can be jerks at school, and do dumb things. Adults can do equally stupid things by making decisions without asking the kids who are impacted.

Racial issues occur, even when they definitely shouldn't. And when bad things happen to good kids, it's nice to know who you can always count on.

It can be assumed that author Sharon M. Draper was a little girl, once upon a time. Can we assume she remembers it keenly? Because in "Blended," she taps perfectly into the emotions and the figuring-it-out period that almost-teenagers endure today.

In getting inside the head of a pre-teen girl, Draper presents a great young character that happens to hate drama. Still, Isabella is a typ-

ical kid with bashful boy-crazy moments and fierce-girl classmate conflicts, but her forthrightness and willingness to ask for help could be a boon for any "blended" child in similar situations. Parents might also appreciate that many of Draper's characters are not assigned a race, which subtly puts the emphasis of much of the plot on the action rather than on the color of skin.

Meant purely for young readers age 9-to-12, this middle-grade book is fun, profanity-free, and relevant now. Give it to the girl who needs a sharp story; for her, "Blended" is a good one.

SENATE, continued from Page 1

ler looks at economic trends, sales, and other tax and fee collections and delivers a forecast for how much money the state should make in the next biennium. The estimate for the last session was daunt-

ing, as economic woes left the state looking at decreased revenue, down nearly \$3 billion over the previous biennium.

Things look much better for the 2020-2021 biennium, as a strong national

economy and rising oil prices over most of 2018 have left the state with eight percent more revenue than two years ago, nearly \$120 billion in total general revenue. The state saw strong economic growth in 2018 of three percent and Hegar projected an even better

2019, calculating 4 percent growth. Despite a strong economy today, Hegar told reporters not to expect things to continue like that in 2020 and beyond.

"Texas remains economically well positioned compared to other states, and we will continue to outpace the

U.S. economy in the long term," he said. "The forecast for the upcoming biennium, however, is cloudy."

He cited some factors; the price of oil is down since October, federal interest rates are up, and both the global economy and US trade policy remain uncer-

tain. Additionally, addressing the public school finance and property tax structures could put more strain on the budget. Hegar's office predicted a more conservative growth rate of 2.5 percent in each year of the upcoming biennium.

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