



North Dallas

Gazette

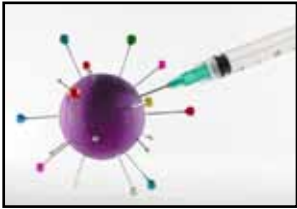
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The solution to the Trump movement

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Sister Tarpley: VP Harris is a woman to watch

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New Study: Innocent Blacks seven times more likely to be wrongfully convicted of murder than innocent whites

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

According to the latest report from The Innocence Project, innocent Black people are seven times more likely to be wrongfully convicted of murder than innocent White people.

The nonprofit legal organization committed to exonerating wrongly convicted individuals also noted that Black people are more likely to be wrongfully convicted of murder when the victim is White.

Among Black people exonerated of murder convictions, approximately 31 percent were wrongfully convicted of killing White people. However, only 15 percent of homicides by Black people involve White victims, the National Registry of Exonerations reported.

Released in February, the latest report revealed that it also takes longer for attorneys to achieve exoneration for an innocent Black person.

African Americans spend an average of nearly 14 years wrongly imprisoned before exoneration – or 45 percent longer than White people.

Further, “Black people tend to receive harsher sentences when ac-



“The legacy of slavery, racist Jim Crow laws, and hateful lynching has translated into modern-day mass incarceration and the disproportionate imprisonment of Black people,” Daniele Selby wrote for The Innocence Project. (Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA)

cused of sexual assault and have a harder time being exonerated from a wrongful conviction,” researchers at The Innocence Project wrote.

“On average, they spend 4.5 more years in prison than their White counterparts before being exonerated,” the researchers found.

As talk and tepid action by lawmakers toward real criminal justice reform continues, the latest reports revealed that Black people wrongly convicted of murder spend an average of three more years in prison than White people – four if they are on death row.

Innocent Black people spend an

average of 16 years on death row before they are exonerated, researchers wrote.

As the March 8 trial of former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin nears, researchers concluded that police misconduct occurred in more than half of all wrongful murder conviction cases involving innocent Black people.

Chauvin, who is White, is being tried for killing George Floyd, a Black man. For more than 8 minutes, Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd’s neck, which caused his

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Vernon Jordan

People In The News ...



Melanie Miles



PO2 Morgan Harris

NDG Quote of the Week: “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”

– Maya Angelou

Vernon Jordan

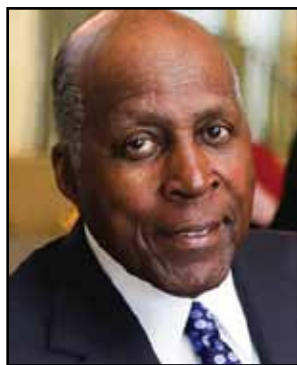
By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Vernon Jordan, the former National Urban League president and civil rights leader, has died at 85.

Vickee Jordan Adams, the icon's daughter, confirmed his death on Tuesday.

"My father passed away last night at around 10 p.m. surrounded by loved ones, his wife and daughter, by his side," Adams noted in a statement.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson said the world lost an influential figure in



the fight for civil rights and American politics.

"An icon to the world and a lifelong friend to the NAACP, his contribution to moving our society toward justice is unparalleled," Johnson declared.

"In 2001, Jordan received the NAACP's Spingarn Medal for a lifetime of social justice activism. His exemplary life will shine as a guiding light for all that seek truth and justice for all people."

Added Congressional Black Caucus Chair Karen Bass (D-Calif.): "For decades, Mr. Jordan fought for the advancement of civil rights in this country. His contributions – first challenging segregation and discrimination as an activist in the 1960s and later continuing the fight in the leadership of the NAACP, the United Negro College Fund and then as President of the National Urban

League – benefited us all."

The congresswoman continued:

As Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I had the absolute humbled honor of meeting with Mr. Jordan multiple times to discuss the challenges of our time, but also our hope and optimism for the future. While Mr. Jordan is no longer with us, we continue this fight surrounded by thousands inspired by his work and his leadership. My thoughts are with the family of Mr. Jordan and the many friends that join me in mourning his loss."

A lawyer and Washington power broker, Jordan was born in Atlanta on August 15, 1935.

He attended the DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, where he was the only African American student in his class.

According to his biography posted by The HistoryMakers, Jordan participated in the student senate at DePauw and won statewide honors in speaking competitions.

He played basketball and graduated in 1957. In 1960, he earned a J.D. from the Howard University School of Law.

Jordan returned to Atlanta, starting his legal career working with the civil rights movement.

"In 1961, he helped orga-

nize the integration of the University of Georgia and personally escorted student Charlayne Hunter through a hostile White crowd," The HistoryMakers noted.

They continued:

"Over the next ten years, Jordan held various positions as a civil rights advocate. He served as the Georgia field secretary for the NAACP, director of the Voter Education Project for the Southern Regional Council, head of the United Negro College Fund, and as a delegate to President Lyndon B. Johnson's White House Conference on Civil Rights."

See JORDAN Page 15

Melanie Miles

The Texas Coalition of Black Democrats (TCBD), in preparation for the 2022 and 2024 election cycles, has organized a statewide Texas Alliance of Black Political Action Committees (PACs) to engage in coordinated local, statewide and national fundraising to increase overall funding to maximize Black Democratic voter turnout through increased and enhanced voter registration, issue education, year-round voter engagement, community service and political infrastructure building and maintenance.



This historic initiative will be led by small business-owner, Melanie Miles. Miles has agreed to lead the fundraising project as part of The Coalition's broader effort to help increase the involvement of Democratic

Precinct Chairs and local and county elected officials within The Coalition and Texas Democratic Party.

In agreeing to serve as Chair of the Texas Alliance of Black PACs, Miles said, "I will be laser focused on helping to raise the funding necessary to bring change to Texas. Our state needs better, more compassionate and competent leadership and the path to achieving that goal is a stronger, more unified, energized and well-funded Black Democratic political infrastructure.

Black Democrats need the financial wherewithal to partner with our county parties across the state to maxi-

mize black voter turnout in our rural, suburban and urban counties."

In addition to fundraising for the Texas Alliance of Black PACs, Melanie Miles has also agreed to work with The Coalition's State Chair, Carroll G. Robinson, to assist him in an effort to help secure funding to ensure that all 254 Democratic County Parties across Texas have a full-time paid staff member to maximize the efficiency of precinct chairs in the effort to increase overall Democratic voter turnout.

Under the leadership of Miles, The Alliance will be reaching out to partner and work with all the various

constituency organizations and allied groups, in the Texas Democratic Party, to maximize strategic deployment of assets, resources and investments in the Coalition's effort to (Re)Turn Texas Blue.

Chairman Robinson said, "TCBD greatly appreciates Melanie Miles' commitment to helping the Coalition and other Texas Black PACs secure the resources necessary to help elect Black Democrats and grow Black voter turnout to help elect Democrats all across Texas in 2022 and 2024."

If you are interested in donating to or partnering and working with the Texas

Alliance of Black PACs, please contact Melanie Miles at TABPACs@gmail.com.

The Texas Coalition of Black Democrats is a political organization and we must always remember that politics is a means to an end. Our end goals must include ending poverty, hunger, homelessness, race-based health disparities, the racial wealth-income-and education gaps. Eliminating food deserts, public transportation and infrastructure inequity, as well as environmental injustices, must also be priorities of the Texas Coalition of Black Democrats.

PO2 Morgan Harris

By Rick Burke
Navy Office of
Community Outreach

NORFOLK, Va. - A native of Mansfield, Texas, is serving aboard USS Iwo Jima, an amphibious assault ship, currently conducting training in Norfolk, Virginia.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Morgan Harris is a 2017 Mansfield Timberview High School graduate. Today, Harris serves as an opera-



tions specialist.

"I assist in navigating the ship," said Harris.

Harris joined the Navy over three years ago to travel and see the world.

USS Iwo Jima, homeported in Mayport, Florida, is the seventh Wasp-class amphibious assault ship and the second ship in the U.S. Navy to bear that name. The ship was named for the Battle of Iwo Jima of World War II.

According to Navy officials, amphibious assault ships are designed to deliver U.S. Marines and their equipment where they are

needed to support a variety of missions ranging from amphibious assaults to humanitarian relief efforts. Designed to be versatile, the ship has the option of simultaneously using helicopters, Harrier jets, and Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC), as well as conventional landing craft and assault vehicles in various combinations.

With more than 90 percent of all trade traveling by sea, and 95 percent of the world's international phone

and internet traffic carried through fiber optic cables lying on the ocean floor, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity and security of the United States is directly linked to a strong and ready Navy.

According to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday, four priorities will focus efforts on sailors, readiness, capabilities and capacity.

"For 245 years, in both calm and rough waters, our Navy has stood the watch to

protect the homeland, preserve freedom of the seas, and defend our way of life," said Gilday. "The decisions and investments we make this decade will set the maritime balance of power for the rest of this century. We can accept nothing less than success."

Though there are many opportunities for sailors to earn recognition in their command, community and careers, Harris is most proud of receiving the Good Conduct Medal.



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The Solution to Trump, White Privilege and The Republican Party

By Dr. John E. Warren,
Publisher and CEO,
San Diego Voice
& Viewpoint

We know from the appearance of former President Trump at the conservative Republican gathering in Florida over the weekend that their agenda against America continues.

We see over 28 states with Republican controlled legislatures have introduced more than 100 bills aimed at voter suppression. These include restricting the number of voting sites, the hours of voting and no weekend voting. There is also legislation to limit the number of drop boxes and the requirement of state issued voting I.D. cards.

But the solution to this assault on democracy has already been demonstrated in both the state of Georgia with its massive voter turnout that produced two U.S. Senators to change the balance of power in the U.S.

Senate and thereby empowering our Vice President, Kamala Harris to be the tie breaking vote as the President of the U.S. Senate. We have also seen the State of Virginia pass a state version of the Voting Rights Act amendments that were struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013.

African Americans, Africans who have become naturalized citizens with the right to vote, Latinos, Asians who are now under massive hate crime attacks, Native Americans and any other people of color who now make up the growing majority of Americans, must become politically active. We must follow the Stacey Abrams approach of voter outreach, education and turnout that Georgia used to elect two U.S. Senators. We must do this in every state starting now with a look at who will run for Congress and the U.S. Senate in 2022. We must change the approach of civic now being

taught in our schools starting with an understanding of the political process at the very local level. We must come to understand that every vote counts and that we can not wait until there are more homicides and abuse of political power from racist law enforcement personnel and White Supremacist who think that democracy means only them and their interest.

The Republican Party has demonstrated its lack of concern for human life other than their own throughout this pandemic. Now that a 1.9 Trillion Covid Relief Bill is before the Senate, a Bill that can mean the difference between life and death for millions of Americans, we see a solid and lockstep Republican block in the Senate determined to vote against the bill and further continue the suffering of

All people in this country regardless of their color. This is the Party opposed to Food Stamps to feed starv-

ing families, but yet believes in subsidies and tax benefits to corporations and big business with those same dollars that could be used to save lives. We must remember that the Republican Party is the Party of White Privilege, even though some misguided Blacks belong to it.

We must learn the track records of those who say they will represent us just as the FBI is learning the identity of those 57 white local elected officials that participated in the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. We must start a collective movement because the Republican Party, its members, the White Supremist and those who use the term "Make American Great Again (MAGA)" to disguise their racist, don't think we are capable of long range planning. We too must both plan now and act now as if the 2022 elections were tomorrow.

Let's beat them at their own game.

When will workers finally get a break?

By Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Contributor

Some folks earn appallingly low wages, in some cases hovering near the \$7.25 minimum, the same rate it has been for more than a decade. To be sure, minimum wages are higher in some cities and states, with the District of Columbia, San Francisco, and Seattle establishing a \$15 minimum. Other jurisdictions have passed legislation gradually moving the wage to \$15.

The Raise the Wage Act of 2021 was introduced on January 26, and House Speaker Pelosi has said a version of the bill will be sent to the Senate for approval. There is likely to be pushback, especially from states that have not raised their wage above the federal level. It is useful to note that in Florida, where the former President enjoys popularity, a ballot measure support-

ing a \$15 minimum wage passed. Even conservatives have to eat!

Senate Bill 53, the Raise the Wage Act, would gradually raise the federal minimum wage from the current \$7.25 level to \$15 by June of 2025. The first increase would happen this year, raising the wage to \$9.25 this year. In subsequent years the wage would rise to \$11.00 in 2022, \$12.50 in 2023, \$14.00 in 2024, and \$15 by June of 2025. The most significant bump is 31 percent, from the current \$290 per week (for a full-time week) to \$380 per week. Even with that increase though, a family of four is living below the poverty line of \$26,500. The minimum wage for a family with one worker won't exceed the poverty line until 2024 when the wage is \$14 an hour.

Raising the minimum wage gives at least 27 mil-

lion workers a raise. Most of them are women. A third are Latino, and 40 percent are African American. Raising the wage would reduce inequality and poverty. Senator Sanders is prepared to push this legislation through by reconciliation if he can't get Republican support. If Republican Senators value their constituents' voices, they will support legislation that brings relief to some of them.

There may also be some assistance coming to working people via the Protecting the Right to Organize, or PRO Act. This legislation protects workers' rights to form unions, limits employers' right to interfere with union activities, and strengthens other workers' rights. With several dozen new provisions, the PRO Act represents the first attempt to overhaul the National Labor Relations Act in more than seventy years. The legislation passed the

House in 2020, passing mostly along party lines, but the Republican-controlled Senate declined to deliberate. This time, Democrats control the schedule, and the legislation will receive some review and deliberation. But Chambers of Commerce and other business groups are likely to oppose it. Research shows that the presence of unions in the workplace increases wages. Equally importantly, it protects workers from unsafe working conditions.

Perhaps legislation will provide workers with some relief this year. It is also possible, though, that working people, especially those near the bottom, will get caught up in partisan squabbling. Workers need a break, need a raise, need safe working conditions. Can Washington deliver?

Julianne Malveaux is an economist and author. She can be reached at julianne@malveaux.com

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Making It Plain: What Black America needs to know about COVID-19 and vaccines

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Multigenerational Homes

By Dena Vang

Living in a multigenerational home has become increasingly common in the United States. One in five Americans currently live in a home with multiple generations. While this living arrangement has its benefits – financial support, accessible childcare, and shared meals – a multigenerational household can also be a double-edge sword during COVID-19, especially for Black families.

African American grandparents play a significant role in the homes across America. The 2020 Neilson African American Report, research found that 5 percent of African American grandparents live with their grandchildren and 40 percent of those grandparents are the main caregivers for their grandchildren. Twenty-nine percent of African American households are more likely to have children under 18 compared to 27 percent of all U.S. households according to the report.

As the pandemic pushes closer to a year in length, many Black organizations have been addressing hesitancy and concerns African Americans have about getting the COVID-19 vaccines.

According to a recent poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), there are still 38 percent of African Americans who are reported to be reluctant to get the COVID vaccine. It is crucial that all Black Americans get the most accurate information about how to stay safe and healthy during the fight against COVID.

The Black Doctors Against COVID-19 (BCAC) is one organization which is keeping African Americans up to date about the pandemic. The BCAC has hosted several Facebook Live events to help Black Americans make informed decisions about



COVID which will help to save our lives. During January's "Making it Plain: What Black America Needs to Know About COVID-19 and Vaccines" event, Dr. Felicia Collins, Rear Admiral, United States Public Health Service; HHS Acting Assistant Secretary of Health was one of the 15 speakers who addressed what Black America needs to know about COVID and the vaccines including how the virus affects multigenerational families.

The impact that the coronavirus is having on multigenerational families really hits close to home for Dr. Collins. "The essential worker in my extended family, unfortunately became infected with COVID and brought it home," said Dr. Collins. "And then grandma became infected and later passed away," she said.

For some Black multigenerational families, not having access to separate facilities in their homes poses another challenge when trying to stay healthy during the pandemic. "The multigenerational families living in homes with one bathroom makes it harder for us," said Dr. Collins. "As African Americans are trying to quarantine and go through these periods knowing that if we're infected with COVID, we have to stay at home and be away from others."

Another concern facing African Americans are social determinants of health, which include access to quality healthcare, housing, transportation, and the ac-

cess to education and job opportunities.

When it comes to employment, Black people are disproportionately represented in the area of essential workers, which not only increases our risk of contracting COVID-19 but also those who are living in their households. Dr. Collins said this poses a problem for African Americans who are working in these jobs on the frontlines. "We are working in long-term care facilities, grocery stores or we're driving the trains and the buses, and we can't work from home," she said.

Dr. Collins stresses the importance of African Americans staying equipped with vital information to ensure that they are not at the end of the line when the COVID vaccine is widely available. "The fact is, there are other people waiting to take our spots in line," said Dr. Collins. They are willing to take the vaccination if we say, 'No thank you' to when the vaccine is offered," she said.

Being armed with accurate information is key as the Black community fight against COVID-19, especially at a time when there's a surge of new virus variants which some studies suggest is about 50 percent more transmissible than the existing iterations of the virus. Dr. Collins said the Office of Minority Health is committed to providing the black community with accurate information about COVID-19, vaccines and so much more. Dr. Collins

said the collective sharing of accurate information is vital for African Americans to push past the pandemic; "I'm a really firm believer in the power of information," she said. Each of us must share that power of information with our families and communities. And then we're going to collectively defeat COVID-19."

The Biden administration has an aggressive plan in place to help us push through the pandemic, which includes vaccinating 300 million Americans by the end of the summer or early fall. While Black Americans wait for the COVID-19 vaccine to become widely available, the CDC recommends the following tips to protect themselves and family members, including those who are at an increased risk for severe illness from the virus. Dr. Collins said it's important that African Americans don't allow COVID-19 fatigue to make us complacent. "Recommit to the public health measures which I know that everyone has heard of, but they are really critical to keep ourselves, our loved ones and our communities safe from COVID," she said.

Here are the latest CDC recommendations for our optimal protection from the coronavirus and other virus variants:

- Wear your mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin. Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face, slipping the loops over your ears or tying the strings behind your head.

- Stay home as much as possible.

- Keep social distance. Stay 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) apart from others.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you

have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneez-

ing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Don't touch your eyes, nose, mouth or mask with unclean hands.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces and any shared items between use like tables,

doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, toilets, faucets,

and sinks with soap and water. Then, use a household cleaner to disinfect the surface. Wear gloves, if possible, when cleaning and disinfecting.

- Make sure the household has good air flow. Open a window and turn on a fan to bring in and circulate fresh air if it is safe and practical to do so.

- Avoid hugging, kissing, or sharing food or drinks with people at increased risk for severe illness in your household.

- Don't have visitors unless they need to be in your home (e.g., home health nurse). If you do have visitors, before they enter your home, check yourself and others in your household for symptoms of COVID-19 and ask your visitors to do the same. Remember to stay

at least 6 feet apart, wear a mask, and ask visitors to wear a mask before entering your home.

- Do not allow any sick or exposed visitors to enter your home.

- Avoid having family members at increased risk care for others in their household. If

people at increased risk must be the caregiver, those who are being cared for should stay home as much as possible to protect their family members at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

For more information about COVID-19 and upcoming events: Black Coalition Against COVID-19, a key health resource for African Americans

Black Doctor.org, the world's largest and most comprehensive online health resource specifically targeted to African Americans.

For more information about COVID-19 news: head to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/living-in-close-quarters.pdf>

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COVID-19 restrictions lifted amid political disagreement

Governor Greg Abbott issued an Executive Order (GA-34) on March 2, lifting the mask mandate in Texas and increasing capacity of all businesses and facilities in the state to 100 percent. The Governor made the announcement while in Lubbock in an address to the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce.

“With the medical advancements of vaccines and antibody therapeutic drugs, Texas now has the tools to protect Texans from the virus,” said Abbott. “We must now do more to restore livelihoods and normalcy for Texans by opening Texas 100 percent. Make no mistake, COVID-19 has not disappeared, but it is clear from the recoveries, vaccinations, reduced hospitalizations, and safe practices that Texans are using that state mandates are no longer needed. Today’s announcement does not abandon safe practices that Texans have mastered over the past year. Instead, it is a reminder that



Ashwini Chaudhary / Unsplash

each person has a role to play in their own personal safety and the safety of others. With this executive order, we are ensuring that all businesses and families in Texas have the freedom to determine their own destiny.”

During his remarks, the Governor cited the rapid increase of vaccines. Nearly 5.7 million vaccine shots have been administered to Texans, and the state is now administering almost one million shots each week. By next Wednesday, he said about 7 million shots will have been administered in

Texas and over half of seniors in Texas will have received a vaccine shot. By the end of March, he believes every senior who wants a vaccine should be able to get one. The vaccine supply continues to increase so rapidly, and Abbott said that more and more Texans will soon be eligible to receive a vaccine.

The Governor said Texas has a surplus of personal protective equipment and can perform over 100,000 COVID-19 tests a day. The state has invested in a variety of anti-body therapeutic drugs that have kept

thousands of Texans out of hospitals. Texans have also adopted daily habits that reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and infection. More than 2.5 million Texans who were lab confirmed for COVID-19 have recovered since the beginning of the pandemic, and experts note the total number of Texans who have recovered from COVID-19 is likely 4-5 times that amount. The number of active COVID-19 cases is the lowest since November—meaning more Texans are recovering from COVID-19 than contracting it.

This executive order rescinds most of the Governor’s earlier executive orders related to COVID-19. Effective next Wednesday, all businesses of any type may open to 100% capacity. Additionally, this order ends the statewide mask mandate in Texas. Businesses may still limit capacity or implement additional safety protocols at their own discretion.

Abbott added that if COVID-19 hospitalizations in any of the 22 hospital regions in Texas get above 15% of the hospital bed capacity in that region for seven straight days, a County Judge in that region may use COVID-19 mitigation strategies. However, County Judges may not impose jail time for not following COVID-19 orders nor may any penalties be imposed for failing to wear a face mask. If restrictions are imposed at a County level, those restrictions may not include reducing capacity to less than 50% for any type of entity.

The governor’s decision has drawn the ire of many opponents, who say that opening the state up full at this point could be an invitation to disaster. Democrats say that Abbott’s move flies in the face of CDC recommendations, and that there will likely be a heavy price to pay down the road.

“A death warrant for Texans,” said former senatorial

candidate and Democratic activist Beto O’Rourke. “Add them to the 44,000+ killed as he failed to confront the pandemic & botched the vaccine roll-out. And those who froze to death because he cares more about energy companies’ profits than keeping Texans alive. Abbott is killing the people of Texas.”

Even Fort Worth Republican Mayor Betsy Price called the move “premature,” and said she would like to see more people vaccinated before lifting the restrictions. Texas has recently seen elevated levels of infections compared to other states, and while the numbers are currently in decline, that issue has many leaders worried.

“I am more than disappointed and, in fact, stunned by the removal of the COVID-19 mandates in the State of Texas that has for many weeks been a hot spot for COVID-19,” said U.S. Rep. Shela Jackson Lee (D-TX18).

Meza files bills to restrict, study solitary confinement in Texas

AUSTIN -- State Rep. Terry Meza (D-Irving) on Wednesday filed two bills addressing the use of solitary confinement in Texas prisons, including restricting its use to a maximum of 10 consecutive days.

“People spend years in solitary confinement in Texas prisons. By the time they are released, their mental and physical health has suffered greatly, and that can impact the remainder of their lives,” said

Meza. “We sentence people to prison to be punished for crimes and rehabilitated to be released back into society. We should not be destroying people’s mental health with lengthy periods of time in solitary confinement,” Meza said.

Solitary confinement, which is called “administrative segregation,” in corrections lexicon, has been used in Texas prisons for decades. The Texas Observer has covered its use

extensively. The American Psychological Association noted as far back as 2012 that prisoners who have spent time in solitary are more likely to suffer from mental illnesses when they are released. The APA also

points to a 2007 University of Washington study indicating prisoners who have spent excessive time in solitary confinement are more likely to reoffend.

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| 2266 | Winter Words Overall Odds are 1 in 4.02 | \$3 | 3/13/21 | 9/9/21 |
| 2257 | Lucky No. 13 Overall Odds are 1 in 4.33 | \$2 | 4/9/21 | 10/6/21 |

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TEXAS LOTTERY

Discovery Education hosting event to celebrate Black leaders in STEM

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The Discovery Education STEM Careers Coalition is celebrating Black History Month by offering resources that shine a spotlight on today's African American leaders in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

The Coalition, a dynamic collaboration of diverse partners, will host a Black Leaders in STEM Professional Development event at 6 p.m. EST, Tuesday, Feb. 16.

Chevron, Boeing, the American Petroleum Institute (API), Microsoft, and American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) will display how they are using their STEM skills to make a difference and introduce students to STEM.

"The members of the STEM Careers Coalition want to prepare all students for future success, and they believe STEM education helps, no matter what career and life choices students make after graduation," Marla Wilson, executive director of the STEM Careers Coalition, told NNPA



US Army CCDC / Flickr

Newswire.

"I have always been interested in understanding how communities coexist with industrial activities," added Uni Blake, a senior policy advisor at API.

"As I was growing in my career, there were very few minorities in STEM careers working in the Oil and Gas Industry who I could turn to for advice about opportunities and career paths," Blake noted.

She continued:

"Protecting health is a high priority for the oil and gas industry, and as an example, my work includes addressing issues and concerns facing minority communities who live near industry operations and facilities."

"Protecting health is a high priority for the oil and gas industry, and as an ex-

ample, my work includes addressing issues and concerns facing minority communities who coexist with industry operations and facilities."

Wilson said the Coalition seeks to inspire students to consider careers in one of the growing STEM fields.

"Each member of the Coalition believes that all students should have the opportunity and resources to reach their fullest potential as they explore the wide world of STEM careers and see how STEM fits into their futures," she stated.

Wilson works with the business community to grow the STEM pipeline, helping to prepare 10 million students for careers in the field.

Born in Las Vegas, Wilson worked for the "Go Red for Women" campaign at

the American Heart Association, and as executive director with Miami March of Dimes. She graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Communications degree.

Wilson said Discovery Education began a coalition model three years ago.

"We began thinking about the strength in numbers approach, and the coalition model was pretty much birthed to engage a number of companies working toward solving one particular problem. And so, with the STEM Careers Coalition, we are solving problems, invigorating and filling the future workforce pipeline with a diverse group of professionals," she said.

The Coalition that includes Chevron, Boeing, Microsoft, ASME, and API, kicked off in 2019. After the pandemic began in early 2020, the Coalition launched "COVID-19 Solution Seekers," a video series that spotlighted how nonprofits, corporations, and industries pivot to meet the needs presented by COVID-19.

"What I love about this dynamic network is that we

can create resources and a curriculum up to the minute based on what we're dealing with right now," Wilson said.

"We want to connect and be as relatable as we possibly can be to students and educators. And so, at the onset of this pandemic, we were in video production. We were producing career profiles of STEM professionals from diverse backgrounds talking about their careers and their educational pathways," Wilson continued.

She added:

"When the pandemic hit, there were a lot of questions about the coronavirus and what we were doing as a community to solve the multiple problems that it began to create. And the Solution Seekers series would

evolve out of that.

"We found that we could use this as an opportunity to really outline to students STEM at work on an everyday basis."

Wilson concluded that it's impossible to overstate the importance of STEM in minority communities.

She said it is a principal goal of the coalition.

"We wanted to make sure that we had an intentional focus on students of color, particularly those from the African diaspora, Latino and Hispanic communities, and female students," she determined.

"These are the most highly underrepresented group in the STEM workforce. So, this [coalition] is bridging that divide and helping all of these students connect to STEM."

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UT Austin is once again named among the world's leading universities

AUSTIN — The latest edition of the World University Rankings by Subject is naming 41 subject areas and programs at The University of Texas Austin among the top in the world.

Among the highlights, petroleum engineering retained its rank at No. 2 this year and held high ranks in overall reputation and research citation rates. Communication and media studies moved up one spot to No. 4. In total, nine subjects are ranked among the top 25.

Of the 41 academic disciplines at the university that are in the 2021 subject rankings, more than a third of them improved their positions this year.

The rankings, compiled by higher education analysts QS Quacquarelli Symonds, are based on a variety of factors including research impact and overall academic and employer reputation. The rankings looked at the performance of 14,435 individual university programs at 1,452

universities in 86 locations around the world.

"These rankings reflect the high-impact research and creative problem-solving UT Austin is known for and illustrate the immense societal value of leading research universities," said Dan Jaffe, interim executive vice president and provost. "Without our world-class faculty and exceptionally talented students, this level of academic excellence would not be possible."

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Mayor Harry LaRosiliere kicks off eighth year of Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program with call for companies to invest in the city's future workforce

In his final year of service to the City of Plano, Mayor Harry LaRosiliere took a fond look back at the first seven years of the Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program (PMSIP) as he announced plans for the 2021 program. Recruitment for businesses to sign up is underway now through April 15.

Presented by Capital One, the competitive "learn-and-earn" program connects students from Plano's award-winning and nationally recognized school district with some of the area's top corporations and nonprofits. The eight-week paid internship program – offering remote and on-site placements, or a combination of both – runs June 7-July 30 (although some start dates are flexible). Students earn a minimum of \$10 per hour working 20-40 hours per week.

During a virtual kick off



planomayorsinterns.org

earlier today with sponsors and employers, Mayor LaRosiliere celebrated the accomplishments of PMSIP alumni who have since moved on to medical school, graduate studies and exciting careers at Fortune 100 companies. He also saluted the business and nonprofit community who backed the program – even during the unprecedented pandemic.

"Our alumni's success is evidence that this program

delivers results. They have gone on to graduate from top universities and work in fascinating fields such as biotechnology, cyber security, medicine, entrepreneurship and beyond," said Mayor LaRosiliere. "These amazing youth represent the tremendous talent pool that exists in our city. I am excited to see this program flourish for years and years to come."

Mayor LaRosiliere launched the program in

2014, which has since grown to serve more than 600 students to date. Additionally, thousands of students have benefited from the internship prep training provided prior to the Job Fair each year.

Highlights of today's program included a short video featuring selfies shot by PMSIP alumni such as Aakriti Guar, a 2015 intern who has since received dual degrees in accounting and supply chain management from the University of Illinois. She currently works at Grant Thornton in their risk advisory practice and attributes PMSIP for teaching and helping her build a great network of talented individuals who have since helped her in her professional and personal life.

Also sharing her testimony was 2014 intern McKenna Black, a TCU marketing graduate pursuing her master's at George Wash-

ington University in security policy studies. She credits the program for her early exposure to leadership and product management skills at a Fortune 500 company at just 16 years of age. Other standouts include Adrian Sadoogh, a 2014 alum at Junior Achievement, who now works as a financial advisor at 10x Genomics; Alexander Tekle, a two-time 2015 and 2016 intern alum, who earned two degrees and currently works at Google as a software engineer; and Austin Olivera, a 2015 alum at Collin County Meals on Wheels who is currently pursuing a bioengineering graduate program at Rice University.

Along with Mayor LaRosiliere, Plano ISD Superintendent Sara Bonser; Stewart Clancy, Senior Director, Risk Management, Capital One; and Steven Webb, JPMorgan Chase, lent their support. They echoed the

importance of the program for both students and employers, emphasizing that underwriting internships at nonprofits opens students' eyes and exposes them to professional, meaningful careers.

"Capital One is proud to be a founding partner of the Plano Mayor's Summer Internship Program, providing students with opportunities to push the boundaries of their education beyond the classroom," said Stewart Clancy, Senior Director, Risk Management, Capital One. "Our commitment to workforce development builds on the Capital One Impact Initiative to advance socioeconomic mobility by closing gaps in equity and opportunity."

Also sharing their experiences were two 2020 PMSIP interns who worked

See INTERN, Page 12



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Wells Fargo makes major investment in six Black-owned banks

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Wells Fargo is observing Black History Month in a meaningful way.

The banking giant has selected six African American minority depository institutions (MDIs) for equity investments.

Broadway Federal Bank in Los Angeles, Carver Federal Savings Bank in New York, Citizens Savings Bank & Trust in Nashville, Commonwealth National Bank in Mobile, Ala., M&F Bank in Durham, N.C., and Optus Bank in Columbia, S.C., are receiving critical equity capital, because of Wells Fargo's generous contribution.

The financial commitment structure means that the investments are in the form of critical equity capital, which is foundational to the MDIs' ability to expand lending and deposit-taking capacity in their communities.

The investments, primarily non-voting positions, are designed to enable the



Based in Los Angeles, Broadway Federal Bank is one of the several minority depository institutions that Wells Fargo is investing in.

banks to maintain their MDI status.

Wells Fargo said it is also supporting each MDI's development through a banking relationship in the form of a single touchpoint coverage model that will help them access Wells Fargo's expertise and pursue strategic priorities like entering new markets, expanding locations, designing new products, and hiring staff to support loan growth.

The investments are part of a March 2020 pledge by Wells Fargo to invest as much as \$50 million in Black-owned banks.

"MDIs are a viable and

very important sector of the banking industry that can directly support the financial health of communities where typically there are gaps in banking services," said Gigi Dixon, head of External Engagement for Wells Fargo's Diverse Segments, Representation & Inclusion group.

"By working together with MDIs, Wells Fargo can address some of the issues where these banks are located and help reach the unbanked. These investments will complement our community development efforts while positively impacting people in many communi-

ties we serve."

Dixon continued:

"We are trying to break the cycle where these institutions and their communities have faced barriers to raising significant capital," Dixon said. "Ideally, this is going to promote the ability of MDIs to stimulate growth in low- to middle-income communities and be more profitable."

The Wells Fargo commitment is in the form of equity instead of deposits. For example, with \$1 of new deposits, an MDI can make \$1 of new loans, but with \$1 of new equity, an MDI can make \$10 of new loans.

Wells Fargo officials said its investment goes beyond cutting a check, but the goal is to have meaningful, lasting relationships with the banks.

"We've spent considerable time getting to know each MDI and understanding their unique needs," Dixon noted.

Each MDI will have a dedicated relationship team as part of Corporate & Investment Banking.

Wells Fargo will provide

day-to-day relationship coverage and a central point of connectivity for MDIs to access various resources.

Dixon asserted that the MDIs receiving the investment had requested non-financial resources in their business plans, and Wells Fargo will be aligning resources to those needs.

Some of the requests include technology solutions for digital transformation, leveraging Wells Fargo's consumer footprint (ATM/branch access), loan origination partnerships, financial education, and mentorship.

"These investments are designed to help the banks become stronger and more impactful to the minority communities they serve, which leads to economic revitalization and job opportunities," said Bill Daley, vice chairman of Public Affairs at Wells Fargo. "So many communities have suffered over the past year. MDIs need capital, but they can also benefit from access to other resources, and Wells Fargo is committed to building lasting, strategic relationships with these institutions in support of their goals."

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DSO names Teacher of the Year

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra announces the winner of its annual Music Teacher of the Year Award. Christian Ferreira of Cuelar Elementary was chosen from nominees across the Dallas Independent School District.

The Music Teacher of the Year Award coincides with Music in Our Schools Month, a nation-wide campaign focused on the importance of high-quality music education in public schools.

"This past year has been difficult for elementary age children throughout Dallas, with new and unprecedented obstacles no educator can prepare for," said DSO Thomas and Roberta Corbett Director of Education Jennifer Guzmán. "However, we have watched as music educators throughout the district have continuously gone above and

beyond, providing amazing learning opportunities for all their students despite the challenges. The DSO is excited to recognize one of the many amazing music educators from DISD and honored that we can applaud this achievement."

Christian David Ferreira Gutierrez is from Bucaramanga, Colombia, living in between Colombia, Mexico and the United States throughout his childhood. He attended the University of North Texas where he completed a Bachelors of Music in Music Theory and a Bachelor of Arts in French. After graduating from college, he worked as a French tutor, private lesson instructor, freelance musician and sound technician. His interest in music education grew as he had the opportunity to teach and inspire more students through piano and guitar.

His parents instilled a passion for both music, education and most importantly, the desire to help others succeed. He decided to step into the world of music education after realizing he could have a broader impact. Ferreira believes the experiences that a child has during his/her elementary years are crucial to their development and that music can be a powerful tool. His students have helped him to grow these first three years as an educator, and he looks forward to continuing this journey.

Nominations were submitted to the DSO with an application and video teaching samples. Christian Ferreira was selected from a group of four finalists. The other three finalists were:

· Janet Behning, Obadiah

See **TEACHER**, Page 9

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Dallas Blooms: 'America the Beautiful' features 500,000 flowers

Named by Southern Living as one of "The Best Places to See Stunning Spring Blooms Across the South," the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden presents Dallas Blooms, the largest annual floral festival in the Southwest. Presented by IBERIABANK/First Horizon, the festival runs until April 11. With the theme "America the Beautiful," the spring festival showcases an explosion of color from 100 varieties of spring bulbs and more than 500,000 spring-blooming blossoms, thousands of azaleas and hundreds of Japanese cherry trees. Each week, Dallas Blooms focuses on one of the six regions in the United States with food, music, flowers and special events.

Known for its artistic horticulture floral displays, the Dallas Arboretum has created three areas that are perfect for photos and videos:

- A large American flag in a raised bed
- America the Beautiful large arched topiary letters in front of a beautiful floral display
- A succulent photo wall with daffodil and hyacinth inlays at each entrance

Timed tickets are required and can be purchased online at www.dallasarboretum.org or by calling 214-515-6615. No walk-ups are available for purchase. Masks are also required for the duration of the visit. For the latest information, visit www.dallasarboretum.org/blooms.

Jim Ryan, Dallas Arboretum board chairman, said,



Dallas Arboretum (2)

"Dallas Blooms marks that spring has sprung in the Southwest. We invite you to experience one of the country's most colorful floral displays with 350,000 tulips and another 150,000 and spring-blooming flowers. Our festival takes place during spring break and Easter, so it's become a popular staycation and road trip for many. Come for the flowers, and stay for the fun and festivities!"

As a nod to the theme, each week showcases a different part of the United States including live music, entertainment and children's activities. The weeks:

March 6-12: The West Week

March 13-19: The Midwest Week

March 20-26: The Mid-Atlantic Week

March 27-April 4: The South Week

April 5-11: Celebrating America

In A Tasteful Place, there are tastings, cooking classes and demonstrations. For those 21 and older, there are also wine and beer pairings. For a complete schedule, check the website or events schedule.

Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden

Reopened for the spring, the nationally acclaimed Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden features 17 indoor/outdoor galleries, 150 interactive science games and daily events and activities of themed adventures throughout the Dallas Blooms festival.



The Children's Adventure Garden is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For a full list of upcoming events and activities, visit www.dallasarboretum.org/children-sadventuregarden.

Special Day Discounts

Discounts include BOGO (Buy One, Get One Free) on Wednesdays, excluding March 17, and C.C. Young Senior Living Thursdays (those who are 65 years and older receive discounted admission and 20% off in the Gift Store).

Mary Brinegar, Dallas Arboretum president and CEO, added, "There is something for everyone at Dallas Blooms, and we've been told we have the largest display of tulips in a public garden outside of Holland. As the tulips bloom throughout the festival, the finale is the mass flowering of the garden's collection of 3,000 azaleas that bloom along with the Japanese cherry trees, ushering in spring with vibrant color everywhere."

The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden is

located on the southeastern shore of White Rock Lake at 8525 Garland Road, Dallas, Texas 75218. The garden is also home of the nationally acclaimed Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden. It is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Daytime festival admission is \$17 for adults, \$14 for seniors 65 and older, \$12 for children 2-12, and free for Arboretum members and children under two. Parking is \$15 or \$10 purchased online. Timed tickets are required and can be purchased online at www.dallasarboretum.org or by calling 214-515-6615. No walk-ups are available for purchase. Masks are also required for the duration of the visit. The Dallas Morning News is the principal partner of the Dallas Arboretum. The Arboretum is supported, in part, by funds from the Dallas Park and Recreation Department. WFAA, Channel 8 is an official media sponsor for the Dallas Arboretum. For more information, visit www.dallasarboretum.org.

TEACHER, from Page 8

Knight Elementary
• Rene Schmidt, Dealey Montessori
• Michelle Vallejo, Mata Elementary

The finalists and the winner were chosen by the DSO's Education Committee, which is comprised of members of the Dallas Symphony Association's Board of Governors, DSO League members, DSO

musicians as well as members of the community at large.

Christian Ferreira will be presented with a plaque and recognized at future concert this season, at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. Ferreira will also receive a \$500 cash award, underwritten by Rita Sue and Alan Gold.



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Dallas Children's Theater opens its doors for in-person summer classes, virtual classes still an option

Summer has always been a special and busy time for Dallas Children's Theater (DCT) and this year will be no exception. While the setup will be adjusted to suit the safety and health requirements of the times, DCT will be reopening its doors for limited in-person classes this summer, as well as offering virtual classes for families who would prefer that option. Interested persons can go to dct.org to check out the lineup.

The following classes will be offered in person:

- One Week Camp - 1st-2nd or 3rd-4th grades
- Four Day Mini Session - 1st-2nd or 3rd-4th or 5th-6th grades
- Musical Theater - 5th-6th grades
- Acting - 5th-6th or 7th-12th grades
- Makin' Movies - 5th-6th grades
- Costume Workshop - 6th & up grades
- LOL Comedy 5th-6th grades
- Musical Theater Master Class - 7th-12th grades
- Movie Making For Teens - 7th-12th grades
- Triple Threat Boot Camp - 7th-12th grades
- Musical Theater Showcase - 7th-12th grades



Dallas Children's Theater

- Improv - 7th-12th grades
- Acting And Scenework - 7th-12th grades

The following classes will be offered virtually:

VIRTUAL STORY DRAMA - ages 4-5 (must be 4 by first day of class)

VIRTUAL ACTING WORKSHOP - for students entering grades 1st-2nd or 3rd-4th or 5th-6th

VIRTUAL VOICE-OVER WORKSHOP with EMILY GRAY - grades 7 & up

VIRTUAL ACTING: ONE WEEK SCENE WORK- entering grades 7th-12th in Fall 2021

Director of Education Nancy Schaeffer (who was also recently named DCT's new Artistic Director) said that the DCT team is excited to get back in the

swing of things. According to Schaeffer, "We have spent a lot of time talking with colleagues around the country about the best ways to make in-person camps work, and we're ready. Now more than ever, social and emotional development is really important for our kids, and I'm so proud to be a part of an organization that nurtures that in a unique and special way. I expect that the families that join us in person for the summer will definitely see their spirits lifted by the human connections that are made."

Dallas Children's Theater is committed to the safety and well-being of all students and staff and some of the summer camp measures to ensure a safe and fun environment for every-

one include:

- A greatly reduced student to teacher ratio.
- Classes will not intermingle or be in the same rooms.
- Masks must be worn by all students and teachers and staff at all times except during lunch.
- Class activities have been modified to comply with social distancing guidelines so that students and teachers can remain at least six feet apart. At lunch time, students will have assigned seating and continue

to social distance.

- Bathroom breaks will be staggered.
- There will be minimal movement in the building. Most students will remain in the same room during their class.
- There will be no in-person performances on the final class day. For selected classes, student performances will be recorded and shared with parents.
- No parents, guests, or visitors may enter the building at any time.
- There will be no shar-

ing of class supplies or costumes or props.

- Hand sanitizer will be available in all spaces and frequent hand washing will be encouraged.

- Cleaning protocols will include enhanced janitorial cleaning with extra focus on more heavily occupied areas and high-touch surfaces. There will also be increased availability of cleaning solutions to employees for cleaning and sanitizing their workspaces

See DCT, Page 12

DART CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We recognize the history and cultural significance of African Americans and value their contributions to our vibrant community.

DART let's go.

As Key PPP changes begin, advocates demand equitable solutions

By Charlene Crowell

Over the past year, COVID-19 and its variants have plagued the globe taking lives and interrupting normal activities in virtually all areas of life. For Black America, already plagued with steep health, income and wealth disparities, coping with the pandemic has been even more painful.

With less income, higher unemployment, and less access to financial resources, both businesses and consumers alike strive to hold on for much-needed relief. In many cases, modest financial resources are either gone or near their end, and the patience to cope has worn thin.

In response, an unparalleled coalition of more than 100 national, state and local advocates are pressing Congress and the Biden Administration for substantive changes to deliver equitable relief to underserved communities. Foremost in the coalition's concern was getting Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds to deserving but largely left out businesses from earlier funding rounds.

"The design of PPP strongly disfavored businesses owned by people of color, who generally do not have established banking and face greater obstacles in capital access," wrote the coalition. "Moreover, the incentive for lenders to fund large loans, which yielded larger fees, has proved to be a barrier to entry for the vast majority of businesses of color."

Fortunately, beginning February 24, new PPP approvals will be restricted to businesses with 20 or fewer employees for two weeks in order to target smaller businesses with relief. The SBA will also implement new rules in the coming days that will lessen barriers for small businesses in several areas. These key changes will provide better access and equitable



Michael Longmire / Unsplash

assistance: using gross income instead of net profit as an eligibility measure, improved practices collecting demographic data and eliminating student debt defaults/delinquency from borrower applicants.

However, despite these changes, more must be done to aid businesses that were already underserved by PPP.

"Many Black, Latino, Asian and immigrant business owners are sole proprietors and independent contractors – vital to their communities," said Ashley Harrington, Director of Federal Advocacy with the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL). "Congress should make increased loan amount eligibility for sole proprietors and independent contractors retroactive, as they did when the rule changed for small farmers and ranchers. We must ensure all vulnerable businesses have equitable access to the relief they need to weather this crisis."

Well-known national organization such as the NAACP, National Action Network and the National Fair Housing Alliance, are partnering with Black business organizations like U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. and the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, along with local partners including the Boston Impact Initiative, Chicago Urban League, and Pacific Community Ventures.

Speaking in a united voice to federal officials, this coalition of organizations and businesses called directly on February 12 for

race-explicit solutions to the new PPP relief. Substantiating this appeal was data that showed that these same businesses that previously missed out on PPP funding collectively provide 8.7 million jobs, \$280 billion in annual payroll, and \$1.3 trillion in revenue.

"This targeted aid should serve as a model for a long-term revitalization program aimed at providing small businesses in these hard-hit areas with the resources to recover faster and emerge strong", said Luke Pardue, and economist with Gusto, a national data firm specializing in small businesses. The firm is also a member of the coalition. "Such a plan could take the form of targeted block grants that Congress provides to distressed localities, who are then able to spend the funds on small business development, job training, and support programs to improve job retention. Congress could make the Neighborhood Capital Investment program permanent with \$12 billion in annual appropriation."

In its own independent PPP analysis, CRL also noted the pandemic's profound effect on small businesses.

"At the outset of the program and during the first round of funding from April 3 to April 16, 2020, it was clear that structural inequities were built in to the administration of the program, the application process, and the fee structure", states a CRL policy brief. "These structural inequities made it extremely difficult

for small businesses – and particularly businesses owned by people of color -- to qualify for assistance or receive it in time to save their businesses and the jobs of the employees that depend upon them."

Additionally, and according to CRL, PPP administration by the Small Business Association failed to require demographic data to determine if lenders prioritized underserved markets and businesses, and consequently failed to issue lender about prioritizing borrowers in underserved markets as well.

Just as Black businesses struggle to access capital, exclusionary housing policies have made it nearly impossible for Black families to build home equity on parity with whites and/or convert home equity into wealth needed to begin a business. In short, denied access to finance is a key reason why many Black consumers struggle as renters instead of becoming homeowners.

Representing the nation's largest trade association with its 1.4 million members working in residential and commercial real estate, the National Association of Realtors recently released a report that analyzed data from the Census Bureau's American Consumer Survey. From a racial perspective, NAR examined homeownership over the past decade, looking at characteristics of who purchased homes, their reasons, and financial backgrounds.

Noting that homeownership boosts consumer wealth, NAR concluded that the net worth of a homeowner is 40 times that of a renter: \$255,000 versus \$6,300 in 2019. But, according to NAR, not all families enjoy the same access to homeownership, and homeownership itself does not offer a complete perspective.

White consumers have consistently held a home-

ownership rate of 70% or higher. But over the past decade, Black homeownership, the single group most negatively impacted by the Great Recession, dropped from 2009 to 2019 to 42%, less than that of Latinos at 48%, or Asian-Americans at nearly 61%. Depending upon locale, White homeownership ranged from 49-78%, Black homeownership ranged from a low of 5% in North Dakota to 70% in Puerto Rico. In the continental United States, 2019's highest Black homeowners was in South Carolina and Maryland, both at 52%.

Explaining the racial disparities, Lawrence Yun, NAR's Chief Economist said, "The residential housing market's strong performance during the pandemic helped homeowners enjoy a significant increase in wealth via approximately \$1 trillion in additional home equity over the last year. However, as indicative of the K-shaped economic recovery, greater numbers of potential first-time homebuyers – many of whom are minorities – are feeling discouraged by disproportionate job losses. Essentially, they're being priced out of owning a home because of rapidly rising home prices resulting from historically-low housing inventory."

"For Black Americans," continued Yun, "in general the greater likelihood of having student loan debt, combined with lower household incomes and accrued savings when compared to the national average, adds to the challenge."

With the exception of Asian and Pacific Islanders, Black heads of household had a higher percentage of student debt than either Latinos or Whites. While 21% of Whites held \$30,000 in student debt, according to NAR, Black student loan debt averaged \$40,000 and affected 43%. Latino student debt was the lowest amount at \$20,000, while

that held by Asian/Pacific Islanders was the highest at \$42,600.

In December 2020, according to NAR, the median price of an existing home was nearly \$309,800, 13% more costly than the previous year, and over 40% higher than five years ago. In 2019, Black median income was short of \$70,000, while that of Whites that same year the median income was \$90,000.

Groups like CRL, National Fair Housing Alliance, National Consumer Law Center, and many others are pushing for funding that will help preserve homeownership with a \$10 billion housing assistance fund that would provide direct payments to homeowners for mortgages, utilities, property taxes, property insurance and other related housing costs.

Advocates are also requesting \$100 million for housing counseling and \$40 million for the Fair Housing Initiative program to assist families disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. They highlight that previous federal programs, such as Treasury's Hardest Hit Fund, were designed to help struggling homeowners during the housing crisis of 2008 but came too late and provided little relief in communities of color. Black and Latino communities together unnecessarily lost \$1 trillion of wealth during the Great Recession.

Public policies and broad societal discrimination created many of today's economic inequities. It is now time to correct the ills of systemic discrimination. And it is government's duty to ensure that the hardest hit communities receive their fair and equitable share of relief.

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

How to apply for federal aid after the Texas winter storms

Thousands of Texans are recovering from last week's severe winter storm, which caused power outages, bursting water pipes, and water supply concerns across the state. Now, residents in more than 100 counties can apply for federal aid through FEMA.

FEMA's federal aid for the winter storms includes assistance for temporary housing, home repairs, low-interest loans to cover uninsured damages and losses, and more.

The Biden administration issued a major disaster declaration which included aid for 77 counties. Gov. Greg Abbott's office announced federal aid would be extended to 31 more counties as well. You can see the full list of counties eligible for aid here.

Applications for assistance are open now and Texans have 60 days from the disaster declaration (issued Feb. 19) to apply. Here is what you need to know if you are looking for federal aid from the winter weather.

If you have insurance, you must first file a claim with your insurance com-



Iszy Park / Unsplash

pany before applying for federal aid.

According to FEMA, it cannot duplicate coverage for losses that have already been covered by insurance. However, if your insurance does not or cannot cover all your household's damage, you could be eligible for federal aid.

Before applying for assistance, Texans should do these three things:

- Take photos of the damage to your home and/or belongings
- Make a list of items that were damaged or lost because of the winter storm
- Have an insurance determination letter, documents proving your ownership or occupancy, and proof of ID

And when you are ready to apply, you should have the following information available:

- Your current phone number
- Your address at the time of the storm and where you are staying now
- Your Social Security number, if possible
- Your list of damages and losses
- If you are insured, the insurance policy number or the agent and company name

To apply for federal aid, visit www.disasterassistance.gov. After you apply, FEMA will review your application and decide if you are eligible to receive assistance.

For those without inter-

net, you can register for aid by calling 800-621-3362 or TTY: 800-462-7585.

Businesses, homeowners, and renters could be eligible for low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Contact the SBA at 1-800-659-2955 or visit www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.

For other ways to give or receive assistance to Texans in need, there are many mutual aid funds, food banks, and non-profits dedicated to disaster relief.

How to help Texans affected by the winter storm

After a major winter storm slammed into the Lone Star State earlier this week, millions of Texans are recovering from the damage done. Some are still without power, while others have experienced issues with their water supply, pipes bursting, and other problems.

The fallout from this storm will continue to impact Texans for the foreseeable future. Here are a few ways you can help with disaster relief:

- Donate to a mutual aid fund. Mutual aid funds provide several relief options, such as housing, food, water, and support systems. In Texas, options include Mutual Aid Houston, Feed the People Dallas, Austin Mutual Aid, and Casa Mari-anella, among many others.

- Donate to a Texas food bank. Many families in Texas saw property damage when frozen pipes burst during the storm. This could affect their food supply and their access to a kitchen. Food banks in Texas are accepting monetary donations as well as food donations. Visit Feeding Texas to find a comprehensive list of food banks based on your ZIP code.

- Support Texas animal shelters. Many of these shelters are struggling to keep their animals warm and may also be dealing with property damage from the storm. SPCA of Texas operates in several locations across the Lone Star State and is accepting donations.

- Crowdsourcing Rescue is accepting donations and volunteers to help those in

need across the state.

- The Austin Disaster Relief Network is raising funds and recruiting volunteers to support Texans affected by the storm.

- National organizations are operating in Texas, including the American Red Cross in North Texas, Central and South Texas, and the Gulf Coast area.

- Airbnb's "Open Homes" program allows residents to open up their homes to those in need.

- Donate to the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, the only disability-led organization in the U.S. with a focus on inclusion.

- The Way Home in Houston is comprised of more than 100 partners aiming to end homelessness.

As always, it's imperative you fully research any organization or charity that you would like to donate to or receive aid from. FEMA issued a warning that scammers are using fake phone numbers to scam Texans affected by the storms and those hoping to donate to disaster relief funds.

INTERN, from Page 7

during COVID-19 – Olivia McCoy, a senior at Plano East High School who interned at the Plano Chamber of Commerce, and Grant Stapleton, a senior at Plano West High School who interned virtually at Frito-Lay/PepsiCo. They shared their experiences and how they grew, their favorite memories.

Even though much of the program pivoted to a virtual format, they came away with a unique skill set – from learning how to stand out at a Job Fair on Zoom, to understanding the challenges that companies and nonprofits faced during the COVID crisis.

"It was great to hear from our 2020 interns because they were true trailblazers, navigating the intern expe-

rience during a pandemic, adapting, and gaining the self-discipline needed to stay on task during the work-from-home era," said Superintendent Bonser. "And we are so grateful to the companies who remained committed to providing our students with amazing jobs, support and mentorships."

Mayor LaRosiliere also recognized the longtime support of presenting sponsor Capital One, along with Plano ISD and JPMorgan Chase (Job Fair sponsor) who is underwriting 20 interns in the technology and healthcare industries and the nonprofit sector. Other program sponsors are Atmos Energy, Bank of America, Boeing, City of Plano, Dallas Maver-

icks, FedEx Office, Granite Properties, Liberty Mutual, NTT DATA Services, Ericsson and Oncor. He also encouraged employers to support the new mayor whose election is slated for early May.

Businesses and nonprofits are encouraged to sign up and hire one or more interns. Businesses may also underwrite an intern at a nonprofit or government agency, or become a program sponsor. Companies pay a \$500 program fee for each intern that covers training and enrichment activities, the Job Fair and the luncheon ticket.

Details and the online application are available at planomayorsinterns.org. Companies interested in signing up may contact Vicki Wait at vicki@vwait-group.com.

DCT, from Page 10

and high-touch areas. Additionally, we will prop open doors as security allows to avoid creating high-touch areas.

- A deep and thorough disinfection cleaning will follow each session.

- DCT has increased HVAC circulation as feasible (we have installed all new MERV13 air filters, in addition to recently installed HVAC units).

- If a student or staff member becomes ill, they will be separated from the class and their parents notified to pick them up immediately.

- If a student or staff member or teacher reports a positive COVID-19 test during the week, that specific class will shift to a virtual format for the remainder of the session.

Please note – we will not offer refunds if we must shift a class to a virtual format.

- Parents are required to alert DCT of any positive COVID-19 test results in their household immediately. Parents are also asked to keep students at home if they are ill or experiencing any symptoms.

Upon entering the DCT parking lot, cars will be directed to designated drop-off spots for each class. At each check-in spot, a DCT staff member will check the temperature of the student. On the first day of camp, the staff member will confirm that we have received the Health Check Form. On subsequent days, they will ask if there have been any changes. Only students

enrolled in DCT classes will be permitted to enter the building. Students who have not submitted the Health Check Form on the first day or who have a temperature of 100oF or above will not be permitted to enter the building. Additionally, students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, nausea or vomiting) will not be permitted to attend camp. Once in the building, students will be escorted to their classroom.

Pick-up drivers need to display the DCT carpool sheet that will be provided in advance. Pick up will be at the same location in the parking lot as Drop off.

Interested persons can enroll in summer classes starting Monday, March 1 by visiting dct.org

JOB FAIRS

On-going U.S. Army Opportunity

The United States Army is hiring for over 150 different career fields.

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Jobs in science, intelligence, combat, aviation, engineering, law and more. Contact 214-406 - 3737

Prerequisites:

- GED/High School Diploma
- Between the ages of 17-34
- No felonies
- No major medical issues
- U.S. Citizen or permanent resident

Ongoing Census Bureau

The Census Bureau conducts continuous surveys to supply the nation with important statistics on people, places and our economy. Local field workers know their communities best, and are instrumental in conducting surveys with residents on a variety of topics. Visit census.gov to apply.

Ongoing City of Dallas

The City of Dallas' HR Dept is currently accepting apps for the Budget and Contract Administrator position. Bachelor's degree in a business/public administration, human resources or healthcare administration field, plus 7 yrs exp.

For more info and to apply, visit: <http://bit.ly/2NcFvVP>.



Ongoing House of Blues

Want a cool job in live music? House of Blues Dallas is hiring! Spruce up your resume and join us on Monday, August 26th for a Job Fair in our Cambridge Room from 1-5PM. All departments are hiring. View job openings at <http://livenationentertainment.com/careers>.

Ongoing First Fridays Virtual Job Fair

Every month computer professionals can participate in the monthly job fair in the comfort of your PJs. Job Seekers must complete profile on https://tao.ai/p/fff/_dfw

#FirstFridayFair (#FFF) is estimated to be largest attended career fair with around 8,000 professionals and 500 recruiting companies. The data science and software development focussed career fair is delivered right at your desktop. No need to travel anywhere, just signup and wait for TAO.ai to organize your interactions.

On-Going Customer Rep job fairs

Pro Staff in Arlington will be hosting an in office Customer Service Representative Job Fair for a call center located downtown Dallas every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 700 Highlander Blvd. Suite 110. The positions pay between \$12 - \$13.50 per hour plus up to \$1.50 an hour in performance pay. The workdays will vary, must be available 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., with overtime as needed. Must have at least one year of customer service experience.

Honoring Women History Month 2021 Theme, "Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to be Silenced."

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NOTICE: *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.bethelbiblefellowship.org*

Note: Until further notice, all services at Bethel church will be via Video-Conferencing and perhaps other churches as well; log on individual churches websites for details. See Bethel's website www.bethelbiblefellowship.org for their details because of the Coronavirus.

March 6, 10 am via Zoom

Join us for our Monthly Meeting, the first Saturday in each month, Women of Reconciliation, Truth & Hope (W.O.R.T.H) We will be discussing, "How to Share the Gospel to Lead People to Christ." Meeting I.D. 844 7077 3249, Pass Code is 779011.

March 7, 9:45 am

Office Manager
BS in Management or Business. 2 yr exp. in real estate investment firm. Exp. to include investment analysis/research, property valuation, forecasting, acquisition, and tax. Proficiency in Buildium software. Job Loc: Allen, TX Send resume to Apollo Reality, Inc., 700 Central Expressway S Suite #400, Allen, TX 75013.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

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.

March 10, 7 pm

You are invited to join us via video-conferencing for Prayer and Bible Study from 7 to 8:45 pm as we pray for the world's Coronavirus. In Wednesday's Bible we are studying Celebration of Discipline by Richard J. Foster, Chapter 8. Dial in Phone # 346 248 7799, Meeting I.D. 256 518 4741.

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Check "The Ship's" website for details of their services until further notice because of the Coronavirus.

March 7,
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.

March 10, 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;

See CHURCH, Page 14



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Knock, Knock; Someone's in Trouble

Dr. James L. Snyder

For some reason, the last several weeks we have been getting many visitors at our door. I'm not sure if this is a general trend or if it is just our door.

Some of them have been salesmen, religious people, scam artists, and a host of other people. They only had one goal in mind, and that was to get our money.

I guess I have not realized how wealthy I am. Everybody wants my money. If they only knew how little money I had, they would be running away from our house. I can't even get my money because I'm not sure where it is.

This year the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I will have been married 50 years. I think my wife married me for my money, but in the last 50 years, she has not found any of it. I'll give her another 50 years, and then we are going to have to reexamine

the situation. When she does find it, we will take a vacation to Hawaii.

Money we have not, and the more they pester us for our money, the more frustration we acquire. If they want frustration, we have plenty of that and are more than happy to give it to them.

My wife and I are very frugal when it comes to money because we do not have that much. But the money we do have will stay in our account and not be given to somebody who wants to sell us an extended car warranty policy. Every time they call about that, I have something I want to extend to them, and it is not money.

When someone calls on the phone, you can always hang up or not even answer it. When somebody knocks on your door, you do not have that kind of choice. You do not know who is there or what they want.

It might be somebody

scoping the neighborhood for a house to rob.

Because my wife knows everybody in the neighborhood, as soon as someone knocks at our door and almost before the door is closed, she has texted everybody on the street to be aware of someone coming to knock on the door. It is great when a neighborhood hangs together.

Once two Jehovah's Witnesses came to our door, and I happened to answer it.

They introduced themselves, then I introduced myself as a pastor and began a sermon right there at the front door. I have 100 sermons in my mind ready to use. I kept preaching, and they tried to interrupt, but you can never interrupt a preacher.

Before I got to the end of my sermon, they turned around and walked away as fast as I have ever seen anybody walk away. After all, they came to my door.

Then we had several men

come by wanting to come inside and show us how solar energy could save us a bundle of money.

Fortunately, for us, it was the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage that answers the door for them. If you think you can get in our house and get by her, you really have not gotten up this morning and had your coffee.

A few weeks ago, it was getting terrible. Almost every day, someone was at the door knocking. I usually handle the phone calls, and she handles the door.

I could see she was getting frustrated, and I understood, quite severely.

She just finished making our lunch, and we just sat down and began to enjoy our lunch together.

Then, someone knocked at the door.

My wife sighed very deeply and said, "Whoever that is, I'm going to give them a piece of my mind. I'm tired of this."

Although we had prayed for our lunch, I was now ready to pray for whoever was at the front door.

On several occasions, I have had a piece of her mind. It's not a pretty sight. She has enough mind to give to many people, and I was very concerned about the people at the front door.

"I don't care who you are. I don't care what you're selling. I don't want it, and I want you to leave and never come back again."

With that, he slammed the door shut and walked away.

"Who was at the door?"

She just looked at me and then said, "I don't know, but I gave them a piece of my mind."

I was chuckling underneath, trying not to let it come to the surface for any recognition.

"Are you sure," I said as serious as I could maintain, "that you gave them the right piece of your mind?"

She just stared at me,

"What do you mean?"

"Are you sure you did not give them the left piece of your mind?"

She finally smiled and then said, "No, I'm saving that piece for you."

I was smiling on the outside but not on the inside. I was honored that she has a special piece of her mind for me, but I have no idea what it will be and when it will come my way.

I thought of the Scripture along this line. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

I think this is hard to do for many reasons. God can give me the strength to do this for his honor and glory.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. The church website is www.whatafellowship.com.

CHURCH, from Page 13

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"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there will not be room to receive."

- Malachi 3:8-10

Check "IBOC's" website for details of their services until further notice because of the Coronavirus.

March 5, 7 pm

All men are invited to Men's Ministry meeting each Friday night at 8 pm, (IBOC promotes proactive male leadership.)

March 7, 10 a.m.

Join us for our Morning Service; and don't forget to invite family and friends to join us as we celebrate our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

March 8, 7 pm

You are invited to Monday School to see what God has to say to us in His Holy Word.

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Check "SMBC's" website for details of their services until further notice because of the coronavirus.

March 7, 8 and 11 am

You are invited to our Worship Services as we honor God for His goodness and faithfulness.

**March 8, 7 to 8 pm
Every Monday Night**

Sister II Sister (Women's Mission) in the Main Fellowship Hall and the Men II Men Bible Study in the Youth Church Sanctuary (Chapel).

March 10, 7 pm

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

your spiritual growth and His glory.

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Vice President, Kamala Harris: An Extra-ordinary Life for Women History Month



**Sister
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The Honorable Kamala Harris made history on January 20, 2021 when she was inaugurated as vice president of the United States. She is the first female, first Black and first South Asian to hold the office.

"While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last," the former United States Senator from California promised a Wilmington, Delaware crowd while delivering her November victory speech.

"Because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities."

The culmination of Harris' historic run with President Joe Biden first began with her own bid for the 2020 Democratic beginning in January 2019.

Through the numerous debates and media appearances that followed, voters learned plenty about Harris' political views and values, but here are some things you might not know about the vice president:

She is the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, born at Oakland, California's Kaiser Hospital on October 20, 1964, to Indian American immigrant and breast cancer researcher, Dr. Shyamala

Gopalan and Jamaica-born Donald Harris, an emeritus professor of economics at Stanford.

The couple met as doctoral students at the University of California at Berkeley in the fall of 1962 and married the following year.

Dr. Gopalan gave her daughter the name Kamala, which means "lotus" in Sanskrit and is another name for the Hindu deity Lakshmi, in part, to help preserve her cultural identity.

The vice president's middle name, Davi, translates to "goddess" in Sanskrit, another tribute to the Hindu religion.

"A culture that worships goddesses produces strong women," the late Gopalan told the Los Angeles Times in 2004.

Harris has a long history of activism. A 2004 Los Angeles Times profile recounted a favorite family story that began with Harris joining in protest chants from her stroller while her parents marched for civil rights in Oakland and Berkeley, California.

Following one march, Gopalan innocuously asked the toddler, "What do you want, Kamala?" Her response: "FEE-DOM!"

Later, when she was 13, Harris and her sister, Maya, led a demonstration in front of their Montreal apartment building in protest of the policy that banned children from playing on the lawn. The owners eventually re-



versed the policy.

Harris loves to cook, "As a child, I remember hearing the pots and smelling the food, and kind of like someone in a trance, I would walk into the kitchen to see all this incredible stuff happening," Harris recalled in a May 2020 Glamour interview.

"My mother used to tell me, 'Kamala, you clearly like to eat good food. You better learn how to cook.'" That's exactly what she did, and, now, the politician regularly shares her culinary skills, recipes, and love for Sunday dinners on social media.

In 2019, she and actress Mindy Kaling made masala dosa together in a campaign video, and Harris also taught fellow senator Mark Warner how to properly make a tuna melt in an on-line video.

When sharing her recipe for "Kamala's Cornbread

Dressing" on Thanksgiving 2020, she tweeted, "During difficult times I have always turned to cooking. This year, I wanted to share one of my family's favorite Thanksgiving recipes with you."

After attending Howard University and the University of California's Hastings College of the Law, Kamala Harris embarked on a rise through the California legal system, emerging as state attorney general in 2010.

Following the November 2016 elections, Harris became just the second Black woman and the first South Asian American to win a seat in the U.S. Senate. She

declared her candidacy for the 2020 U.S. presidential election on Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2019 but dropped out of the race before the end of the year.

In August 2020, Joe Biden announced Harris as vice presidential running mate and after a close race, Biden and Harris were elected in November 2020.

I hope whenever you're able to make it in life, it brings you as much warmth as it has brought me — even when separated from those I love."

Harris is also an avid reader. While running as a Democratic candidate for president in 2019, Harris was the first to respond to Book Riot's request for her favorite books and/or those that have been most influential in her life.

She listed five: Native Son by Richard Wright, The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini, The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan, Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis.



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Monday School 7pm & Men's Fellowship Friday 8pm

JORDAN, from Page 2

In 1971, Jordan was appointed president and CEO of the National Urban League, spearheading the organization's growth.

On May 29, 1980, a White supremacist attempted to kill Jordan.

After a successful recovery, in 1981, Jordan resigned from the National Urban League to work as legal counsel with the

Washington, D.C. office of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer, and Feld.

His active practice includes corporate, legislative, and international clients, researchers at the HistoryMakers noted.

Jordan's close friend is former President Bill Clinton, and during Clinton's presidency, Jordan became one of Washington's most

influential power brokers, the researchers noted.

He also was a partner in the investment firm of Lazard Frere & Company in New York.

In 2001, Jordan published his autobiography, "Vernon Can Read!", and authored a weekly newspaper column syndicated to more than 300 newspapers and served as a frequent television guest and commentator.



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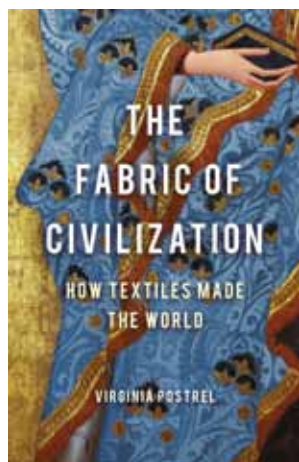
NDG Book Review: 'The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World'

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

A couple weeks ago, you really needed to wrap up in some extra blankets.

One layer, two layers, covered face and a cold nose. Extra blankets, extra sweaters, coats, socks, gloves, it took awhile to thaw yourself out and in "The Fabric of Civilization" by Virginia Postrel, you'll see where those snugly wraps started.

Many thousand years ago — long before your need for insulated gloves and a knitted hat — the tale of textiles began when early humans invented string. But string, as Postrel points out, "is not cloth." Nope, and it takes



a lot of gathering to obtain enough material to make enough string for the making of cloth, tasks that were easier once humans started keeping livestock eleven thousand years ago.

Accidental genetics are

likely what made cotton "the world's dominant... 'natural' fiber" but that took awhile, too. Scientists say that the usefulness of the plant was known on several places at various times in history but it wasn't until 1806 that a species nearly tailor-made for the soils and growing season of the Mississippi delta was found in Mexico City and was brought to America. Genetics confirmed that that seed had come from an African seed that had "somehow" gotten to Mexico and germinated, then had cross-pollinated. Further cross-pollination in the South made it the plant from which slaves harvested the

fiber.

Remember, though: raw fiber is no good unless it's processed, which was mostly women's work for centuries. Their spinning led to weaving, which took a surprisingly advanced knowledge of mathematics. The use of dyes was perfected (and contentious), and new methods of making fine cloth were invented and refined. Hand-spinners were replaced by technology, ancient cities were conquered for want of weavers, cloth-making became a way to pay taxes and participate in trade, and the race was on to make fabric in a laboratory.

And in the future?

There are "hints," says Postrel, of "a change in the relationship between pure science and industry practice."

This morning when you got dressed, you picked a comfortably soft shirt, avoided the scratchy sweater, put the worst-fitting jeans back in the drawer, and didn't think much about how these things got into your closet. "The Fabric of Civilization" will make you appreciate that path, in a centuries-long thread of progress.

Some of what you'll find in here is common knowledge — it's likely stuff you learned in history class — but author Virginia Postrel also

weaves surprises into her narrative. Read, and you'll be glad you don't have to make flax thread from scratch. Read, and imagine being a weaver during Genghis Khan's time. Read, and it's hard not to be transfixed by the stories behind a natural silk kimono, an elegant jacquard robe, or stoles made of kente cloth by weavers who created them in the same way their foremothers did. These are all good yarns, told so appealingly.

So grab that blanket again. Crafters, fashionistas, and historians, heads up and take a chair: "The Fabric of Civilization" is a book to wrap your hands around.

FTC launches initiative for lower-income communities to report fraud

The Federal Trade Commission is launching a new initiative aimed at partnering with community legal aid organizations to expand its outreach to lower-income communities to encourage them to report fraud and provide them with advice to help recover.

The Community Advocate Center initiative will provide a new way for organizations that provide

free and low-cost legal services to report fraud and other illegal business practices their clients have experienced directly to the FTC on behalf of their clients.

"It is a top priority to ensure that FTC resources are available to those who most need them," said Acting FTC Chairwoman Rebecca Kelly Slaughter. "The goal of the Community Advo-

cate Center is to build the bridges between underserved communities, their advocates, and the FTC in order to fight fraud and try to recover money lost."

By participating with the FTC's Community Advocate Center, organizations can connect members of their communities to specific, concrete steps they can take to try to get their money back. They also will

receive aggregated data detailing the types of fraud and other illegal business practices affecting their communities, such as the methods scammers use to defraud consumers, methods they use to demand payment, and the amount of money consumers report losing.

For more information about the Community Advocate Center and to sign

up to participate, visit ReportFraud.ftc.gov/community.

The FTC thanks the Legal Services Corporation, Inc., the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, the National Consumer Law Center, and the National Association of Consumer Advocates for their support of this initiative.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote

competition and to protect and educate consumers.

You can learn more about consumer topics and report scams, fraud, and bad business practices online at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. Like the FTC on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, get consumer alerts, read our blogs, and subscribe to press releases for the latest FTC news and resources.

MEZA, from Page 5

"At this very moment, I have constituents from my district sentenced to prison for non-violent crimes who are in solitary confinement for as much as a year. That is unacceptable," Meza

said.

In addition, Meza also filed a bill to direct the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, with assistance from the Texas Health and Human Services Commis-

sion and the Department of State Health Services, to study the use of administrative segregation and its impact on the physical and mental health of prisoners.

"If we are unable to pass restrictions on the use of administrative segregation

this session, we must pass the study bill so we have empirical evidence from Texas government agencies on the impact of this practice, so the Legislature is better equipped to act next session," Meza said.

Rep. Meza's two bills are

House Bills 2751 and 2752.

Meza, an Irving resident who represents Irving and Grand Prairie, is an attorney who has engaged in criminal and civil practice. In addition, Meza, a former public school teacher, is a longtime community ad-

vocate and activist for civil rights.

She has worked on civil rights issues and community engagement with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).

INNOCENT, from Page 1

death.

According to the National Registry of Exonerations, cases of Black people exonerated from wrongful murder convictions were 22 percent more likely to involve police misconduct than similar cases involving White defendants.

"The legacy of slavery, racist Jim Crow laws, and hateful lynching has translated into modern-day mass incarceration and the disproportionate impris-

onment of Black people," Daniele Selby wrote for The Innocence Project.

"Nowhere is that seen more clearly than in prisons like the Mississippi State Penitentiary — also known as Parchman Farm — and Louisiana's Angola prison, which were built on and modeled after slave plantations and where several Innocence Project clients have been incarcerated," Selby penned.

She continued:

"Racial discrimination and bias has been ingrained in the criminal legal and law enforcement system from its earliest days and continues to pervade every level of the system today. The Innocence Project, with your support, is committed to addressing these injustices."

The report arrives approximately one year after controversial — but largely unchecked — remarks by Manhattan, New York, District Attorney Cy Vance Jr.

After a jury returned two

guilty verdicts against former movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, Vance incredulously had this to say about allegations of rape and sexual assault:

"It's rape even if there is no physical evidence."

The district attorney stated that the verdicts against Weinstein "pulled the justice system into the 21st Century. It's a new day. Their verdict turned the page on our justice system on men like Harvey Weinstein."

While the verdict may

have turned the page on White men like Weinstein, African Americans have always struggled to receive fair treatment by the police and unprejudiced trials in the courtroom.

"By the preconceived notion, a man of color accused of rape, by a White woman, is presumed guilty beyond a reasonable doubt," editors at the American Bar Association wrote in 2019.

"In the case of a White man accused of raping an African American woman,

the presumption of guilt shifts from the White defendant to the African American female victim. Here, there is a presumption that a woman is unchaste because the color of her skin is Black," the editors continued.

"Alternatively, the standard applied to the White defendant is the presumption that he is innocent until the African American victim is proven pure, innocent, and deserving of the law beyond a White person's reasonable doubt."